



Lent,
Holy Week
and
Easter 2023

The Church of The Holy Innocents
Paddenswick Road, W6 0UB



Lent 2023

Another turbulent year passes. With war continuing in Ukraine, the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and financial crises for many and the country, we are again taking cautious steps forward in challenging times. Just as we try to do each Lent.

It may be an inward journey into the soul that we take, but it can still be as challenging and rewarding as the most adventurous holiday, if we can make a commitment to a real journey taken over the entire 6 weeks of Lent.

Lent Resources

This booklet contains information about our own Lent Services, Programme and Resources together with suggested reading material and links to other publicly available resources.

The Great Easter (Paschal) Vigil on Holy Saturday is the earliest Christian worship service we know of and reminds us how our Lent journey is embedded in the Hebrew scriptures and traditions.

We are therefore truly blessed to have in our church and this booklet, the Afflick Paschal Panels, inspired by the scriptures in this ancient Vigil service, to enhance our journey.

Lent Services in Church

Ash Wednesday, 22nd February

8.00 am Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

7.30 pm Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

Wednesday, 1st March

11.00 am Parish Eucharist

Wednesday, 8th March

11.00 am Parish Eucharist

Wednesday, 15th March

11.00 am Parish Eucharist

Sunday, 19th March (Mothering Sunday)

10.10 am Parish Eucharist

Monday, 20th March (Feast of Saint Joseph)

7.30 pm Parish Eucharist

Wednesday, 22nd March

11.00 am Parish Eucharist

Saturday, 25th March (The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary)

7.30 pm Parish Eucharist – a healing service with anointing

Sunday, 26th March (Passion Sunday)

10.10 am Parish Eucharist followed by Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 29th March

11.00 am Parish Eucharist

Sunday 2nd April (Palm Sunday)

10.10 am Parish Eucharist

SATURDAYS, by appointment: Sacrament of Reconciliation

Lent Programme in Church

Believe-Acknowledge-Look

Credo. We believe...or should that say I believe? So begins the work of defining the Christian Profession of Faith as articulated in the Creeds of the Church since earliest days. In the 4C as the Church became more powerful, hierarchical and centralised (did it? – at least legal, promoted and institutional) an agreement on what Christians actually believe became a political and cultural necessity.

Over the Sundays in Lent, the preaching will consider and reflect on the words of the Nicene Creed which is used as part of the Parish Eucharist most of the time.

26th February – What Nicea says about God the Father, the First Person of the Holy Trinity.

5th March – What Nicea says about God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

12th March – What Nicea says about the Incarnation and God's Plan of Salvation.

19th March – What Nicea says about God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

26th March – What Nicea says about the Church of God and our Call to Holiness.

Blessings and Curses: Defining Moments in a Life of Faith

After reflecting on the Nicene Creed in our Liturgy, stay after the Parish Eucharist for a lively conversation about what it means to be a Person of Faith in an Age like ours. All are welcome.

26th February - Faith in an Age of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics

5th March - Faith in an Age of Social Media and Disinformation.

12th March - Faith in an Age of Debt and Economic Upheaval

19th March - Faith in an Age of New Warfare and Climate Crisis

26th March - Annual Parish Meeting: The Church of The Holy Innocents, Hammersmith in 2050

Mid-week Eucharist in Lent

Wednesdays at 11am

On 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th March

Service followed by silent prayer to noon. Spend an hour with God in the beauty of holiness.

Stations of the Cross

Saturdays at 11am

On 25th February, 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th March

The same Stations each week, but with different reflections and prayers on Jesus' final journey to his death on the cross.

Lent through the ages

Four main roads lead us to the Lent we know today.

The first is the preparation by the earliest followers of Jesus for the earliest known Christian festival, Easter, which is cited by Iraneus in the 2nd Century. It speaks of a 40 hour fast, based on the time Jesus was believed to be dead before rising to life.

Second, from Egypt (and perhaps also the 2nd Century) came the tradition of extending the 40 hours to a 'great week' – starting with the reading of the Passion on what we now call Palm Sunday (which we still observe). By the 3rd Century, and times both of Christian growth and persecution, an intense period of preparation for baptism included teaching and scrutiny of candidates to ensure they were ready for their journeys of faith. The whole congregation was involved for an intense three-week period, and thus the initiation of new believers helped the spiritual growth of established ones to their mutual benefit.

The effective nationalisation of Christianity in the 4th Century had a profound impact on theology and liturgy, and it seems to be from this period onwards that the third major development emerges. Lent becomes modelled on the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness (and the Israelites 40 years in theirs). The wilderness is a suitable, simple and austere place to refresh our love of God in readiness for Easter.

