

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 54

lent, easter, pentecost

5 march to 8 june 2025

A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

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introduction

Welcome to the sixth in a series of eight issues of Spill the Beans through which we are taking an alternative journey through the Scripture over a two year period. Having spent the previous year with The Women's Lectionary, and not at the beginning point of either the Revised Common Lectionary or the Narrative Lectionary, this has been an opportunity for thinking about a different way to engage the Scripture with a contemporary setting.

Word And World Lectionary

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team took time out to consider the way forward and with enthusiasm embarked on creating our own two year lectionary. We had past experience with our "Path Less Travelled" lectionary in 2018-19 which was inspired by user feedback.

This time we decided to deliberately and methodically to engage Word and World using the device of special days and themes. For instance, using United Nations' focus days, or saints days, or particular festivals. We have shaped these into short thematic series. We would encourage engagement both with the Scriptural texts for each day and to use this as an opportunity for your congregation to engage with some of the international themes that arise.

This is a different approach for us and we hope it will be inspiring to you in your worship as we pray it will be for us as we lead worship in our own settings.

We have decided to keep the format for the layout of the issues as we have used in the past year, and to encourage the development of intergenerational worship.

Intergenerational Worship

Spill the Beans has always been rooted in the power of story telling. Story binds generations together. In that shared bond of story lies the creative space for building relationships between generations. Using different ways to engage with the story recognises the variety amongst us all: some learn by listening, others by doing, others by creating. All are valuable and a part of our shared worship of God.

We are encouraging you to experiment as we will be doing with ways to worship intergenerationally in an authentic and inclusive manner. To that end we are still providing a rich variety of resources but grouped by how they help us **'tell the story'**, **'explore the story'**, and **'live the story'**. Mix and match, rewrite, contextualise for your own setting, try something different, and have fun with it! Please do give us feedback.

There are many resources online to help think more deeply about intergenerational worship. A simple but very helpful summary is provided by the Methodist Church, copied below.

Intergenerational worship IS about:

- **building relationships**—offering a key time for people to get to know each other better and build a sense of connection;
- **a time of worship and learning that is offered in a simplified and participatory way**—simple does not mean shallow; rather it enables everyone to contribute and receive in a meaningful and appropriate way;
- **providing an inclusive experience and a sense of belonging**—helping everyone of all abilities to feel part of the body of Christ, whatever their experience;
- **being a bridge**—not only between ages but also for those who are exploring what being part of a church means. This relaxed service style can provide a comfortable place for some to discover more about Christianity;
- **encouragement, nurture and inclusiveness**—it is a means by which faith can grow and, in turn, inform life-making or life-changing decisions;
- **exploring vocation**—an opportunity to discover and develop gifts and calling.

Intergenerational worship is NOT about:

- limiting the richness of resources used;
- oversimplifying the message or adding a children's talk into the 'usual' service;
- unstructured and chaotic worship;
- children having token responsibilities for roles and participation;
- limiting potential to explore faith and discipleship together;
- nuclear families exclusively worshipping together.

Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

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the team

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Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

- | | |
|------|---|
| ATAS | All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need |
| CG | Common Ground |
| CH4 | Church Hymnary, 4th Edition |
| GTG | Glory To God: The Presbyterian Hymnal |
| GWA | God Welcomes All (Supplement to CH4) |
| JP | Junior Praise |
| MP | Complete Mission Praise |
| STF | Singing The Faith |
| WGP | Wild Goose Publications |



