



LENT BULLETIN

Pastoral Letter Lent 2026

Dear Friends,

Lent is early this year and so as we begin February, we also mark the beginning of Lent, which is a very important season in the Christian Calendar. We start with a Lent course on Tuesday 3rd February at 11 am and will continue to meet throughout the entire Lenten season. The theme this year is Mission.

During Lent we are reminded of the experience Jesus went through in the wilderness. In Luke 4:1-13 we read of how he was tempted by Satan for 40 days; and how the angels ministered to him.

The devil tempted Jesus by offering him material goods and worldly power. He also challenged Jesus to perform miracles for the sake of proving that he was the Son of God.

It was the Holy Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness.

Our desert times as human beings, although painful or even catastrophic, are always times when the spirit is there in the barrenness of existence. Jesus was at the beginning of his ministry, and the questions that were asked to him concerned his strengths rather than any conceivable weaknesses.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, which meant both the realisation of his relationship with God and the self-knowledge of what he could achieve with people.

Essentially the underlying question in the whole wilderness passage is about the shape of his ministry. What he rejects is the temptation of quick results (man shall not live by bread alone),

the temptation to adopt showy techniques (you shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone shall you serve) and the temptation to imitate the norm of power structures for the good of the people.

What are these temptations then, particularly as they pertain to the ministry of the church? Perhaps it is about courting popular opinion when what the church is truly about is conversion and transformation? Perhaps in ministry it is the temptation of power, having the power to lead, rather than being open to the powerlessness of being led by the Spirit.

The desert is a place of discernment where hard decisions are made and where resistance shapes lives; it is not to be avoided but entered into in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I should like to encourage you among other things to reflect on the following two things during Lent:

- a) As yourself, which are the areas of your own life that you need to work on in order to balance the call to transformation individually and in terms of community?
- b) What do you have to change, let go of in order to open to the work of the Holy Spirit?

A Prayer

Almighty God whose Son Jesus Christ fasted 40 days in the wilderness and was tempted as we are, yet without sin, give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit, and as you know our weaknesses, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God bless you

Philip

Concert to raise funds for Mission Action (our charities)

On Sunday afternoon, 22nd February, 3.00 – 5.00, there will be a concert of a varied programme of songs interspersed with some poems: ‘**Songs for a Sunday Afternoon**’. CHORUS!, a local choir, is giving their time free, presenting a lovely programme in four-part harmony, to raise money for Mission Action, St Andrew’s fund-raising charity group. CHORUS! is delighted to be coming back to sing at St Andrew’s but with a larger choir.

The programme will include some popular songs from people like The Beatles, Billy Joel, Pharrell Williams; African songs; folk songs...

Please come and support this event. It will be a lovely programme to cheer the heart and spirit in this dreary part of the year. We have chosen to sing on a Sunday afternoon to enable more people to attend, who would find coming out on a cold, dark evening difficult.

Mission Action supports three different charities.

HELP!

To keep somewhere like St Andrew’s a vibrant, efficient and welcoming community building/church, a lot of goodwill is required: many people giving a few hours a week to cover all the many things that need to be done.

One important ‘job’ at St Andrew’s is the staffing of the office as this is often the first port of call for people wanting to hire the community hall (an important source of income), buy tickets for events, contact Philip regarding baptisms, marriages and funeral services. This requires having someone in the office for two hours on each weekday to be there for visitors, answer the phone and, if happy to do so, reply to emails that have come into the office. ***Do you have a couple of hours that you could offer either once a week or every so often when cover is needed?*** At present we are very short of people who can staff the office. It is not a difficult thing to manage and ‘training’ and support is readily given.

If you feel that it is something you could do, please contact the office or speak to Richard, Jenny or Sue.

Open Gardens 2026

We are planning to hold another Reading Street Open Gardens event on Saturday 4th July and are looking for more gardeners to take part. Your garden can be any shape or size, large or small, but must be within 10/15 minutes walking distance of the Church. If you are interested, we need to know as soon as possible, and before the deadline of 14th February. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Linda Owen linbob@btinternet.com and we look forward to hearing from you. Linda

Holy Week 2026 services

Sun 29 th March		Palm Sunday services.
Mon 30 th March	7.00 pm	Compline 7.00 pm
Tue 31 st March	7.00 pm	Compline 7.00 pm
Wed 1 st April	7.00 pm	Compline 7.00 pm
Thu 2 nd April Maundy Thursday	7.30 pm	Holy Communion and Stripping of the altar.
Fri 3 rd April Good Friday	12.00-3.00 pm 6.00 pm	Three-hour devotional. “The Cross of Christ” choir devotional.
Sun 5 th April Easter Day	08.00 am 10.00 am 6.30 pm	Said Communion Family Communion Evensong