



“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 carbon or plastic, resources that focus on living sustainably and environmental justice are given a green asterisk.

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

With a global, economic justice and/or creation care theme ...

***All We Can's** ['Travel Lightly'](#) downloadable resources (a full service, film, children's and young people's resources, etc) ask us “to consider the wilderness experiences we all journey through, but which have become the daily reality of many people in our world” and to reduce our own footprint in order to create a more sustainable world for others.

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 are also versions for [children](#) and [young people](#) – and you can sign up for weekly reflections.

Christian Aid's *Count Your Blessings* is available as a [downloadable leaflet](#). It contains very short daily notes focused on people from the Philippines, sharing something of their quest to overcome poverty, climate impacts and other issues, and encouraging us to pray, act and give to help change the lives of the world's poorest communities. There's also a [children's version](#) with weekly themes and suggestions for daily prayer, giving and or acting.

For many years, **Episcopal Relief and Development** in the US has been offering Lenten meditations written by staff and partners. This year, they've chosen meditations published over the past decade to share afresh. You can find them in a [downloadable publication](#) or [sign up](#) to receive them by daily email.

***Green Anglicans** is offering an opportunity to cut down on plastic use, with a [handy calendar of daily suggestions](#). They also still have the [2016 Carbon Fast](#) to download.

*The **Joint Public Issues Team's** *Living Lent* is a fully interactive resource. Participants are “invited to become part of a community who will respond to the call to climate action by making significant personal commitments to changing our lifestyles for the climate.” There are six communities, each with a particular focus, and support in the form of prayers, blogposts, and opportunities to share.

The **Mothers' Union** has [Lenten reflections and prayers](#) in its general faith resources section.

***Ruth Valerio** is inviting people to pursue a '[Plastic-less Lent](#)' “taking steps to reduce the amount of plastic we have in our lives” There are 'plastic-less tips' daily ... and lots of support.

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 [A New Heart](#). Each week it gives prayers for God's restorative and regenerative power to transform the lives of a different group of people in the Middle East and North Africa: women, men, married couples, parents, young people and the Church.

***Tearfund** is offering daily [email devotionals on the theme of 'Enough'](#) – and will be challenging its supporters to take the '[Plastic Pledge](#)' – to give up using one form of single-use plastic for 40 days.

The Anglican **Diocese of West Malaysia** produced in 2018 '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 daily offerings:

- Give up busy-ness (materials from [I'm not busy](#)).
- From **Biola University's Centre for Christianity, Culture and the Arts**, an [interactive Lent calendar](#) which offers each day a work of art, reading from scripture, poem, reflection, prayer and music.
- **Busted Halo's** [Fast, Pray, Give Lent Calendar](#) offers daily quotes with a challenge.
- The **Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College** has links to [this resource](#), which could serve as a guide to trying different spiritual practices during Lent.
- The **Church of England** is offering Lent Pilgrim reflections based on the booklet [Pilgrim Journeys: 40 Days of Reflection on the Beatitudes](#) by the Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft. You can [sign up](#) for daily emails exploring the reflections; each with “a short Bible reading, an invitation to reflect, a suggestion for prayer and a prompt to act.”
- the **Church Army's** '[Salt and Light](#)' offers weekly reflections and challenges looking at Matthew 5:13-16 ("You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world")
- **CMS** offers [daily mission-focused reflections and prayer suggestions](#)
- **Salisbury (C of E) Diocese's** '[Praying Together](#)' has daily readings with suggestions for reflection, prayer and action

- ***Sheffield (C of E) Diocese's [Lenten Challenge](#)**: An oldie but a goodie ... step away from meat, step towards Fairtrade
- **Space to Breathe** offers resources to help you '[Take the Silence Challenge](#)' in Lent
- You can get the daily suggestions for 'The Generosity Challenge' 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 resources include '[Sustainable Development](#)', a series of stories focused on the Sustainable Development Goals. Each week offers a Bible passage, a story from ABM's partners, information about particular goals, questions for reflection, prayers and action points.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand offers '[Living our lives with love](#)' – a weekly course keyed into the Sunday Gospel readings, with reflections, questions for discussion, prayers, action points and stories from Caritas partners.

Christian Aid 's [series of weekly reflections on the theme of "Journey through the wilderness"](#) from 2018 are still well worth using. 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 [The Mystery of God](#) and was prepared by the Mission Theology Advisory Group. It looks at some of the big theological questions – life and death, theodicy, God's glory; sin, suffering and hope; relationship and reconciliation; parenthood and adoption; love and sacrifice; joy and salvation. It first explores the themes as they apply to human life with stories, reflection points, prayers and actions – and then offers a theological reflection – with an invitation to meditation – on the themes as found in the mystery of God. Lots to grapple with here.

The Church Urban Fund offers a [series of studies](#) focusing on reducing loneliness and building community.

*The **Diocese of Bath and Wells** is offering '[Living Well in God's World](#)' which provides a booklet with a weekly theme explored in passages from the Bible, a biblical reflection, some facts, a prayer and daily challenges to choose from. There are also supplementary resources for families and schools.

*From the **Eco Spirituality Resources website** come two resources '[Spirituality of Soil: A Lenten journey from cosmic dust to Easter garden](#)', "created to help individuals and/or groups deepen their Lenten experience by increasing their appreciation of E/earth, God's living and acting within it, current threats to our soil, and how we can respond in faith" and a '[Laudato Si' Reflection Resource](#)'

Embrace the Middle East's Lent resource for this year is called [Living Fruitfully](#). Written by the Sanctuary Centre's Liz Baddaley, it offers a chance to "Explore the fruits of the Spirit and other key New Testament passages on growing in Christ-likeness; reflect on Jesus' own character; and be further inspired by our partners as they live fruitfully to bring transformation to those experiencing poverty or injustice in the Middle East today. " 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.

The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger** [Lent resource](#) draws on Scripture and stories from ELCA World Hunger partners worldwide – offering after each reflection points for repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love.

The **Global Catholic Climate Movement's** [Eating Simply resources](#) could be used for a series of Lent lunch discussions. It challenges families and church groups to move towards a more sustainable diet.

Lent Event is an initiative of Australia's Uniting Church. This year its focus is on courage. Resources include [five Bible study reflections](#) on the theme 'Living with courage in a fearful world'. For each there's a Bible passage followed by things to do, pray or discuss.

***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 a [Carbon Fast](#) that offers weekly reflections and suggestions for action.

Traidcraft's Lent resources (click [here](#); tick “church resources” and put Lent in the search box) 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.

Trocaire offers [sermons for each Sunday of Lent](#), which contain much for reflection. Their [Stations of the Cross](#), which relate the events of the Passion to the sufferings of those who are deprived of land rights, are also an excellent resource.

USPG's 2019 Lent study course is titled '[The Prophetic Voice of the Church](#)' and looks at the radical nature of the Gospel, with a focus on the church in India. Each week contains a story from the church in India, a Biblical passage with discussion questions, a contemplative exercise, and a prayer. Other past USPG Lent courses, looking at view of the Gospel, development, mission, migration, and other questions are also [available to download](#).

In 2017, the **Diocese of Wau (Episcopal Church of South Sudan)** produced '[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.

The **World Council of Churches'** [resources](#) are part of its Seven Weeks for Water series and focus on water justice in Asia. They consist of reflections on a biblical passage, with questions and action points, written by Asian Christian leaders. There's also liturgical material from the service that launched the series.

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.