**Lent at St. Barnabas, Downham**

Whilst reflecting on the penitential aspect of ashing, it is important to also reflect on the sign of the cross.

“The Christian begins Lent by receiving once again the mark of the cross, in dust because of human fallenness, but nevertheless it is a cross, put back where it belongs as the Lenten journey to the cross of Christ begins.”

*(Michael Perham, New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy)*

**Wednesdays in Lent – Mass and Study**

Our evening Mass at 7.00 p.m. will be followed by a Bible study in the Vicarage as we reflect on our own Christian journey.

**Fridays in Lent – Mass and Coffee Morning**

On Fridays, following our 10.00 a.m. Mass, we will hold a Lent Coffee morning to support the Bishop’s Lent Call.

**Saturdays in Lent – Reflection and Lunch**

At 12 noon we hold a short service with music, silence and reflection followed by a simple lunch of bread and soup in support of the Bishop’s Lent Call.

**Sundays in Lent at 4.00 p.m. – Stations of the Cross**

During Lent we will have a short service on Sunday afternoons reflecting on the journey that Jesus took carrying his cross through the streets of Jerusalem. The Stations reflect the encounters that Jesus had on this journey and are depicted by the 15 Stations on the walls of the Church.

Each week we will reflect on the journey and think about how we identify with Jesus’ suffering.

I do hope you will be able to join with us as we observe Lent this year.

**Fr. Stuart**

**Lent at St. Barnabas, Downham**

Lent is a time of direct preparation for the keeping of Easter and historically the season was at first of particular concern to two groups of people – those who were preparing for baptism at Easter and those excluded by sin who were to be restored to the Church’s Eucharistic fellowship.

However all Christian people have come to recognise that they are being summoned during Lent to a renewal of their baptismal covenant and a deepening of their penitence.

The themes of Lent are self-denial, penance, study, almsgiving and preparation for Easter.

Our liturgy reflects this, with the Gloria omitted, liturgical colours are purple and the church is bare of flowers and decoration.

The traditional period of Lent is 40 days, a reminder of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness after his baptism, being tested by Satan.

The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history and now in the West it is usual to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week, excluding Sundays, so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter.

Within the period of Lent there are some distinct themes and services.

**Ash Wednesday – 14th February**

The formal start of Lent, with a service that has a strong penitential theme, including the imposition of ashes. With or without sackcloth, ashes have been a sign of sorrow, mourning or repentance since biblical times (e.g. Esther 4 v 1, Job 46 v 2, Jeremiah 6 v 26). The ashes are traditionally made from the burnt palm crosses of the previous year.

**Lent Services and Events**

During Lent we have a pattern of services on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays which will follow the same format unless otherwise highlighted.

**Wednesday 14th February – Ash Wednesday**

7.30 p.m. Sung Mass with Imposition of Ashes

**Wednesdays in Lent**

**(21st, 28th Feb, 7th, 14th, 21st March)**

7.00 p.m. Said Mass followed by Lent Bible Study (Vicarage)

*We reflect on our own Lenten journey through prayer and informal study.*

**Fridays in Lent**

**(16th, 23rd Feb, 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd March)**

10.00 a.m. Said Mass followed by Lent Coffee Morning

*Reflections on the Projects supported by the Bishop’s Lent Call and shared fellowship in support of the Bishop’s Lent Call.*

**Saturdays in Lent**

**(17th, 24th Feb, 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th March)**

12 Noon – Lent Meditation followed by Lent Lunch

*Reflective service followed by a simple lunch in support of the Bishop’s Lent Call.*

**Sundays in Lent**

**Sunday 18th February – 1st Sunday of Lent**

9.30 a.m. Sung Mass and Junior Church

4.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

*A quiet meditation on the Stations of the Cross*

**Sunday 25th February – 2nd Sunday of Lent**

9.30 a.m. Sung Mass and Junior Church

4.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 4th March – 3rd Sunday of Lent**

9.30 a.m. Sung Mass and Junior Church

4.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 11th March – Mothering Sunday**

9.30 a.m. All-Age Eucharist and Parade

4.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

**Sunday 18th March– 5th Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)**

9.30 a.m. Sung Mass with Passion Reading.

4.00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

*A separate leaflet will be issued for Holy Week, which starts on Palm Sunday, 25th March and for the Easter season*

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