

# A Greener Lent

## 2023



*Bryony Davis ~ Hazelnut Community Farm 2023*

The six weeks of Lent give us a chance to reflect on our lives, to think about where change is needed and to turn towards new ways of living, that better reflect our love for God, one another, our world and ourselves. Each week has a different theme and activities to help us think about putting our faith into action.

- ✿ If you have children, do get your them involved and talk about why you are doing the activities.
- ✿ Connect to what interests or challenges you most (there is no pressure to do everything).
- ✿ Do post any photos, thoughts and resources you find helpful on the Hazelnut Community WhatsApp, so we can share our experiences and journey through Lent together.



Week 1 ~ 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February

# WONDER

*‘The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of God’s hands’ Psalm 19*

It is easy to take the world around us for granted - to rush about without noticing the small wonders of nature that are everywhere, even in the busiest city. If we are to love the earth and encounter God in creation, we must first learn to stop, to notice, to enjoy and take delight in this amazing planet that is our home.

- ✿ Go on a slow walk. Take time to stop and stare. Notice the tiny creatures you share your neighbourhood with, the beauty of flowers and plants, the patterns the clouds make, the sound of rain or the wind in the trees etc.....
- ✿ Put aside just a few minutes a day and find one thing – a flower, bird, insect or animal and give it your full attention. Enjoy its beauty, notice its behaviour, recognise its value.
- ✿ You might like to take photos of the things that catch your attention, or to try painting or drawing them. Or to write in a journal about the things you have seen and how they speak to you of God.
- ✿ Spend a few moments each day giving thanks for the beauty of the world around you.
- ✿ In celebration of the wonder of nature, you could make a donation to plant a tree – see [woodlandtrust.org](http://woodlandtrust.org), [treeaid.org](http://treeaid.org), [forestofavontrust.org](http://forestofavontrust.org) or [plant.ecosia.org](http://plant.ecosia.org)

Week 6 ~ 29 March – 4<sup>th</sup> April

# REFLECT

*What does the LORD require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*

This week, we move towards Holy Week and the end of Lent. Spend some time thinking back over the activities of the past five weeks.

- ✿ What have you most enjoyed?
- ✿ What has challenged you the most?
- ✿ What were you most surprised by?
- ✿ What has inspired you to take action?
- ✿ What will you try to continue to do?
- ✿ Where did you encounter God?

Debra Rienstra, in Refugia Faith suggests: ‘One of the common discoveries for those who observe Lent is that self-restraint and limits bring unexpected joys. Emptying can lead to deeper fulfilment.’ May we be surprised by the delights of living greener Lent lives.

Week 3 ~ 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March

# WATER

*You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.  
Psalm 56:9*

Water is fundamental to life. We can't manage without it. We are so used to accessing clean water by turning on the tap, we don't even think about it. Many of us get great pleasure from spending time by rivers, lakes or the sea, and our gardens and farmers rely on water for plants to grow. There are also huge environmental issues around water; our rivers are dying from pollution, our seas are full of plastic and sewage, some parts of our world are being destroyed by flooding or drought.

- ✿ Clean water is a gift. Count how many times you turn on the tap in one day and how many different ways you use water at home.
- ✿ Go for a walk by your local river or canal. Listen to the sights and sounds. What do you notice about it? Does it look healthy or polluted? Is it full of life or sad and stagnant? What plants, trees, birds and wildlife is your river supporting?
- ✿ What can you find out about your local river or canal? Where does it come from and go to? Are there local groups trying to protect or restore rivers near where you live?
- ✿ Nearly 800 million people in the world don't have access to clean water and 1 in 4 don't have use of a toilet. Consider giving a donation to a charity that helps provide clean water, like [wateraid.org](http://wateraid.org), [toilettwinning.org](http://toilettwinning.org) or [charitywater.org](http://charitywater.org)

Week 4 ~ 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March

# REST

*'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest'. Matthew 11:28*

Living in the face of the climate emergency is exhausting. We may feel anxious about the future, powerless to bring about change and unsure how to campaign for a better world. It is important to take time to look after ourselves, to rest and to do the things that give us life. Yet we often find it hard to stop, to remember the limits to our responsibilities and to let God restore us.

- ✿ Make a list of the ways you relax, help you to feel calm or give you energy such as hobbies, being creative, exercise, gardening, reading, music, napping etc. What time can you put aside to do things that restore you this week?
- ✿ Too much time on social media or listening to the news can be really stressful. If this is a problem for you, can you cut down or have some time off from these things this week?
- ✿ Time in nature can be healing for tired bodies and minds. Can you spend time somewhere beautiful this week?
- ✿ Contemplative prayer draws us into God's peace and can help us find balance and renewed strength. Spend a few minutes being quiet each day (there are useful resources on the Centre for Action and Contemplation website ([cac.org](http://cac.org)) and at [contemplativeathome.com](http://contemplativeathome.com)).

Week 5 ~ 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March

# FOOD

*‘Eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart’. Ecclesiastes 9:7*

Good food is one of the joys of life. It keeps us healthy, provides fuel for our bodies and brings people together. But food also causes 25% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Meat and dairy based diets produce far more CO<sub>2</sub> than plant-based diets. If everyone transitioned to a more plant-based diet, food-related greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by around 70% and the land used for agriculture by 75%. Reducing our meat and dairy consumption doesn't have to be an all or nothing thing. Eating a vegetarian diet just one day a week for a year saves around 100kgs of CO<sub>2</sub> in a year

- ✿ Eat plant-based for a week. This will take some planning so that you don't waste the food in your fridge, and have the plant-based alternatives you need.
- ✿ If that is a step too far – use this week to cut down on the meat and dairy products you eat. Set a goal of meat-free or plant-based meals or days. Think about which things you find hardest to do without and which new things you are enjoying.
- ✿ If you are already vegetarian or vegan, share some delicious and easy recipes on the WhatsApp Group or invite people over to eat some tasty vegan food.
- ✿ Before each meal, pause for a quiet moment of gratitude to God or say Grace with those you are eating with.

Week 2 ~ 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March

# WASTE

*Jesus said: ‘gather all the pieces that are left over - let nothing be wasted’. John 6 :12*

Our world is filled with so many natural resources which humanity has harnessed to build, develop, invent and grow. We need to use these resources wisely and recognise their limitations, living within the boundaries that God's earth has given us.

- ✿ Get a cardboard box and use it to collect all your waste plastic this week – YES – all of it – film, packets, wrap, bottles, hard plastics. Give them a rinse first. At the end of the week, take a look (and a photo) of what you have collected. Imagine what a whole year's worth of your plastic waste would look like!
- ✿ Sort through your rubbish. What can be recycled in your recycling box or bin? Where else could you recycle your rubbish? Co-op and Tesco often recycle soft plastics. The British Plastics Federation has information about plastic recycling.
- ✿ However, plastic recycling is not straightforward. Take a look at the Greenpeace 'What really happens to your plastic recycling' report.
- ✿ What might you do to cut down on plastic use, especially food wrapping and single use plastic? What other things could you do to reduce the waste you produce?