



March Newsletter

A few weeks ago, a church member put out a WhatsApp message, inviting people to join in litter picking around Sandford. We very much appreciated the idea, the invitation and the action.

Loving the outdoors and walking, we often find ourselves getting enraged, at people's selfishness in littering the countryside. Plastic water bottles and filled dog poo bags, left on paths, particularly raise our blood pressure!

If we care so much, however, why don't we get some gloves, a bin bag and a long-handled grabber and collect and recycle rubbish, on our walks? Many people do. Rubbish and litter picking, is a great topic for Lent.

Lent is a time, to examine the rubbish in our lives.

To repent of the mess, we and others make; to turn to God afresh, and say sorry for the sin that separates us from Him and each other. We're reminded of this on Ash Wednesday; *'Make our hearts clean, O God'*, we pray, *'renew a right spirit within us'*, echoing the words of Psalm 51:10.



Lent is an opportunity, to do a litter pick of our lives.

With God's forgiveness and help, to spiritually and practically, clear up toxic and destructive habits, actions, or feelings, that harm us and others and creation. Choosing instead a more wholesome and life-giving way of living.

Lent is a reminder, that restoration and renewal is possible.

Just as the countryside, can be cleared of rubbish and environments restored, by people who care, so can we.

Every Lent, we retell a great love story; the story of God's passion for his creation, revealed through the life and death of Jesus Christ. A death that ultimately leads to the joy of the resurrection and new life, that we celebrate at Easter.

The idea of Lent, is to journey together as church community, deepening our faith. The invitation of Lent, is to experience, God's grace, afresh, in our messy, rubbish strewn lives. God's action, if we accept it, is to be restored, recycled and made new.



Whatever our Lent observances, this year; whether we give something up, or whether we take up and do something new - the point of them, is to try and grow closer to God.

For those who enjoy the outdoors and are able to, including ourselves, litter picking for Lent, might be a good place to start!

However, you decide to live Lent, may you find it life-enhancing.

Neil Kelly & Deborah Swann

The Revd Neil Kelly and Revd Deborah Swann, Team Vicars.

A Lenten Fast

Give up harsh words: use generous ones.

Give up unhappiness: take up gratitude.

Give up anger: take up gentleness and patience.

Give up pessimism: take up hope and optimism.

Give up worrying: take up trust in God.

Give up complaining: value what you have.

Give up stress: take up prayer.

Give up judging others: discover Jesus within them.

Give up sorrow and bitterness: fill your heart with joy.

Give up selfishness: take up compassion for others.

Give up being unforgiving: learn reconciliation.

Give up words: fill yourself with silence, and listen to others.

ASH WEDNESDAY death, sin and reconciliation



'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'.

These stark words are repeatedly said on Ash Wednesday, at the beginning of the six-week season of Lent, as people are marked with ash, in the sign of a cross, on their foreheads.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence, i.e. acknowledging and feeling remorse for sin and wrongdoing, in order to seek God's forgiveness. The custom of being marked with ash at the start of Lent, began in the Middle-Ages. Ashes, are often made out of the previous year's palm crosses, for added symbolism.

Being 'ashed' and told to *'remember that you are dust'*, is a reminder of our mortality and the precious gift and fragility of life. Remembering can help us to value the present moment and reflect on how we are living.

At the start of Lent committing ourselves afresh, to *'turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'* can be an opportunity for reconciliation with God and other people. God's generosity in always welcoming us sinners back into his loving arms, when we've failed and fallen short, is the inspiration for us to love as generously in return. Generosity is a great theme for Lent.

Join us on Ash Wednesday

to mark the beginning of Lent

Holy Communion

with the opportunity to be marked with ash reminding us of our mortality and need for God's mercy.

