

# Connected

Sunday 21st February 2021  
1st Sunday of Lent

## Verse For The Week

"Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart."

(Acts 8: 22)

## Sermon Snippets

Acts 8: 9-25

### Where is your heart?

Magic can be entertaining but even today people think that some people have special magical powers.

Simon from Samaria was a sorcerer full of spells and magic but he came to realise that through Christ we can know the greater power of God. But he got confused, as we can, as to whether the power of God in us makes us special people with special powers better than others, or even whether God's blessing can bring us material wealth. Peter had to put him straight.

But was Peter too harsh and what would Simon do? And what do we think about why we serve God?

### *Watch Sunday's service*

at [www.ccwsm.org.uk](http://www.ccwsm.org.uk)

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.



Lent is a 40-day period which started on Ash Wednesday (17 February) and goes through until Easter. It is a time of reflection and repentance, when Christians consider the separateness from God that would exist if it were not for the death and resurrection of Christ. For some, this involves fasting or abstinence in order to spend time focusing on God's love expressed in costly sacrifice.

The word 'Lent' comes from the old English 'lencten' - springtime, which also refers to the lengthening of the days. The period of 40 days reflect the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry, preparation which included fasting.

The colour purple is the linked with this liturgical season, and this is for two reasons: firstly because it is associated with mourning and so anticipates the pain and suffering of the crucifixion, and secondly because purple is the colour associated with royalty, and celebrates Christ's resurrection and sovereignty.

To help us engage with Lent this year, Julie, Terry, Ian, Keith and Tom have each written a reflective piece for the five Sundays in Lent to be published in *Connected*. You will find the first of these on page 4 of this week's edition.

It is our hope and prayer that as we engage with Lent in these strange times, we will each find a new depth of awareness of what God has done, and continues to do, with and for us, and that we experience a deeper level of relationship with Him.

# Prayer Pointers

## Monday

We pray for all children in our wider families and the church family. We pray for all who are feeling fearful, anxious and exhausted. We pray they will feel comforted and at peace today. Whatever challenges they face in the days, weeks and months ahead, we pray that they will know that they are not alone.

## Tuesday

We pray for wisdom and discernment for our Prime Minister and his advisers in the face of the pandemic and the financial crisis. Pray for our local Member of Parliament, John Penrose, as he represents this area.

## Wednesday

Please give thanks for the work of the local police, fire and ambulance staff and pray for protection from harm and the virus, and for wisdom as they deal with members of the public.

## Thursday

Pray for Angeline, in her role as Music Director, as she chooses and sources songs each week to help us worship God and reflect on the Bible passage. Pray also that there would be no technical problems as she and Andy edit sound files and record videos. Give thanks for the skills of our musicians and singers as they occasionally provide videos for us to sing with.

## Friday

Please pray for the team preparing the online service for Sunday: the preacher, the leader and the editing team. May we pray that God the Holy Spirit will use the service to speak into our hearts and to many other people's hearts.

## Saturday

Pray for the members of JaM Club, and members of Toddlers as they take their craft packs from church, that they may be blessed as they use them. Please pray for all the folks that you are aware of who struggle with financial problems. Please give thanks for the outstanding work done by the Weston Branch of CAP (Christians Against Poverty), asking for perseverance and skill in their demanding work.

## Sunday

Please pray that many will tune into the service this morning and that God will speak very clearly through each part. Pray God's blessing on all who take part both on screen and as worshippers in our homes.

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*"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."*

*Augustine of Hippo*

# Notices

## *Prayer Opportunities*

Even though our two churches are closed for public worship, Christ Church is open on weekday mornings for private prayer from 09.00 to 12.00. There are two helpful prayer stations in the church which provide visual prompts.

Please use the hand sanitiser as you come in to the church, wear a face covering (unless exempt) and follow the rules on social distancing.

In addition we now have a Bible Story Trail in the church garden. This is a great opportunity for people of all ages to engage with the story of God's love in Creation. It even has something to say about Coronavirus!

## *Church Has Got Talent*

We have received a number of contributions for our Talent evening. To view the 'show', please click this link to the [Events Page](#) of the Christ Church website. It will be available from 7.30pm this Saturday (20th) for about a week.

## *Bible Notes*

Bible notes from CWR and Scripture Union for the next quarter are now available. They can be collected from the Christ Church foyer from 9am to 3.30pm Mon-Thu, or 9am to 12noon on a Friday. Any remaining notes will be delivered to subscribers.

## *Wheelchair Assistance*

Help required please! I lent one of the Christ Church wheelchairs out this week, which reminded me that I lent another out a few weeks ago, but I can't remember who took it!

We don't need it back right now, but it would just help to know where it is.

Thanks.

*Phil*

## Church At Home Packs

*In last week's Connected, Nicky and Angeline explained what the Church At Home Packs are, and who might benefit from them. This is the second half of that piece.*

Next, we come to the **'Play Together'** section, and whilst you might think this is just for families and children – you are never too old to have fun. Experiencing God through play and fun has got to be a good thing hasn't it?!

