

**The Benefice of All Saints, Highbrook  
& St Margaret of Antioch, West Hoathly**



**A Journey through Lent  
2021**

Dear Friends,

This year Lent has been hard to plan for. Not knowing what will be allowed or even possible makes it tricky, not only for thinking about activities in the church buildings but also for you at home. It's not only about the practicalities, but also how we are each feeling at this time.

I am very grateful for the inspiration for this booklet, which comes from Mthr Cécile Schynder, a priest in the Diocese of Southwark. And it was a reminder to me that we do not have to do everything on our own. We achieve so much more when we work together, help each other, and as a result we find the weight carried feels a little lighter.

Likewise, I hope that this booklet will help us to grow closer as a community and congregation. It contains a Bible reading, a short reflection and a prayer or action for each day. If something works well for you, please share it with others. If it doesn't, put it aside and try something new the next day. The purpose is to journey with Christ, growing more and more like him each day, with a focus on care, both self-care and care for others. A separate booklet will be available for Holy Week and Easter.

Finally, you are invited to join the Lent discussion group. In 5 sessions, gathering on Zoom, we will look at key passages from the Bible which speak of God's promises to us, focusing on stories of time spent in different types of wilderness. The group will meet on Saturday mornings, 10.30am - 11.30am, starting on 27th February. If you like to join us please let me know and I can send you the dates and Zoom logins. It is possible to join over the phone too.

May you this Lent discover and re-discover just how much you're loved; by others as well as by God.

With love and prayers,

Mthr Nicol

## Tuesday 16 February – Shrove Tuesday

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost'.

*Luke 15.6*

### **Reflect**

Jesus loved to celebrate and in fact was often criticised for feasting with the wrong kinds of people. In Luke 15 when this happened, he told three stories: about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. All three stories ended with a party to celebrate what was lost. And George Herbert in his poem 'Lent' brings it with the words "Welcome dear feast of Lent".

As we stand before the beginning of Lent this is exactly the right moment to celebrate.

### **Pray**

Pray for your church community. How many members can you name? Who is going to walk with you on the journey through Lent to Easter and beyond?

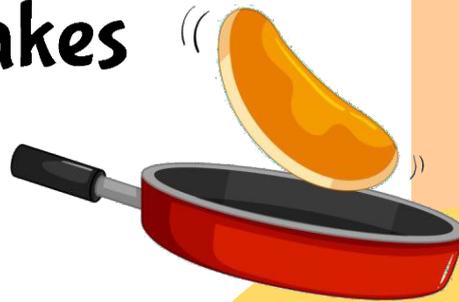
### **Act**

Have a pancake party!

# Are there pancakes in the Bible?

Shrove Tuesday  
"Pancake Day"

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February  
2021



Shrove Tuesday or 'Pancake Day' is the day before Lent. In the same way that Advent is a time for us to prepare our hearts for Christmas, Lent is our time of preparation for Easter.

## Psalm 37 v 3–6

The name **Shrove Tuesday** comes from the word "shriven" meaning to confess your sins and receive forgiveness. Forgiveness for sins is at the heart of the Easter story and many Christians choose to use Lent as a time to think about their own behaviour and to recommit themselves to God. Some people choose to give up things during the period of lent such as unhealthy foods or treats or dedicate part of Lent to fasting.

Enjoy serving the Lord, and he will give you what you want. Depend on the Lord; trust him, and he will take care of you. Then your goodness will shine like the sun, and your fairness like the noonday sun.

Pancakes are a great recipe for using up ingredients. In some countries there is a celebration feast with lots of rich foods before the period of Lent begins. As you make your pancakes why not pray and thank God for all the good and rich things in your life.

What could you do to recommit yourself to God this lent?

Is there something you need to say sorry to God for?

Is there a healthy or faith building habit you would like to take up this Lent?

Is there an unhealthy thing in your life you would like to give up this Lent?