5th March 2025

11am

The Church of St Martin on the Walls, Wareham



Lent Reading

2025 Parish Lent Book available from the Church Bookstall at Lady St Mary's



In Quietness and Trust Special price **£3.85**

40 daily devotions from the beatitudes.

by Matt Searles

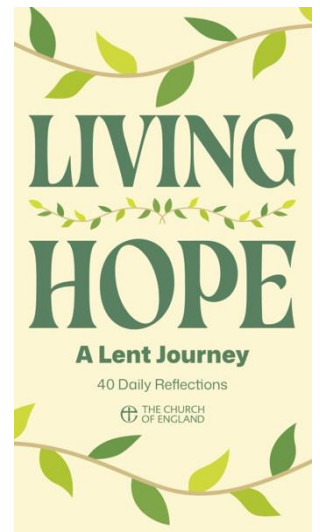
This reduced price from £6.99 is possible because we have purchased in bulk!

These daily readings with a short reflection and prayers, will guide you through the beatitudes Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount. This Easter, join Jesus on his path to the cross, and see that his way – though so different to the way of the world – leads to freedom, joy and life. Matt Searles is a Bible teacher, author and songwriter based in Cumbria, England.

Living Hope: check out the Church of England website

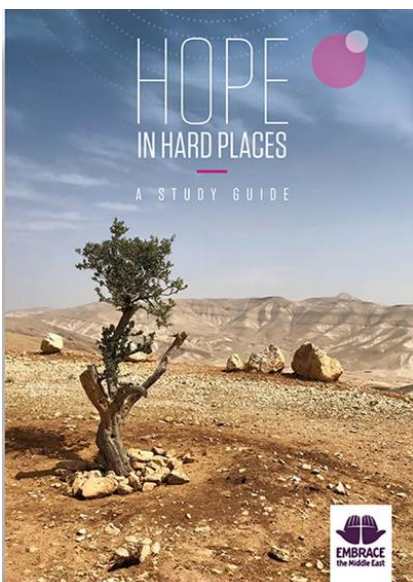
The Church of England's Lent theme for 2025 is **Living Hope**.

Living Hope offers us the opportunity to deepen our hope in God and be part of what God is doing to bring hope in the world. The daily readings and reflections explore how we can have hope in times of frustration or uncertainty; the hope found in joining with others; the invitation to notice signs of hope around us; the courage to face reality and pursue a hopeful future; and the ways God transforms death into life at Easter.



Embrace Lent Study Guide 2025: Hope in Hard Places £4.99

Available from the charity Embrace the Middle East: www.shop.embraceme.org



Hope in Hard Places looks at stories of steadfast faith, hope and trust found in the Bible and reflect on what God's transformational love can mean for our world today. Find encouragement and strength in stories of hope that span over 3000 years of history - showing us that God remains with us at all times. Suitable for individual reflection or to use with a small group as a Lent Course. The course guide includes weekly Bible readings, scriptural reflections stories from the Middle East, questions and discussion topics, prayers and action points.



Parish Weekend Away to RENEW, REFRESH, RESTORE

12th – 14th Septemeber 2025

Following last years successful retreat, join us this year, for a weekend away on the North Devon coast at Lee Abbey Christian Community. The weekend will feature inspiring talks, uplifting worship sessions and opportunities for prayer and reflection.

Lee Abbey offers a variety of activities to enjoy in your free time, including walks along the stunning coastline, or simply relaxing in peaceful surroundings.

Costs £190 per person (£240 en suite) including full board and programme with discounts for children.

Leaflets are available in the churches giving further details or complete your room request by scanning this QR code with a smart phone or typing bit.ly/lee-abbey-25 into your internet browser.



News from the Parish ... Church Electoral Roll

A new Electoral Roll has to be prepared this year and everyone who wants to be included needs to sign a new form. This happens every six years. The timetable is as follows:

- Week commencing 24th March – All those on the existing Electoral Roll will be contacted by email or post and asked if they want to be included on the new Electoral Roll. Forms will be attached to emails or posted/delivered to those who don't have email addresses and will also be available in each church.
- Sunday 27th April – Last date for receipt of applications to be included on the new Electoral Roll.

In addition to the Electoral Roll Form there will be a letter explaining why people might want to join the Electoral Roll and what this implies. There will also be a second form to complete regarding Data consent and privacy.

Joining the Electoral Roll is important if you consider yourself to be a member of one of our churches, and we would encourage you to fill in the forms as soon as possible after you receive them.

