

Come and See 2025

Daily bible readings and notes

Week 1

<p>5th March Ash Wednesday Day 1</p>	<p>Psalm 51.1-9 Have mercy on me O God</p> <p>The season of Lent began as 40 days of preparation for baptism at Easter. The 40 days echo the 40 days Jesus spends in the wilderness after his own baptism. The whole church walks with those who are new to the faith and keeps this season as a time to return to Christ, to the very centre, to our first love.</p> <p>The beginning of this journey is honest reflection, acknowledging how far we have fallen short and drifted away. Psalm 51 gives us words for our honesty and sorrow as the journey to the cross begins again.</p> <p>At the Ash Wednesday service, the congregation come one by one to the front of the church and receive the imposition of ashes made from the burning of last year's palm crosses. The sign of the cross on our forehead is a reminder of our own baptism – the theme of Come and See this year - and, of course, Christ's death on the cross for our sins we are confessing.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>If you have received ash on your forehead today it is more than just a mark—it's a reminder of life's fragility and the renewal that faith brings. Consider what you might need to let go of, trusting that in releasing it, you invite new growth and possibilities.</p>
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6th March
Thursday
Day 2

Psalm 51.10-19
Create in me a clean heart O God

As the congregation are signed with the cross on Ash Wednesday two ancient words are spoken over us:

Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return echoes the creation and fall story in Genesis 3.19. We are fashioned from the earth. We have a continual tendency to sin, to fall short, to do what we do not want to do. We stand in need of a clean heart and a new and right spirit, in the words of the Psalm.

But there is a purpose to our penitence as the second word reminds us: Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

This is our whole life's work. Psalm 51 catches some of what this will mean in our calling to bear witness to God's grace and draw others to God's love; and in our calling to praise and worship, to whole lives dedicated to God's glory and lived in daily thankfulness.

Pause

We come from dust, yet we're animated by the divine breath. Today, think about your vulnerabilities—how do they remind you to lean more on God's enduring grace and strength?

7th March
Friday
Day 3

Psalm 104.24-35

O Lord how manifold are your works

Psalm 104 helps us explore the wonder and glory of creation echoing the early accounts in Genesis. Genesis 2.19 tells us that the LORD God formed every creature out of the ground, from the earth and dust. Verse 29 of our psalm reminds us that the life of every creature, including humankind, is finite:

When you take away their breath they die and return to their dust

The Psalm helps us put into words our wonder, love and praise but the contemplation of creation also provokes deep questions. Another creation psalm asks:

What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Psalm 8.4

If we are creatures made of earth, why are we then so important to Almighty God, maker of heaven and earth. If we are finite, why is that we long for eternity? If we are part of the creation how is that we find our deepest home and happiness in knowing God?

Pause

God's presence is a constant invitation to draw closer. Today, consider carrying a small item—a stone, a piece of jewellery, or a note—as a reminder that His guidance is always within reach.

<p>8th March Saturday Day 4</p>	<p>Psalm 103.8-18 He remembers that we are but dust</p> <p>Psalm 103 offers us a powerful description of the immense love and faithfulness and gentleness of God. There is mercy and grace here without end. There is an offer of complete forgiveness. There is compassion for his feeble and frail children, lost in this world's temptations and confusions. This great compassion is rooted in God's knowledge of us as our maker and creator.</p> <p>For he knows how we were made He remembers that we are but dust</p> <p>Again there is an echo of the creation stories. We are children of the earth, fashioned from the physical earth, sharing the same elements as the rest of creation. Yet we are also alive in different ways from every other creature: we are aware; we have language and personality; we have a sense of what is right and wrong; we have shared stories and deep culture and a longing to know our purpose and to praise our maker: Bless the Lord O my soul.</p> <p>Pause Lent is a perfect time to evaluate the ways our life can get '<i>lost in this world's temptations and confusions</i>'. How can you make room for daily moments of reading, reflection, and prayer to deeply influence your connections with God, others, and yourself?</p>
<p>9th March First Sunday of Lent Day 5</p>	<p>First film: Fashioned from Earth</p>

Week 2

<p>10th March Monday Day 6</p>	<p>Mark 7.14-23 From within the human heart</p> <p>A simple conversation about whether you should wash your hands here becomes a doorway to a fundamental lesson on our humanity. The core of our faith is not about outward cleanliness and appearances. We are not, for the most part, corrupted by externals. The core of our faith is how we are on the inside, the human heart.</p> <p>The picture Jesus paints of our hearts, of how we are on the inside, is both honest and bleak. Yet each of us will recognise ourselves in this picture. The long list of evils is real. We know that these possibilities for sin are present in every human heart, that left to ourselves we are unable to live good and holy lives. We are creatures of the earth and bound to the earth. We know what it means to be defiled.</p> <p>And this is why an outward washing of the hands is not enough. We need a deep, inner cleansing and forgiveness. We need a new beginning, a new heart and God's presence in our lives.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>Washing our hands is something that we have all taken more seriously because of COVID – to protect ourselves, but also to protect others. Being seen to take that seriously signals the sentiment of our heart to 'the crowd' – how might we capture that sentiment for God again today?</p>
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11th March
Tuesday
Day 7

John 8.1-11

Let anyone among you who is without sin....