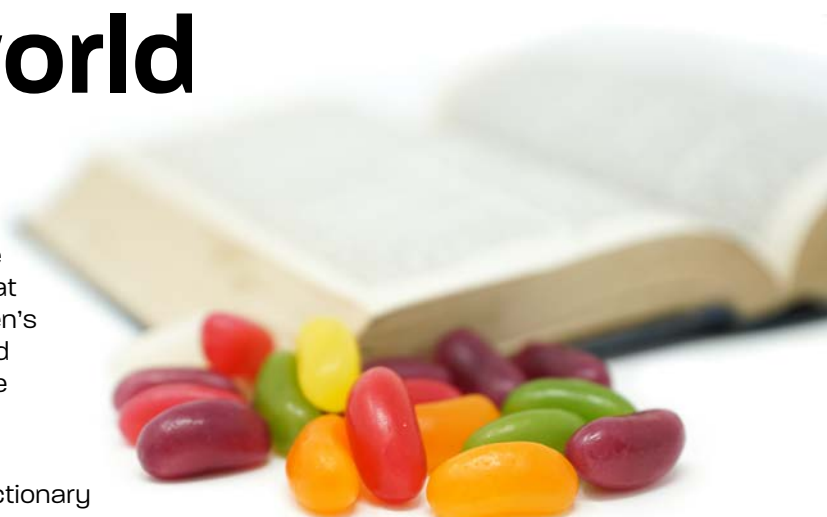
word and world

Lectionary

December 2023—November 2025

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team have been exploring ideas on what to do following our year with The Women's Lectionary. As we are mid-stream in both Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary, we decided to take the opportunity to do something different.

This is our second foray into creating our own lectionary following The Path Less Travelled in 2018/19. The inspiration for this new plan was to connect the worship of the church more systematically with events that are happening around and outside the church. This includes 'national' or 'world' days, particular seasonal events and people. We are excited at the opportunity this may give us to engage with other events. Some are very serious such as International Holocaust Memorial Day, while others may inspire some fun such as National Ice Cream Day and one close to our hearts... Jelly Bean Day!



As always, this is invitational, and you are welcome to join us as and how is right in your own setting. We pray it is a jumping off point for your own engagement of Word and World.

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Links/Notes
YEAR 1					
3 Dec 23	Advent 1	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 8:1-4	Abolition of Slavery (2 Dec)/Persons of Disability
10 Dec 23	Advent 2		Malachi 3:1-7	Galatians 5:13-14	Human Rights Day
17 Dec 23	Advent 3		Isaiah 16:2-5	Luke 1:5-25	International Migrant's Day (18 Dec)
24 Dec 23	Advent 4	Christmas	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 1:39-56	
25 Dec 23	Christmas Day		Luke 2:1-20	1 John 4:7-9,13-21	
31 Dec 23	Christmas 1		Matthew 2:1-15	Micah 5:1-5a	
7 Jan 24	Epiphany 1	Unwrapping	Luke 1:1-4	John 1:19-31	Beginnings, setting up calendars, Orthodox Christmas
14 Jan 24	Epiphany 2		Luke 4:16-30	Psalm 119:97-108	Flourishing, St Mungo
21 Jan 24	Epiphany 3		Luke 6:20-26	Psalm 1	Blessings, use "A Man's A Man" by Robert Burns
