

The Lenten Cross

1st March

First Sunday in Lent – stones

Today is the first Sunday in Lent. This year we have a Lenten Cross to help us think about Jesus and his sacrificial love for us. The cross is made from the trunk of the Christmas tree that stood in church just a few weeks ago, reminding us of God's love given to us through the birth of Jesus. Each week we will add a new symbol to the cross, reflect on what this tells us about Jesus, and be given something to think about on our Lent journey.

On the first Sunday in Lent, as Jesus endures the temptations and decides to put his trust in the God of the covenant, rather than take the easy or even sensible way, we place stones at the foot of our Lenten Cross. (*Place stones at the foot of the cross.*)

(Mark 1:11-15)

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 forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Let us pray:

God of covenant, help us not so much to focus on what we 'give up' this Lent as on how much we 'give in' to your ways. Amen.

8th March

Second Sunday in Lent - red ribbon

On the second Sunday in Lent we place a red ribbon round the Lenten Cross as we remember that the call upon Jesus and upon us is not an easy one – it is costly and often makes us different from the rest of society. (*Place the ribbon round the cross.*)

(Mark 8 v34 & 35)

Jesus said: "If anyone wants to follow me he must first forget about himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever is willing to lose his life for my sake and the Gospel will be saved."

Let us pray:

Most holy God, give us the desire to reject evil, no matter how profitable or popular it appears. Help us to seek to do the right thing, even though it costs us dearly. Amen.

15th March

Third Sunday in Lent - coins

On this third Sunday in Lent we place coins on the cross to remember the cleansing of the temple. (*Attach bag of coins to the cross.*)

(John 2: 13-16)

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

Let us pray:

Help us God to love you and your ways: to respect the wisdom of our elders, protect the lives and reputations of those around us, cherish the relationships entrusted to us, and learn the value of enough. In Jesus' name. Amen.

22nd March

Fourth Sunday in Lent - Mothering Sunday – Methodist Orb

The fourth Sunday in Lent is Mothering Sunday. We place a Methodist Orb on the cross - a symbol that declares that the love of Christ reaches round the globe. It is for all. (*Place the orb on the cross.*)

(John 3 v16 & 17)

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved.

Let us pray:

Help us, loving God, to live as people who know that we are loved, not condemned. Amen.

29th March

Fifth Sunday in Lent - Passion Sunday – crown of thorns

On this fifth Sunday in Lent, Passion Sunday, we place a crown of thorns on the cross as Jesus is mocked before his death. (*Place crown of thorns on the cross.*)

(John 19v 1 - 3)

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.

Let us pray:

God of those who suffer, draw near to us in our need, that we may bring your peace and presence to those who feel separated from you. Amen.

5th April

Sixth Sunday in Lent - Palm Sunday – palm cross

On this sixth Sunday in Lent we attach palms to the Lenten Cross. What kind of King is this? (*Place palm cross on the cross.*)

(Mark 11: 8-10)

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Let us pray:

In this most holy of weeks help us to stay close to Jesus that we may recognise the unfolding work of God. Amen.



10th April

Good Friday - sign

On Good Friday we attach a sign to the Lenten Cross. It names Jesus as 'King of the Jews'. (*Place the sign at the top of the cross.*)

(John 19:17-19)

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'

Let us pray:

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. Amen.

12th April

Easter Sunday - flowers

On this Easter Sunday we bring flowers and place them on the cross. We transform this cross from a symbol of death into something which speaks of life and beauty and of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. (*Congregation bring flowers forward and place them on the cross.*)

Christ is risen - He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