Diary of Events

March Outdoor Spirituality Events

Thursday 6th March 11am A reflective walk.

Meet at Lady St Mary's Church in Wareham at 11am.

This walk will last about 2 hours and will include uneven ground.



Sunday 16th March 4pm Fire pit gathering at Holme Priory.

A place that is spiritual but not religious and where whatever you bring will be valued.

Friday 28th March 2- 4.30pm A quiet afternoon at Holme Priory.

A little bit of input, but not too much. Time and space to wander or simply sit and be. And of course, tea and maybe even cake!

Everyone welcome to any or all of these.

Message hilary.bond@mac.com for more details, or just come

Lent Frugal Lunches in support of Christian Aid

Saturday 8th March 12.30 – 1.30pm

United Reform Church, Wareham

Wednesday 19th March 12.30 – 1.30pm

Parish Hall, Wareham

All welcome

Suggested donation £5 to support the work of Christian Aid



Going Deeper: Everyone welcome!



Do you want to deepen your faith, learn alongside others, and be encouraged in following Jesus Christ?

This month Going Deeper into Lent

Come along to enjoy informal worship and prayer with refreshments to begin

6pm Sunday 9th March 2025 at Sandford St Martin's Church

Men's Breakfast



The next Men's breakfast is on **Saturday 15th March 2025 at the Bear Hotel, South Street starting at 8.30am**. The guest speaker this month will be Alicia Clifford, Senior Project Manager R.N.L.I. Whether you are a regular at men's breakfasts, or have never been before, you are most welcome to come along. **Please contact the Parish Office no later than the Wednesday before to book your place, on 01929 550905 or email: parish.office@warehamchurches.org.uk**



Open House - Thursday 27th March 2025

2pm at Sandford St Martin's Church. 'Mayor' - with time after for a cup of tea, chat and a raffle for charity. All are most welcome.

Making Mothering Sunday Posies - Volunteers Needed



Your HELP is needed to make the Mothering Sunday Posies on **Friday 28th March at 10am** in the Parish Hall

Please bring appropriate greenery if you can, especially flowering heather, rosemary and pittosporum. Refreshments will be provided.

Contact Details

Parish Office and Administrator Debs Barclay



Parish Office, Church Green, Wareham BH20 4ND

T: 01929 550905 E: parish.office@warehamchurches.org.uk

W: www.warehamchurches.org.uk

The Parish Office is open to answer all face-to-face enquiries, telephone and email enquiries **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday** 9am to 1pm

Clergy Team



Team Vicars The Revd's Neil Kelly & Deborah Swann

T: 01929 208400 E: neilkelly3@icloud.com and debjswann@gmail.com

Pioneer Priest and Schools Worker The Revd Hilary Bond

T: 01929 551219 E: hilary.bond@me.com

The Revd Michael Young

T: 01929 552582 E: myng110@gmail.com



Jewellery and Silverware's Appeal 2025

Love God, Love life,

Live Generously, Give Generously

Following previous successful fundraising initiatives by Gay and Revd Michael Young, (Antiques and Collectables and Coin Appeal), we will be launching a new Parish appeal this year, to raise much needed funds.

More information to follow in the April monthly newsletter but please, if you're spring cleaning, keep hold of any old gold and silver, or costume jewellery, silverware, coins and scrap items that you might be thinking of recycling, selling, or sending to charity shops. It would be brilliant if you would consider giving in this way.

Regular planned giving and tithing of income, remains the most effective way to give financially to the church, but this is a great way to give if cash is limited. Thank you!

For enquiries about this before the formal launch of the Appeal, please call Michael and Gay Young on 01929 552582.

Tithing:
a rich biblical model of Giving

Give 10

Tithing is a biblical model of giving, originating in Old Testament times and the Law of Moses. The general idea, transferable to our lives today, is that one-tenth of income is given to God.

One of the key verses about tithing one-tenth comes from Leviticus 27:30:
"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord."

The 10% requirement comes from the Hebrew translation of the word 'tithe', "עשר" or "ten".