

# Seek the Lord



Lent booklet for all

# Seek the Lord

**'Seek the Lord while he may be found.'** (Isaiah 55:6) We are called to draw closer to God and grow in confidence through our spiritual journey of discovery.

In recent years the Church in general shows many signs of lack of confidence, a tendency to look inwards rather than outwards, and to be hesitant in its aspirations.

But Isaiah continues by saying **'Call upon him while he is near'** – and we are called to seek him, to call on him and to draw ever closer to him.

Our Christian journey is not to be one of ease and privilege. We are called forth to care passionately about the Gospel values of truth, justice and reconciliation. The discovery of that profound reality of love which is both unconditional and challenging is at the heart of the Christian 'Way'

## Seek the Lord

Iconic stories, found in the collection of books which comprise the Bible, point to this journey of discovery. The wanderings of Abraham, the Exodus and years in the Wilderness under Moses, the exile of Elijah and the poetry found in the text of the Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40 – 55) which proclaims -

**'In the desert prepare a way for the Lord.  
Make straight across the wastelands  
a highway for our God.  
Let every ravine be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be brought down.**

**the crooked shall be straight,  
the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
and all humanity shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'**

(Isaiah 40 verses 3b-6.  
Revised New Jerusalem Bible translation)

Perhaps the glorious vision did not materialise quite as the poet-prophet portrayed. However, the promise that opens to us if we seek and search is profound. Our seeking and searching may be loud and active or silent and contemplative. It may use words, music and art. It may well be sacramental and liturgical. It may rely on simplicity and stark emptiness. But the journey is because we want to 'draw near' (to draw from Thomas Cranmer in the Book of Common Prayer of 1549).

### A Collect for the First Sunday of Lent

Lord our God,  
you alone do we worship,  
only your word gives life.  
Sustain your Church on its Lenten journey.  
When we walk through the desert of  
temptation,  
strengthen us to renounce the power of evil.  
When our faith is tested by doubt,  
illumine our hearts with Easter's bright promise

We ask this through Christ,  
our deliverance and hope,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
holy and mighty God for ever and ever.

(© ICEL 1997)



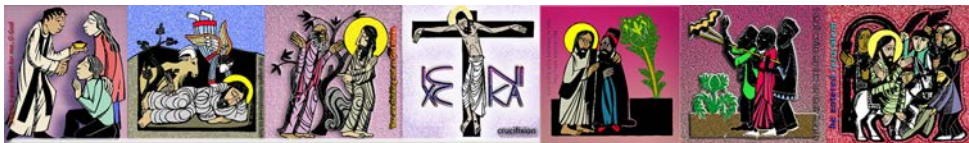
*The healing of the blind man.*

'Seeing' window.

St John's Church, Tisbury.

## Contents

Gospel reflections	5	Lent Quiet Day	13
Daytime group	9	The Language of the Arts	14
Stations of the Cross	10	'Seeking' photo project	15
Neglected Treasure (OT)	10	Lent Lunches	16
Messy Church	11	Lent Calendar	16
Waiting for God in Silence	12	General information	16



## Sunday Gospel Reflections

Each Sunday at the morning Eucharists throughout the Benefice we hear the Gospel reading which draws us into the journey of Lent. Here you will find reflections on these passages – you will need your Bible to read each passage.

**First Sunday of Lent**      *Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March*

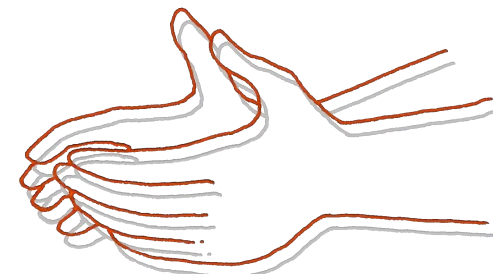
### Luke 4.1-13 - The Temptations in the Wilderness

Luke implies that the very purpose of Jesus' time in the wilderness was to be tempted. Clearly Jesus was on his own in this place.



Jesus will be true to his sonship not by flamboyant acts but by suffering an impoverished death on a cross, a commonplace punishment for criminals. Often we would like God to treat us as "different," "special" people who deserve miraculous intervention and deliverance from the limitations of our humanity. This will be offered to us, but only in the way in which it was offered to Jesus: by the way of suffering, dying, and rising with him.

Living Liturgy 2022 edition with addition from the Redemptorist Publication "Living Word"



## Second Sunday in Lent *Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March*

Luke 13: 31 to end of chapter - Herod the Jackal and Jerusalem Admonished

Jesus is warned by some Pharisees that Herod wants to kill him. He gives them a tough message for Herod and predicts his own death in Jerusalem.

