

Lent and Easter 2012

The word 'Lent' comes from the Old German *Lenz* - Spring. The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday which comes 40 days (not counting the Sundays) or six and a half weeks before Easter. It's the season when together we follow Jesus from the wilderness to the Cross, sharing the lessons of his temptations, his conflicts, and his sufferings.

There are many ways to enter more deeply into Lent, and this year, taking the lead of Bishop Stephen, our Diocesan Bishop, we are focussing on 'prayer and parties'. Both give us the opportunity to build relationships with God and each other, the foundations of our life as churches. We're going to use five ways of building those relationships, and below I explain a little of the thinking behind each, and how they'll work. Then in the pages that follow there is a diary for Lent, showing when and where the four different elements will take place, as well as all the Services which we will have during Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with Easter Day.

Prayer Special

We all struggle to pray. When Michael Ramsay, a previous Archbishop of Canterbury, was asked how long he prayed for, his answer went right to the heart of the challenge:

'About five minutes a day, but it takes an hour to get there.'

All of us struggle to make enough time to pray, to focus our minds on God, to give him the opportunity to speak to us, and us to him. Yet when we manage to do it, we never regret it. In a way we do not understand, in prayer God meets us and renews us, and gives us the hope and love we need to meet the challenges of each day.

The good news is that we can help each other in our prayer lives, because God has put us together as the church. That help sometimes comes simply by talking to others and discovering that they share our struggle. At other times it comes through experiencing ways of praying together which are transformative.

This Lent we're having a 'Prayer Special', based in Bassingbourn Church when we can find ways to deepen our prayer lives. Around the church will be a trail connecting Prayer Points, each offering an opportunity for different sorts of prayer: confession, praise, intercession - for the world, our communities, our church, ourselves. There will be a variety of activities to aid prayer and help us to concentrate, e.g. planting seeds, pictures, writing in washable ink on a pebble, and so on. There will also be a DIY coffee/tea area.

We will begin the Prayer Special on Monday 5th March at 7.30pm, when we will worship and pray together, and learn more about how the elements of the Prayer Special will work. Then all week the church will be open each day until 8pm, so that you can go in and pray whenever you want. Each evening there will a volunteer in the church, so you will never be alone.

I really hope you'll be able to come on 5th March, and at other times during that week.

Lent Course

Last year during Lent the homegroup in Bassingbourn worked through a little book written by the Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell. Called 'The Things He Carried', Bishop Stephen says in the book that he wanted to focus on those things which Jesus carried in the last hours of his life, 'not just the cross itself,

but the crown of thorns he was forced to wear, the seamless robe that was taken from him, the other burdens that we laid upon him, and also the hopes and fears that he carried in his heart.’

Those who studied the book last year found it inspirational, and so Di Williams is going to offer these sessions again, this time in Whaddon on five Tuesday evenings during Lent. Everyone from both villages is very welcome. You don’t need to attend all five, but obviously if you do you’ll benefit fully from these wonderful, simple meditations.

Party Time

Lent is traditionally when we give things up, denying ourselves things we enjoy so as to make space for God. It’s also a time, though, for doing things we don’t often do, or don’t do enough. This Lent I want to encourage you to clear a bit of space in your diary in order to get to know other people in the church better. It’s very easy for us to see people only on a Sunday, and not really know them. Of course we can’t know everyone well, but we can slowly get to know some people better. Indeed, that’s what makes the church such a rich community: it’s made up of people that you might never meet otherwise.

So, this Lent you might invite someone you don’t yet know to your house for a cup of coffee, or to the pub for a drink (a non-alcoholic one if you’re giving it up for Lent!), or you might have a meal together. However you decide to do it, we’re focussing on this ‘party time’ for two weeks of Lent from 11th to 25th March.

On Sunday 25th we’re going to celebrate our life together by sharing a meal in church after our Service. The main courses will come from ‘Yuva’, our local restaurant in Kneesworth, for which there will a charge, and we’ll supplement them with home grown

salads and desserts. Full details will follow nearer the time, but please put the date in you diary. And start thinking about who you might spend time with in the two weeks beforehand.