There are two realities in this powerful drama. The brilliance of Jesus' answer to her judges exposes them and exposes us:

Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.

The crowd leave one by one, beginning with the elders. This is the first reality: none of us as creatures of earth are without sin. We all stand together in need of God's grace. For some this is obvious. For others it is a hard truth to grasp and to bear.

But the second reality is equally powerful. When we first hear the story we may instinctively stand in the crowd ready to condemn and looking for a stone to throw. But then we also come and stand, as it were, in the place of the woman, alone before Jesus, realising our sin and ready to be condemned.

This second reality is in hearing Jesus words addressed to each of us – even though we are sinners: *Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and from now on do not sin again.*

Pause

Jesus sits. The woman stands. Jesus bends down, straightens up and stoops once more. The crowd walk away. The woman remains standing. At the moment of greatest jeopardy, Jesus exposes the bare nape of his neck to the armed crowd. Consider afresh how vulnerable Christ makes himself for sinners like us.

12th March
Wednesday
Day 8

Job 42.1-6
I repent in dust and ashes

Job has suffered greatly. All through the taunts and complaints of his so called friends, Job has held to his integrity. He does not deserve what has happened to him. He has lived a good life. He has a right to question God and make his case.

But then the Maker and heaven and earth appears to him in glory and cross questions him. God does affirm Job's integrity and restores him. It is better to express our anger and injustice and grief in prayer than to hold back.

But when Job is granted this vision of God's glory he is also changed and transformed. The anger and sense of injustice is gone. Job grasps the majesty and otherness of God, God's power and glory.

In that moment Job recognises that he is a creature of the earth: his only response now is humility, to bow low to the ground, to repent in dust and ashes.

Pause

"You will crawl on your belly and eat dust" Genesis 3: 14. Job is in the dust, having endured the trial of the Accuser. Contrast, though, the movement – Job is stock still, abiding in God's presence. The Accuser, as ever, has slunk away from the glory of God. Where are we in the stillness, in relation to God's presence?

13th March
Thursday
Day 9

Romans 7.14-25

For I do not do what I want

Paul is exploring his own heart here but with lessons for all our hearts. One of the distinctive marks of the Christian view of humankind is that we are deeply imperfect and flawed. These imperfections are not just a reckoning of what we have done or said which is wrong. They extend to our very nature.

There is an inner conflict which Paul exposes. The first mystery is that we know very often the right thing to do. The second mystery is that all too often we do the opposite:

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do (19)

We have an earthly, fallen nature. We need forgiveness for what we have thought and said and done. But we need even more than forgiveness. We need a new creation, to be born from above, to receive a new heart and a new Spirit. This is exactly what is offered to everyone through what Christ has done.

Pause

The waters of baptism are often approached by people adorned in clothes of white. At its heart this tradition symbolises a commitment to be remade, washed clean. What household item is most overdue a deep clean? Your oven? Your bicycle? Your washing machine filter? Imitate Brother Lawrence and worship as you clean.

14th March
Friday
Day 10

Luke 18.9-14

God be merciful to me a sinner

Many of us perhaps, begin the journey of Lent at least a little like the Pharisee. We look back and we begin to justify ourselves. We compare ourselves with others beginning with those who (obviously) deserve our condemnation. Then, to bolster our own sense of worth, we compare ourselves with others around us in the Church. We list our own achievements, our prayers, our fasting, our giving. We wonder why this brings so little satisfaction.

But by the grace of God, as we journey on, the light shines a little deeper. We begin to sense where we too have fallen short. Perhaps our own willingness to judge another. Perhaps we are reminded of our persistent failings; our past sins.

And so, eventually, we begin to stand in the place of the tax collector. We stand far off. We will not raise our eyes. We beat our breast and say: God be merciful to me a sinner. Then and only then will come a deep sense of mercy received and peace.

Pause

The midnight zone is the name given to the part of our oceans where sunlight does not penetrate. Life there seems dangerous: otherworldly. Yet, when this depth is stirred up (E.g. Psalm 46:2) the upwelling of nutrients brings abundant life. How might this encourage us to engage with those areas of our own lives and community where the shadows are hiding abundant life?

<p>15th March Saturday Day 11</p>	<p>Ephesians 2.1-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith</p> <p>We cannot grasp either the wonder of the gospel or the immense significance of our baptism until we have understood the seriousness of the human condition without Christ. Ephesians describes that condition here in the starkest of terms: <i>You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived....we were by nature children of wrath like everyone else...(1, 3).</i></p> <p>As we understand the depth of our plight as children of the earth and as we understand that we were and are powerless to help or heal ourselves, so we come to see the wonder of our salvation. We begin to glimpse that we are not saved because we are special or could help ourselves. Our salvation rests only in God's love, in grace which is received by faith: by believing and by trusting in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>And as we come to that point, we begin to understand – or understand afresh – what it means to be a Christian: that we have been created and redeemed with a purpose for good works.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>The thought of trespass conjures images of scrumping apples or riding your bicycle on a yet to be opened motorway. Consider, though, Moses and Miriam leading the exodus through the waters of the Red Sea – trespassing on seabed between walls of water – and finding new life on the other side. Do our baptismal vows still feel that transformative?</p>
<p>16th March Second Sunday of Lent Day 12</p>	<p>Second film: The Waters of Cleansing</p>