Here we have the other side of the graciousness of God's covenant which has been at the heart of both the Old Testament reading and Epistle for the day. God will not coerce but in spite of all opposition and rejection God's gracious purposes will be fulfilled. This is part of that journey, not just to Jerusalem but to glory, which is such a prominent feature of the second part of Luke: 'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9:51). This means that all the machinations of Herod Antipas, 'the fox', are irrelevant. Christ will reach his goal, and Herod will be the merest puppet. He will die in the appointed time and at the appointed place. Yet human freedom is real and human responsibility great. Through the centuries, Jerusalem had rejected God's teaching and spurned his love. Thus the Messiah was to be killed in his own capital city. God's house had become 'your house' (v. 35); God will not overrule people's free choice. When is verse 35 to be fulfilled? Palm Sunday is a partial but limited fulfilment. Rather his death would be the way Israel would come to repentance, and when he returns in glory then the whole purpose of his death will be recognised, and he will be hailed and acknowledged as Lord.



From 'The Ministry of the Word'  
edited by Norman Starkey © 2000

## Third Sunday of Lent *Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March*

Luke 13:1-9 Examples inviting repentance and the parable of the barren fig tree

Jesus teaches that, while disaster is not necessarily a punishment for sin, all need to repent of behaviour that leads to destructive outcomes. God's grace may bring opportunities to turn away from our sins, and it is wise to use them.



The gospel underlines God's patience in waiting for us to repent and "bear fruit." In Luke's Gospel, repentance does not come about by human efforts at reforming our lives. Rather, the process of transformation begins with God's gracious initiative. Our Lenten practices help to sharpen our ability to be transformed and to respond in such ways that can set us ablaze with divine love, like the bush that caused Moses to turn aside and look.

From Redemptorist Publications 'Living Word' and  
'Living Liturgy' 2025 edition © 2024 by OSB

## Fourth Sunday in Lent *Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March.*

*Although Mothering Sunday readings will be used at most mid-morning Eucharists, here we consider the readings for the fourth Sunday of Lent*

Luke 15.1-3,11b-end – A parable of God's mercy. The lost son and the dutiful son



The Pharisees cannot understand why Jesus associates with those they consider sinners: tax collectors and prostitutes. To explain why, Jesus tells the story of a prodigal son.

As a figure of the divine, the father in today's gospel parable offers a gift of reconciliation that

shatters the too-narrow vision of children vying for a bigger piece of the pie, when all along the whole of the inheritance is offered to each and all, with no bounds. This gift begins a process of healing that expands our puny estimation of our inheritance and opens our capacity to be transformed by the Giver, enlarging our capacity to pass on that heritage to others.

Redemptorist Publications 'Living Word' 2022 and  
Living Liturgy 2025 edition

**Fifth Sunday of Lent** *6<sup>th</sup> April. Sometimes called 'Passion Sunday'*  
John 12:1-8; Anointing at Bethany

Jesus attends a dinner at the home of Lazarus. Mary anoints Jesus with costly perfume and so reveals the path of true discipleship.



As we come to the end of our Lenten readings, we linger on this passage, rich both in theological significance and human interest. As Jesus enters the week leading to the cross, we have a blend of warm affection and hostile enmity as well as misunderstanding. These three reactions will form the substance of our meditation.

Mary's loving extravagance (v. 3) mirrors and anticipates that greater love which is to be poured out (see 13:1). Just as Jesus is to wash the disciples' feet, so she anoints his and cares nothing for hostile reactions. The shadow of the cross lies over the whole incident and Mary wants to declare her love unmistakably. But there is also the dark presence of the betrayer (v. 4), so prominent in John's Passion narrative. John alone adds the detail 'he was a thief' (v. 6). Judas' chilling market economies show his inability to understand extravagant love and thus a failure to grasp the heart of the gospel.

Yet the silent crowd who neither defend Mary nor grasp the greater significance of the event are characteristic of the indifference of the masses which is to be a feature of the crucifixion itself. Passionate, overflowing love is at the heart of the Passion story which we by God's grace now remember and proclaim.

Here is love vast as the ocean,  
Loving kindness like the flood.  
When the Prince of Life, our ransom  
Shed for us his precious blood.

