



“Is not this the fast that I desire ...?”

CCOW Guide to Online Resources for Individuals and Groups in Lent (2018)

Lent is traditionally a time when Christians engage in prayer, meditative reading, giving and fasting above and beyond their normal practices. Fasting, of course, is not simply a matter of restraint in eating and drinking – as Isaiah 58 reminds us, the fast that God desires involves refraining from wickedness; freeing those who are oppressed; sharing with those in need; keeping our speech free of evil; and honouring the time set aside for God, the Sabbath.

The list of resources below is designed to provide material for individuals (or groups) who wish to undertake additional reading or prayer during Lent. There are myriad Lent resources – those we've highlighted either have a focus on Isaiah's themes in the context of the world church, global justice or creation care ... or come from a different part of the world ... or both! For those who, as part of their disciplines, are seeking to abstain from food or carbon, resources that focus on fasting and food justice are given a purple asterisk; those that focus on a carbon fast and environmental justice are given a green one.

May God bless our use of these resources and draw us closer through them.

In addition to the resources below, we heartily recommend the [Godspace](#) "Resources for Lent" page, which has links to a wide variety of materials and also includes recommendations for families and schools.

DAILY READINGS and/or ACTIONS

All We Can's ['Keep it simple'](#) resources (daily reflections to order, service, film and powerpoint to download) challenge us to live simply in solidarity with our global neighbours.

*Did you find **Tearfund's Carbon Fast** helpful in the past – and wish you could take part again? This year the **Anglican Communion Environmental Network** and the **Global Catholic Climate Movement** have teamed up to produce a [Fast for Creation Calendar](#) : each day offers a story and a simple action. **The Eco Church South West programme** also has extensive [Carbon Fast materials](#) from years past– well worth looking.

CAFOD's [online Lent Calendar](#) offers an opportunity to give, act and pray for people living in poverty. Each day's piece has a photograph, Scripture readings, reflections, actions and prayers. There's also a [powerpoint version for children](#) – and you can sign up for weekly reflections.

Christian Aid's Count Your Blessings is available as a [leaflet](#). It contains very short daily notes that remind us of the many blessings we have, inform us about poverty and encourage us to pray, act and give to help change the lives of the world's poorest communities. There are also a [children's version](#) with suggestions for daily activities.

Episcopal Relief and Development in the US invited members of their staff to write reflections on themes of early childhood. Each day's offering has a Bible verse and short meditation. You can read them in a [downloadable publication](#) or [sign up](#) to receive them by daily email.

The **Mothers' Union** has [prayers, family activities and ideas for action](#), including resources for a short act of Lenten worship and a "40 Days of Lent" calendar with suggested daily activities for families.

The **Sanctuary Centre** offers options for '[Journeying through Lent with symbols and prayer](#)' and for '[Worshipping through Lent](#)'. As always, they're creative and make use of art, music and other forms of symbol, helping us to focus on Christ and our local and global neighbours.

SAT7, which helps to provide Christians in the Middle East and North Africa with media resources to make the Gospel visible, has a Lent resource called '[Hear My Voice](#)'. Each week there are prayers for a different country, with a reflection by a Christian connected with that country and daily prayer points.

***Tearfund** [will be offering](#) daily email devotionals on the theme of restoration – and will be challenging its supporters to undertake a form of fasting with the 'Mean Bean Challenge'

The Anglican **Diocese of West Malaysia** has produced '[At the Foot of the Cross: Treasures from the Psalms](#)' which offers for each day of Lent a meditation on a psalm, followed by a question or point to ponder, a reminder of one of God's promises, and a prayer.

And some more general offerings:

- Give up busy-ness (materials from [I'm not busy](#)).
- **Busted Halo's** [25 Great Things You Can Do for Lent](#)
- The **Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College** is doing an [online course](#) on (Catholic) spiritual practices starting on Ash Wednesday. They're using in part [this resource](#), which could also serve on its own as a guide to trying different practices during Lent.
- Sign up to receive daily actions from the **Church of England's** "[Live Lent: Let your light shine](#)"
- the **Church Army's** '[Salt and Light](#)' [weekly reflections and challenges](#)
- **CMS** offers daily [mission-focused reflections and prayer suggestions](#)
- ***Ruth Valerio's** call for a '[Plastic-less Lent](#)'
- **Salisbury (C of E) Diocese's** '[Praying Together](#)' has daily readings from Mark's Gospel, together with suggestions for reflection, prayer and action
- ***Sheffield (C of E) Diocese's** [Lenten Challenge](#): A step away from meat, a step towards Fairtrade
- **Space to Breathe** offers resources to help you '[Take the Silence Challenge](#)' in Lent
- You can get the daily suggestions for [40 Acts: Do Lent Generously](#) from **Stewardship** in an email, via the [40 Acts website](#), or by following on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or [Pinterest](#). Challenges are available for individuals or groups and come with an explanation and Christian reflection.