**There are no verses about pancakes in the Bible but there are lots about saying sorry and drawing close to God each day.**

## A pancake prayer

Dear God,

As we prepare our pancakes help us to remember the good and rich things you bless us with each day.

Help us prepare our hearts for Lent and recommit to connecting with you. Show us where there are things that need to be removed from our lives and areas where we need to say sorry to you.

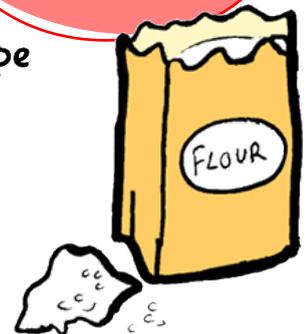
Amen



## Simple Pancake Recipe

(This recipe is for thin crepe style pancakes)

- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg



Combine your ingredients to make a batter.

Prepare your frying pan with a small amount of butter or oil so that the pancake doesn't stick.

Pour in the batter, use a spatula around the edge of your pancake to stop it from sticking. Flip the pancake until it is golden brown on both sides!

## Wednesday 17 February – Ash Wednesday

Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

*Matthew 3.2*

### **Reflect**

In Matthews gospel, the first thing Jesus said was ‘repent’. This word implies changing our minds, turning around and facing a new direction.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for the people you have hurt this year. Or perhaps more importantly can you pray for the people who have hurt you?

Phone or email somebody you have not spoken or written to for a long time.

## Thursday 18 February

When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.”

*John 2.9-10*

### **Reflect**

God is overwhelmingly generous. In the story of the wedding at Cana Jesus gave them six stone jars full of wine. That’s about 800 bottles! Jesus could have simply given them what they needed but chose instead to be overwhelmingly generous.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for a charity or a cause that is important to you. Is there a way you could support them more during Lent?

Speak about something you are passionate about. Is it child food poverty? The welcome to refugees? Equal opportunities for all? Saving the rhinos? Tell somebody about your passions.

## Friday 19 February

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? *Micah 6.8*

### **Reflect**

One of the most important words in the Old Testament is the word 'hesed' that is often translated as kindness. The problem is that it is really hard to translate into English. It means something like faithful, loving kindness (not niceness!) but something that runs deep and expresses itself through regular care and thoughtful acts.

### **Pray & Act**

Watch the news. Pray for something you've seen on the news or heard on the radio.



## Saturday 20 February

God saw everything that God had made, and indeed it was very good. *Genesis 1.31*

### **Reflect**

God loved the world he created. In Genesis 1 after each created day God declared the act of creation as 'good' and at the end of day 6 we are told that it was 'very good'. However much human beings have spoilt creation since, we must not forget that God loved the creation then, loves it still and wants us to love and care for it too.

### **Pray & Act**

Plant some seeds or go out for a walk and see whether you can find some spring blooms. Take time to notice the detail of what you see - the colours, the textures and the scents.

## **Sunday 21 February – Lent I**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.

*Mark 1.9-15*

### **Reflect**

The wilderness is a lonely and harsh place. Sometimes it may feel that living through this pandemic is like walking through the wilderness. Yet every desert has its beauty. Reflect on a journey you have taken through a wild place, whether a desert or moor or the sand dunes by the sea. What do you remember? How did you feel?

### **Pray**

Can you pray and give thanks for the small, good things that have happened during the pandemic?

## Monday 22 February

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth ...

*Isaiah 44.24*

### **Reflect**

God is often described in the Bible in the act of creation. Over and over again we find God creating: stretching the heavens out like a tent or patiently weaving humanity into being. As we are invited to align ourselves with God, we too are encouraged to be creative and bring new things to life.

### **Pray & Act**

Look at God's creation and rejoice in it.

Make something today, such as a cake, a picture, a model, a poem or a story.

## Tuesday 23 February

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. *Matthew 10.29*

### **Reflect**

God didn't just create the world and walk off and leave it to itself. God continues to care about it and love it.

