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From the Vicarage

Friday 26 February

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Mark 8.34b

The last few weeks have been a time of self-denial for many of us as we have travelled through this most recent lockdown. Once more there are things we have not been able to do, people we have not been able to see and places we have not been able to go. So, when we came around to asking ourselves the question on Ash Wednesday “what have I given up for Lent”, for some there didn’t seem that there was that much left.

In that context, these last few months may have been a time of serious soul searching and an opportunity to examine some fundamental questions about life, its purpose, the relationships within it, and how we understand faith in God in the midst of everything else that is going on.

St Mark's Gospel reminds us very clearly of the Gospel imperative that we become fully dependent upon God and seek in complete faith to follow him as disciples. Even if that means we step forward with something as difficult and complex as a cross to bear. To step forward in this way is to sit light to the fears and concerns of the past, to focus on the hopes and assurance we have in Christ and to have the capacity to take risk and respond to opportunity. So let us have the courage to let go and depend on him as we emerge from this time of lockdown and lent as changed people. For as we get ever closer to Easter we are reminded of the hope of resurrection and the promise of eternal life.

Responding to the Prime Ministers announcement on 22 February, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England's Coronavirus Recovery Group, said *"I am grateful to the Prime Minister for sharing these proposals to ease the current restrictions in a way which gives us all some clarity and enables people to begin to plan. We will study the details and, working with Government Departments, refine our own advice for local churches in the weeks ahead"*. PCC's will meet to decide how this might look for us in the weeks ahead especially for easter.

Sunday 28 February

Online Worship will be via Zoom @ 10.00 a.m using this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72337650077?pwd=bCtnbU4rWGdmRW45UUvSms2UmRRUT09> (Meeting ID: 723 3765 0077 Password: 0Wg7Kw)

Please stay or join for virtual coffee after the service.

The Church of England's online service is @ 9.00 a.m. The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby leads worship for the Second Sunday of Lent.

The link is here: <https://youtu.be/JEnBowcRV8U>

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 is at 8.10 a.m. The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Reverend John Davies, marks St David's Day in a service for the second Sunday of Lent, recorded under lockdown conditions at Brecon Cathedral. The service is led by the Dean of Brecon Cathedral, the Very Reverend Dr Paul Shackerley. The link is here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000sq5j>

Lent Group

Our Lent group is following 'The Prayer Course' and meets at 2.00 p.m each Tuesday during March. If you would like to join this group and haven't already done so please do contact me.

A further resource that you may like to use this Lent is the Church of England's '#LiveLent Reflections' which are available in printed format, a downloadable app, or by email. A link is here:

<https://churchofengland.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=50eac70851c7245ce1ce00c45&id=78db0d8305&e=cf4b1d96e3>

Each day's reflection will also be paired with a hymn and available on the Daily Hope phone line (details below).

Worship and Prayer by telephone



A reminder of Daily Hope which is a telephone service offering music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. Sunday worship is available each week from 9.00 a.m. The line is free and available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**.

Tuesday Morning Prayer

We meet each Tuesday @ 9.00 a.m for Morning Prayer and to pray particularly for those in need of prayer at this time. Use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82310905515?pwd=eGszTUvdW5jcWlNL1U5YXFBT0trQT09> (Meeting ID: 823 1090 5515 Passcode: 237323)

Virtual Wednesday Coffee morning

The virtual coffee mornings are now being held weekly on Wednesday between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m. Please do come along if you can. You don't have to stay for the whole hour, but many people are continuing to value the opportunity to see and speak with each other, even if virtually at this time. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82945268510?pwd=R0U4VFI4Z1J6Ri9xNWlET0dZem5ZQT09> (Meeting ID: 829 4526 8510 Passcode: 855870)

Friday Compline

We meet for Compline (Night Prayer) each Friday @ 8.00 p.m. All are welcome to join us. Use this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73672170367?pwd=QnVKWTRpR3g5VWk0WUtCQ3hhNFRkQT09> (Meeting ID: 736 7217 0367 Password: 7YC29t)

A Prayer

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
may we come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May God bless you and keep you as we seek to follow and journey with
Jesus this Lent.

Shaun