Week 3

<p>17th March Monday Day 13</p>	<p>2 Kings 5.1-14</p> <p>The healing of Naaman</p> <p>Naaman's story is a story of humility and grace meeting human power and authority. Naaman is an enemy of Israel and a man of great wealth and influence yet he is laid low by his leprosy. This great wealth and power cannot bring about his healing and nor can the two kings in the story. Instead God uses first a young, captive slave girl in his household, then a man of God who seeks no bribe or reward, then the waters of the Jordan.</p> <p>Naaman has the courage to believe and trust first his young servant, then Elisha and then to trust himself to the waters. These waters, like the waters of baptism, have no magical properties. They are an outward sign of Naaman's trust and of God's healing power. A life and a household is transformed.</p> <p>Naaman's story looks back to the crossing of the Jordan in Judges 3 and ahead to John baptising in the Jordan perhaps close to this very place. Signs of grace and faith are at the heart of our understanding of baptism today.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>Imagine yourself as Naaman standing in the River Jordan. You have washed six times; you are about to try the seventh. What are you thinking? What are your thoughts as you come out of the seventh wash and see yourself healed?</p>
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18th March
Tuesday
Day 14

Luke 3.7-17
John the Baptist's testimony

John's baptism was no mere formality or empty ritual. John's preaching confronts the evils of his day, challenges his hearers to repentance and calls Israel back to God. His baptism has practical consequences: sharing food and clothing with the needy; leaving dishonest practices and in our work; being content with our wages. When the soldiers and tax collectors, rich and poor, women and men are washed in the Jordan, this is a moment of inner transformation – a watershed.

John is washing and cleansing the people of God for a purpose: to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. His ministry is powerful but he regards himself as nothing compared to Jesus – merely a voice crying in the wilderness. This baptism in water is preparing the way for one who will pour out on God's people the gift of the Holy Spirit and new fire.

Pause

Take another look at John's advice to the different people who respond to his preaching. What do you think he might say to you and other people in your situation? You may want to write down your thoughts, or speak with God about these things.

19th March
Wednesday
Day 15

Matthew 28.16-20
The Great Commission

At the very end of Matthew's gospel, the risen Christ gives to his disciples and to the church in every age a great commission. They are to make disciples of all nations: this great good news is no longer for one nation only but for all.

Making disciples will involve three actions (all participles in the original): going out into all the world; baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching these new disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded.

The calling of the church in every generation is to continue to fulfil this great commission given by the Lord: to go, to baptise, to teach. Baptism is at the very heart of the mission of God in every generation.

Every Christian is called to share in this commission. How is your own local church sharing in this calling. How are you going? How baptising? How are you teaching?

Pause

Take time to reflect on these questions, on your own or with a group from your church. Might there be new ways in which you and/or your church are being called to go, baptise, and teach?

20th March
Thursday
Day 16

Acts 2.37-42
What should we do?

How does a person become a Christian? What steps are involved? Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost is very clear and has set the pattern for Christian initiation for the Church down the ages. The crowds ask a clear question: what should we do?

Peter gives a fourfold answer. First repent. Turn away from sin and turn to Christ. Second be baptised in water in the name of Jesus Christ. The third step of faith, believing and trusting in Christ is implicit in this public baptism. Fourth receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Each of these steps is echoed in the service of baptism and confirmation. The candidates publicly repent of their sins and turn to Christ. At the font they make a public profession of faith. Each is baptised in water. The Bishop lays hands on each and prays for strength in the power of the Spirit. This is the way the faith has been passed on from one generation to another across two thousand years.

Pause

Take some water and make the sign of cross on your forehead. As you make the vertical stroke, consider what you need to turn away from. As you make the horizontal, commit afresh to following Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

21st March
Friday
Day 17

Acts 16.25-34
The Philippian Jailer

Several times in Acts whole households are baptised when adults come to faith. This is the case for both Lydia and the unnamed jailer in Philippi in Acts 16. A normal household would include children, of course and this is one of the reasons why the majority practice of the church worldwide has been to offer baptism to the children of believers on the understanding that they make their own confession of faith when they are of age.

There is a beautiful double washing in this passage which takes us deeper into the meaning of our baptism: The jailer takes Paul and Silas and washes their wounds from their beating with rods. This signifies a change of heart since he did not wash them prior to the earthquake. Then, following this outward washing there is an inner washing and healing as the jailer and his entire family are baptised.

When anyone becomes a Christian there is a deep healing and a transformation which has the potential to reshape their entire household.

Pause

Pray that your family members and close friends they may experience the fullness of healing and transformation that Christ offers. Ponder: what 'household' patterns of daily life could you and people close to you establish to help you all draw closer to Christ?

