have been asking about faith or might enjoy the chance to chat. And, of course, a lot of people might benefit from the chance to revisit the core of our faith, so do think if you would enjoy this yourself- it will take place on Wed at 7, leading into Compline.

**Lenten thoughts from the Rev’d Andrew Dotchin**

I know what it is to be noisy and for that reason I cherish the blessed season of Lent – a time set apart to listen, a time of ‘less mouth and more ears’. Lent will be blessed indeed if sometime these forty days we can find a place and time to sit and listen to the voice of The One Who Loves us Best. Each of us, with just a little effort, should be able to find some time and space each day in Lent to do just a little less and listen a little more.

**To Do**: Some suggestions on finding space to listen:

• Set an egg timer running – Look at the sands as they fall and allow yourself to settle. Be still and open your ears to God,

• Set your alarm clock five minutes earlier and hit the snooze button when it goes off - Don’t get up until your normal rising time. Spend the extra time consciously listening.

• If you listen to the news on the radio do nothing else (be still, keep quiet) whilst ‘the pips’ are broadcast - Then listen for God’s cry of love for a broken world in the news reports.

**To Pray**: Teach me, dear Lord,

frequently and attentively to consider this truth:

that if I gain the whole world and lose You,

in the end I have lost everything;

whereas if I lose the world and gain You,

in the end I have lost nothing. *(Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890)*

The Parish of St Paul, Wokingham

**Keeping Lent Well in 2021**

The Lenten Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,

you hate nothing that you have made

and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:

create and make in us new and contrite hearts

that we, worthily lamenting our sins

and acknowledging our wretchedness,

may receive from you, the God of all mercy,

perfect remission and forgiveness;

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. **Amen.**

An Introduction

Lent is an ancient gift to the Church and to us as individuals. It was traditionally the season in which new Christians prepared themselves to be baptised at Easter and, over the centuries, it has become 40 days (starting at Ash Wednesday) in which we go into the desert with Jesus and simplify our lives and come back to God so that we can enter into the drama and disaster of Holy Week with determination and focus and truly appreciate the resurrection light of Easter Day. It is a gift to the Church and to each of us. It is an invitation to put God once more at the heart of our lives. It is the call to push aside the stuff and accretion of daily life and remember what is truly of worth.

In this most challenging of years, the Clergy Team urge you to take up something extra and life-giving for Lent. We have already given up so much and missed out on so much over these last months. Take something up- make a new commitment- do something you will enjoy or which will help others- and, Bertie the Reporter would add, do let us know what you’re doing so that your story can be a further encouragement to others.

Suggestions for what you can do alone

1. Commit to doing something **you will enjoy** for Lent, or something you used to enjoy and have got out of the habit of doing.
2. Buy a new and lovely notebook and **write out** the whole of Mark’s Gospel, a few verses a day, as a way of inhabiting the Gospel and getting deep into the story.
3. Read all of **Mark’s Gospel** over the season of Lent and make a note of what you notice and enjoy
4. Take a photo of **a sign of hope** every day and build them into a slideshow or collage
5. Lee Abbey Christian Community are running a Lent Course online which is free and looks really interesting, around **encounters with Jesus**. You can do it whenever you like during Lent. [Crossing an Unknown Sea – Lent Retreat – Lee Abbey Devon](https://leeabbeydevon.org.uk/programme/crossing-an-unknown-sea-lent-retreat/)
6. Produce a Lenten **musical playlist** which helps you to travel with Jesus- or write a haiku every day.
7. Work through the **Lent Course** on your own if Tuesday evenings don’t work- [United Society Partners in the Gospel | For Such a Time (uspg.org.uk)](https://uspg.org.uk/forsuchatime)

Suggestions for doing things with others

1. The **Ash Wednesday** service will take place on Wed the 17th of Feb at 8pm on the usual online platforms- it really matters that we start Lent well and start it together, so please put it in your diary.
2. **Involve other people**- now is the time to re-start your prayer triplet, or have a regular Zoom meeting with your Tithings Group, or…
3. **Morning Prayer** happens every Mon and Thurs at 8.30am. Why not download the Daily Prayer app on your phone and commit to coming along via Zoom (for the moment): Meeting ID: 753 2006 4518, Passcode: 024453
4. We are going to do **Compline (Night Prayer)** every Wednesday from the 24th of Feb at 8.00pm on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 880 4760 4115 Passcode: 996458

1. The **Lenten Bible Course** this year is USPG’s course on our responsibility for creation- For such a time as this. Come along to be part of the conversation at 7.15pm every Tuesday, starting on Feb the 16th, after the Pancake Party. The Course is here: [United Society Partners in the Gospel | For Such a Time (uspg.org.uk)](https://uspg.org.uk/forsuchatime) and this is the Zoom link to the Sessions: Meeting ID: 839 9739 4879 Passcode: 132087
2. **Come and See** is the new Diocesan initiative which is aiming to make deeper contact with people who might have found Church online during lockdown and would like to know more. [How to ask deep questions of faith (anglican.org)](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/) We are running a course during Lent- please contact Richard or Louise Cole if you would like to find out more, and do pass on the idea to others who you know who