

Ash Wednesday - 'You hate nothing that you have made'

Penitence and Faith (The Collect for Ash Wednesday)

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Lent 1 - 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts'

Approaching God (The Collect for Purity)

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lent 2 - 'We give you thanks and praise'

The Great Thanksgiving (The eucharistic prayers)

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.
By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;

he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.
Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lent 3 - 'Whose nature is always to have mercy'

Coming to God's table (The Prayer of Humble Access)

We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy

so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,

that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Lent 4 (Mothering Sunday) - 'Our Father'

Relationship with God (The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Lent 5 - 'We offer you...a living sacrifice'

Sending Out (Post Communion Prayer)

Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.

The Downs and Valley Churches

Lent 2026



By Heart: Prayers of the Communion Service

This Lent we shall be exploring the prayers which form part of our Communion services – familiar words which we may not realise that we know by heart. But what do they mean, and how can they help us deepen our faith and get to know God better?

You can follow the series through our websites, which are most easily found by searching for 'A Church Near You Ilmington Downs and Stour Valley Churches'. You'll find a dedicated page there, with a new piece added each week exploring the prayers which are printed on the next pages.

Richard Cooke

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