28 Jan 24	Epiphany 4		Luke 8:16-18	Jonah 1:1-17	Lighting, Up-Helly-Aa (30 Jan)
4 Feb 24	Epiphany 5		Luke 8:22-25	Psalm 139:1-12	Calming, World Cancer Day
11 Feb 24	Transfiguration		Luke 9:10-17	2 Kings 5:1-6	Feeding, International Day of Women/Girls in Science
14 Feb 24	Ash Wednesday	Social Justice	Luke 11:37-44	Isaiah 55:6-11	Valentine's Day
18 Feb 24	Lent 1		Isaiah 58:6-12	1 Samuel 21:1-6	World Day of Social Justice (20 Feb)
25 Feb 24	Lent 2		Luke 6:27-36	1 Peter 3:8-14	
3 Mar 24	Lent 3		Luke 7:1-17	Psalm 68:4-10	Whuppity Scoorie Day (1 Mar)
10 Mar 24	Lent 4		Luke 7:36-50	Micah 7:14-20	Mothering Sunday, International Women's Day (8 Mar)
17 Mar 24	Lent 5		Luke 8:26-39	Psalm 102:1-6,18-22	International Day of Happiness (20 Mar), Red Nose
24 Mar 24	Palms/Passion	Matthew 21:1-11	Psalm 22:1-11		
25 Mar 24	Monday	Holy Week	John 15:1-13	Psalm 36:5-11	The true vine
26 Mar 24	Tuesday		John 16:4b-24	Psalm 74:1-14	Work of the Spirit
27 Mar 24	Wednesday		John 17:1-11	Psalm 70	Praying for friends
28 Mar 24	Maundy Thurs		John 18:1-12	Psalm 116:1-2,12-19	Betrayal and arrest
29 Mar 24	Good Friday		John 19:1-30	Psalm 40:1-14	Jesus and Pilate
30 Mar 24	Holy Saturday	John 19:38-42	Psalm 31:1-5	Jesus' burial	
31 Mar 24	Easter Day	Resurrection and New Creation	John 20:1-18	Psalm 18:16-21	Jesus and Mary in the garden
7 Apr 24	Easter 2		Isaiah 40:21-31	Matthew 6:25-34	Holy Humour Sunday, World Health Day
14 Apr 24	Easter 3		Isaiah 51:1-18	Matthew 13:24-29	National Gardening Day
21 Apr 24	Easter 4	Isaiah 61:1-11	Matthew 20:1-16	Mother Earth Day, Jelly Bean Day (both 22 Apr)	
28 Apr 24	Easter 5	Joy	Psalm 30	Romans 12:9-21	International Dance Day (29 Apr), Beltane's Day (1 May)
5 May 24	Easter 6		Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-12	World Laughter Day, St Catherine of Siena (29 Apr)
12 May 24	Easter 7	Christian Aid	Acts 1:15-17,21-26	1 John 5:9-12	RCL readings used this week to link to Christian Aid
19 May 24	Pentecost		Acts 2:1-21	2 Samuel 6:14-19	World Baking Day (home bakes to raise money for work of Christian Aid)

