

*'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!  
He cannot be the Messiah, can he?'* (John 4:29)

## The Mid-Point of our Lenten Journey

### *Taking Stock*

This latest edition of the Listening Post will be circulated on Refreshment Sunday – or Mothering Sunday, as it is more commonly celebrated. It is the opportunity on our Lenten journey to pause for a moment, draw breath, and perhaps even ask ourselves how it's all going.

That word “refreshment” transports me in my mind to an image of the Woman at the Well in John 4. Jesus is on his way from Judea to Galilee, and must go through Samaria. It's a long journey, going through the Samaritan city of Sychar. There he finds Jacob's well, and when a Samaritan woman arrives to draw water, he asks her to give him something to drink.

The conversation that follows is surprising in almost every way. Surprising because Jesus is speaking to a woman; because he is speaking to a Samaritan; and also because he appears to know things about her and her life (that she has been married a number of times and the man she now lives with is not her husband) that she would not have expected him to know.

While the experience could have been intrusive and even embarrassing, it appears to be the complete opposite. In Jesus's presence, the woman feels seen and understood. Her life is given value and significance and she simply can't stop herself from telling people about it. Transformation is beginning to take place. She has started asking herself whether this really could be the Messiah.



It seems to me that if we are to pause and take stock mid-way through Lent, it is important to do so in the presence of Jesus. To picture ourselves in the place of the woman of Samaria, being seen and listened to, yet also being prepared to dig a little deeper and explore what we might find.

So, how has Lent been for you so far? When we set out on our journey on Ash Wednesday, did you have specific plans or aspirations? If so, I wonder how they are going. Have you remained on track, or have other things got in the way? Is there a need to re-focus? Or do you simply need to be gentle with yourself, because sometimes other things are more important than sticking rigidly to a plan?

Or maybe you started Lent without any plan at all. In that case, how has it been? Have you decided that you need more focus as you have progressed through the season? Or are you finding it liberating to have fewer expectations? Perhaps you are realising that sometimes a little space can help you to listen more carefully to God.

### ***What now?***

Having taken a little time to reflect on your Lenten journey up to this point, it's worth asking yourself what is coming up next. Your reflections may well have given you some good ideas in this regard.



What we know from the perspective of the church year is that we are about to reach the sharp end. Next week is Passion Sunday, with Palm Sunday the following week setting us up for Holy Week. These are powerful times in the church calendar. While each year must be taken differently, there are opportunities

to engage meaningfully with the story of Jesus's final days, leading up to his crucifixion.

As always, there will be services at St Mary's to support your devotions. On Palm Sunday (10<sup>th</sup> April) morning worship will be an All Age Service, and there will be Choral Evensong at 6pm. Holy Communion will be celebrated every evening of Holy Week at 8pm, with foot washing and the institution of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday there will be family worship at 10am, followed by hot cross buns. Children's craft activities will be available in the Cuddington Hall. From 12 noon on Good Friday there will be reflections at the foot of the cross, including a guided musical meditation at 1.30. The Liturgy of Good Friday begins at 2pm for the final hour.

You may know already which of these services you would like to attend, or you may see how you feel as you progress. Either way, the hope is to be prepared to hear afresh the good news of Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

My prayer is that we will all experience the loving presence of God as we continue on our Lenten journeys.



## April Services and Events

<b>Sunday 3</b>	<b>08.00</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
	<b>09.30</b>	<b>Sung Communion</b>
<b>Sunday 10</b>	<b>08.00</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
	<b>09.30</b>	<b>Palm Sunday All Age Worship</b>
	<b>18.00</b>	<b>Choral Evensong</b>
<b>Monday 11</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>Holy Week Communion Service</b>
<b>Tuesday 12</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>Holy Week Communion Service</b>
<b>Wednesday 13</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>Holy Week Communion Service</b>
<b>Thursday 14</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday Communion and Vigil</b>
<b>Friday 15</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>Family Service</b>
	<b>12-2pm</b>	<b>Good Friday Reflections</b>
	<b>14.00</b>	<b>Liturgy of Good Friday</b>
<b>Sunday 17</b>	<b>06.00</b>	<b>Easter Vigil &amp; Service of Light</b>
	<b>08.00</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
	<b>09.30</b>	<b>Easter Sung Communion</b>
<b>Thursday 21</b>	<b>14.30</b>	<b>Afternoon Group in the Cuddington Hall</b>
<b>Saturday 23</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall</b>
	<b>18.30</b>	<b><i>Fundraising Musical Evening in Church</i></b>
<b>Sunday 24</b>	<b>08.00</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
	<b>09.30</b>	<b>Sung Communion</b>
	<b>11.00</b>	<b>Annual Church Meetings !!</b>
<b>Tuesday 26</b>	<b>14.30</b>	<b>Knit &amp; Natter Group in the Leverton Room</b>

**Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am**

**Everyone is very welcome**