

Lent2021



A gentle Lenten journey from
the Diocese of Chester

Holy Week

31 March: Revd Tina Upton

Maundy Thursday: Revd Canon Jeremy Dussek

Good Friday: Bishop Mark Tanner

Mini challenge 7 Encourage Biodiversity

This Lent the Diocese of Chester, led by the diocesan Environment Forum, is inviting you to join in with a Lenten journey. Leading the way are 40 individuals from around our diocese who will each reflect on God's word and God's world. They will delve into scripture and share inspiring personal stories about the small ways in which they are moved to cherish the gift of life.

So, are you up for joining in?

Daily reflections

Follow the daily reflections below. They've been organised into weekly booklets to share with others via email, and printer-friendly versions are also available to print and post to those who might prefer the reflections in a physical format.

Mini challenges

Take up our 7 mini challenges throughout Lent. Set by the diocesan Environment Forum, these 7 mini challenges will stretch you to live your life differently for the season of Lent (and beyond). So, instead of *giving up* something for Lent, why not try *taking up* one or all of these mini challenges?

Ian Bishop

Archdeacon of Macclesfield

31 March Revd Tina Upton

Lent2021

"A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. 19 So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20 Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions."

Matthew 7:18-20

There are cherry trees alongside the path leading from the Rectory to the church, which I pass very frequently. Right now, in winter, to my untrained eye, the gnarled bare branches look as if they could be dead. In a few weeks' time they will burst into life, and those branches will produce buds and then a fantastic blossom. In springtime, what was hidden inside becomes obvious, whether a tree has died or is alive. The fruit is not what gives the tree life, but it is clear evidence of that good life. Jesus reminds us that the same is the case spiritually with people.

External appearances tell us nothing of how alive in Christ someone is. I can look to others as if I am saying and doing the right things, but my true relationship with God is hidden. Hidden, that is, until the Holy Spirit at work within me forces me to do something that others spot is of God. That is what shows whether I am authentic or not. It is up to me to ensure that my relationship with God is such that my roots go deeply into Him, and allow the Holy Spirit to flow sap-like freely through me. Daily prayer and bible reading keep my roots healthy.

Spend a little time thinking if there is anything in your life that is blocking God from freely flowing through you.

Revd Tina Upton, Holy Trinity, Blacon

Information Point

Check out the Diocesan website for advice on energy use in your church.

<https://www.chester.anglican.org/support-services/churches/technical-advice/energy-use.php>

A prayer

Dear God,

Show me how I shut you out and help me to be cleansed of that, and to know your Spirit filling me afresh, and empowering me to work for your glory in this world.

Amen.

Maundy Thursday Revd Canon Jeremy Dussek

Lent2021

"After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And he took the bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"

Luke 22:17-19

On Maundy Thursday 2008, I was at the Chrism Service in Birmingham Cathedral, when I received an urgent text from the vendors of the house I was trying to buy. They were desperately pushing me to exchange contracts so they could complete the sale before the end of the Financial Year; so often we can be at the hands of others who seek to tempt and pressurise us to act for their own financial gain!

In agreeing to betray Jesus, Judas thinks he will gain power by receiving thirty pieces of silver. It's the opposite message of the Last Supper that follows; here Jesus reveals the true meaning to finding fulfilment by giving his power away by serving others; that's how God's glory is revealed and what we need to remember in our search for God's blessing today! (Don't our NHS and care workers remind us of that at this time!)

As Judas goes on to make a fool of himself by realising that the silver now has no value or meaning, he subsequently hangs himself. The chief priests panic and use the silver to purchase and desecrate a piece of land which becomes 'the Field of Blood'.

How often do we throw away and waste the earth's resources because of our erratic behaviour? How often do we seek to find personal fulfilment and status through exploiting rather than serving others?

On this April Fool's Day, let's remember that Jesus' actions may still seem foolish to the world, but as St Paul reminds us - the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom as Easter reveals!

Revd Canon Jeremy Dussek, Chester Cathedral

Information Point

The Live Simply award is for Catholic Communities – but the website has some great advice for faith communities to live simply.

<https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award>

A prayer

Heavenly Father, Suffering Servant

Forgive us when we have acted like Judas through our desire for power and self-fulfilment. In taking bread and wine, may our attitudes and desires become more Christlike as we serve others in sharing his love by the blood he sheds for our redemption.

Amen.

Good Friday Bishop Mark Tanner

Lent2021

"Then they will begin to say
to the mountains, 'Fall on us';
and to the hills, 'Cover us.'
For if they do this when the
wood is green, what will
happen when it is dry?"

Luke 23:30,31

I hope that you have found this Lent series helpful... and challenging. I don't like challenging people, but we do have an urgent task ahead of us. I guess that I don't need to persuade you that the current human impact on our planet is unsustainable and we need to act now, for our own sake, for the sake of others around the world, and for those yet to be born.

Today is Good Friday. We see with utter clarity just how far God will go to rescue us in love. The Bible will not duck the challenges that it needs to offer us as it invites us to follow him. It faithfully displays warning signs where there is danger. Jesus is talking here about what happens if we reject him, but there is an interesting ecological echo. This starts with an invitation to accept His offer of love and life and then works into every part of life... including the environment. In the beginning, God commissioned human beings to be good stewards of creation. When we ignore our God-given responsibilities in terms of caring for creation, we will face consequences that are not the ones God desires for us. And so He challenges us. He invites us. He warns us. He loves us, and helps us...

... and that last bit is vital, for we are not alone in this. Like you, I am just a beginner here, but in Christ, it's all about grace, so let's carry on in Him. Hear the cry of His heart, and let us love afresh as we care for all that He has given.

Bishop of Chester, Mark Tanner

Information Point

Hold a Climate Sunday before 5th September. There are loads of resources on the Climate Sunday website.

<https://www.climatesunday.org/>

A prayer

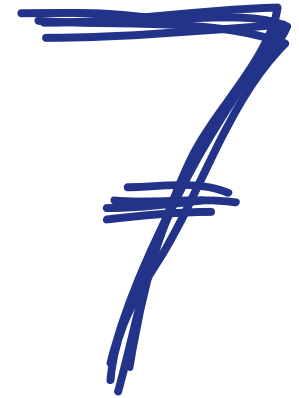
Dear Lord

Thank you for your gifts of life and love. Forgive us when we are careless of the needs of others or the cry of our planet. As we love you and seek to love others guide us to be good stewards of all that you have given.

Amen

Lent2021 ...7 mini challenges

This Lent the Diocese of Chester, led by the diocesan Environment Forum, is inviting you to join in with a Lenten journey and to think about how we might all play our part in living more sustainably. Let's think about what we might change in our daily lives to show our love for God's creation and the environment.



Encourage biodiversity

**Plant trees and flowers that will help local wildlife and
organise a litter pick.**