

Lent

at All Hallows By The Tower



Lent is a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and covers the period of approximately six weeks up to Easter Sunday.

The Latin name for the period, *Quadragesima*, means 'fortieth', and traditionally relates to the forty days which, according to the Synoptic Gospels Jesus spent fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by the Devil.

It is also a remembrance of the 40 years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness. (Technically, there are 46 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday, but the 6 Sundays are excluded as there is no obligation to fast on Sundays.)



The traditional purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer for Easter, and this leaflet has ideas and suggestions for spiritual disciples that will help you engage with the season.

I. Repentance

Ash Wednesday (5th March)

This is the first day of Lent, and is marked by Christians with prayer, fasting and repentance.

The act of repentance is commonly enacted by partaking in ashing. Ashes, made from last year's burnt Palm crosses, are used to mark the foreheads of Christians during the Ash Wednesday service. The ashes remind us that we are mortals in need of resurrection and sinners in need of forgiveness.

There will be a service at 12.30pm of Holy Communion with imposition of ashes.

There will also be Taizé Prayer with imposition of ashes at 6.00pm.

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Lent is a good time to consider making your Confession, since this season is a time to consider whether the actions we have done in the past have damaged our relationship with God and with those around us.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is where God waits with loving and joyful arms. It is a place, not of guilt and worry, but of liberation. If you have a great weight you are carrying around on your heart, then this Sacrament offers an opportunity to receive specific and confident forgiveness from God.

Although often thought of as a Roman Catholic tradition, the Church of England has always retained the Sacrament of Reconciliation, citing "all may, some should, none must."

If you have never made your Confession before and would like advice on how to prepare for it, or would like to arrange a time to make your Confession to God, either in Lent or during Holy Week, please speak to any of the parish clergy.

2. Study

Lent Course and Reflection Group:

This year we will be joining the Diocesan Lent Course - **Climate Justice & Discipleship**. In 5 sessions, each led by a different bishop from across the Diocese, we are invited to reflect on five significant moments in Jesus' life and ministry. As we take this journey together, how might we encounter Christ through creation, pursue justice from within, and convert our fearful reactions into a loving response?

They will take place online on the Tuesdays during Lent, 7.30-8.30pm (March 11th, 18th, 25th, April 1st, 8th). If you are unable to make the Tuesday sessions, they will be recorded and available for catch up during the week.

You can learn more about the course and register for the Diocesan sessions on their website:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/diocesan-lent-offering-2025-climate-justice-discipleship/>

There will be an additional offering of 3 parish online reflection groups, with an opportunity to discuss the material, our responses individually and as a parish. These will take place on Saturdays 15th March, 29th March, 12th April, 10.00-11.00am.

If you wish to join the parish reflection group for the 3 additional sessions, please let the Parish Administrator know (parish@ahbtt.org.uk), and a Zoom link will be emailed to participants.

3. Prayer

Take time to think about justice towards God.

Prayerful habits

Prayer is something which often becomes easier the more we pray. Try something different each week, or if something begins to show fruit, focus on that prayer habit. For example, you might consider saying the Lord's Prayer every day at a certain time, or as you reach the end of the day taking time to notice and give thanks to God for any points in the day where you have felt God's presence.

Daily Office

A good spiritual discipline is to pray daily. If it is a new discipline, consider saying one of the Daily Offices (Morning or Evening), and if you have fallen out of practice, it is a good time to pick up the habit again.

From Ash Wednesday we will be offering daily prayer in All Hallows, in the Lady Chapel:

Morning Prayer - 8.30am (Monday-Wednesday, Friday), 10am (Saturday)

Evening Prayer - 4.30pm (Monday-Saturday)

4. Self-Denial

Take time to think about justice towards yourself.

Fasting

Fasting can include giving something up (for example, meat, chocolate or alcohol) during the season of Lent. If you have any health concerns, please speak to your doctor before starting a period of fasting or abstinence.

Christians fast for several reasons.

- 1) It confronts us with the contrast between us and those who lack the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter.
- 2) It helps us to draw closer to God as we experience in a small way the temptation Christ faced in the Wilderness.
- 3) In a very real way, giving up something you really enjoy is a way of rehearsing our capacity to handle death.

However, Jesus told his disciples that fasting is not to be seen by others '*but by your Father who sees in secret*' (Matt 6.18).

Fasting is done for love, not for show.

5. Alms-Giving

Take time to think about justice towards your neighbour.

Charity giving

Consider making a special effort this Lent to give towards a charity - for example one of our Mission partners: Bow Foodbank, the Square Mile Hygiene Bank or FirstLove Foundation; or one you have a special connection with.