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
26 May 24	Pentecost 1	Witness and Journey	Exodus 3:10-17	Matthew 28:16-20	
2 Jun 24	Pentecost 2		Genesis 20:1-13	Acts 21:1-6	
9 Jun 24	Pentecost 3		Exodus 34:4-8	1 Samuel 3	St Columba
16 Jun 24	Pentecost 4	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Exodus 2:1-10	Luke 15:11-32	Father's Day
23 Jun 24	Pentecost 5		Exodus 5:1-14	1 Corinthians 4:1-13	World Refugee Day (20 Jun), International Widow's Day
30 Jun 24	Pentecost 6	Stories of Travelling	John 4:1-15,28-30,39-42	1 Kings 17:7-16	Hospitality
7 Jul 24	Pentecost 7		Matthew 15:21-28	Hebrews 13:1-3	Encounters with strangers
14 Jul 24	Pentecost 8		Leviticus 25:10-12,35-41	Galatians 3:26-28	Towards equal opportunities
21 Jul 24	Pentecost 9		Mark 2:18-28	Genesis 2:1-2	Holidays and refreshing Sabbaths, Ice Cream Day
28 Jul 24	Pentecost 10		Psalms 139:1-12,23-24	Romans 8:31-39	God with us on the journey
4 Aug 24	Pentecost 11		1 Kings 19:1-8	Mark 8:1-9	Food for the journey
11 Aug 24	Pentecost 12		Psalms 71:16-18	Ephesians 4:11-16	Journey from youth to age, Inter. Youth Day (12 Aug)
18 Aug 24	Pentecost 13		Telling Our Stories	Deuteronomy 6:20-25	John 9:13-25
25 Aug 24	Pentecost 14	Exodus 12:21-28		Acts 26:1,9-18	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 Aug)
1 Sep 24	Pentecost 15	Jeremiah 29:1-14		Philippians 4:10-20	World Letter Writing Day, Amnesty International Write for Rights
8 Sep 24	Pentecost 16	Peacemaking	Leviticus 26:1-6	Matthew 5:9	World Suicide Prevention Day (10 Sep)
15 Sep 24	Pentecost 17		Psalms 34	Colossians 3:12-17	International Day of Democracy, Hildegard De Bingen (17 Sep)
22 Sep 24	Pentecost 18		John 14:25-31	Philippians 4:4-9	International Day of Peace
29 Sep 24	Pentecost 19	Environment and Harvest	Deuteronomy 16:9-15	James 2:14-26	World Heart Day, building up to Sukkot
6 Oct 24	Pentecost 20		Psalms 126	Joel 2:15-19	Restoring the environment
13 Oct 24	Pentecost 21		Exodus 16:9-16	2 Corinthians 9:6-15	World Food Day
20 Oct 24	Pentecost 22	Faith Heroes	Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:8-22	Back to the Future Day (21 Oct)
27 Oct 24	Pentecost 23		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:23-28	National Mentoring Day, Reformation Day (31 Oct)
3 Nov 24	Pentecost 24		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:29-40	All Saints Day (1 Nov), link to any local saints
10 Nov 24	Pentecost 25	Hope	Job 17:1-5,11-16	Matthew 12:9-21	Armistice Day (11 Nov), World Kindness Day (13 Nov), St Machar, St Gerardine
17 Nov 24	Pentecost 26		Lamentations 3:19-24	Romans 8:18-25	Prisoners Week, International Day for Tolerance (16 Nov)
24 Nov 24	Reign of Christ		John 3:11-21	Isaiah 42:1-10a	
YEAR 2					
1 Dec 24	Advent 1	Incarnating Love	Isaiah 11:1-9	Luke 5:12-13	World AIDS Day, St Aiden of May
8 Dec 24	Advent 2		Mark 1:1-8	Isaiah 2:2-4	International Anti-Corruption Day (9 Dec)
15 Dec 24	Advent 3		Isaiah 35	Galatians 5:13-16	
22 Dec 24	Advent 4		Luke 1:26-38	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	
24/5 Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Day		Luke 1:46-55 Matthew 1:18-25	Romans 13:11-12 1 John 3-11	
29 Dec 24	Christmas 1		John 1:1-14	Isaiah 43:1-7	Donald Caskie (died 27 Dec 1983)
5 Jan 25	Christmas 2	Daniel 2:8-23	Matthew 2:1-6	Thomas Aikenhead (died 8 Jan 1697)	
12 Jan 25	Epiphany 1	Holocaust Memorial	Luke 11:14-28	Nehemiah 5:1-13	Awareness of evil
19 Jan 25	Epiphany 2		Exodus 1:15-22	Mark 9:42-48	Slaughter/protection of innocents, Jane Haining
26 Jan 25	Epiphany 3		Isaiah 61:5-11	Mark 15:33-34	International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 Jan)
2 Feb 25	Epiphany 4	Rediscovering Jesus	Luke 2:41-52	Proverbs 3:1-10	Jesus the Jew, Candlemass, Groundhog Day
9 Feb 25	Epiphany 5		Matthew 13:1-3,10-17	2 Samuel 12:1-7a	Jesus the Storyteller
16 Feb 25	Epiphany 6		Luke 4:38-41	Ezekiel 34:11-16	Jesus the Healer
23 Feb 25	Epiphany 7		Mark 6:45-52	Mark 8:11-14	Jesus the Wonder Worker
2 Mar 25	Transfiguration		Matthew 16:13-20	John 20:30-31	Jesus: the Christ?



Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
5 Mar 25	Ash Wednesday	Health and Wellbeing	Matthew 6:1-6,16-21	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Wellbeing
9 Mar 25	Lent 1		Romans 12:1-8	Proverbs 16:21-24	Self Care I
16 Mar 25	Lent 2		Romans 12:9-21	Psalm 1	Self Care II
23 Mar 25	Lent 3		John 6:35-40	Proverbs 3:5-8	Food
30 Mar 25	Lent 4		Hebrews 4:1-11	Matthew 11:28-29	Rest, Mothering Sunday
6 Apr 25	Lent 5		1 Timothy 4:6-16	Isaiah 40:25-30	Health
13 Apr 25	Palm/Passion	You want it darker	Mark 11:1-11	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	The Gate
14 Apr 25	Monday		Mark 11:15-19	Isaiah 48:6-11	The Temple Courtyard
15 Apr 25	Tuesday		Mark 11:12-14,20-25	Isaiah 34:1-4	The Mount of Olives
16 Apr 25	Wednesday		Mark 14:1-11	Isaiah 61:1-4	The Home at Bethany
17 Apr 25	Maundy Thurs		Mark 14:12-16	Isaiah 53:7-12	The Upper Room, Gethsemane
18 Apr 25	Good Friday		Mark 14:43-15:41	Joel 2:1-2	The Hill, Golgotha
19 Apr 25	Holy Saturday		Mark 15:42-47	Psalm 22:27-31	The Tomb
20 Apr 25	Easter Day		Mark 16:1-8	Luke 24:13-35	The Garden (use Emmaus story for an evening service)
27 Apr 25	Easter 2	Community Wellbeing	John 21:1-14	Mark 1:16-20	Back at the Beginning I
4 May 25	Easter 3		John 21:15-21	Mark 14:66-72	Back at the Beginning II, Mental Health Awareness Week, death of David Livingstone (1 May 1873)
11 May 25	Easter 4		Acts 9:36-43	Revelation 7:9-17	Christian Aid Week
18 May 25	Easter 5	Creative Communities	Micah 6:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-14	The Why Behind the How
25 May 25	Easter 6		Colossians 3:12-17	Micah 6:6-8	Creative People, death of Thomas Chalmers (31 May 1847)
1 Jun 25	Easter 7		Ephesians 5:1-20	Micah 6:6-8	Creative Living
8 Jun 25	Pentecost		Galatians 5:13-26	Micah 6:6-8 Acts 2:1-13	Creative Spirit
15 Jun 25	Pentecost 1	Thankful and Grateful	Psalm 100	Romans 5:1-11	Father's Day, National Beer Day
22 Jun 25	Pentecost 2		Psalm 118	1 Thessalonians 5:12-24	International Picnic Day (18 Jun)
29 Jun 25	Pentecost 3		Psalm 145	2 Corinthians 4:7-18	Death of George MacLeod (27 Jun 1991)
6 Jul 25	Pentecost 4		1 Chronicles 16:8-36	Romans 11:33-36	Thank You Day
13 Jul 25	Pentecost 5	Crossroads of Culture and Faith	Psalm 95	Luke 2:22-32	Music, St Swithin
20 Jul 25	Pentecost 6		2 Chronicles 1:1,7-13	Luke 3:7-18	Politics, St Thenew
27 Jul 25	Pentecost 7		Exodus 31:1-11	Luke 6:43-45	Art
3 Aug 25	Pentecost 8		2 Samuel 12:1-9	Luke 9:1-6	Literature
10 Aug 25	Pentecost 9		Song of Songs 2:8-17	Luke 12:49-53	Poetry
17 Aug 25	Pentecost 10		1 Kings 4:29-34	Luke 17:11-19	Science
24 Aug 25	Pentecost 11		1 Samuel 8:1-21	Luke 20:20-26	Civic Space, death of George Matheson (28 Aug 1906)
31 Aug 25	Pentecost 12		Prayer	Jeremiah 20:7-18	1 Samuel 1:1-18
7 Sept 25	Pentecost 13	Luke 10:1-9,17-21		1 Samuel 2:1-10	Thanksgiving
14 Sep 25	Pentecost 14	Genesis 32:3-21		Luke 18:1-18	Protection
21 Sep 25	Pentecost 15	John 17:10-26		Luke 2:36-38	Intercession
28 Sep 25	Pentecost 16	2 Samuel 12:15b-23		Psalm 98	Unanswered
5 Oct 25	Pentecost 17	Reforming Our Faith	Psalm 96:1-9	1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 14:26	Songs and Liturgy
12 Oct 25	Pentecost 18		Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	Matthew 22:34-39	Times and Priorities
19 Oct 25	Pentecost 19		Joshua 10:36-43	2 Timothy 3:14-17	Lectionaries
26 Oct 25	Pentecost 20		Exodus 3:1-10	Ephesians 3:14-20	Experiences of God, Reformation Day (31 Oct)
2 Nov 25	Pentecost 21	Christ on the Edge	Mark 12:41-44	Deuteronomy 24:17-22	All Souls Day
9 Nov 25	Pentecost 22		Matthew 5:38-44	Genesis 22:1-14	Remembrance Sunday
16 Nov 25	Pentecost 23		Luke 10:25-37	Deuteronomy 10:17-22	Home Made Bread Day (17 Nov), St Margaret of Scotland
23 Nov 25	Reign of Christ		Mark 10:17-21	Luke 12:13-21	Stir Up Day, death of James Hogg (21 Nov 1835)