<p>22nd March Saturday Day 18</p>	<p>Colossians 3.1-14 New clothes</p> <p>The symbolism of baptism underlies this powerful description of new life in Christ. The opening verses echo Colossians 2.12: : <i>when you were buried with him in baptism you were also raised with him through faith.</i></p> <p>The image of dying to our old life develops into a picture of putting off the old self and then of being clothed with the beautiful white robes of Christ. Again this is probably a reference to the practice at a baptism service of the candidates coming out of the water and being given new white robes to wear.</p> <p>Our baptism is a radical new beginning, a moment of transformation and a commitment to a lifetime of renewal. This new beginning affects our character and relationships. More than this it affects our very identity which rests now not in our race or background or status in society but only in Christ. This can only mean a commitment to radical social transformation.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>A thought. As you put away clothing at night, ask God what qualities or behaviours from that day, it would be good to ‘put away’ and pray for help in doing so. As you get dressed in the morning, pray for God to clothe you with Christlike qualities.</p>
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<p>23rd March Third Sunday of Lent Day 19</p>	<p>Third Film The Waters of Salvation</p>
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Week 4

<p>24th March Monday Day 20</p>	<p>Isaiah 43.15-21 A path through the mighty waters.</p> <p>The crossing of the Red Sea is a key part of the story of salvation. God creates a way through the sea, a path through the waters. The alternative to the path for the Israelites is captivity or death. The path is a path both to freedom and to new life.</p> <p>This great story of Exodus comes alive again for God's people in exile in Babylon. God promises through the prophet a new Exodus, a new path through the mighty waters, a new crossing of the wilderness.</p> <p>Both of these great images of Exodus and Exile combine in the deep mystery of our baptism. We pass through the waters from death to life, from slavery to freedom as in the crossing of the Red Sea. As exiles, far from home, we are lost. God calls us back to the Father's embrace and gives to us springs of water in the this world's wilderness.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>Where have you known the love of God calling you back from the "waters of death" into "the Father's embrace"? Where are you now? What is your prayer today?</p>
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25th March
Tuesday
Day 21

Jonah 2
The waters closed in over me

Jonah 2 is a Psalm of Thanksgiving for deliverance from death and calamity. In the Book of Jonah the words form the prayer that Jonah prayed from the belly of the fish. The seas are an image of chaos and of death. The psalm would perhaps be used in the worship of the temple in Jerusalem as a prayer offered on behalf of anyone who had suffered calamity or illness and now offers sacrifice and thanksgiving for deliverance and salvation.

Jonah himself becomes a sign and prophecy of the death and resurrection of Christ. As Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the fish and then was restored to life, so Jesus was crucified and on the third day God raised him from the dead.

But Jonah also becomes one of the sources we explore for the meaning of baptism. Jonah flees God's call and God's love. He is restored to new life and purpose but only after he has passed through the waters of chaos and death and is restored to new life.

Pause

The belly of the big fish is an uncomfortable place. Have you experienced times of discomfort through which God has brought you back into his life and calling?

What has God taught you through the times of chaos?

26th March
Wednesday
Day 22

Romans 6.3-11
Baptised into his death

Like the Israelites, in baptism we pass through the waters. Like Jonah, in baptism we go down into the depths and rise again to a new life with God. But what does this mean?

Paul takes this symbolism of baptism much further in Romans, drawing on the Old Testament imagery. We are baptised into Christ's own death – our old self was crucified with him. There is a radical new beginning. Like the Israelites we have been set free: we are no longer slaves to sin.

But the emphasis here is also on baptism as a sign that we are united with Christ in his resurrection. We rise from the waters to new and eternal life. We live now with him and for him. Death no longer has dominion over our lives. We are set free from our mortality, our fear to live now for the praise of his glory.

Pause

What aspects of your life have “died with Christ”? In what ways have you experienced freedom from sin through being united with Christ? Take time to remember and give thanks.

27th March
Thursday
Day 23

Galatians 2.19-21

I have been crucified with Christ

In Galatians, Paul extends this idea of dying with Christ even further. He deploys the much starker phrase: I have been crucified with Christ. The meaning of this death, this baptism is not a once and for all event in our past but a daily reality of dying to self, to our old selves, and, by God's grace, seeking to live by faith in the Son of God.

This new life involves a continual putting to death of the old self with its passions and desires. Isaac Watts captures this well in the verse from *When I survey* which is normally omitted from our hymnals:

His dying Crimson like a Robe,
Spreads o'er his Body on the Tree
Then I am dead to all the Globe
And all the Globe is dead to me.

We do well to remember the charge given at our baptism when the congregation say to the candidates at the signing of the cross:

Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

Pause

One way of living out our being crucified with Christ is holding everything in our lives up to God in open hands – so God can put in them what he wants and take out of them what he wants. What do you want to hold onto? What are you willing to give over to God?

28th March
Friday
Day 24

John 21.15-19
The call to follow

After Simon Peter's denial, after the cross, after the resurrection, Jesus renews his gracious invitation and his call on Simon Peter's life. The gentle dialogue gives an opportunity for Simon to declare his love, without boasting or braggado. Each declaration of love is followed by a commission: feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. A call to service flows from our love for Jesus.

This gracious act of restoration is followed then by a promise not of earthly glory but of suffering. Simon Peter's dedication of his life will mean a surrender of his freedom and his life for the sake of the gospel. Christ bids him come and die. The whole scene leads up to the words which echo the first call of the disciples: follow me.

For Simon Peter as for all of us, there will be times when we go astray and times when our calling is renewed. At each point in the journey we return to a deeper commitment, a clearer picture both cost and glory.

Pause

How far are you living out the call Jesus makes on your life? Are you running away like Jonah, standing by the cross like John, or needing gentle restoration like Peter? What would you ask from Jesus today?