If God cares for the world so much that he even notices the death of a sparrow, just imagine what God's heart must feel like at the time we live in.

### **Pray & Act**

Sit for a moment quietly in a room and ponder the love God has for you.

Share that love with a smile with anyone you might meet today, even if it is only a doorstep visit.



## Wednesday 24 February

But Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

*Ruth 1.16*

### **Reflect**

One of the most moving expressions of love in the bible is this one from Ruth. When Naomi, her mother-in-law, tried to get her to think of herself and leave, Ruth responded with this wonderful pledge of love, loyalty, and faithfulness. We do not know whether Naomi already knew that Ruth loved her, but after Ruth's proclamation, she could be in no doubt. It is much better to make sure people know that we love them because we have told them. Sometimes people do not know until they hear it.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for those you love and tell someone that you love them.

## Thursday 25 February

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

*Psalm 8.3-4*

### **Reflect**

The psalmist looks at the world and is moved to wonder about the place of humanity in this wonderful created world.

Wondering and curiosity are an essential part of what makes us human. As people we have discovered the most amazing things – like a vaccine for COVID-19. But so often our lives get stuck in the daily grind and we forget to ask the really good questions.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for all those who work hard to find vaccines to Covid-19.

Go and find out something new today. Who has made the clothes you wear? Where is the tea or coffee you're drinking grown?

## Friday 26 February

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan.

*Luke 17.15-16*

### **Reflect**

It is easy to forget to be grateful. Especially in times of hardship and difficulty. In the story of Luke 17, ten lepers were healed but only one of them remembered to come back and say thank you. Not sure what happened to the others. Perhaps they were so caught up in their joy that they forgot.

### **Pray & Act**

Are there good things happening right now you are thankful for? Give thanks for the small everyday moments that transform your life right now.

## Saturday 27 February

For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

*Psalms 92.4*

### **Reflect**

Everyday life has become challenging. Some of us feel lonely and stuck at home, while some of us are incredibly busy with home-schooling and working from home.

Today is Friday: if you are busy can you stop for a moment? Pour an extra cup of tea in the afternoon, or switch off your computer early? If you're alone at home or struggling with loneliness and anxiety can you lift your head and look out of the window? Remember that you're part of something much bigger than you.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for your heart - for compassion and healing.

Open your window or go for a walk and notice the things around you: birds singing – sun shining – rain splashing – children laughing.

## Sunday 28 February – Lent 2

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

*Mark 8.31-end*

### **Reflect**

It is never easy to talk about suffering or pain or death. Peter found it unthinkable that his new found Rabbi could be in pain one day. He was so scared about it that he only heard the words ‘suffering’ and ‘death’. But Jesus also mentioned ‘raise again’ and ‘life’. Can we talk about death and pain to those we love?

If so what words do you use?

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for the you have loved, and still love but see no more.

Tell somebody else about a person you lost. Tell their story and do not forget the small, quirky things that made them who they were.

## Monday 1 March

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever. *1 Chronicles 16.34*

### **Reflect**

Saying 'thank you' can appear to be just about politeness but it is much more important than that. The trick lies is not just saying 'thank you' but in being thankful. The more thankful we are the more we are able to see God at work in our lives and in the lives of others.

### **Pray & Act**

Sit a few minutes in quiet before you eat your meals today. Pray for those who will go hungry today, for those who will eat the same cheap food again and again because it is the only thing they can afford.

Say 'grace' before your meal or simply make the sign of the cross before you pick up your fork and knife.

Start a collection for your food bank.

## Tuesday 2 March

You shall love your neighbour as yourself. *Leviticus 19.18*

### **Reflect**

One of the more challenging things that Jesus did in his teaching is to stretch the meaning of who our neighbours are.

Who is your neighbour?

Do you know the person who lives next to you? Above and below you?