*Robert Lowry (1826-99)*

From 'The Ministry of the Word' ibid

Daytime Fellowship Group

The Great 'I Am..' sayings in John's Gospel

Location: 8, Newport, Warminster BA12 8RH

Time 2pm – 3.30pm

Dates in Lent: Tuesdays March 11<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>

*Refreshments provided*

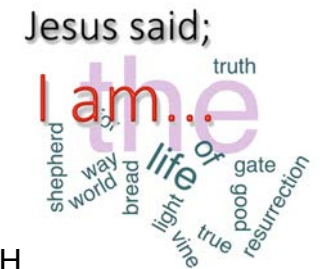
During Lent, afternoon meetings are being held – open to all who would like to explore more about our understanding of Christ as revealed in these seven great sayings in St John's Gospel. We meet in the home of Elaine and Terry McNicholas. There will be a chance to explore and discuss our discoveries about Christ as we 'seek the Lord'

Leader and organiser: Elaine McNicholas

For more details:

Email : [elaine.mcnicholas@sky.com](mailto:elaine.mcnicholas@sky.com)

Mob: 07368 206565



## Stations of the Cross

Wednesdays in Lent, 6 p.m. in the Minster

The Stations of the Cross have been used for many centuries because they enable people to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus.

The Stations originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.

**Each Wednesday in Lent** at 6 p.m. in the Minster, we shall "Walk the Way" using the Stations as we seek the Lord. A different leader each week will invite us to different ways of reflecting on and responding to each station

Easy to follow, profoundly biblical and a way of entering into "the Way" with body, mind and spirit in our journey to 'seek the Lord'..



Dates in Lent for your diary:  
March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

An evening course 7 - 8.30pm, 10 sessions in all.

*" A great time together to find resource for faith from the O.T. Story."*

This is our Bible heritage and rooted deep into our culture and worship.

### Location:

Minster Church, Church Street, Warminster. BA12 8PQ. There is roadside parking

*Please bring a Bible and a heart to find out about the Old Testament.*

More information from Rev Martin Weymont.

[weymontmartin@gmail.com](mailto:weymontmartin@gmail.com) or 01985-300025

All welcome - just turn up!

Neglected Treasure?

Learning for Discipleship Programme

2023 - 2025

## Neglected Treasure?

**'Christian perspectives on the Jewish Scriptures'**

**Mondays, 7 p.m. in the Minster Church West End**

Continuing the 'Learning for Discipleship' programme of the River Were Churches, you are invited to join this exploration of the Old Testament. The programme began at the end of January but continues through Lent on Monday evenings.



Learning for Discipleship Programme

2023 - 2025

## Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March

Children with an adult are invited to join us for Easter craft, music, story and lunch.

Messy Minster

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 10:30am until 12noon**

Minster Church - West End

**Lots of exciting things to make including cards, crafts, modelling and cooking,**

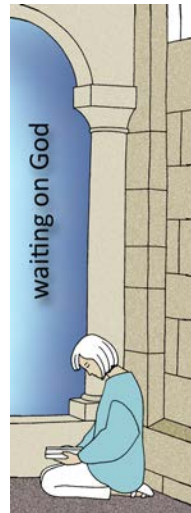


Free but donations welcome.

For more details contact the benefice Office or the Revd Carole Owen

## Waiting on God in Silence

led by Revd Richard Davies,  
7.15am on **the last Wednesday of the month.**  
**The session in Lent will be Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**March 2025** at the Minster Church.



For many people there comes a time in their spiritual journey when they find themselves longing for more silence. They find a small pool of silence in the midst of a busy day, and they jump in without hesitation. During the Sunday service in Church the person leading the intercessions allows for some short periods of silence and is surprised when people are so grateful and enthusiastic about the silence! Silence is so rare, and yet for many people today it's like a deep thirst.

*Our monthly meeting at the Minster, entitled "Waiting on God in Silence", at 7.15pm on the last Wednesday of each month is an attempt to provide some much-needed silence for those who would value it.*

What we are trying to do in silent prayer is a bit like getting under the surface of the sea where, a few feet below the turbulence of the waves, is a gentle stillness. Like the waves in a stormy sea, our lives may be frenetic on the surface, but underneath we may be able to enter a realm of mental and spiritual peace where our agitations are resolved, and God is able to steal into our lives. In this kind of prayer, we aren't trying to achieve anything. We simply open ourselves to God and wait. Essentially it means being attentive and open to God who is constantly wanting to communicate his love for us. He does this through the whole fabric of life, but nearly always shyly, without wanting to overwhelm us and take away our freedom. Our task is to be more attentive to his coming, to listen between the lines, to catch the silent music.

What do we do in our meetings? It all takes place in the crossing at the Minster where we sit in a circle with a candle and crucifix in the midst of us. The meeting begins with a period of relaxation, to put behind us the events of the day, to settle into the silence, to become aware of God's presence within us and all around us, above all to relax. We often do this to a piece of gentle music. After that we have two periods of twenty minutes each spent in complete silence. Each period of silence is introduced with a short reading of some kind. We finish the meeting by saying The Grace together. It all takes no more than an hour.

So if you are feeling the thirst for more silence, if you are interested in trying this silent prayer, Lent is a good time to give it a try. Why not come along on **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 7.15pm at the Minster.** You will be very welcome.