<p>29th March Saturday Day 25</p>	<p>Hebrews 12.1-13 Perseverance</p> <p>The baptism service calls us to a life of Christian service: a wholehearted dedication of a life made whole and for the whole length of our lives. This journey of discipleship demands the grace of perseverance. The race we are running is to be a marathon and not a sprint. The letter to the Hebrews paints a vivid picture: a great cloud of witnesses cheering us on. Jesus has run this race before us, bearing a greater cost and waits for us now at the finish line.</p> <p>Hebrews teach Christians even to see purpose in trials and tribulations. They are not sent from God but can be put to use in the Christian journey to build resilience and strength for the greater trials ahead, just as an athlete disciplines their body.</p> <p>The final verses of the passage echo down the ages whenever we are tempted to rest by the roadside. Hear them afresh today.</p> <p>Pause Are you running strong or weak at the knees? Do you need Jesus' healing touch or pioneering lead? Ask Jesus to lead you in the next steps of your journey, and listen in silence for what he might want to say to you.</p>
<p>30th March Fourth Sunday of Lent Day 26</p>	<p>Fourth film: The Waters of Life</p>

Week 5

<p>31st March Monday Day 27</p>	<p>Psalm 42 Flowing streams</p> <p>The Psalms deploy vivid images for God and God's grace. Psalm 42 begins with the powerful picture of my soul as a deer in a desert longing for water. The image used for God is a flowing stream: an abundance of living water, cool and refreshing, enough to slake thirst and give life.</p> <p>The Psalm has a beautiful refrain which runs over into Psalm 43 (and originally perhaps these two psalms were one). The refrain repeats three times in 42.5 and 11 and 43.5. Notice that the psalmist is cast down and disquieted and asks the simple, vital question: "Why?" The sense of depression, anxiety or spiritual unease can have multiple causes.</p> <p>The refrain goes on to offer not a diagnosis but a prescription, whatever the circumstances. Hope in God. Lift your voice in praise. Trust again in desert times that the living water will flow.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>Water, a precious resource that we cannot live without, may we continuously be reminded that we cannot live a meaningful life without God, our sustainer, and source of eternal life. Think about how God has sustained you?</p>
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1st April
Tuesday
Day 28

Exodus 17.1-7
Water from the Rock

The people of Israel in Exodus travel for many years through the desert. The desert offers many tests and challenges – seven according to one reckoning – and this is the second. There is a daily need for water for a vast multitude to drink. There is no stream, no oasis in this desert and the people cry out to the Lord.

Again and again in these moments of crisis the Israelites doubt God, doubt their calling to freedom and want to turn and return to Egypt. Again and again, God answers their need: this time as Moses strikes a rock at Horeb with his staff and the waters flow.

This image of the people of God wandering in the desert is a lasting image for the church in every generation: we too are on a pilgrimage through sometimes barren lands. We too need to look for unexpected grace and refreshment in this coming week. In the words of the great hymn by Whitcomb Willis we too need to smite the living fountains from the rocks along our way.

Pause

God always journeys with us, yet ahead of us, and stands on the rocks that are in our pathways. He is the way maker. How has God's presence restored your faith and shown grace in your life, when you thought there was no way out?

2nd April
Wednesday
Day 29:

Isaiah 43.18-21
Water in the desert

The Exodus image inspires the exiles, living in Babylon and longing for home. They too must cross a desert to return as they journey home. The prophet reminds them of the great Exodus story: "For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert". But the prophet takes them further still: "I am about to do a new thing".

No two journeys will be the same. The Exodus and Exile are different but the same God guides and leads through desert places. God guides and watches over the church in every generation. The great themes of grace are played again, but there is always creativity and improvisation. No two Christians have exactly the same journey or the same experience of God's provision.

Our individual lives and journeys are continually unfolding, by the grace of God. Each chapter, like the great story of salvation, draws on the last. But each is different. What is the new thing that God is doing in your own life today?

Pause

In our spiritual blindness, when the world is shouting at us and pulling us away from God, become still; and listen for the comforting voice of God and where He is guiding you.

3rd April
Thursday
Day 30

John 4.7-15
Living water

Every Christian at some point wrestles with whether we are worthy to receive God's grace. Who are we that God should love us and call us to be his friends? Who are we that Christ should die for our sins? Who are we that God should give to us the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus meets the Samaritan woman exactly where she is. This is a woman who lives beyond the community of grace and has known tragedy and chaos. Already she has had five husbands yet lives with a man who is not her husband. She is isolated from her community and has to come alone and unprotected to draw water in the heat of the day. She is angry and defensive in the dialogue.

Yet Jesus meets her where she is and disarms her by his grace and wit. It is this woman, not the disciples, who receives this first great promise of the gift of the Spirit: a spiritual well of living water flowing out for eternal life. Everything will live where the river goes.

Pause

We cannot live without water. Does it matter therefore who gives it to us? Water clears our minds; it soothes as we watch it flow. Have you ever considered the life-giving power of water and those grateful for the smallest trickle from the mountains?

4th April
Friday
Day 31

John 7.37-39
Rivers of living water

Jesus is summarising the whole story of scripture here on the last and greatest day of the Feast. There is no exact quotation which matches a verse in the Old Testament. But this great theme of God's gift of the Spirit as the river of life found in the Psalms and the Prophets is drawn together into one of the greatest promises in the gospels.