WEEKLY READINGS and/or STUDY GUIDES

The **Anglican Board of Mission (Australia)**'s [Lent Study 2018](#) focuses, as does USPG's (below) on the Sustainable Development Goals. Each week follows the lectionary and offers a story from ABM's partners, information about particular goals, questions for reflection, prayers and action points.

CCOW's Elizabeth Perry has put together a '[Linked Lectionary](#)' which provides people reflecting on or preaching about the lectionary readings with reflections and questions on related global justice themes, as well as links to stories connected with the themes.

Christian Aid offers a [series of weekly reflections on the theme of "Journey through the wilderness"](#)

Several are written by Christian Aid staff members from Kenya. Very helpful for personal meditation, home groups, or as a point of reflection for preaching.

CTBI's Lent Course is called [40 Stories of Hope](#) It intermingles stories from the narrative of Jesus' life and prison stories, with questions to apply learning from both to daily life.

The Church Urban Fund offers a [series of studies](#) called 'Hungry for Change' The focus is on food poverty in the UK – but some of the points are more widely applicable.

Embrace the Middle East's Lent resource for this year is called [Making All Things New](#). Written by Liz Baddaley, it “revisits beloved Bible passages and brings to life God’s passion for bringing about new beginnings. Each session also includes prayers, a ‘fresh look’ reflection and simple practical actions”. Also still available is Embrace's 2014 Lent course, [Embrace Lent: Jesus and the Marginalised](#) which offers opportunities to reflect on Jesus’ interactions with people who were marginalised and on marginalisation today in the places where Christ lived.

Lent Event is an initiative of Australia’s Uniting Church. This year its [Faith in Action](#) resource offers six Bible studies which focus on justice, hope, love, self-awareness, hospitality and sacrifice. For each there's a Bible passage followed by things to do, pray or discuss. There's a focus on the whole Pacific region.

***Operation Noah** has prepared a [Lent Course](#) based on the [Ash Wednesday Declaration](#) on climate change. The five segments cover basic information about climate change, the theological themes behind a Christian response, and suggestions for prayer and action.

***Renew Our World** – an international coalition of Christians trusting in God's transforming power and committed to living in ways that show love for neighbour in action and in truth – has prepared a [Carbon Fast](#) that offers weekly reflections and suggestions for action.

Traidcraft's Lent resources (click [here](#); tick “church resources” and scroll down) are 6 A4 sheets, each with a very short reflection, prayer and notes on Traidcraft’s work in the areas of trade and social justice, and how you can get involved.

USPG's 2018 Lent study course is titled ['All Things Are Possible'](#), “attempts to make clear the links between our faith and global development ... We want to suggest that it is only in God that there is any real hope for lasting change.” Each week focuses on a theme of development and contains a story from a USPG mission partner, a Biblical passage with discussion questions, a contemplative exercise, and a prayer.

Viva's 6 part [Lent blog series](#) looks at the Lord's prayer and draws on Viva's work with vulnerable children.

The **Diocese of Wau (Episcopal Church of South Sudan)** Lent course (2017) is ['Lessons: Learning with Parables'](#). “The course works by discussion and prayer, gives an African outlook on Christianity and focuses on issues relating to peace ... It tries to stimulate participation, discovery and tackle hard issues in faith. Topics include education for girls, education for life and how education impacts on peace and community.” The Internal Province of Northern Bahr el Ghazal's 2018 Lent course – ['Growing: Learning to Bear Fruit'](#) – looks at growth in agriculture and in faith.

CCOW helps churches to pray and act in response to God's call for us to love God and neighbours near and far. If you'd like further information or resources, or would like to contribute to our work, take a look at our website www.ccow.org.uk or ring 01235 851763.