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CONNECT

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*Draw near to God, and he
will draw near to you.
James 4:8*

Dear Friends,

the six weeks before Easter is called the "Lenten Season", this year starting 2 March. It is a time to focus on the suffering, death and resurrection of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus died, and "paid the price" for our sins, we are redeemed and have new life in him. However, it is also useful to learn some information, or rather refresh our knowledge about Lent (in a "quiz style")

The word "lent" means "lengthen" and stands for that time in spring when the days grow longer. The original period of Lent was 40 hours. It was spent fasting to commemorate the suffering of Christ and the 40 hours He spent in the tomb. In the early 3rd century, Lent was lengthened to 6 days. About 800 AD it was changed to 40 days. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 40 days before Easter. Sundays are not included in those 40 days. Those 40 days correspond with Christ's 40 days in the wilderness.

Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, is celebrated in many parts of the world with feasting. The French call it "Mardi Gras". The Germans call it "Fausching". The feasting comes from the custom of using up household fats to make pancakes prior to the 40 days of Lenten fasting, when no fat is used.

German bakers made pretzels in Lent first in the 12th century to represent a Christian at prayer, with his palms on opposite shoulders, making a crisscross of his forearms (the word "bracellae" means "little arms", later changed to brezel or pretzel). Shrove Tuesday takes its name from "shriving" or forgiving sins. The word "carnival", in relation to Mardi Gras means "good-bye to meat".

Traditionally, in Lent the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only in order to support the singing. In early England, women of the parish traditionally spent Holy Week scrubbing the church, so it would sparkle for the Festival of Easter.

Through all this tradition we can see that Lent very much helps us focus on one's devotional life and spirituality in the context of Jesus'

Passion, death and resurrection. As Christ fasted and prayed in the desert for forty days, let us try to be mindful of his self-denial in the context of our own "wilderness experience". In order to facilitate that we give up on unnecessary luxuries and wrong habits and value God's Word, leadership of the Spirit in our lives and the fellowship with each other instead. Lent is also a time for reflection. We can grow in understanding of God's call on our lives and in understanding of what journeying with Jesus might mean for us in the context of our own "wilderness". Perhaps, we can reflect on what Christ has done for us, and then asking what we can do for him, as individuals and as a witnessing church.

With Christian love, John

World Day of Prayer

Please note there is only one service this year and it will take place at Christ Church on Friday 4th March 2022 at 2.30 pm. Everyone welcome.

In the light of the situation of Russia and Ukraine, the World Day of Prayer International Committee has invited us to prepare an additional prayer of intercession for use throughout the world on 4 March – see front cover

Annual Church Meeting

This will take place on Sunday 20th March following worship and lunch. This is a time to reflect on the reports (including finance) for 2021 and only questions relating to these items will be addressed at this meeting.

Lunch will cost £5.00 per person with all proceeds going to Commitment for Life. If you wish to attend, please let Isabel have your name by Sunday 13th March. We hope you will all be able to attend.

Commitment for Life Prayer

Prayer for Christian Aid

In the midst of silence words are not spoken
No translations required.
In the depth of silence I am called to listen.

Listen to your heartbeat, and the blowing of
your wind.
Listen to the movement and diversity of the Spirit.
Be still, says the Lord and know that I am God.

Listen to the cry of the voiceless.
Listen to the poor and excluded
Listen to the hungry and oppressed.
Listen to the widows and her children.

Be swift to hear and slow to speak.
You are called to love and serve all humanity.
You are called to stand with the lost and broken.
You are called to establish God's values
throughout the earth.

Spirit of God breath on us again,
That we might hear, see and build a shared life.
Mould us and open us up to new dreams and
new hopes,
A new life in Jesus Christ. Amen

Dionne Gravesande (Christian Aid)

The URC daily devotions

The URC daily devotions can be accessed via devotions.urc.org.uk
These are approx 5 minutes long. The Sunday service can be
accessed from the same site.

“When It’s Over” by Roger McGough

What will we have learned from stillness and silence?
From sharing, not taking? Waiting, not pushing?
Whispering, not shouting? Dawdling, not rushing?
When life is back to normal and hugging is over
Will we look beyond ourselves and help the Earth recover?

This morning, the only cloud.
On the horizon is a cloud.

Without fear of intrusion,
it drifts above, full of itself.

The sky, has it had a facial?
Its skin positively glows.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane?
Superman? No, just a bird.

And on a branch, another one is singing.
The purity of the note!

No need today to clear it's throat.
If trees could smile, surely this one would.

Imprisoned for our sins,
is now the time to question why?