The freedom to worship as a Christian led to freedom of travel on pilgrimage and the fourth main road to the Lent we know today. Visiting the places where Jesus lived and died led to an interest in following his journey through time, particularly the last week of his life, which has become Holy Week as we know it. The final steps taken by Jesus on the via Dolorosa were depicted in visual tableaux by Franciscans in the 14th Century, on which the ‘Stations of the Cross’, the distinctive Lent service we now have, is based.

To this day, Lent remains a preparation for Easter by fasting, almsgiving, repentance and rededication of our lives to God, study, reflection and prayer.

Our Lent journey

Easter is a given. The empty tomb and the resurrection of our Lord is an unconditional gift from God we do not have to earn, but which we can enjoy all the more by re-setting the focus of our hearts and imaginations on it; and by desiring simpler lives in order to be more open to God’s love.

We are beloved children of God and in Lent we deepen our understanding of what that means. What are we here for and to achieve? What do we need to let go of? What padding needs to be stripped away, and barriers pushed aside, that are currently separating us from God and our true selves?

We have all experienced times of temptation and emptiness in life, but Jesus did not go in to the wilderness just to give something up for a few weeks. He went to discover the meaning of something he had been given. So do we.

We can make the same journey real and meaningful when we are able to relate events in our own lives to the life of Christ. If we have experienced abandonment, then we see He was abandoned too, and we can learn from His reflection on the experience and heartfelt cry from the Cross. If we are particularly fearful or hesitant, then we witness His fears and doubts in the Garden of Gethsemane, followed by the betrayals seen in two of His closest followers, Judas and Peter.

It is not for the faint hearted. On this 6-week journey we may encounter stark, vast emptiness; struggle with old sorrows; acknowledge our numbness to injustice; or experience a deepening awareness of our own and others’

hurts, that can lead us to recognise the healing Christ brings through His Passion and Wounds.

Ash Wednesday - 22nd February

Marking the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday establishes the tone of repentance and rededication for the season. The ashes used in the liturgy, made from last year's Palm Sunday crosses, are a visible sign of mourning our sins, of repentance and a reminder of our own mortality.

“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Ecclesiastes 3:20

“Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Job 42: 6

This is a moment of reminder that the world does not revolve around us. The day is often marked with fasting.

Mothering Sunday - 19th March

This fourth Sunday of Lent is also known as Laetare Sunday, from the opening words of the Latin introit for this day, *Laetare Jerusalem – Rejoice, O Jerusalem*. In the English church this became a traditional day for domestic servants to return to their home towns, to visit their ‘mother churches’ and also for parishioners to visit the cathedral or ‘mother church’ of the diocese.

By extension it is a time for all Christians to celebrate the Church as our mother. As the secular ‘Mothers’ Day’ grew in popularity during the 20th century, in the UK the traditional ‘Mothering Sunday’ observance widened its focus to include celebration of our human mothers.

Joseph of Nazareth - 20th March

The Annunciation - 25th March

These celebrations of Joseph and Mary are not out of place during the sacrificial season of Lent. Both Mary and Joseph displayed a sacrificial turning away from their former lives and entrusted themselves to God’s plan for them. Mary responded in trust and obedience to the message of God

announced by Gabriel. Joseph too obeyed the angel's instruction, defying social convention to remain at Mary's side when God's promise became a visible reality.

Passion Sunday – 26th March

Passiontide - the last two weeks of Lent – is when we recall how Jesus 'set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9.51) and the inevitability of his death. Historically the fifth Sunday of Lent was known as Passion Sunday, marked by the reading of the Passion narrative from the Gospel of the year. From this Sunday onward it is customary for the statues, icons and objects of devotion in church to be veiled.

Palm Sunday – 2nd April

Today marks the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem on a donkey in a procession that meets Zechariah's prophecy of the coming Messiah, but is also encapsulated by the familiar hymn "Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp, ride on to die." Lowly, if not laughable, pomp indeed.

The crowds might be shouting out 'Hosanna' – 'save us now' – but this liberator is no mighty warrior when making an almost comical entry on a peaceful beast of burden. This is surely a parody of a triumphal entry, but it then stands in stark contrast to the tragedy of the passion Gospel, with its emphasis on suffering and abandonment, through the parallel accounts of Jesus' trial and death from a wide cast of characters.

