

# NEWSLETTER

February 2021

## from the Church of St. Michael's Bray



The Parish Church of Bray with Braywood, Holyport & Moneyrow  
Green, Fifield, Touchen End and Oakley Green

website: [www.braystmichael.co.uk](http://www.braystmichael.co.uk)



Dear Friends,

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

Some of you will have noticed that we have been using the porch of the church since Christmas as a place of reflection; the Crib during Christmastide and Epiphany and since then a 'sign of hope' for those visiting the Churchyard. During Lent we will make the porch a focus for reflection on Jesus' time in the wilderness.

Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion by Rome.

The Christian churches that observe Lent in the 21st century (and not all do significantly) use it as a time for prayer and penance. There is also a practise of spending time reading and studying Scripture and spending more time in prayer. Only a small number of people today fast for the whole of Lent, although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to surrender a particular item such as favourite foods or pastime. Whatever the sacrifice it is a reflection of Jesus' deprivation in the wilderness and a test of self-discipline.

### **Why 40 days?**

40 is a significant number in Jewish-Christian scripture:

- In Genesis, the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.
- The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God.
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry.

Most Christians regard Jesus' time in the wilderness as the key event for the duration of Lent.

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## Why is it called Lent?

Lent is an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Lent is observed in spring, when the days begin to get longer.



## The colour purple

Purple is the symbolic colour used in some churches throughout Lent, for drapes and altar frontals.

Purple is used for two reasons: firstly because it is associated with mourning and so anticipates the pain and suffering of the crucifixion, and secondly because purple is the colour associated with penitence and reflection, a time of preparation and cleansing to ready for the celebration of Easter.

## East and West

Both the eastern and western churches observe Lent, but they count the 40 days differently.

The Western church excludes Sundays (which is celebrated as the day of Christ's resurrection) whereas the Eastern church includes them.

The churches also start Lent on different days.

Western churches start Lent on the 7th Wednesday before Easter Day (called Ash Wednesday).

Eastern churches start Lent on the Monday of the 7th week before Easter and end it on the Friday 9 days before Easter. Eastern churches call this period the 'Great Lent'.

The last week of Lent is called **Holy Week** as we recall the last days of Jesus life and prepare for the great celebration of Easter and resurrection.

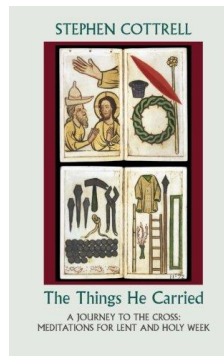


***See the next page for details of our Lent course***

With prayers and blessings, Rev'd Ainsley

# St Michael's Bray

## Lent Course 2021



**Wed Feb 24, March 3, 10, 17 and 24**  
**2.30pm - 3.45pm, online via Zoom**

We will be using the Book **The Things He Carried**, A Journey to the Cross: Meditations for Lent and Holy week' by Stephen Cottrell

**All are welcome**

### **How to take part:**

Buy a copy of the book and read it through Lent, perhaps on your own or perhaps with a friend or family member(s), within the parameters of current Covid restrictions.

To add to your personal reading, you are warmly invited to **join the weekly Zoom meetings** to discuss the book with others, to share conversations and companionship as we journey together.

### **What to do next:**

Please email the co-ordinator to say you would like to join the Zoom meetings and you will be sent a link closer to the start. The cost of the book is around £7 and is available via **Quench bookshop, Maidenhead, 01628 621985** or from various online retailers including Church House Publishing.

Co-ordinator: Beryl Maw [berylsmb2020@gmail.com](mailto:berylsmb2020@gmail.com)

## Minecraft church keeps

### BUILDING and BUILDING!

What we started last year with a Christingle service seems to be growing really well. I have had six new sign-ups in the last seven days as I write this!

But just as growth is nice, so is depth. We are working on how we can live and play well together online. After all, Jesus ask us to 'Love Your Neighbour' no matter who they are! (virtual or human!) What this starts out like is the universal desire of the kids to have a rule "Don't break someone else's stuff". That is fairly understandable. What I was pleased to note was they also wanted "To teach each other how to do things".

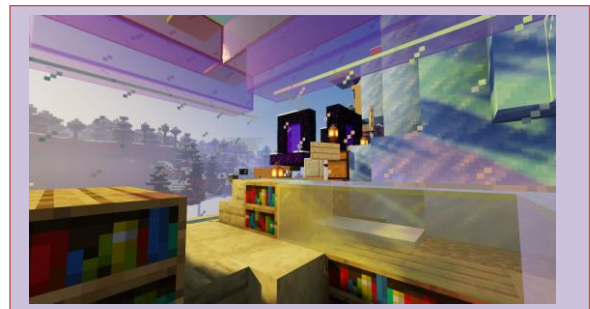
They have started right away on this and have worked together on a number of projects and showed off their skills and Minecraft knowledge (how to 'craft' objects, how to make little machines, how to build creatively). I have also found another curate up in Hereford also doing Minecraft with their young people. So we have decided to collaborate too so we can ponder and pray how to shape something rich and Christ-like online!

Personally, this week I learned how to fly properly with my 'Elytra' wing and I built a glass study for myself! I also found out how to make my view of the game world look really gorgeous. Please pray as we seek ways to take discipleship deeper as we grow!



Rev Kev

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