



Lent in Lockdown 2021

**Churches of North Bradford on Avon and
Villages**



Introduction

Lent is a time for pilgrimage – an actual physical journey or a spiritual pilgrimage ‘to a sacred place’ gaining insights to our spiritual health along the way.

The past year has been one we could never have imagined. Our Lenten pilgrimage for 2020 was interrupted by the arrival of Covid-19, the closure of our churches and the first Lockdown.

For some, this has been their busiest year ever; for others it has been a year of anxiety and despair and for yet others, it has been a year of loneliness, frustration and boredom.

So how do we, as individuals, approach Lent this year? We may of course come out of Lockdown 3 during Lent, so we need to continue to be flexible and our plans may change.

But for now, here we are – in Lent in Lockdown.

We recognise that one of the most wonderful and challenging things about pilgrimage is how much time we have to spend with ourselves. We may feel that we have spent the last year in pilgrimage, sustained by our faith, journeying through these times alongside others, albeit often at a distance, but with too much time spent with ourselves. Lent for us this year therefore might be a time yes, for reflection and reading but also for more engagement with others.

Those of us who have been manically busy, may need to strip away some of that busyness with time carved out for ourselves for reflection, prayer and contemplation, and also for curling up with a book, for hobbies and crafts, for exercise, for whatever is life-giving for each of us.

This period of Lent, the 40 days before Easter was a time traditionally set aside for those preparing for baptism on Easter Eve. These people would as part of their final preparation leave behind all the things of this world that got in the way of their relationship with God. They spent time in fasting, prayer, serving the poor and other disciplines of the Christian life. They prepared for lives of loving service in the world.

So, may we take up this ancient tradition and use Lent as a time for renewing our relationship with God, stripping away all that has accumulated around our souls, the distractions with which the world has surrounded us, and prepare to rediscover who we are as God’s people.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday which invites us to begin that process of inner reflection and self-examination; to look at the pattern of our lives, to make more space for God, and to re-engage once more with prayer and study, expecting transformation and a deepening understanding of the Christian way.

So, how can we spend Lent in Lockdown? Do take a look at all the resources in this booklet and keep an eye on the Benefice website resources section for more.

With my prayers for you all to have a blessed Lent,

Revd Ann Keating

Rector of Churches of North Bradford on Avon and Villages

Lent lunches on Zoom

Wednesday lunchtimes from 12.30 – 13.30 from Ash Wednesday 17 February to Wednesday 31 March, the Wednesday of Holy Week

This year we are unable to meet face to face, but we can meet online; there are a range of books to engage with and discuss, our three Bishops have prepared Sunday sermons for us to use. Let's watch and discuss the ideas and challenges they bring us.

All you need is a Zoom invitation. **Email nboabenefice@gmail.com or ring Denise Button on 862949.** Bring along your lunch and let's meet together online.

Books

Our focus this Lent is on the book **Living His Story: Revealing the Extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways** by *Hannah Steele*. This is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book. It unpacks liberating and practical ways of sharing the gospel story afresh, showing how we can live Jesus' story in our own lives simply by being the people God made us and allowing people to be drawn to him through our natural gifts. It accompanies the **#LiveLent app** and course described later which we are encouraging people to follow this year.

Lent can be a very special time for spiritual nourishment and outreach in different ways. If you are thinking of a book to stretch you and deepen your faith then you may also be interested in one of the following, the first three are recommended by Paul Batson.

Thy Will be Done by *Stephen Cherry* This is a book that explores the meaning of The Lord's Prayer. We say this prayer, given to us by Jesus himself, so often, that it might be timely to take the opportunity to enrich our understanding of it.

A Cross in the Heart of God by *Sam Wells*. So often we hear the phrase, 'Jesus died for my sins', but how are we to make sense of this without making non- sense of God?

The Art of Holy Week and Easter by *Sister Wendy*. Those of you who enjoyed her previous book, *The Art of Lent*, will need no encouragement. For those unfamiliar with that book - this one is a series of photos of famous paintings on the theme of Holy Week and Easter together with Sister Wendy's insightful comments.

The Way of Julian of Norwich: A prayer journey through Lent by *Sheila Upjohn*. Based on the writings of Julian of Norwich, each of the six short chapters ends with some questions and a reflection.

Rooted in Love: Lent reflections on Life in Christ by *Sarah Mullally*. There are 40 short chapters, each with a biblical reading, reflection, recommended actions, and prayer. The chapters are written by the seven Bishops of London. The book's first part aims to point us to Christ and then later explores our calling and what a maturity in Christ might look like.

Apps and Downloadable resources

#LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story is based on the book *Living His Story: Revealing the Extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways* by Hannah Steele and is the resource we plan to follow this Lent. It invites each of us to reflect on our own story of God and how we might share it through our everyday lives as part of our Christian witness.

