

Church at Home

First Sunday of Lent



Before the Service

Welcome as we worship God together from across the Diocese of Oxford in Church at Home on this First Sunday of Lent.

We are delighted that the president today is the Revd Andrew Lightbown, rector of the Winslow Benefice, and that our address is given by the Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed ideas, prayers and music for this week's Church at Home as we move into Lent.

Ash Wednesday, celebrated last week, is the first day of Lent, the 40 days (not including Sundays) that precede Holy Week and Easter. In the Christian Scriptures, the number 40 relates to the period spent in the ark by Noah, the period spent by Israel seeking the Promised Land after the Exodus, and the amount of time Jesus was in the wilderness after his baptism and prior to beginning his ministry.

For us, the season of Lent is an invitation to 40 days of renewal, 40 days to prepare ourselves to take in the Good News of Easter through deeper disciplines of prayer, fasting and good works. It is about the discipline of letting something go to make space for God in our lives, to explore what life can be like living in the knowledge of God's love for us through our relationship with Jesus Christ. Lent is a season when people wrestle with all sorts of faith questions and prepare to be baptised, and Easter has always been the great occasion for this to happen.

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I have hoped all the day long.* *Psalm 25:3-4*

Thank you to everyone from across the Diocese who has made this service possible, including clergy and people from Reading, Winslow, Oxford, Henley, Chipping Norton, Waltham St Lawrence and Burnham.

Video before the service

Give Hope

*The Rt Revd Olivia Graham
Bishop of Reading*

COVID-19 has turned our world upside down. But this Lent, as we prepare for the good news of Easter, we have so much to be thankful for.

Each vaccination taken up is an act of love for those around us.

A way of showing our gratitude to all those that have made it possible.

A sign of hope for the future.

Music before the service

Toccata in sol maggiore by Théodore Dubois
Organist Steven Grahl (Christ Church Cathedral)

Greeting

President In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

President The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

The president welcomes the congregation gathered online and introduces the service.

Hymn

Lord, Reign in Me

**Over all the earth You reign on high,
Every mountain stream, every sunset sky,
But my one request, Lord, my only aim
Is that You'd reign in me again.**

Lord reign in me, reign in Your power,

**Over all my dreams, in my darkest hour,
You are the Lord of all I am;
So won't You reign in me again.**

**Over every thought, over every word,
May my life reflect the beauty of my Lord;
'cause You mean more to me than any earthly thing,
So won't you reign in me again.**

**Over all the earth You reign on high
Every mountain stream, every sunset sky
But my one request, Lord, my only aim
Is that You'd reign in me again.**

Brenton Brown - 2006

Performed by the worship team at St Mary's, Chipping Norton

Prayer of Preparation

All

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Prayers of Penitence

President

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God,
though we have rebelled against him.
Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask for his mercy
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

President

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:
fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

President We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
fill us with your Spirit.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

President We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:
fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

President Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

President Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

President 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.

All **Amen.**

We listen to God speaking through the Scriptures.

First Reading

Genesis 9:8-17 (NRSV)

Read by Jecca Bryan (St Margaret of Antioch, Harpsden)

Reader A reading from Genesis chapter 9.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

Second Reading

Psalms 25:1-9 (NIV 1985)

Read by Ann Lewis (St Mary's, Chipping Norton)

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
In you I trust, O my God;
 do not let me be put to shame;
 nor let my enemies triumph over me.
No one whose hope is in you will be put to shame;
 but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without cause.
Show me your ways, O my God;
 teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me,
 for you are God my Saviour;
 and my hope is in you all day long.
Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love,
 for they are of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth or my rebellious ways;

according to your love remember me,
for you are good, O Lord!
Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
He guides the humble in what is right,
and teaches them his way.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God**

Gradual Hymn
Fight the Good Fight

**Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right:
lay hold on life, and it shall be
thy joy and crown eternally.**

**Run the straight race through God's good grace,
lift up thine eyes, and seek his face;
life with its way before us lies,
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.**