Note that the double-lined breaks in the table delineate between issues.



wellbeing in honesty

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 5 March 2025

Word

Matthew 6:1-6,16-21
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Theme

Health and Wellbeing

tell the story

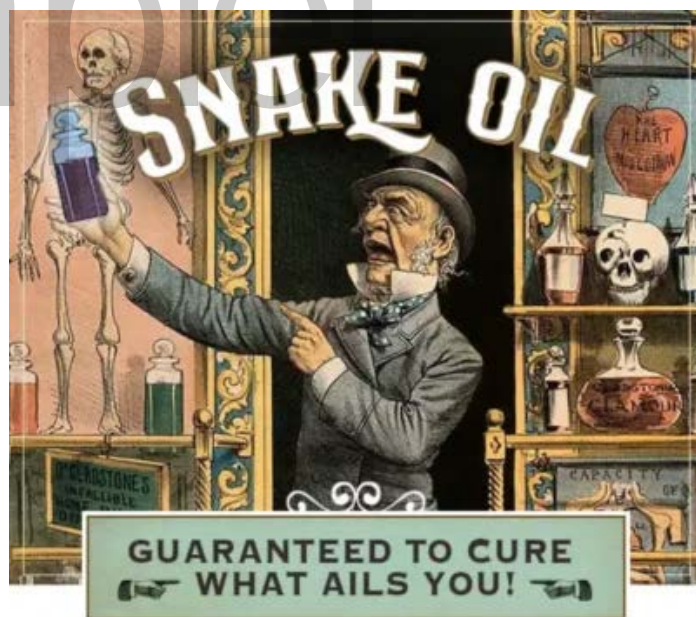
Bible Notes

In recent years it feels like there has been an uptick in mentions of the term 'grift'. In its traditional understanding it usually is a reference to a small time swindler trying to get one over their 'mark' by extorting money through cheating them in some way. Images of Snake Oil salesmen may spring to mind. Yet the subtlety in the term is that when we use it there is an implication in some way that everyone understands what is going on. The grifter of course knows what they are up to, but perhaps also the victims have some understanding that they are in a confidence game and have been tricked by the grifter. This sets up all manner of psychological defenses, of course, that play further in to the grift and the confidence trick can become 'reality' in the minds of those who have been victims to the grift even though there is a part of them that knows they have been played.

The term has been on the rise because the grift is strong in modern politics and amongst politicians. Former Prime Ministers and many others will say what they know to be nonsense in the media if they think it is the right nonsense to get them noticed by the people who might buy their book, or pay for a speech, or grant a well-remunerated position... or add to the bigger grift.

Both of the readings for Ash Wednesday confront such immorality in the lives of those in public positions but they do it in different ways and in so doing they invite us into a time of reflection on our own part as we enter the season of Lent.

In Matthew's gospel Jesus warns of those who are hypocrites, those who Eugene Peterson's paraphrase



describes as 'playactors'. They are playing a game knowing the expectations of others upon them and wanting to be seen to be acting correctly. One might describe it as a grift. They do not mean it, the actions they conduct are not from the depth of their heart and soul as a true reflection of their inner life, they are rather outward acts to mislead. Good can happen as a result of their actions, but Jesus warns not to be seduced by the outward performance, rather to develop a strong inner life of connectedness to God.

There are interesting challenges here between Jesus' advice and contemporary church mission which often seeks to encourage entrepreneurialism and a spirit of

self-promotion for the church in order to attract new members.

Paul's words in 2 Corinthians may help bring some balance in their different approach. Here Paul is describing much of what is the outer life, but in the context of that being the outworking of a deeply faithful inner life. It is due to the strength gained in faith that the outer hardships can be borne. Those hardships are not sought out for their own sake, they are rather a natural consequence of living a life committed to the teaching of Christ in a society that refuses to heed it and seeks rather to destroy those who speak of truth.

Our modern life is overcome with misinformation and misleading talk. It was no doubt ever thus, hence this week's ancient words warning about it, but there is little doubt that social media has supercharged the effect that grifting and hypocritical playacting can have on people who may in good faith be seeking after truth and find it in easy answers and what feels right to them. But the church, and particularly as we enter Lent, knows better that it is a long journey of self-exploration and turning one's inner life towards God's purposes that is most effective in deepening faith and commitment to Christ. Those deeper sources are what provide for our true wellbeing in life.

Story Retelling

Time For Lent

A time for total honesty.
A time for no pretence.
A time for no hypocrisy.
It's time again for Lent.

No prayers aloud in public,
in hope of admiration.
No chance that I'd be guilty
of such an inclination!

No faces grim from fasting—
I sometimes give up cakes—
there's something to be said for
the difference it makes.

No showy virtue-signalling
with a generous donation—
no matter how good the cause,
don't give for adulation!

Keep it all a secret
if you do the things you meant
by praying, fasting, giving
in the holy weeks of Lent

Or you may feel nothing special
each time you close the door
and sit with God in quietness,
questioning—should I do more?

A time for total honesty?
A time for no pretence?
A time for no hypocrisy?
How does it all make sense?

A time for proving nothing,
a time to reconnect,
a time of glad surrender,
will be a Lent, well kept.



Discussion Starters

There will no doubt have been a story or two in the past two or three weeks that will be examples of hypocrisy either in how they have been reported or in their actuality (note that these are not always the same). Spend a bit of time reflecting on recent examples of hypocrisy.