There is a connection here to Jesus passion and the water and blood which flow from his pierced side, a sign of his gift of the Spirit which flows from his glorification. But the desert which blooms now becomes not the desert of the Exodus or the Exile but the desert of the human heart, where nothing is able to grow without God's love and grace.

Rightly understood, this gift of life then spills over and overflows in the renewal of all the earth through the Spirit's work in the hearts of the people of God. As the deserts in our own lives are made new, so we join with us in the mending of the earth and the building of God's kingdom.

Pause

Our sorrow is deep for the destruction of the planet, armed conflicts and our children's future. We can mourn but we can also open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and imagine a sustainable and peaceful world. What do you see? What will your contribution be?

<p>5th April Saturday Day 32</p>	<p>Revelation 22.1-7 The River of Life</p> <p>This powerful, beautiful, transformative vision of life giving water is carried by Revelation into John's vision of the heavenly city. At the heart of that city is, what else, but the river of the water of life. Here we find the river foreshadowed by the rivers of Eden, by the rock at Horeb, by the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Here we find echoes of the waters of baptism and the spring of living water which flows from the heart of the believer to renew the earth.</p> <p>Here we find a vision of the destiny of the people of God, formed by the cross, guided through the desert and entrusted with living water: they will reign for ever and ever.</p> <p>Stand in John's vision for a while today and imagine this great river of life. See as John does the twelve kinds of fruit and the leaves which are for the healing of the nations. Take a moment to remember that this river of life flows now in the hearts and minds of believers, bringing life to desert places this day.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>As we recall the believers across the nations, sustained by the river of life and sharing life with those around them, give thanks for the worldwide fellowship of Christian brothers and sisters. Pray for the healing of the nations.</p>
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<p>6th April Fourth Sunday of Lent Day 33</p>	<p>Fifth film: The Breath of God</p>
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Week 6

<p>7th April Monday Day 34</p>	<p>John 20.19-23 He breathed on them</p> <p>Jesus appears to his frightened disciples on the first Easter Day. His first word to them is: “Peace be with you” – words we use each week as we gather for the Eucharist. Peace – shalom – is a big word in the Bible: it carries meanings of wholeness and healing as well as the absence of conflict and fear. Jesus repeats the word and the greeting after he has shown them his hands and his side and then comes the commission to the disciples and to every Christian: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you”.</p> <p>Only after this commission, this sending, does Jesus breathe on the disciples and say <i>Receive the Holy Spirit</i>. The Spirit is the very breath of God. There is something of the Spirit’s grace and gentleness as the sign of this greatest of gifts is as soft as a breath on the forehead. The Spirit is given so that the disciples can fulfil the commission to be sent into all the world.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>You must be close to someone for their breath to be discernible, and for the breath of the Spirit to be discernible in our lives we need to remain close. When we feel like we are working in our own strength, it is time to draw close again and deeply breathe in the Spirit’s presence. How might you choose to do this?</p>
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8th April
Tuesday
Day 35

John 14.15-17
Another Advocate

Jesus' promise of the Spirit is extraordinary. The Spirit will be another Advocate. The word Advocate means someone who is alongside us, working for us and with us, taking our part, a companion on the way. The Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts through faith: to transform us and equip us for ministry but most of all simply to be with us.

John's gospel uses the word "abide" to describe the relationship between the Spirit and the disciples: *You know him because he abides with you and he will be in you.* The word can be translated as *dwell* or *remain* or *live* or *make a home in*.

The word abide connects beautifully with the image of the Spirit as the breath of God dwelling in the heart of the believer. Our breath is part of our inner being. We breathe without having to think about breathing. God's love, God's grace, God's presence is at the very centre of our lives.

Pause

Take moments to pause during today to really take in that the eternal God lives within you, and how the breath of the Holy Spirit is present in each moment, deepening your relationship with God.

9th April
Wednesday
Day 36

Romans 8.26-28
Sighs too deep for words

Prayer is a vital part of the work of a Christian. Yet there are many situations when as Christians we do not know how to pray. We hold the world, or loved ones before God and we do not have any words to express even a part of what we are feeling.

The gift of the Spirit is in part for these moments of deep sorrow and perplexity. God the Holy Spirit, the breath of God in our hearts, intercedes in these moments *with sighs too deep for words*. We offer the gift of time, of attention, of compassion, of intention. For a few moments we share God's own perspective on the suffering of the world. Almighty God knows the deepest longings of our own hearts, because God knows the mind of the Spirit which we share.

Romans 8.28 offers a compelling vision of peace, of serenity: all things work together for the good of those who love God. This is not a serenity which is blind to the suffering of the world, but a serenity which has dared to see that suffering, and join with the Spirit in prayer for redemption.

Pause

Pilgrims who embark on long, prayer filled walks often reflect that amid the blisters, midges, brambles and missed turnings, there are moments of clarity – serenity – which indelibly mark their faith. As our passage highlights, these are hard to describe to others; words seem somehow insufficient. What steps might you take today to enable such a moment?