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for the people you live with: your household, your family, the people in your street, the people that make up your community.

Be kind to someone new.



## Wednesday 3 March

Now as you excel in everything ... so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. *2 Corinthians 8.7*

### **Reflect**

What you do affects who you are. Although popular wisdom states that bad people do bad things and good people do good things, it is also true that regularly acting selfishly changes who we are just as acting generously does.

If we learn to excel in generosity and kindness, then generosity and kindness stop being just a meaningless action and become instead a state of mind, and a state of our heart.

Perhaps we can become people whose instinct is to rejoice in giving things to others.

### **Pray & Act**

What would being more generous look like?

Pray for the gift to be more kind to yourself and neighbours.

## Thursday 4 March

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. *Genesis 2.15*

### **Reflect**

In Genesis 2, one of the first things that God did after creating Adam was to make him a caretaker of the Garden of Eden. And even though we no longer live in that garden the responsibility to care for the wild that God created remains.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for all the frontline workers who pick up litter from our streets, collect our waste-bins and work in our recycling plants.

Go for a walk and fill a bag with litter. Dispose of it responsibly.

## Friday 5 March

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. *Romans, 7.19*

### **Reflect**

Evil may be putting it a bit strongly, but we can by accident end up doing things other than the good we intended to do. It's so easy to get side-tracked, being pulled into mind games or sucked into Twitter or FaceBook disputes.

Sometimes all we need to do is to make the decision to do something different.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for yourself. What is it you need right now?

Have a screen free day and do something different.

## Saturday 6 March

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia. *2 Corinthians 1.1*

### **Reflect**

Paul was a seasoned letter writer. Not only do we have more than ten letters from him in the New Testament, there are also allusions to many more that he wrote but which did not survive.

Paul knew the importance of maintaining links with people, of hearing how they were getting on and in encouraging them for the future.

### **Pray & Act**

Send a letter or postcard to someone. Tell them how you are.

Pray for them.

## Sunday 7 March - Lent 3

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

*John 2.13-22*

### **Reflect**

Jesus was angry. It showed in his words and his gestures. The way the temple was run, the selling of animals, the changing of money for profit all that was not in the initial plan of the temple. The temple, God's house among God people became a place of corruption and exclusion. Sometimes we Christians are not very good at talking or showing our anger. And yet our anger is a sign that something isn't right, that something isn't just. What makes you angry? Could it be that your anger is pointing you towards a solution?

### **Pray & Act**

Let your mind wander through the week just passed. What kind of feelings have you experienced last week? Especially ponder the moments you were frustrated, upset, or irritated. What did you do with your anger? Could there be another way of owning your more challenging feelings? Give thanks to God for who you are. All of it. Because you are wonderfully made.

## Monday 8 March

Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?  
*Luke 15.8*

### **Reflect**

Imagine for a moment that the woman is God. Can you see her on her knees in the dust of the world looking for you? Can you imagine her searching for you – sweeping even into the darkest of corners - not giving up – until she finds you? And when she finds you – do you remember what she will do?

Yes, she will call the entire neighbourhood together and declare: ‘Come and rejoice with me because I have found (*put your name here*)! I thought him/her lost. But now I found (*your name*). Come and rejoice with me!’

### **Pray & Act**

What did you feel imagine God looking and finding you? Talk to God about it.

## Tuesday 9 March

See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare.  
*Isaiah 42.9*

### **Reflect**

One of the characteristics of human beings is that we often like things to be the same as they’ve always been. Just think of how outraged you feel when they move the supermarket shelves around or when a tv show changes something you love. This pandemic has changed many things and we often long for some normality to come back. Yet we have a God who is not stagnant or inert. We believe in God who is always doing something new.

### **Pray & Act**

In all this pandemic new-ness what normal do you miss most?  
And what ‘new’ have you discovered and liked?

Pray for all who are trying to work as best in this new situation: hospitals, schools, shops, church.