The short Bible passage, a reflection and a prayer are available soon on a free App via www.churchofengland.org/livelent. The App version also includes a daily Family Activity, offering a simple way to explore a story or a theme from the day's reflection. Do visit the site to see the variety of resources available. For those unable to access the App, there will be copies of the #LiveLent booklet in our churches for you to use.

Courses

Living His Story. There is a free guide for groups wishing to study the weekly themes from this book together, produced by SPCK, [it is now available here to download](#).

There are various other Lent courses available, some focussing on particular issues; here are a few.

Women in the shadows. The Diocesan Board of Education would like to highlight a resource regarding women and girls caught up in modern slavery. Worldwide, women and girls account for 71 per cent of the 40.3 million people living in modern slavery. In the UK, it is harder to gather exact numbers, but we know that in 2018, a third of cases reported to the UK Modern Slavery Helpline related to female victims. To help shine a light on the suffering of marginalised women, The Clewer Initiative has launched **Women in the Shadows**, a new Lent course for churches, community groups and individuals.

The course comprises of five short films and a devotional booklet and is available to download here <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/womenintheshadows>. The films include haunting survivor stories, with insightful contributions from front line experts and campaigners. The devotional booklet was written by colleagues in the Clewer network who are all deeply committed to combating modern slavery in their dioceses. Through Bible study, reflections and prayer, it explores what the Bible says about social injustice, exploitation, and God's heart for the poor. The devotional will also encourage reflection on how we can take action to help vulnerable women in our communities. The films can be watched as standalone documentaries or as part of the complete course.

For Such a Time as This is a six-session study course produced by USPG. It addresses the environmental crisis. It is available free from www.uspg.org.uk/forsuchvertime (inviting donations to the Green Schools Programme supported by the Church of South India). Environmental issues are set firmly in a Christian framework of Creation, Fall, Salvation, Restoration and ReCreation.

'Homelessness in the Bible and Today' Study Course. Alabaré have produced this [Bible Study Course](#). The course provides insight into and understanding of the causes of homelessness and the complex issues faced by those living in crisis, within the context of Bible study, as well as outlining Alabaré's work.

You can download it from their website [by clicking here](#). In addition, they are planning to run the course over Zoom during Lent. If you would like to join them in this way, please contact Helen Inglis on h.inglis@alabare.co.uk

Lent in Lockdown Envelopes

These envelopes, containing resources for you to use during Lent, including your palm cross, will be available to collect from our churches from Ash Wednesday. Do please ensure those who are shielding also receive one.

Online services

Benefice Sunday services

These will continue to be available as usual each week from YouTube; the link is posted on the Benefice website each week www.nboachurches.co.uk.

Ash Wednesday Service Wednesday 17 February at 17.30 Salisbury Cathedral

Bishop Nicholas will be presiding and preaching in the cathedral on Ash Wednesday at 17.30 and the service will be streamed live and remain online for a limited period afterwards. This would be a very moving way of gathering together not only as a group of churches, but also as a Diocese at the start of Lent, so do please join the service with us. You will find it to download on the Salisbury Cathedral website <https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk> and we will provide links in the Lent and Easter Resources Section of the Website on the front page of the Benefice website.

Maundy Thursday Service 1st April at 11.00 am

Each Maundy Thursday, at 11.00 am in the Cathedral, all those who hold licenses with the Diocese usually meet for a service of *The Blessing of Oils and the Renewal of Ordination Vows*. This is a highlight in the diocesan year when clergy, LPAs, LLMs, LWLs etc. reaffirm the vows they originally made. This year, it too will have to be live streamed, but being online gives many more of us the opportunity to join in. It is wonderful preparation for the keeping of the Great Three Days throughout the diocese and the service will remain available for a limited period for those who want to watch it later. Again, download from the Salisbury Cathedral website <https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/> and we will provide links in the Lent and Easter Resources Section on the front page of the Benefice website.

Easter Experience in our Churches

We are setting up Prayer Stations reflecting the themes of Lent and Easter in our churches for you to explore. Resources are for adults and for children. Please see NewsLink and the website for plans from individual churches.



Prayer

Enjoy being in God's presence at home or in our four churches and absorb the peace and joy he brings you. Light a candle each day at 6.00 pm as we pray for our nation. Suggested prayers are on the Benefice website under **Prayers for use at home** in the resources section.

Join the virtual community of prayer and light at Salisbury Cathedral to reflect a year of hope, sadness and joy that has challenged us all. Anyone can take part. All you need to do is light your candle, take a photograph of it and upload it to the dedicated [Light a Candle](#) page on the Cathedral website, adding your dedication by using the form opposite your uploaded picture.

Your dedication will be also added to the prayer list inside the Cathedral used by the clergy in the course of daily worship – and a real candle will be lit in the Cathedral for every virtual candle uploaded. Your message can also be easily shared on social media.

DailyHope, a free national telephone line, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of the phone.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services in mind.

Links to **other prayer resources** from the Church of England are also on the Benefice website.