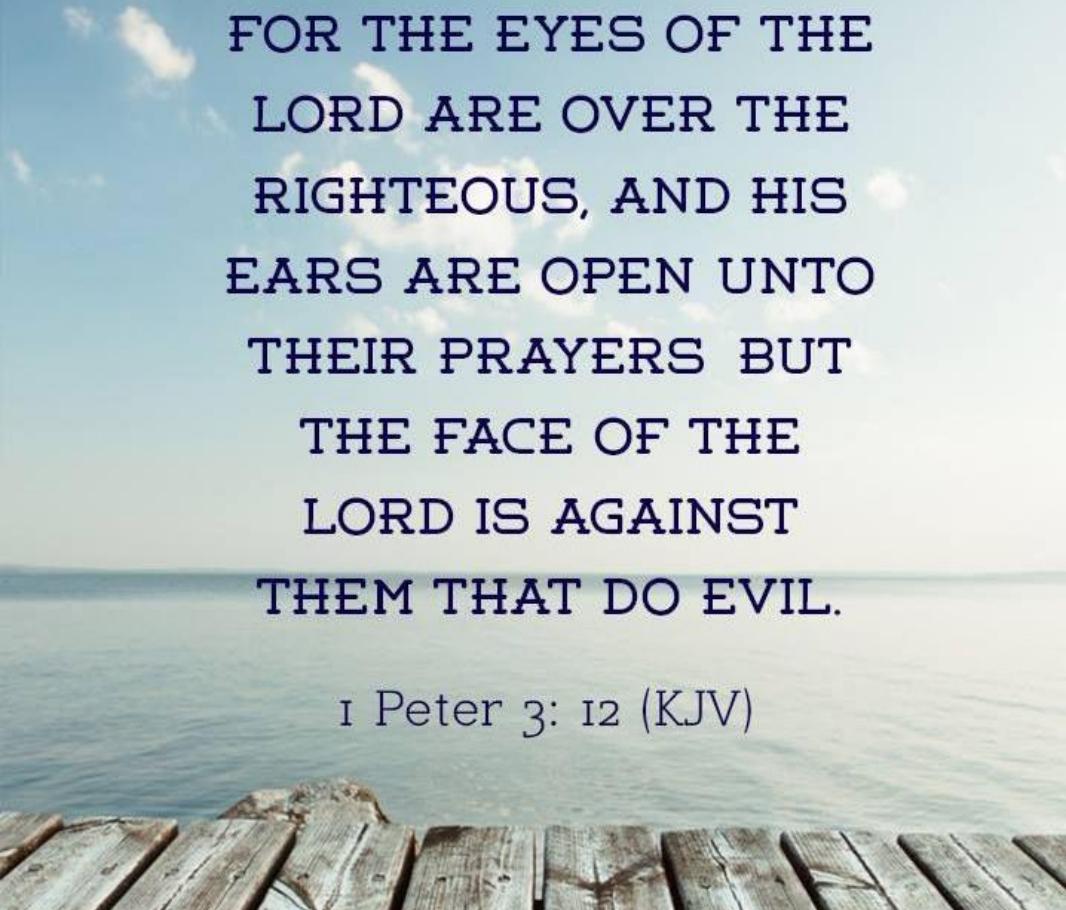


# St. Mary's, Stoke D'Abernon

## First Sunday of Lent



FOR THE EYES OF THE  
LORD ARE OVER THE  
RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS  
EARS ARE OPEN UNTO  
THEIR PRAYERS BUT  
THE FACE OF THE  
LORD IS AGAINST  
THEM THAT DO EVIL.

I Peter 3: 12 (KJV)

February 21st 2021

# A Message from Godfrey

Why did the temptation of Jesus occur at this point in his earthly ministry? Why did the Spirit deliberately drive Jesus into this situation? If we may suppose that Jesus was being tempted to diverge from the path set before him, then it may be that we can answer both questions.

Jesus was facing a journey with a particularly gruesome destination. Not only that but he would also face obstacles in reaching that destination, which would be erected by his enemies, friends- “but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me Satan, for you are not on the side of God but of men.” He even found obstacles that he created himself like the overturning of the tables of the money lenders in the Temple, an action that put him on a collision course with the Jewish authorities whose authority he not only called into question but held them in utter contempt.

At the start of a journey it is vital to identify the destination with absolute clarity if there is to be any chance of staying on course. It is also necessary to be adequately prepared for the conditions that will be faced. In his wilderness experience, Jesus could focus on the ultimate and not just the immediate. He was already on the road towards Jerusalem. However, this experience brings the big temptations to light. Usually, simple every day concerns can distract us from our journey quite satisfactorily. As a final preparation for his earthly or public ministry, Jesus is given the opportunity to take stock of what lies before him, both in terms of destination and the obstacles in between.

We too need this constant refocussing, guided by the Spirit.

Jesus goes into the wilderness, then, as a player in a larger drama. His first role is to face a formidable adversary we might be forgiven for mistaking Jesus as a weapon used in a war between other, superior forces or as a new recruit who still needs to prove his mettle. We see that he has been shown a vision of what lies before him and it is a life that is full of confrontation.

