



St NICOLAS' CHURCH

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Sunday 21 February 2021

First Sunday of Lent

Message from Fr Paul

Dear Friends

The word Lent means 'spring' or 'springtime'. There are already signs of spring among us. It is wonderful that the days are lengthening and that people are sharing photographs of what is beginning to appear in their gardens. We need these signs of new life more than ever this year.

The season of Lent is the most penitential season in the church's year, traditionally marked by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It calls us to prepare well for the great Festival of Easter when with joy we share in the paschal mystery of the Lord and rejoice in his resurrection and his great triumph over death and sin.

In the forty days that lead us to Easter we are given a special opportunity to grow in our faith and discipleship. However we choose to spend this time of spiritual growth is up to us. If we choose to give something up it is not simply about whatever we take too much of at other times of the year: chocolate, alcohol, cake, even television etc. It is far more significant than that. It is about searching our souls and giving up those things, which we build us idols in our lives; those things which have tended to take up the place of God. They may only be the smallest of things and sometimes it is their subtlety, which makes them the idols they have become. They will be different for each of us and we do well to give them up so that our focus on God may be greater and our experience of him enriched.

One of the things I plan to do this Lent is to read Rowan Williams' new book *Candles in the Dark: Faith, Hope, and Love in a time of pandemic*. In the book, Bishop Rowan has produced a series of short reflections which he contributed to the life of St Clements Church, Cambridge last year during Lockdown. I am looking forward to experiencing some of his spiritual wisdom. I will also be looking for and at some of those idols which may be around in my own life.

Whatever you choose to do, I pray that it will be a time of spiritual growth and enrichment for you, remembering that although largely apart, we are still travelling together in the Spirit.

With love and blessings, Fr Paul

READINGS & COLLECTS

Genesis 9: 8 - 17

Psalm 25: 1 - 9

1 Peter 3: 18 - 22

Mark 1: 9 - 15

Collect: Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

WORSHIP IN THE PARISH

In the light of the current 'lockdown' it has been agreed that there will be

NO IN-CHURCH SERVICES for the foreseeable future.

Our churches will also **not be open for private prayer.**

Sunday 21 St N 11:15am Service of the Word via Zoom, led by Bishop Henry Scriven, followed by time to chat

St H 10:30am Eucharist from St Helen's; the Revd Dr Charles Miller

St M 9:30am a celebration of Mass via Zoom; the Revd Paul Smith

Sunday 28 St N 11:15am Service of the Word via Zoom,

led by the Revd Paul Smith, Preacher the Revd David Bevington followed by time to chat

St H 10:30am Eucharist from St Helen's; the Revd Dr Charles Miller

St M 9:30am a celebration of Mass via Zoom;
the Revd Canon Charles Masheder

CHURCH NEWS

Although **Jim Barker** retired as our Verger in September, we have been unable to say goodbye as we would wish. The DCC have therefore decided to arrange for us to show our thanks to Jim at a later date when we are able to gather together safely. If you would like to contribute to a retirement gift, donations can be made by bank transfer (with a helpful reference please) or cheque. Please contact Paul Rast-Lindsell (07876 277363 - paulr.stnics@gmail.com) for more details. Thank you.

We will still be 'at home' for Silent Reflections on Tuesday 23 February and Rosalind Rutherford is providing material on the theme Travelling through Lent. A copy will be emailed to those on our list, and made available from St Michael's website.

Faith Forum: Our Faith Forum talk in March will be by the Revd Katie Tupling, Disability Advisor for the Oxford Diocese. Katie will be speaking on '**Disability and the Church**'. The talk will be held on Zoom at 9.15am on Sunday, 7th March. The link to join the Zoom meeting will be made available from 28th February.

'A Candle in the Window': Please think whether **you could contribute** to the March issue whose theme is 'Waiting and Hoping' but as you know, articles don't have to stick to the theme. One possibility is to send a photograph that illustrates a sign of hope. Deadline February 26th.