All these accounts come together at the Cross, and it becomes apparent there are not many stories with different endings but only one story. It started at Creation (as did our Lent journey) and it will only come to an end when Jesus

returns to judge our story, and all the other stories in the world that there have ever been and are yet to be.



Holy Week

We now begin our pilgrimage to the foot of the cross.

On Monday and Tuesday our Gospel readings are from John, the anointing at Bethany and Jesus' foretelling of his death, as the tension builds towards its climax.

On Wednesday evening at The Church of The Holy Innocents we have a service of Tenebrae, a traditional service derived from the monastic offices of Mattins and Lauds. As the chants are sung, the lights in the church are extinguished one by one until the church is left in silent darkness.

The Triduum

The Triduum is the three-day period beginning in gathering gloom at sundown on the evening of Wednesday in Holy Week and ending at sundown on Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday -6th April

Also known in the English church as Maundy Thursday, from '*mandatum*', commandment, recalling the 'new commandment' Jesus gave his disciples as he prepared to be betrayed: 'love one another, as I have loved you'.

On Maundy Thursday we recall the events of the Last Supper and the institution of the celebration of Holy Communion. According to John's Gospel, the evening began by washing the disciples' feet, an act of the humblest service.

The synoptic Gospels describe a Passover meal, at which Jesus broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said 'take, eat, this is my body'. After supper he took the third cup of wine, the cup of redemption, and said 'drink this, all of you, this is my blood'.

Jesus said 'I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes'; and after this Eucharist we do not consecrate bread and wine again until the celebration of the Kingdom at Easter. The remaining bread is set aside

in the garden of repose, the altar is stripped bare, and we symbolically watch and wait with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

Good Friday - 7th April

The solemn liturgy of Good Friday recalls the trial, suffering and crucifixion of Jesus as we journey with Jesus along the *via Dolorosa*, the Way of Sorrows. As Archbishop Stephen Cottrell puts it, on Good Friday we seek not so much to understand the Cross as to stand under the Cross.

Reflective silence forms a vital part of the liturgy of Good Friday. The passion narrative from St John's Gospel is read or sung. A crucifix is brought into church with the words 'behold the wood of the cross on which was hung the Saviour of the world'. The congregation may perform an act of veneration, such as kissing the wood of the cross.

Communion is received in one kind only, from the reserved sacrament consecrated on Holy Thursday.

Holy Saturday - 8th April

Holy Saturday is a day of profound emptiness.

It is not, though, a day to rush through in our haste to get to Easter. The joy of Easter is incomplete if it does not stand in contrast with the pain of Good Friday and the desolation of Holy Saturday. To remember this time when Jesus lay dead in the tomb is to remember that there is no part of our human existence that Jesus has not shared. Most of us have experienced loss in our own lives, and Holy Saturday is a reminder that Jesus, in the most profound way, is with us in that loss.

The Great Vigil of Easter

In the deepest darkness, outside the church a new light is kindled and the fire is blessed. The Paschal Candle is studded with the nails of the crucifixion, before being lit from the new fire and then carried into the dark church. In the candlelight the Exsultet, the ancient hymn of praise, is sung. A series of readings follows, recalling the faithfulness of God from the creation, through the

Exodus, into the now-fulfilled promises through the prophets.

The priest proclaims the resurrection of Christ and a joyful cacophony breaks out. The church is flooded with light and we see it decorated in all its Easter glory as the *Gloria in Excelsis* is sung.

The Liturgy of the Word follows, and then the Liturgy of Baptism, traditionally for the welcome of new believers into the church, and now also for the renewal of baptismal vows by the whole congregation.

We celebrate the Eucharist together, rejoicing in the assurance that, as Christ has shared in our death, so we will share in his resurrection.

Easter Day - 9th April

After the excitement of the Vigil, Easter morning marks the beginning of our fifty days of Easter joy. Alleluia, having been excised from our liturgy during Lent, becomes the joyful refrain of this season.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!



Lent in Action

Almsgiving

The traditional Lenten practice of giving can be expressed through a response to appeals made by international, national and local charities, as well as to the Bishop of London's Lent Appeal 2023: Mozambique Conflict Trauma Support: Healing the memories.

Its focus is on raising money to train leaders in Mozambique who can provide pastoral care and support for those with trauma. Since 2017, over a million people living in northern Mozambique have been displaced by a violent insurgency and 4,000 have been killed. Consequently, the need for trauma counselling and support is as great as the need for food, but agencies and organisations do not have funds for this.