When we go on a journey we are placing ourselves in a relationship of trust. We hope that the pilot knows what he or she is doing or that the driver will deliver us safely. We will be influenced by the people we meet who are not like us or who come from different cultures or religions. We will experience new influences and may even find something or someone that will be life changing.

And that is what Lent is all about. It is an invitation, indeed, a challenge to get out of our spiritual comfort zone and fast and give money and see exactly where we are on our journey.

I find great solace in poetry and wish I were clever enough to write some. May I end by reading a Lenten Poem by Ann Weems, an American poet.

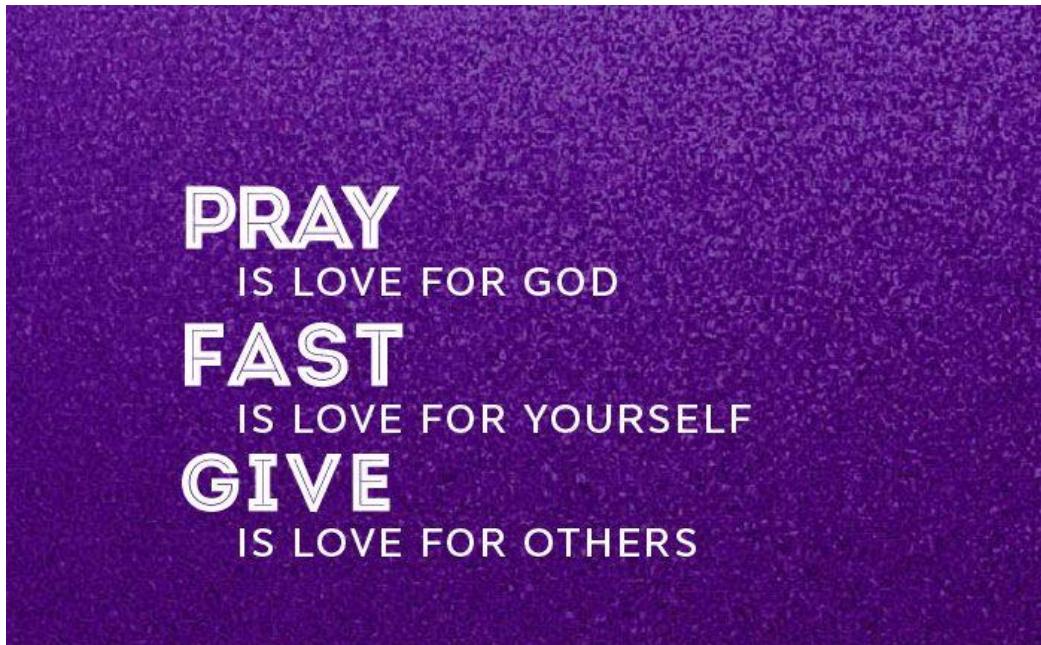
*Lent is a time to take time to let the power  
of our faith story take hold of us,  
a time to let the events get up  
and walk around in us,  
a time to intensify our living unto Christ,  
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,  
a time to place our feet in the streets of  
Jerusalem or to walk along the sea and  
listen to his Word,  
a time to touch his robe  
and feel the healing surge through us,  
a time to ponder and a time to wonder....  
Lent is a time to allow  
a fresh new taste of God!  
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,*

*for thoughts come unbidden.  
Perhaps we're afraid to face our future  
knowing our past.  
Give us courage, O God,  
to hear your Word  
and to read our living into it.  
Give us the trust to know we're forgiven  
and give us the faith  
to take up our lives and walk.*

Whatever you decide to do this Lent, my prayer for you is that it is a meaningful and life changing period on all levels.

Thoughts and prayers

Godfrey



# Bible References 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Year B	Psalm	First reading	Second reading
<b>Frist Sunday of Lent</b> February 21st	Psalm 25 : 1-9	1 Peter 3 : 18 - end	Mark 1 : 9 - 15
<b>Monday</b> February 22nd	Psalm 19 : 7 - end	Lev 19 : 1-2, 11-18	Matt 25 : 31 - end
<b>Tuesday</b> February 23rd	Psalm 34 : 4-6, 21-22	Isa 55 : 10-11	Matt 6 : 7-15
<b>Wednesday</b> February 24th	Psalm 51 : 1-5, 17-18	Jonah 3	Luke 11 : 29 - 32
<b>Thursday</b> February 25	Psalm 138	Isa 55 : 6-9	Matt 7 : 7-12
<b>Friday</b> February 26	Psalm 130	Deut 26 : 16 - end	Matt 5 : 43 - end
<b>Saturday</b> February 27	Psalm 119 : 1-8	Deut 26 : 16 - end	Matt 5 : 43 - end

**Hyperlinks to Guildford Cathedral Services :**

<https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/worship/services>

St Mary's, Thorpe website :

<https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/>

## Collect 21st February 2021

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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.



# Parish Notices

## Sunday Services at St. Mary's

We have decided to close St Mary's for services for the foreseeable future. The Church will remain open for funerals, and private prayer on Thursdays and Sundays from 10am until noon until we advise otherwise.