## Wednesday 10 March

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

*Romans 16.20*

### **Reflect**

Well maybe not a kiss – it would certainly alarm your neighbours! However even during Covid-19 the sentiment remains. So many people live in an isolated and lonely bubble.

Do you know of somebody in our congregation who lives alone? Can you give them a ring?

### **Pray & Act**



Smile and say hello to people on the street or in the supermarket today. Notice how they react to your greeting.

## Thursday 11 March

And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 4.7*

### **Reflect**

Peace is not something that can be instilled by command. It is often the case that the more people tell you to be calm and relaxed, the more agitated you stressed you feel.

The peace Paul talks about is not the kind you need to work to achieve. The peace Paul talks about comes from God. You do not have to strive for it or make it work. It is there deep within you. It is a gift.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for peace in a country that is torn apart by war or hunger or injustice.

Listen to a piece of music that makes you feel relaxed.

## Friday 12 March

You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fulness of joy, in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. *Psalm 16.11*

### **Reflect**

There is a widespread belief that the Christian faith is so serious and important that there can be no room for fun. In fact the Christian life and faith is so very important that the only thing to do is to enjoy it, with all the fullness of joy that is to be found in God's presence.

What is it that makes you laugh?

### **Pray & Act**

Give thanks to God for all the small things that make you giggle and laugh and smile.

Do something today 'just' for fun.

## Saturday 13 March

Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. *Romans 12.10*

### **Reflect**

In our culture love has become an emotion: one that you either have or don't have. In the Bible however, love is much more closely linked with action. In the Bible love is what you do, not necessarily what you feel.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for those who do the many things we take for granted: street cleaners, taxi/bus drivers, post workers...

Do a job that someone else normally does.

## Sunday 14 March – Mothering Sunday

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

*Luke 2.33-35*

### **Reflect**

Today we honour our mother church. Traditionally this was a Sunday when Christians visited the church where they received the sacrament of baptism, the entry point into the Church. So take some time to reflect on the different churches and Christians who have shaped and guided you on your journey of faith.

Mothering Sunday coincides with Laetare Sunday, also called or Refreshment Sunday, a day of respite from fasting halfway through the penitential season of Lent. Midway through Lent, this is an opportunity to rest before we approach Passiontide.

### **Pray & Act**

Pray and give thanks for those people that have nurtured and 'mothered' you along the way.

## Monday 15 March

He gives rain on the earth and send waters on the fields.

*Job 5.10*

### **Reflect**

There is no space here to address the complex, even impossible question of why some of us have all the water we need, while others have either far too much or none at all. But one thing is certain: water, the kind that nourishes us and brings life, is a gift and not a right.

### **Pray & Act**

Give thanks for the water that you can use during your day.

Why not try to use less water today? Water your plants with the washing-up water or find out whether your toilet can use less water.

## Tuesday 16 March

And make the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

*1 Thessalonians 3.12*

### **Reflect**

Love is a vital theme in the New Testament. Love both for those we know and for those we do not.

Imagine for a moment people looking at you and the way you lead your life. Imagine them saying: he/she is a Christian, not because of the church he/she attends but by the way his/her life is transformed by love. Imagine that for a moment ...

### **Pray & Act**

Pray for God's love to transform you every day.

Make a list of your friend's upcoming birthdays and remember to send them a card.



## Wednesday 17 March

Bear one another's burden, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. *Galatians 6.2*

### **Reflect**

We live in a world with information overload. And since the start of the pandemic we are aware how some of the information given to us is contradictory in nature. The internet allows us to have passing knowledge about the day to day lives of many people to the point that we often end up knowing a little about a lot of people, but not a lot about any of them. Bearing one another's burdens involves not just knowing a few details but knowing so much about their griefs and joys that we carry them in our hearts.

### **Pray & Act**

Ask someone how they are and take time to listen to the answer. Pray for that person during the week.