A big example from recent years could be someone like Elon Musk who on the one hand labels himself an advocate of free-speech and allows all manner of falsehoods to be spread on his social media network under that protective rhetorical shield. At the same time Musk frequently banishes from that platform those who push back on his own views.

- What forms of hypocrisy do you identify in the examples you have raised?
- What are the common themes?
- Why do you think people revert to such actions?

Read together Matthew 6:1-6,16-21 from a couple of different versions (for instance use the New Revised Standard Version and The Message) and contrast how Jesus' words are interpreted and explored in both versions.

- Which version did you find most helpful and why?
- How does the term 'playactor' used in The Message help to explore Jesus' warning?
- What does this passage have to say to us about being authentic in our lives?

Read together 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10. Try not to rush over the lists of situations that Paul describes, rather dwell on each a little and consider what he might have been thinking about from his own experience as he lists them.

- What was your initial response to the forms of commendation that Paul describes as part of being a servant of God?
- What do they say about a life of faith in God?
- How do you balance this with Jesus' message?

sampler

explore the story

Engaging The Text

You will need: a bowl filled with oil, covered on a table in the centre of the worship space on which there is also a candle.

For Ash Wednesday we offer a ritual that invites us into Lent. On a central table place a covered bowl of olive oil or other suitable oil. To begin the ritual, the leader uncovers the bowl and lights a candle. Of course, you could also use a bowl filled with ash for this purpose.

Invite everyone to stand in a circle around the table and bowl.

The leader, in their own words, retells the story of God creating humanity from dust. The people respond by saying: "And to dust we shall return."

The leader reads Matthew 6:19-21 and following this the people respond by saying: "And to dust we shall return."

The leader reads the first verse of the hymn 'All things of dust, to dust return' as below.

*All things of dust to dust return
on earth and in the sky.*

*The hottest, brightest suns that burn
in time grow dim and die.*

*The fish that leap, the birds that soar,
the newborn young that play,
the leaves that fill the forest floor
revert to dust and clay.*

The people respond by saying: "And to dust we shall return." Follow this with a silence as people reflect.

The leader then picks up the bowl and anoints those in the circle, as they feel comfortable. Perhaps holding hands open in front of themselves is a sign they wish to be anointed, and hands crossed over their chest is a sign they do not.

The leader then concludes the ritual with a prayer and carrying the candle out of the worship space into the world.

Time For Lent

You will need: card cut into circles about the size of a tea plate, felt tip pens, purple self-adhesive dots.

Give each participant a card circle and ask them to mark it off like a clock face round the edges and then into six pizza slice-like sections from the middle outwards. Ask participants to reflect on one thing they would like to focus on in each of the weeks of Lent such as prayer, reading, reconnecting with someone, learning about something which is happening in their community and ask them to write or draw their focus, one per section. Use the dots to decorate the clock. Participants should take this clock home and use it throughout Lent.

As the journey through Lent begins, participants can use this craft to help them focus on their priorities for this season.

Ash Wednesday Cross

You will need: thick white paper, thick black paper, white chalk, dark coloured charcoals.

Give participants one sheet of each colour of paper. Ask them to draw a rough cross on the black paper using white chalk and to draw round their hand with charcoal onto the white paper.

Participants can use these images to reflect on the beginning of this season and how they are going to pray and act during Lent.



Call To Worship

Stoor is a Scottish word for dirt.

The shade of the world
slips into purple hues.
The season changes
and the air feels different.

Let us gather in this giving time
of ourselves,
of our hurts,
of our burdens.
That we might join the journey
of the one who walks with us,
in the dust and stoor
of life.

Prayer Of Dedication

This Ash Wednesday,
we dedicate ourselves to,
you as a Lenten practise.

Each day in Lent,
we humbly pray,
you show us where and how,
we may be present to others, for you.

We pray these unpretentious gifts
be gathered,
for the furtherance of your kingdom,
used where and how you direct.
Amen.



Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Holy God,
we enter into this
solemn time of worship,
among a community of believers
who gather to worship,
not for display,
not for attention,
but to be reconciled to God.

Like Paul,
we entreat you
to support us,
in our ongoing work
of faithfulness,
the building up of
our health and wellbeing,
always in Christ.

Forgive us
when we practise our righteousness before others;
when we give so that others can see,
when we sound a trumpet calling
attention to ourselves rather than to you.
When we store up treasures on earth,
when we play the hypocrite
and behave in a manner that is not
the way a follower of Christ behaves.
Remind us to ask forgiveness of others,
as well as coming before you.