**Cast care aside; lean on thy guide
his boundless mercy will provide;
trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove,
Christ is its life and Christ its love.**

**Faint not, nor fear, his arms are near;
he changeth not, and thou art dear;
only believe, and thou shalt see
that Christ is all in all to thee.**

Melody attributed to John Hatton (d. 1793)
Words: John S B Monsell (1911-1875)
Sung by the Waltham St Lawrence Virtual Voices,
Musical director Simon Shaw, organist Dr Camilla Jarnot

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:9-15 (NRSV)

Read by Revd Samson Kuponiyi (St Peter's, Burnham)

Deacon Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

All **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Deacon Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

All **Glory to you, O Christ.**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Deacon This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection

The Rt Revd Olivia Graham
Bishop of Reading

The Creed

President Let us affirm our faith in God.

All **We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and
the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Led by Margaret Thewsey (Shiplake with Dunsden and Harpsden)

We bring ourselves to a place of quiet and stillness as we pray.

The response to the prayers is:

Intercessor Lord, meet us in the silence.
All **Give us strength and hear our prayer.**

At the end we say:

Intercessor Merciful Father,
All **accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Music for reflection

○ the deep deep love of Jesus

Words: Samuel Trevor Francis (1834-1925)

Music: 'Ebenezer' by Thomas John Williams (1869-1944)

*Sung by the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church,
recorded in 2013, conducted by John Padley*

The Peace

President Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace. *Romans 5:1-2*

President The peace of the Lord be always with you.
All **And also with you.**

*Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church.
Although we are separated by distance, we are one Body of Christ; the Spirit moves
among us as we share Christ's peace.*

Preparation of the Table

President God of mercy and compassion,
your Word calls us home to faith and love.
Accept all we offer you this day;
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

All **Amen**

The Eucharistic Prayer

President The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

President Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

President Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

President It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God, everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer, acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through the study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

President

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is given for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

All

Great is the mystery of faith.
**Christ has died. Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

President

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send your Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of
The blessed Virgin Mary, St Frideswide and all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever and ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

President As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:
All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

President Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup,
All **we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes in glory.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

President God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
All **Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
in the glory of God the Father.**

The president receives the bread and wine on behalf of the community as we make our 'spiritual communion'; taking time to notice God's presence with us and trust that, as we desire communion with God, God will meet us in our hearts by faith.

There are no special words or actions required for this; only true desire, lively faith and genuine love. If you find it helpful you may wish to use the following prayer, or simply listen to the music and meditate upon God's love for you.

Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock. You wait for me and only I can let you in. I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with your presence. Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood, that I may be your blessing to a world in need. Amen.

Music During Communion

Taizé: Wait for the Lord *Sung by the Christ Church College Choir, Oxford*

**Wait for the Lord,
whose day is near,
Wait for the Lord,
Keep watch, take heart**

Prayer after Communion

President Let us pray.
Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him
who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Blessing and Dismissal

President May God the Father,
who does not despise the broken spirit,
give you a contrite heart.

All **Amen.**

President May Christ,
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
heal you by his wounds.

All **Amen.**

President May the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into all truth,
speak to you words of pardon and peace.

All **Amen.**

President And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen**

President Go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.**

**O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight
and to the rescue came.**

**O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail.**

**And in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach his brethren, and inspire
to suffer and to die.**

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.**

*Words by John Henry Newman (1801-1890)
Music: 'Gerontius' John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876)
Sung by singers from St Andrew's Church, Oxford*

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[unicef.org.uk/donate/jan21-em-covax/](https://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/jan21-em-covax/)

#twinmyvaccine

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Our lead liturgist this week was Revd Philippa White, precentor and school chaplain, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. The producer was Revd Sarah Nesbitt, assistant curate, United Benefice of Shiplake with Dunsden and Harpsden.

Church at Home is produced each week by Revd Charlotte Bannister-Parker, associate chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford; and Steven Buckley, director of communications; with the help of Emma Thompson, digital communications officer, and Mark Robinson of Digital Creative.

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COME AND SEE

You're invited

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