If you are creative and enjoy making things, the **'Make Together'** section may be for you. We try to use resources that you would have at home and that you wouldn't need to go out and buy. Creating something to remind us of the teaching or whilst we reflect on God's word can be really helpful.

You may be someone who draws close to God through music. Then the **'Sing Together'** section is for you. The songs included are usually in addition to the ones we sing in the service and we always provide a link to click on for the YouTube video of each song.

Perhaps you are someone who likes to sit quietly and reflect on what you've learned. In the **'Reflect Together'** section we suggest some interesting ways in which you can do this.

**'Pray Together'** is where you will find prayers and different ways of talking with God. Not everyone prays by sitting still, with their eyes closed and hands together. Some like to walk and talk. Some like to be active. Some like to use poetry or written words and some like to draw or create.

Finally, we have the **'Do Together'** section. It's really important to do something with what you learn each week and this section includes ideas to do just that.

You may have noticed that there is a common word that appears throughout the packs - **Together!** Now, we know that we haven't been able to physically be together in the same way that we have been used to, but using the Church at Home Packs in Life Groups, in families or as individuals is one way in which we can continue to be united. We watch and join in with the service and then during the week we can think, talk, study and explore that further together. In doing this we are developing our faith at home and most importantly, we can be putting into practice what we've heard on Sundays in the rest of our lives throughout the week.

*Here are some more comments from people who have been using the packs over the last year:*

"We use the Church at Home pack each week in our Life Group and it's good to look back on the Sunday sermon and use the pack to discuss and delve deeper into the issues that were raised. There's so much in the packs that we only use part of it each week, choosing the sections that are most suitable for groups and leaving the other parts for people to use on their own if they wish. The packs provide ideas for activities and often have links to songs that you can listen to in the week. I'm just starting to use their resource to read 100 key Bible passages in 100 days. I'm not a 'crafty' person so I skip those sections. It's like a pick'n'mix with something for everyone."

*David W*

"I think the packs are amazing with so much in them. I have found them so helpful, especially when we go through the sections in Life Group as they help us to go deeper into the teaching and worship of Sunday services. There are sections for everyone to have a look at, whether it be music, craft, games, sharing conversations, study or quiet reflection!"

*Wendy T*

"The packs are lovely – sometimes we do craft and other times songs and prayers. Sometimes we watch the service and talk about that. I have found the packs very useful to explain different things to the children, especially in explaining all the changes we have had in the last year! And I'm always learning from them too."

*Nicky C*

"I use them for my Life Group. It means that we have a connection with the whole church family as it's based on the sermon."

*Bev H*



# Another coffee, anyone?

## Lent Reflection



*Psalm 25: 1-9*

It was during Lent 2020 that we fell down the rabbit hole into a strange and curious land of wilderness and isolation. This has lasted much longer than the 40 days of repenting and fasting that we had planned.

And still we wander, exiled in this strange land of Covid, with no idea how long it will be until we arrive in the promised land of restored community. In our turmoil, with the psalmist, King David, we cry out to the Lord, reaching out to him with our whole being, lifting hands, eyes, and hearts. We put our trust in the Lord of compassion, pleading with him to have mercy on us because of his steadfast, covenant love and faithfulness.

With the encouragement of the psalmist we confess those dark times in our lives when we have lost our way and wandered away from God's paths. We plead with him for forgiveness: "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me." If we are honest we know that we have fallen short and gone astray; we have taken our eyes off Jesus, and so we cry out to the Lord: "Draw us back when we have wandered away from your paths, guide us in the way we should follow, for you are our rescuer and our hope. Come and minister to us as angels ministered to you in the desert. Be gracious to us for we are alone and brought very low."

As we wait and trust in our faithful God of transformation, we journey with patience through Lent 2021, accepting God's timing and wisdom, confident in his resurrection promise. We journey in hope rather than resignation, for God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, knowing the end from the beginning.

*Heavenly Father, in your great mercy, forgive us, strengthen us and help us to recognise Emmanuel, God with us, in this time of Covid exile and penitential season of Lent. Amen.*

*Julie*

## World Day of Prayer



Friday 5th March 2021

The service this year has been prepared by Christian women of Vanuatu. Vanuatu is an archipelago of 80 islands in the South Pacific.

The town centre group were planning to hold the service at Clarence Park Baptist Church but will instead be joining with the Zoom meeting being organised at Milton Methodist at 10.30 am.

You are all invited to join the service on Zoom at 10.30am on March 5th using the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93332594488?pwd=bEtwREhVVHd1NkdQY2tlaEhYUmtxQT09>

Meeting ID: 933 3259 4488  
Passcode: 596239

If you would like to make a contribution towards the work of WDP you are welcome to go on to their website and make a direct payment:

<https://www.wwdp.org.uk/product/make-a-donation/>

Every year, donations collected at the World Day of Prayer are used to support Christian charities around the world.

You can collect copies of the Order of Service from the Christ Church foyer. If you would like one and are unable to collect one please contact me and I will deliver one to you.

Liz Cole - Tel: 782886

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### Contact Details

Rev. Tom Webber (709343)  
(Day off - Tuesday)

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