## Thursday 18 March

O taste and see the Lord is good. *Psalms 34.8*

### **Reflect**

The lockdown sometimes makes us lose our sense of time. As days and even weeks merge into one it is hard to remember exactly what we did the day before last. Can you remember what you ate for lunch on Tuesday?

The ability to savour is a frame of mind, and if we become better at tasting our cornflakes we might discover that we get better at savouring other good things too.

### **Pray & Act**

Try to live this day with your senses. What do you feel, taste, smell, hear, sense during this day?

Take longer over breakfast and really taste your cornflakes (or whatever else you are having).

## Friday 19 March

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

*Psalm 9.1*

### **Reflect**

Are you a glass half full or a half empty person? We are used to associating positivity with personality types, and there is no doubt that there are some people who are naturally more optimistic than others. But thinking positively can also be a discipline.

At this moment in time it is easy to see the bad. We don't really have to look hard for it. But is there some good too? As Christians we are called to be tellers of good news, even if we sometimes have to dig hard to find it.

### **Pray & Act**

Make list of all the good things in your life and thank God for them.

## Saturday 20 March

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.

*Acts 4.32*

### **Reflect**

The earliest Christians shared everything that they had, though even in the earliest days they struggled with it (look at chapter 5 of Acts for signs of it going wrong).

Over the years Christians have tried (and often failed) to turn to the principle of sharing everything that they own, but this failure does not mean we should give up on sharing. If sharing everything is unrealistic sharing as much we can is something we can all aim for.

### **Pray & Act**

When you go shopping next time pick up/ order some more food to give to the food bank.

## Sunday 21 March – Lent 5 – Passion Sunday

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

*John 12.23-33*

### **Reflect**

Today we turn from our own personal Lenten journey towards the journey Jesus and his disciples walked. A journey that led them to the cross and beyond. As you read the text above you can just imagine the confusion among the disciples as they try to make sense of what is happening. Jesus’ words for fellowship and servanthood have turned into something less cosy. It’s now a matter about life and death, about keeping and losing.

### **Pray & Act**

What do you do when you feel confused? In the times when the rug is taken from under your feet, how do you pray then? Remember what made you hold on despite everything. Where is your hope anchored?

## Monday 22 March

Be still, and know that I am God.

*Psalm 46.10*

### **Reflect**

How often do you take time to be deeply and profoundly still? If you are inexperienced at it, it can be incredibly difficult: your body may twitch or your mind wander off.

Hard as it is, it is worth doing - not least because when all other distractions are gone, we can discover more about who we are and what we really feel about things, but also more importantly, we open up a space in which we can encounter God.

### **Pray & Act**

Sit still for five minutes and listen to your breathing.

Use the Jesus prayer to focus your mind:

Say with each breath in: '**Lord Jesus Christ**'

And with each breath out: '**have mercy on me.**'

## Tuesday 23 March

Do not neglect to show hospitality to stranger, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. *Hebrews 13.2*

### **Reflect**

The gift of hospitality is something we are often not very good at. And the pandemic has made this even harder. How can we show hospitality to others in lockdown?

Hospitality is not just about a cup of tea. It's the ability to reach beyond ourselves and welcome those we don't know- it's a gift that transforms not only the one who is welcomed but also the one who offers welcome.

### **Pray & Act**

Can you read up on social justice issues in the area you live? Where is the next homeless shelter? Where is the nearest asylum seeker hostel? Which is the nursing home closest to you? Can you find out what they need at the moment? Can you offer something? It may be a warm hat, it may be a phone call.

## Wednesday 24 March

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. *Philippians 4.8*

### **Reflect**

What do you spend most of your time thinking about? For each of us the answer will be different. In Philippians, Paul urges his readers to make sure they spend most of their time thinking about good things.

The thinking about good things is a discipline that can take forms, but one of them is to use our imagination to think about the welfare of those around us.