## Hall Opening

Sadly the hall has had to shut.

**Post, emails and telephone calls** to the Parish office will be monitored and responded to. Please address any general enquiries, in the first instance, to: [admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk)  
or Tel. 01932 866005

**The weekly Parish leaflet** will continue and be sent out on regular email distribution to those on the electoral role and others who have specifically requested it. Similarly, the St Mary's website will be updated to advise of any changes from the current situation.

**The St Mary's Chat WhatsApp Group** will continue to allow people to share their prayers and thoughts. Godfrey will continue to post his personal messages, including his Sunday message.

For those unable to access WhatsApp, my video messages are also available on this Website Home page and my Sunday messages also appear under **Sermons** on the **Quick Links** on this page.

We will continue with our regular postings of my video clips on Twitter and Instagram, so do follow us on **@StMarysstokedab**



If you are struggling with loneliness and need someone to talk to, or would like help with groceries or anything else, please don't hesitate to call Polly in the Parish Office on 01932 866005 in the first instance.

## **Chair Yoga will continue on zoom**

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcO-trzljEtGrmiE7 - BsHIGkmVpnJCXR](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcO-trzljEtGrmiE7-BsHIGkmVpnJCXR)

(If you cut and paste this into your browser it will automatically link you)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Meeting ID; 858 5729 6019      Passcode: 35 44 47

# Hey! Don't forget the ...

Here is the list of items most needed for our Foodbank. Please can you help us by buying an item and putting it in one of our collecting bins? Thank you for your help.

- **Tinned custard (or cartons)**
- **Sponge puddings**
- **Fruit juice 1L (UHT)**
- **Sugar 500g (Small packs please)**
- **Large instant coffee**
- **Hair conditioner**
- **Large nappies 6, 6+, 7**



Collecting bins are listed below. Please check Church websites for their opening hours.

- Waitrose, Cobham
- Sainsbury's High St, Cobham
- Oxshott Village Store
- Cobham Rugby Club open 9am - 4pm
- The Bakery, Effingham & Hollyhedge Road, Cobham
- St Andrew's Church Cobham
- St Mary's Church Stoke d'Abernon
- St Martin's Church, East Horsley



**The word Lent has nothing to do with fasting or giving things up**

'Lent' is a shortened version of the Old English word 'lencten', a word which simply means spring (in relation to the season). It is thought to have Germanic roots and seems likely to have been used to describe the season when the days began to lengthen, signifying new life and renewal. Over time, the word Lent came to be linked specifically to the Christian tradition of fasting before Easter, which always coincided with the spring.

### **Lent was originally 36 days long**

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, the day after Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) and lasts for 46 days up until Easter Sunday (although officially the Lent fast is only 40 days long as Sundays aren't included). It wasn't always like this though – in fact, Lent started out as just the six week period (still excluding Sundays) in the lead up to Easter, so the fast was only 36 days long! Lent was extended to 40 days (which is why it begins on Ash Wednesday) to parallel with and help Christians remember the time Christ spent in the wilderness, avoiding temptation at the hands of the Devil, as he prepared for his ministry, death and resurrection.

### **Lent is about fasting and spiritual growth**

Most people know about giving things up for Lent. Some people give up chocolate, sugary drinks, meat, alcohol, cigarettes – even other modern indulgences like videogames or social media in a bid to exercise self-control and spend more time focussing on what is important in Life. Lent is traditionally

a time of repentance and spiritual renewal, where Christians remember Christ's own preparation in the desert, where he turned his back on the temptation of the devil in order to prepare himself for the mission God had sent him to complete. Hundreds of years ago this manifested in the form that people gave up meat, fish, eggs, wine, oil, butter and other dairy products. While many Christians have moved away from this practice, this is still seen in some Eastern Churches, following a much stricter fast.

### **Lent is also about doing good**

Lent isn't just about remembering Christ's suffering – it's a time in which believers try to be the best Christian they can possibly be. In the early Lent traditions, Almsgiving (the giving of charity to the poor and needy) was another important aspect of the fast. So the principle of doing Lent generously has been around for hundreds of years “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy” (1 Cor 12:26)

### **Mother's Day is actually a part of Lent**

Lent is the build-up to Easter and Easter is a celebration of Christ's rebirth. What better a thing to celebrate during the fourth Sunday of Lent than mothers? The Sundays of Lent are all joyous occasions for Christians everywhere – here in the UK the fourth of these Sundays is known as Mothering Sunday. Mothering Sunday was originally all about returning to your home (or ‘mother’) church, and eventually it became a celebration of motherhood. Lent, as mothers around the country are sure to remind you, is all about giving generously!

## **Good Friday is a bit of a strange name**

The term “Good Friday” seems a bit strange at first glance given that it is the day we remember Jesus’ crucifixion and burial. Scholars continue to debate the correct origin of the word good; some attribute it as meaning Holy, or Pious, while others argue that it comes from a corruption of ‘God Friday’. The Oxford English Dictionary opts for the first – but either definition hints at the significance of the day. Good Friday is certainly the holiest Friday of any given year.

