

# Resources for Worship – The beginning of Lent

An occasional series from the Diocesan Worship and Liturgy Committee

*It's the journey and the wilderness that count!* Lent is one of the few church observances that still strikes a faint chord in the hearts of a reasonable proportion of parishioners. The caricature is weight loss drives or plans for a dry six weeks that usually last about six days. Our challenge is to provide something more enduring. Rather than desperately trying to reach any targets (7lbs or not a single Mars bar) we offer a safe opportunity to acknowledge our own need of God's loving forgiveness. Christ died to save sinners rather than God challenging us to be good enough to meet him. Here are some ideas.

## Pancakes and fire: the Sunday before Lent

*Why not use this Sunday to make a link with Ash Wednesday by burning palm crosses at the end of the service? After this everyone can share drop scone pancakes with their tea and coffee.*

Before the service, bake last year's palm crosses for 10 minutes in a hot oven and chop them into about 4 pieces each. Place them in an old casserole dish and put them in front of the altar for the service

During the final hymn, but before the Blessing, invite the whole congregation to follow the cross, and someone carrying the palms, outside. If you have a choir, invite them to lead and line the porch so that the singing inside and outside is not too out of sync.

Once the hymn is ended, say the following prayer (or another of your own creation), light the palms, and keep any pyrotechnic 10 year olds at a safe distance.

After a blessing and dismissal, return for pancakes and coffee.

### Prayer for burning of palms

God of all grace, you bring healing and wholeness to all creation:  
Gather us in your name;  
And light the fire of your love in our lives.  
Help us as we start the journey of Lent;  
make us ready to follow your Son Jesus Christ  
who fasted 40 days,  
entered Jerusalem in triumph,  
shared our dusty humanity,  
died on a cross to share our pain,  
rose from the dead to bring us  
forgiveness of sins  
and ascended to bring us the glory of heaven.  
In his name. Amen

## Anointing in ash on Lent 1

If you are finding that attendances on Ash Wednesday are reducing, try using the first Sunday of Lent as a day for anointing in ash as well. Properly explained it can be an incredibly powerful experience for all ages.

Move the confession to after the Creed, use the sermon to explain what will happen and give some ideas on how to engage with it.

You might like to use the 10 commandments or silence to help people prepare. After a suitable confession invite people to stand before a large cross to be anointed in ash (use the words in Times and Seasons)

Give people permission to take part in some or all of it or miss bits out! You can do this by inviting people to receive the sign of a cross in ash on their forehead as a sign of our fallen humanity but give them the option to just stand before cross and not receive ash if they prefer. Others will wish to stay in their seats throughout and it is important to give permission for this as well.

During this the choir could sing the Lent prose or a Taize anthem.

After the Absolution you can build in some simple intercessions or go straight into the Peace.

If you are really adventurous you can make a link with anointing in ash at the beginning of Lent 40 days before Easter and anointing in glitter at Ascension 40 days after Easter.



## Music

<http://godspacelight.com/2014/02/20/music-resources-for-lent/> Christ has walked this path

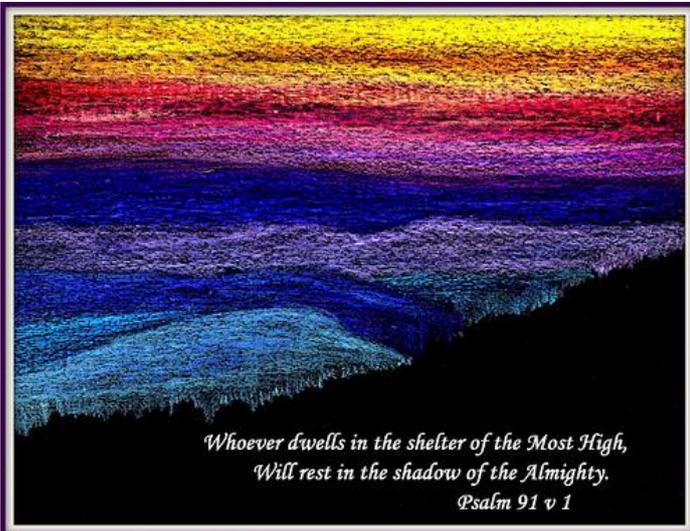
This is a beautiful piece of music for reflection. The copyright is Sola Scriptura songs/Ark music  
The site also has a lot of other suggestions worth looking at

## Lenten display

Why not start a Lenten display with a table focussed around Ash Wednesday containing some objects which help people think about their own need of God's forgiving love. Perhaps include a footprint in sand, or some ash for people to use, or a bare branch or a prayer card to take away. The possibilities are endless!

You could invite a different member of the congregation to co-ordinate an extra table for each Sunday in Lent, perhaps based on the Gospel readings for that week.

## Picture



*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High,  
Will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
Psalm 91 v 1*

This comes from a website which invites you to make a donation if you use an image or subscribe for about a dollar a week.

<https://stushieart.com/tag/lenten-art/>

## Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0b2GFdxuVk>

God my rock

This is a great song that would fit well at the beginning of Lent

## Video

There are loads of possibilities. Here are three:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAuB-3V46zk>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqkYAD\\_MukM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqkYAD_MukM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxV2Bs9Rr0A>

Alternatively, just type in Lent video into your search engine and have an enjoyable browse! Some you will have to purchase but others will be free.

## Poem

Malcolm Guite has written a beautiful sonnet for Ash Wednesday.

Visit

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2012/02/20/ash-wednesday/>

But remember to get permission if you are printing it.

If you have interesting ideas about worship around the beginning of Lent, feel free to email them to us at

[stalbandswlc@gmail.com](mailto:stalbandswlc@gmail.com)

We will endeavour to circulate them.

Similarly if you want more details about anything on this sheet, please email us.

To sign up to what we hope will be a regular monthly sheet on ideas for worship, email us at the same address asking to be put onto the circulation list.

We plan for the next sheet to themed around ideas for worship in Holy Week and Easter Day. Let us know if you have items you think are worth including.