### **Pray & Act**

Think of the people you live with or the people you share your faith with. Is there something you could do to brighten their day?

## Thursday 25 March

O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, Oh Lord. *Psalms 4.6*

### **Reflect**

Somewhat intriguingly in the Old Testament a phrase that is commonly used to describe the good things we receive from God refers to the light of God's face.

God's shining face can be seen in those that surround you. Can you spend today looking closely and discern God at work in your neighbour but also in the bus driver, the shop keeper, your colleagues on a Zoom call?

### **Pray & Act**

Can you share what you see with others? Can you find works to tell others about the beauty you see in them? And then can you imagine God looking at you and telling you what God sees? You as the pearl, the beauty, the crown of God's creation?

## Friday 26 March

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? *James 2.1*

### **Reflect**

It's all too easy to show favouritism. Jesus recognised our tendency to be nice only to our friends and family (see Luke 14.12), and James saw that the rich and famous often get preferential treatment. But we are called to cast our nets wider.

### **Pray & Act**

Make a list of up to five people you have met or spoken to recently who are not in your immediate family or circle of friends, and then pray for them.

## Saturday 27 March

Take no gold, or silver or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff: for labourers derive their food. *Matthew 10.9-10*

### **Reflect**

When Jesus first sent his disciples out to proclaim the kingdom, he told them to take nothing with them other than the clothes they stood up in. The call to simple living is not an easy one to follow – sometimes it can feel as if our possessions increase all on their own – but the call is still important. Simplicity of living offers fewer distractions and the potential for greater focus on the things that are important.

### **Pray & Act**

Find an object that means a lot to you. Give thanks for the memories it contains.

Then look around your house/flat/room and find something you don't use any longer and give that one away.

## Sunday 28 March – Palm Sunday

Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

*Mark 11.1-11*

### **Reflect**

Today is Palm Sunday, a day full of drama. This marks the beginning of Holy Week. It starts with the procession, the shouting and the welcoming of Jesus into Jerusalem. There is hope for a new king, the ecstasy of the disciples as they watch and participate. But soon the tone changes. In church we hear the Passion being read. We hear the high priests' plotting, the death threats, Jesus washing the disciples feet, the night in Gethsemane.

Today the world turns upside down.

### **Pray & Act**

Ponder and have a chat with your family: how will you mark Holy Week this week? Have a look at the notices about the next booklet and see whether there is something you could join (in church or online).

Pick up a palm cross from church or ask someone to pick one up for you. Is there a place in your house where it could hang for the year to come? Perhaps behind a cross?

# Love yourself through Lent

In a really challenging season why not focus on self-care this Lent.  
Here are 40 self-care ideas to choose from, why not pick one each day and give yourself a boost of positivity..

Listen to a favourite song.

Enjoy a hot drink

Say "I love you" to somebody.

Put on some music and dance like nobody is watching!

Have a hot drink.

Try a new hobby.

Light a candle.

Take a bath.

Drink a glass of water.

Pray.

Cook your favourite meal.

Go for a walk.

Get into your pyjamas early!

Read a Psalm.

Phone a friend.

Watch a favourite film.

Write down your worries and bring them to God in prayer.

Open a window and breathe deeply!

Read a book.

Count your blessings.

Turn off your phone for an hour.

Go to bed!

Have a nap.

Build a nest and snuggle up!

Put on some music and dance like nobody is watching!

Look through old photos.

Talk to a plant.

Sing as loudly as you can!

Bake something.

Watch a funny video.

Write a letter.

Visit an art gallery or museum online.

Put on an outfit that makes you feel good about yourself.

Stretch!

Take your dog for a walk!

Look for pictures in the clouds.

Get creative, draw or write something.

Say "no" to something.

Have a lie in.

Pause and listen to God's voice.

Buy yourself a treat.

Get creative, draw or write something.

Say "no" to something.

Have a lie in.

Pause and listen to God's voice.

Buy yourself a treat.