Village Walks

Another way to spend time with people is appreciating the simple pleasure of walking. We live, of course, in beautiful surroundings in Bassingbourn and Whaddon, and during Lent we're organising a number of walks, led by different people, to enable us to enjoy the countryside and one another's company. Some entail just a walk, others include some refreshments. Full details, including where they start and finish, are given overleaf, along with details of everything else going on in Lent.

Lent Lunches

The United Reformed Church in Bassingbourn will be hosting lunches, from noon until 1.30pm, on five Mondays during Lent. Again these are opportunities to meet other new people, and to enjoy some wonderful hospitality.

So, I hope you find Lent this year inspiring, and that your faith will deepen and grow as together we follow Christ to the cross, and know the joy of his resurrection.

With my best wishes,

Donald

FEBRUARY

Wed 22nd 10am **Ash Wednesday Service**, Orwell Church
with Bishop Stephen
7.30pm **Ash Wednesday Service**, Whaddon Church

Sun 26th

(1st of Lent) 8.00am **Holy Communion** Bassingbourn Church
9.15am **Holy Communion** Whaddon Church
10.30am **Morning Praise** Bassingbourn Church
2.30pm **Bassingbourn Walk**, led by Jeff Hacon, starting at
Bassingbourn Church

Mon 27th 12-1.30pm **Lent lunch** United Reformed Church,
Bassingbourn

Tues 28th 8pm **Whaddon House Group, Session 1** studying
'The Things He Carried', led by Di Williams, at
Spring Cottage, Bridge St., Whaddon

MARCH

Friday 2nd 9.30am **Whaddon Walk** 2 miles, leaving from
Bassingbourn Church, followed by coffee at Hatties.
Led by Jenny Grech: 01223 208938

7.00pm **Women's World Day of Prayer**
United Reformed Church, Bassingbourn

Sun 4th 10am **Family Service** Whaddon Church
(2nd of Lent) 10.30am **Holy Communion** Bassingbourn Church

Mon 5th 7.30pm **'Prayer Special' begins** Bassingbourn Church,
which is open until 8pm each night this week for
personal prayer

12 -1.30pm **Lent lunch** United Reformed Church, Bass.

Tues 6th 8pm **Whaddon House Group, Session 2** – studying
'The Things He Carried', led by Di Williams, at Town
Farm, Church St., Whaddon

Sun 11th 8.00am **Holy Communion** Bassingbourn Church

(3rd of Lent) 9.15am **Holy Communion** Whaddon Church
 10.30am **Kids' Service** Bassingbourn Church
 2pm **Whaddon Walk** 5-mile circuit, starting at
 Wimpole Car Park, led by David Grech, 01223
 208938. Bring flask, cake provided.

Start of two-week '**Party Time**' in Bassingbourn

Mon 12th 12 -1.30pm **Lent lunch** United Reformed Church, Bass.

Tues 13th 8pm **Whaddon House Group, Session 3** studying
 'The Things He Carried' led by Di Williams, Town
 Farm, Church St., Whaddon

Sun 18th 10am **Mothering Sunday Service** Whaddon Church
 (4th of Lent) 10.30am **Mothering Sunday Service** (including
 enrolment of new members of Mothers' Union)
 Bassingbourn Church

Mon 19th 12-1.30pm **Lent lunch**, United Reformed Church, Bass.

Tues 20th 8pm **Whaddon House Group, Session 4** studying
 'The Things He Carried', led by Di Williams, Town
 Farm, Church St., Whaddon

Sat 24th 2.30pm **Whaddon Walk** around Community Wood,
 starting at Whaddon Village Hall, led by Helen
 Strudwick 01223 207434

Sun 25th 8am **Holy Communion** Bassingbourn Church
 (5th of Lent) 9.15am **Holy Communion** Whaddon Church
 10.30am **Morning Praise** Bassingbourn Church
 followed by
 12.30pm **'Yuva' lunch** in church

Mon 26th 12-1.30pm **Lent lunch**, United Reformed Church, Bass.

Tues 27th 8pm **Whaddon House Group, Session 5** studying
 'The Things He Carried' led by Di Williams, Town
 Farm, Church St., Whaddon.

10.30am **Holy Communion** Bassingbourn Church,
....followed by sparkling wine & nibbles