It is also an appropriate time to reflect on the level of our giving to support the mission of our own parish church and the other people and organisations it supports. We want to continue our support of ALMA, our link parish in Mucaba, Angola; as well as renew links with the Churches of The Holy Innocents in San Francisco, USA and Tikopia, in the Pacific Solomon Islands.

Other Lenten disciplines can easily work in tandem with this one. For example, an individual or group sponsored giving-up/taking-up, or setting aside the cost of something given up for Lent, is a simple way to raise funds in support of any of these causes.

Study

40 days, 6 Weeks, 14 Stations

Study is the discipline of building life-giving habits for our minds. In focusing on study in Lent we are actively choosing to avoid distractions and to search for truth and meaning in our chosen discipline.

In addition to our usual Reading List, we are providing suggestions for, and links to, a variety of Lent resources across different disciplines.

Reading suggestions

Emma Ineson, Bishop of Kensington - *Failure: What Jesus Said About Sin, Mistakes and Messing Stuff Up (The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2023)*

Michael White & Tom Corcoran - *Messages of Healing for Lent 2023*

Paul Anthony Dominiak - *The Falling of Dusk: The 2023 Lent Book*

Martin Kochanski - *The Creed in Slow Motion: An exploration of faith, phrase by phrase, word by word*

Christopher Jamison - *Finding the Language of Grace: Rediscovering Transcendence*

Rupert Shortt - *The Hardest Problem: God, Evil and Suffering*

Timothy Keller - *Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter*

The Church Times Holy Week and Easter Collection - *Print of the Nails*

Matthew Desmond - *Poverty, by America*

Alan Jacobs, ed- *Poems to Make the Soul Sing (A Collection of Mystical Poetry Through the Ages)*

Clint Smith - *Above Ground: Poems*

Kristie Anyabwile - *Literarily: How Understanding Bible Genres Transforms Bible Study*

Glen Scrivener - *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress and Equality*

Scarlet Hiltibidal - *You're the Worst Person in the World: Why It's the Best News Ever That You Don't Have it Together, You Aren't Enough, and You Can't Fix It on Your Own*

Peter Enns - *Curveball: When Your Faith Takes Turns You Never Saw Coming (or How I Stumbled and Tripped My Way to Finding a Bigger God)*

William Edgar - *A Supreme Love: The Music of Jazz and the Hope of the Gospel*

Other suggestions

USPG (Anglican Mission Agency) – [*Good Samaritans, Good Neighbours*](#)
- 6 session study course asking what it is to be a good neighbour; a key question that is at the heart of the Parables in Saint Luke's Gospel.

Church of England – [*Dust and Glory*](#)
– a Lent journey of faith, failure and forgiveness is this year's Church of England's theme. Resources include a daily Bible reading, short reflection, practical challenge, as well as a prayer linked to the week's theme.

The Bible Society – [*The Lent Encounter 2023*](#)
- a 6 week guided tour of different Lenten themes; touching on some of the big preoccupations and concerns of our times and reminding ourselves of how the gospel of Jesus Christ speaks hope into our situation today.

A Rocha – [*Connect with God's Creation over Lent*](#)
- take time to connect with our Creator and God's creation this Lenten period with a new Lenten resource to use as a church, as a family or as an individual.

Christian Aid – [*Talking climate justice and transformation*](#)
- 6 session guide exploring Lenten themes (repentance, sacrifice, redemption, reparation and restoration) to help us grapple with climate crisis

Churches Together in Britain & Ireland – [*'Christ's Costly Gift of Reconciliation'*](#)
- explore the significance of Christian Unity to the Church's mission of reconciliation through a weekly scripture reflection, questions for reflection and discussion, suggestions for action and prayer.

Services for Holy Week and Easter



Palm Sunday, 2nd April

No 8.30am Holy Communion

10.00 am The Liturgy of the Palms & Procession from St John the Evangelist, Glenthorne Road

Monday and Tuesday in Holy Week, 3rd & 4th April

7.30 pm Holy Eucharist with Homily

Wednesday in Holy Week, 5th April

7.30 pm Tenebrae of Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday, 6th April

(Chrism Mass & renewal of ordination vows at St Paul's Cathedral)

7.30 pm Institution of Holy Eucharist with the washing of feet; stripping of the Altar followed by prayer at the Altar of Repose.

Good Friday, 7th April

11.00 am Stations of the Cross

12 Noon Liturgy of the Day with Reading of the Passion

Holy Saturday, 8th April

10.00 am Morning Prayer

10.30 am Cleaning and Decoration of the Church

8.30 pm The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Day, 9th April

No 8.30 am Holy Communion

10.10 am Holy Eucharist of the Resurrection



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