10th April
Thursday
Day 37

Ephesians 3.14-21
Strengthened by the Spirit

We live in an age which is very confident in the language of physical exercise. We understand the importance of workout and of aerobic exercise. We know the value of weight training and building muscle mass (although understanding and practising are two different things).

But we live in an age as well which does not know or understand the value of spiritual exercises. Even in the church we have neglected the spiritual disciplines of prayer and study and fasting. Many of us struggle even with the fundamental practice of Sunday worship and daily prayer.

The great prayer in Ephesians 3 is a window on these spiritual disciplines. The prayer is one for the strengthening and deepening of our inner person with one clear purpose. We are to grow stronger in our souls in order that we can comprehend, grasp and understand the length, breadth, height and depth of God's love and that we might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Pause

Take a coffee cup and place it in front of you. If this were the same scale as our Solar System, the Earth would be a grain of sand. Our Galaxy would be North America. All of it. Now consider the scope of being 'filled with all the fulness of God' and dwell in that awesome mystery a while.

11th April
Friday
Day 38

Acts 19.1-7
Did you receive the Spirit?

Luke begins every new episode of Acts with a story about the gift of the Spirit. Pentecost happens over and over again, always in different ways because of the Spirit's endless creativity and grace. In Ephesus we have disciples who have learned about repentance and faith and fellowship but have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. They are only partly initiated into all that God has for them. Paul prays for them and the Spirit falls. A new group of twelve begins an extraordinary and fruitful period of mission.

All through Christian history and today there are Christians who have been part of the church all of their lives but who have never truly heard about the Holy Spirit. They may have said the creed and sung the hymns but this is not the same as understanding and knowing the presence of the Spirit in our lives and the gifts of the Spirit in our ministries. There have been many times of renewal in the church when Christians have rediscovered the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Pause

The Lowestoft Revival of 1921 saw faith flourish on the East coast. Its impact was felt overseas through the Mission work of Jack Turner, who came to faith in Felixstowe, but shared the Gospel with sled and husky in Baffin Island, Canada. His boldness was fuelled by his reliance on the Holy Spirit. Where might you boldly go? It could be next door.

<p>12th April Saturday Day 39</p>	<p>Luke 24.44-49 Stay in the city</p> <p>Today the church stands on the threshold of Holy Week. Tomorrow is Palm Sunday. We will remember Jesus entry into Jerusalem, his arrest and trial, the crucifixion and in eight days time his glorious resurrection.</p> <p>As we walk through Holy Week together, we stand with the disciples. But Jesus words from the very end of Luke should also be in our minds. This great story of our salvation is not an accident but a design: <i>Thus it is written that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day.</i> We see Holy Week through the lens of resurrection.</p> <p>We see Holy Week also through the lens of the promise of the Holy Spirit. If the Church is to bear witness in our own generation to the good news of Jesus, then we too need to be clothed with power from on high. We cannot do this in our own strength.</p> <p>As we prepare this week to renew our baptismal promises, may God kindle in us afresh a thirst for the gift of the Spirit.</p> <p>Pause</p> <p>“May the good Spirit of God be upon you, now and forever.” These beautiful words are from the Church of Sweden liturgy for confirming your baptismal vows. This blessing emphasises being ‘clothed with power from on high’ – how might we open our hearts afresh to let other see the Spirit of the risen Christ in us?</p>
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<p>13th April Palm Sunday Day 40</p>	<p>Sixth film: New fire</p>
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Week 7

<p>14th April Monday of Holy Week Day 41</p>	<p>Exodus 3.1-6 The burning bush</p> <p>What does it mean for our hearts to be strangely warmed (in John Wesley's words)? What does it mean to be on fire for God with love for God and for our neighbour? The story of the burning bush offers the church a striking image. Moses' attention is caught by the bush which is on fire but which is not consumed, which burns but does not burn up.</p> <p>From ancient times, this has been an image of Pentecost. The flame of the Spirit is seen above the heads of all the believers, filling them with power from on high and distributing gifts for ministry. This fire from God does not overwhelm the believers or overwhelm their personality. The fire is a sign of God's refining, as fire refines silver or gold in a furnace and a sign of God's empowering presence and comfort.</p> <p>It is no small thing for hearts and minds to be set on fire for God to give strength and power for the Christian life.</p> <p>Pause Ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice when your heart has felt strangely warmed. Perhaps in response to something you have read during this years' Come and See, or maybe in response to a situation in the news. Take a moment to talk with God about this and like all good conversations listen to God's response.</p>
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15th April
Tuesday of
HW
Day 42

1 Kings 18.30-39
Fire from heaven

We may not feel that we have much to offer God, that we are worthy of the gift of the Spirit. We may feel that our own hearts are weighed down, that our lives are compromised, that we have nothing much to give as we walk through this Holy Week and prepare to renew our baptismal promises.

We may even feel a little like the sacrifice Elijah prepares with great care on Mount Carmel. Elijah has to rebuild the altar, dig a trench, build the fire, cut the sacrifice in pieces and lay it on the wood. He then pours four jars of water over the sacrifice, then four more, and then another four. Can the God of Israel set even this soggy sacrifice alight? Then with a simple prayer, fire falls from heaven.

God's gift of the Holy Spirit to us is an act of grace. We do not deserve this gift. No matter how we come, no matter how soggy the sacrifice, God is able still to set hearts and minds on fire once more.