This Lenten season,
may we not look dismal,
but reflect the light of your love to others,
as we endeavour to draw ever closer to you.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

Holy God,
we are not in closets,
as we come to you,
but in worship with others,
offering our prayers,
interceding for others,
not to be heard by others,
but to collectively voice,
our deepest desires,
to be heard by you.

Together we pray for
the health of your world;
the health of the earth,
the health of our bodies,
the health of our churches,
the health of our communities...

There are people hurting,
physically,
mentally,
and spiritually,
across our world.

There are so many
areas of conflict,
where your peaceful presence,
would make a difference.

We pray for chaplains,
who are at the front line of need,
for Christians in hostile lands,
struggling to live out,
your message of hope.
in this Lenten season.

Change our dismal faces,
to reflect the joy,
of your message to others.
Shine your truth,
into shattered dreams,
and rebuild the experiences of others.

Breathe hope,
into desperate hearts,
one promise at a time,
one person at a time,
one community at a time.
We pray these things as one voice,
in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Reflective Prayer

Piety, how do we practise it,
if not to show it?
Here we are beginning Lent,
that great season of returning to you,
with the imposition of Ashes.
Choosing to be identified,
as yours—
but it's rather showy.

How do we show our faith to you?
Pray, in secret of course,
not sounding a trumpet,
or on the street corners,
never for show.
Fast?
How do we fast for you?
Never grumpily,
or going about as if we are in pain.

We cannot be hypocritical,
doing one thing and saying another,
as we work out,
the path to follow you.
And we do have,
to practise our righteousness,
because without practise,
we will never learn.

How?
Our passage raises so many questions...
Where is our treasure?
And rewards-what is that about?!

Surely, with integrity,
we do these things:
pray, fast, give alms,
not to be on display,
but to practise
our righteousness,
as we grow our relationship with you.

Reward enough?
Certainly.

So we pray, today,
this Ash Wednesday,
authentically,
reconciling with you,
because you are our treasure,
and we know
where our treasure is,
our heart shall be also.
This Lenten journey,
beginning today,
align our hearts with you.
Now is an acceptable time.
Amen.

Reflection

*An alternative Matthew 6:1-6,16-24, as seen by the writer
in a Scottish city.*

Be careful not to practice your hypocrisy
in front of homeless people on the streets.

Giving To The Needy

When you give to a homeless person
accompanied by a faithful dog,
do not give a bag of food and say
"This is not for you but for your dog."

Prayer

When you pray, do not stand,
putting one finger tip
on a homeless person's hat,
and say "Thank You, God,
for this poor person
and keep him/her warm and safe."

Fasting

When you 'fast', do not expect
a homeless person to fast with you
as you see the pangs of pain on his or her face
and offer nothing to satisfy their hunger.

Treasures In Heaven(?)

Do not keep tight hold
of your treasures in your bag
when a homeless person is looking at you
and walk quickly past.

For where your heart is,
there your hypocrisy will be also.

Sending

Lent is the time for opportunities.
A time to clear our vision.
To continue in our spiritual growth
and where we are going in our life,
so journey with us, God of life,
into this Lenten season.

Praise/Hymns

All things of dust to dust return	GWA 108
Be thou my vision	CH4 465 / MP 51
Beauty for brokenness	CH4 259 / MP 806
Breathe on me, breath of God	CH4 596 / MP 67
Change my heart, O God	MP 69
Focus my eyes on you, O Lord	CH4 567
Give me the faith which can remove	MP 168
I want Jesus to walk with me	CH4 539
Jesus, lover of my soul	CH4 490
Just as I am without one plea	CH4 553 / MP 396
Lord teach us how to pray aright	CH4 545
O for a closer walk with God	CH4 552 / MP 494
O for a heart to praise my God	MP 495
O God, you search me and you know me	CH4 97
Open my eyes that I may see	MP 544
Prayer is the soul's sincere desire	CH4 546 / MP 567
Sing a new world into being	GWA 224
There's a wideness in God's mercy	CH4 187 / MP 683
<i>Some shorter songs/ chants that might be used within prayers:</i>	
Be still and know that I am God	CH4 755 / MP 48
<i>suggested use: split the 3 verses over a three part prayer of confession</i>	
Come and fill our hearts with your love	Taizé Community
Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us	WGP
O Lord, hear my prayer	MP 908



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