Online Reading Group will meet via Zoom, fortnightly, on a Thursday afternoon from 4pm to 5pm. The book the group will be reading and discussing is Encounters - Jesus,

connection and story: past, present and future by Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, ISBN: 978-0-232-53466-5. If you wish to participate please contact Susan Scott by email susan.scott21@btinternet.com, so the Zoom details can be forwarded to you.

COME AND SEE is an invitation from our Bishops to local communities to take the first steps in exploring faith. Many people are asking deep questions of faith. Did you know 1 in 5 people watching church online during the pandemic didn't regularly attend before the crisis? 'Come and See' is a free online experience to help you find out more about the Christian faith. It all started on Sunday 24 January – so why not walk with us, as we walk with Jesus... and come and see. Find out more and get involved at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/> Can you think of someone not 'involved' or regularly connected to the church who might respond to this invitation?

COMMUNITY NEWS

Women In The Shadows is a new Lent Course from the Clewer initiative (the national work of the Church of England to combat modern slavery) about the horrors of modern slavery and its devastating impact on victims. At the heart of the course are five short films which include haunting survivor stories and compelling interviews with ten people who work on the frontlines. Devotional material will help participants process, reflect and apply the lessons from the films to their own context. To find out more see <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/womenintheshadows>

Quiet Garden Day on Saturday 27 February 2021 10 am - 4 pm. Leaders: Sue Sheppy and Keith Green. Title: Absence and Presence. This will be on Zoom, but with plenty of off-screen time throughout the day. Let Abigail Perrow (abi.perrow@googlemail.com) know if you wish to attend and she will send you the materials for reflection and the Zoom link, nearer to the time.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- For all Christian poets today who write to enrich the faith of others;
- for our own spiritual pilgrimage during Lent that God may bless our endeavours;
- for Her Majesty the Queen and Philip, Duke of Edinburgh at this time;
- those suffering from Covid-19 in our parish and their families;
- those working on 'the front line' in our NHS; for all in the emergency services;
- those administering and receiving the Covid-19 vaccine and those anxiously waiting for their vaccination;
- all affected by modern slavery;
- all teachers and children, especially those connected with St Nicolas School and all schools in our parish;
- our parish clergy, wardens, and our congregations;
- the care homes in our parish, for all residents, families and staff at Bridge House and Old Station House, with whom we have special links;
- our nation and Government;
- all suffering in body, mind or spirit and those suffering, throughout the world, from the health, economic and political effects of the coronavirus.

- Give thanks for the life of **Rosemary Perrow**, known to many in the Parish, who died on 19 February; pray also for David & Abigail, and all who mourn.

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Diocesan Church at Home (Live-streamed Eucharist) online each Sunday at 10:00am (with recordings of previous services and other resources also available):

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

[Oxford Cathedral on-line services](#) - Sunday Sung Eucharist and Evensong, and weekday Services (includes service booklets and sermons). Recorded archive available.

The [Parish resources](#) page contains links to Sunday's Service at St Helen's, plus an archive of Parish resources.

The [St Nicolas' website](#) has recordings of our 11:15 am Service sermons.

RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE BY TELEPHONE

Diocesan Eucharist Recordings of most of the Sunday services should be available from around 11am each Sunday. Simply call 01865 920930 and, once connected, dial 0 for the full service or 1 a shortened form. Standard call rates apply.

Daily Hope A Church of England resource offering hymns, prayers and reflections as well as full services via a freephone number 0800 804 8044.

CONTACT US

Team Rector	The Revd. Dr. C Miller	01235 520144
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	Mr Andrew Coker	01235 539929
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Website	https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/	
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/stnicolasabingdon	

When the office is closed (Fridays until further notice) please contact the Revd Canon Charles Masheder on 01235 520959 for any **urgent pastoral issues**.

Please note the Parish Administrator's amended January hours: Working in the office: Monday & Thursday 9am - 3pm. Working from home: Tuesday & Wednesday 9am - 3pm. To contact Jenny leave a message on the office phone 01235 520144, use the office mobile: 07395 943957 or email administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk

*Please send any information for next week's pew slip to
eluned@hallas.org.uk by Wednesday*