Pause

What might your life look like if your heart and mind was set on fire by God's Holy Spirit? If you would like to, pray this simple prayer: Come Holy Spirit and kindle in me the fire of your love.

16th April
Wed of HW
Day 43

John 3.15-17
...and with fire

John the Baptist's focus is the wonder and the greatness of Jesus, the one who is to follow him. The baptism John offers in the Jordan has become a powerful sign of healing and new beginnings to the crowds who come. But one more powerful even than John is coming. Where John baptises with water, the one who is to come will baptise (that is drench) the believers with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

This is a baptism which will look not only to the past, to the forgiveness of sins, but to the future, to equipping for fulness of life. The fire of the Spirit will bring love, joy and peace.

This week we remember the ways in which Jesus demonstrates this power and grace of God: in humility, in weakness, in obedience to death, in the sacrifice of his life, dying that we might live. This is a precious, costly baptism of grace.

Pause

Take time today to consider the precious and costly gift of baptism which Jesus offers. How might this help you to acknowledge those areas of your life that need forgiveness, so that you might embrace the fulness of life his sacrifice brings?

17th April
Maundy
Thursday
Day 44

John 13.12-20

Here on Maundy Thursday is another powerful picture of baptism which is also a commission. Jesus wraps himself in a towel, pours water into a basin and washes the feet of each of his disciples. Jesus dialogue with Peter about being made clean links this action with being washed, with being baptised. The Son of God becomes our Saviour.

Jesus' death creates a new community who share a common meal, Holy Communion and a common commission. The commission is to be like Jesus, to wash one another's feet. The Church is to be a community of humility, of mutual service and love. This command to wash feet is also a command to extend spiritual grace as well as physical service to many others: a command to offer the washing and cleansing offered to Peter to the whole world.

We remember today that we like the first disciples are servants called to love and messengers called to pass on good news of that love to all the world.

Pause

What does washing the feet of others look like for you in your daily life, and how do you allow others to wash your feet? Take time to reflect upon how serving others and being served by others is different for you.

18th April
Good Friday
Day 45

Romans 6.1-11
Baptised into his death

Today we kneel together at the foot of the cross. We trace the story of the crucifixion from the trial of Jesus and the journey to the cross to his final words, his death and his resting in the tomb.

Paul's words in Romans are a helpful reminder of what the cross means to Christian people. Our baptism, whether recent or long ago, was a baptism into his death. When new Christians are baptised this Easter Eve and Easter Day, their old self is crucified with Jesus. The power of the great sacrament of baptism flows from Jesus' death on the cross, in ways we can never fully understand. We are healed and made new. Sin's power over our lives is ended and we are set free. We share the gift of resurrection, rising to new and eternal life with God.

Take time this Good Friday to sit at the foot of the cross and remember Jesus' gift of his life. Take time to remember that in baptism our old self has died with Christ. Sin and death have no hold over our lives. We are set free. Thanks be to God.

Pause

The invitation to 'take time' is one to not hurry away from the cross. It may be uncomfortable, and we may not know what to say, but the invitation is to *be with* Jesus, in his vulnerability and desolation; compassionately and with a thankful heart for all he has done for us.

19th April
Holy Saturday
Day 46

1 Thessalonians 5.12-19
Do not quench the Spirit

On this day between Good Friday and Easter Day the Church prepares to proclaim again the resurrection of Jesus and many across the world prepare for baptism or to renew our baptismal promises.

This is a good day to reflect on Paul's reminder to the Church not to quench the Spirit. The word quench is the ordinary word for putting out a fire (you will find it used in a different way in Ephesians 6.16).

If the Spirit is a flame burning within us, a flame of love for God and love for others, we must take care not to quench that flame. The fire of the Spirit is nurtured through prayer and worship, through sacraments and fellowship. ~~and prayer~~. The fire of the Spirit is quenched, perhaps, through fear or anxiety, or turning aside from grace.

Today, seek God's renewing love and power and rekindle the Spirit's fire.

Pause

Notice today when the fire of the Spirit within you is quenched, and when it is rekindled. What was the catalyst for each of these experiences? How might talking this through with God bring insight for the way ahead?

The night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalms 139:12

20th April
Easter Day
Day 47

Luke 24.28-35

Were not our hearts burning within us?

Jesus meets these two disciples where they are on the first Easter Day: grieving, shattered, confused, walking in the wrong direction. Jesus mends and repairs their hearts first by gracious listening to all of their grief and questions.

Jesus then interprets the scriptures to them, especially about his own suffering and death. It is this part of the journey, reading scripture, which causes their hearts to burn within them and passion to be rekindled.

He is then made known to them in the breaking of the bread and they recognise him. Their lives are turned around.

Most of us this day will have the opportunity for fellowship, to listen to others and to listen to their griefs. We will have the opportunity this Sunday and every Sunday to hear the Scriptures and their interpretation. We have the privilege of gathering around the table of the Lord where bread is broken. We have the opportunity to meet the risen Jesus as the disciples met him, and for our lives to be transformed. Come and see.

Pause

As Come and See draws to a close, consider when has your heart burned within you? Where have you like Moses been drawn to the fire of God's presence in the world? What might the next step on the journey look like for you and who or what could help you to take the first step towards this?