When it's over, what lessons?
Ask the tree, the bird and the sky.
Thanks Patricia

Communion Offering for March

Nailsea Leg Club

The aim of the leg club is to provide high quality, evidence-based clinical treatment by qualified NHS nurses whilst alongside providing refreshments, social interaction and fun.

More information: [Leg Club - Tyntesfield Medical Group](#)

CHURCH EVENTS DIARY – March 2022		
SUNDAY 6TH	SUNDAY WORSHIP with Mr Brian Jones	11.00AM
SUNDAY 13TH	SUNDAY COMMUNION WORSHIP with Rev.d Ruth Browning	11.00AM
SUNDAY 20TH	SUNDAY WORSHIP with Mr Delwyn Tilke	11.00AM
SUNDAY 27TH	MOTHERING SUNDAY WORSHIP with Rev.d John Gray	11.00AM
SUNDAY 3RD	SUNDAY WORSHIP – Café Style with Rev'd Helena McKinnon	11.00AM

Flower Rota March

Offers to arrange in a vase appreciated. Please speak to Sally or Barbara.
Also if you are aware of anyone who would appreciate receiving some flowers please let an elder know.

March 6th Sally
March 13th Mary and Jeff
March 20th
March 27th Mothering Sunday Flower fund

Written by Rev Michael Hopkins

Eating a sausage on Ash Wednesday 2022 marks the 500th anniversary of a very important event, and sausage is far more appropriate than an act of piety at home or in church! The Reformation began in Zurich on Ash Wednesday 1522 – 500 years ago this year – and it all started with a sausage, or rather several sausages.

Ulrich Zwingli was the Pastor of a church known as the Grossmünster in Zurich, Switzerland. This wasn't the first time Zwingli was in trouble – he had form from preaching along the same lines as Erasmus and Luther, but this was Zwingli's first rift with the established religious authorities. During the Lenten fast of 1522 Zwingli was invited to join a sausage supper that Christoph Froschauer, a printer in the city, served to his workers who were seemingly worn out from printing a new edition of The Epistles of Saint Paul. Various civic and church leaders were present, and the meal involved Swiss Fasnachtskiechli and some slices of sharp smoked hard sausage. The eating of meat during Lent was prohibited, and Froschauer was arrested.

Though Zwingli did not eat the sausages himself, he quickly defended Froschauer from allegations of heresy, giving a detailed defence of this call in a sermon called "Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen" (Regarding the Choice and Freedom of Foods), in which he used Martin Luther's teachings to show that "Christians are free to fast or not to fast because the Bible does not prohibit the eating of meat during Lent," that is to say that fasting should be entirely voluntary, not mandatory. Zwingli was setting out the view of the Reformers that Lent was a matter for personal choice, rather than a rule for everyone

Once news of this outrage broke, Hugo von Hohenlandenberg, the Bishop of Konstanz, was so wound up by Zwingli's preaching that he called for a rule banning the preaching of any of the Reformation doctrines in Switzerland. This was too little and too late, as Zwingli went on to be a revered figure in Swiss Protestantism.

Thanks Julie Kirby

Change All Around Me

Everything is farther away than it used to be. It is twice as far to the corner and they added a hill, I notice.

I have given up running for the bus; it leaves faster than it used to. It seems to me they are making the steps steeper than in the old days, and have you noticed the smaller print they are using in the newspapers today?

There is no sense in asking anyone to read aloud, everyone speaks in a such a low voice that I can hardly hear them! And the material in clothes is getting so skimpy, especially round the hips and waist. Even people are changing they are so much younger than they used to be when I was their age.

On the other hand people of my age are so much older than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and she had aged so much she did not recognise me.

I got to thinking about the poor thing whilst combing my hair this morning and while I was doing that I glanced at my reflection and do know what?

They don't make mirrors like they used to.

More Senior thoughts

Now that I am older, here is what I have discovered

I started out with nothing.... I still have most of it

It is easier to get older than get wiser

Why is it when the world beats a path to your door you're in the bathroom?

Funny but I don't remember being absent minded.

Thanks Barbara

A man collapsed at this work desk, he was taken to his doctor who referred him to the hospital —diagnosis--- Nervous Exhaustion. On being questioned the patient explained that his confusion started when he married.

He married a widow who had a grownup daughter who then was his stepdaughter

The patient's father fell in love with her and married her "my stepdaughter was now my stepmother", he said "my wife and I later had a son who was then my father's brother in law since he was the half-brother of my step daughter who was my father's wife."

"As my new son was brother to my step mother he became my uncle." "So my wife is also my step grandmother, since she is my stepmothers mother."

"As I am married to my step grandmother I am not only my wife's grandson and husband I am also my own grandfather !!!!.

The doctor listening to this saga then ran screaming from the consulting room and is now in an induced coma.

Thanks Patrick