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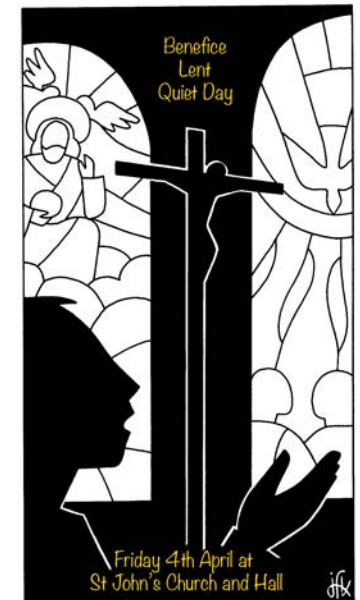
## Lent Quiet Day

Date: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April  
Location: St John's Hall, garden and church  
Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*(Bring your own lunch!)*

*More details in due course.*

Leader: Revd Richard Davies

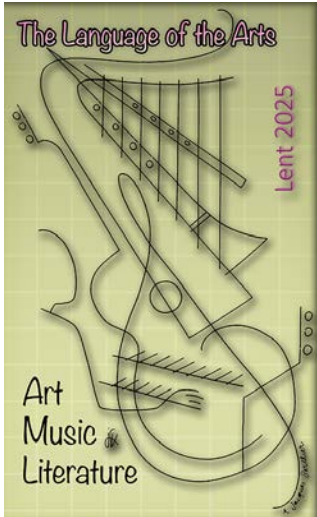


## The Language of the Arts

**Location:** St Johns Church hall,  
Boreham Road.

**Day / dates** Thursdays in Lent  
13th, 20th, and 27th March, and the  
3rd and 10th April

**Time:** Midday to 1 p.m.



## The language of art, literature and music

**as we seek to know the Lord more.**

You are invited to weekly midday sessions in St John's Hall at which a different person each week will introduce for discussion and further exploration a particular piece of art, literature or music which has significantly influenced them in the search for the divine.

*'Seek the Lord and...'*

Art, music, poetry, literature and so much more in the artistic world are major vehicles to aid humanity's sense of the profound. In the Christian Church these forms remain integral to the Christian ways of worship and inspiration.

Come, listen, join in, bring your insights and exchange with those of others.

*All very welcome*

More details (including about the specific subject of focus for each session) from our web site

## Seeking project

This Lent we invite you to enter a practical, photographic project on the theme of "**seeking**".

This project is open to the whole community (including our schools, youth organisations and clubs).

Through photographs, the theme can be explored as people may wish. Those wishing to enter can read the information on information leaflet or on the Benefice web site, which sets out the details of what may be submitted.

Photographs must be submitted as prints (A5 max). Entrants can submit up to five different photos. Colour and black and white are equally acceptable. Mobile phone, digital or other cameras are all encouraged. There are age categories (see information leaflet and web site) to give the maximum opportunity for people of all ages to be involved.



**Entries** to the Benefice Office (at the Minster) by April 6th.

**Exhibition** in Chapel of St Lawrence from the week after Easter.

## Lent Lunches

There will be five soup lunches in Lent on **Wednesdays**, noon to 2 p.m.

This year we shall be supporting the work of the Mothers Union in the Diocese of Maridi – part of our link with the Church in South Sudan. Come and share a simple lunch and good companionship each week. *See full article in February Bulletin for details.*

*Dates and locations - see next page*

**Mothers UNION**  
Christian care for families



# Lent Lunches



Charity Lent Lunches

**Wednesday 12th March** in the West End of the Minster Church.

**Wednesday 19th March** in the Rectory, Church Street.

**Wednesday 26th March** in the West End of the Minster Church

**Wednesday 2nd April** in Westdown House, Church Street (next to the Rectory)

**Wednesday 9th April** in the West End of the Minster Church

This Lent, as we 'seek the Lord' we are offering a Lent calendar of daily suggestions of things to reflect upon or to try to do. All are designed to help us in our approach to Holy Week and Easter



The Lent Calendar is found as a page in the Lent section of 'What's On' on the Benefice web site (see below). Printed copies are available at the back of all our churches,

## More information from

Minster Facebook page:



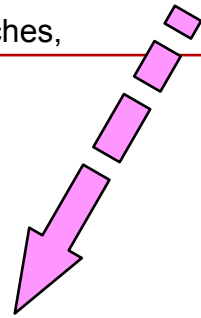
@MinsterWarminster

Benefice web site:

<https://www.riverwerekchurches.org>



[www.riverwerekchurches.org](http://www.riverwerekchurches.org)



Posters, leaflets in church and also the Benefice Magazine.