

Discovering Jesus in Holy Communion

Daily bible readings and notes

Week 1

<p>18th Feb Ash Wednesday Day 1</p>	<p>Do this in remembrance of me</p> <p>1 Cor 11.23-26</p> <p>The Institution of the Lord's Supper For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.</p> <hr/> <p>Welcome to Come and See. All across the Diocese on this Ash Wednesday Christians will gather around the table of the Lord to mark the beginning of Lent. We will share together in bread and wine, in Holy Communion and we will meet with Jesus there. Come and See this year is an invitation to explore what this might mean. We will look together at six different ways in which the risen Jesus meets with us in bread and wine.</p> <p>But first we read together the four different accounts of the very beginnings of this meal, beginning with the oldest: Paul's words to the Church in Corinth. These words are echoed in every Eucharist. There are four actions: Jesus does four things – which the priest will do in every service. Jesus takes bread, gives thanks to God, breaks the bread and gives it to his disciples. Jesus takes wine, gives thanks and shares it with his friends.</p> <p>Jesus gives words full of meaning: this is my body that is for you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. And then Jesus gives his Church a command, an instruction: Do this in remembrance of me. Do this as often as you drink it remembrance of me.</p> <p>Come with me as we explore all this means.</p>
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Pause	<p>Jesus' actions as he institutes the Eucharist are very intentional, as are those of the priest at the Lord's Table. This Lent, as you prepare to meet with Jesus during Come and See, ask the Holy Spirit to help you remain intentional both in your desire and practice every day.</p>
<p>19th Feb Thursday Day 2</p>	<p>This is my body</p> <p>Mark 14.22-25</p> <p>The Institution of the Lord's Supper While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'</p> <hr/> <p>Mark's Gospel is the earliest of the four to be written down and the shortest. Mark's account of the institution is just three verses, but it has the same essential elements: Jesus takes bread, gives thanks, breaks the bread and shares it and does the same with the cup.</p> <p>Mark echoes Paul's accounts in the words at the giving of the cup: This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many. Jesus looks to his death on the cross, his life offered for the sins of the world. The word covenant is a rich and deep word in the bible: a covenant is a promise, a contract, an agreement between two parties – here between God and humankind.</p> <p>There are covenants in the Old Testament between God and creation and between God and Israel. There are signs of these old covenants in the rainbow and the practice of circumcision. Here the new covenant of forgiveness is with all those who trust in Christ. The sign is the meal that Jesus gives us.</p>
Pause	<p>Jesus' words, 'This is my body,' establish a new covenant of self-giving love. This simple meal is a profound sign of that love offered to all who trust in him. How might you embody such self-giving love in your life today?</p>

<p>20th Feb Friday Day 3</p>	<p>....for the forgiveness of sins</p> <p>Matthew 26.26-30</p> <p>The Institution of the Lord's Supper While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'</p> <p>When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</p> <hr/> <p>Matthew adds just one detail to Mark's account in the words at the giving of the cup. The new covenant is centred on a specific purpose: for the forgiveness of sins. In each of the gospels, the writers tell us clearly that the Last Supper is a Passover meal, celebrating the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt and from the final plague, the death of the firstborn.</p> <p>In the story which Matthew tells now, Jesus will offer up his life to bring about this new covenant, to make our forgiveness possible. Each time we come together and celebrate the Eucharist we therefore celebrate, above everything else, that in Christ we are forgiven, once and for all, for ever. That forgiveness extends to all the errors and mistakes of our lives; the big sins and the small ones, the ones others know about and the ones hidden in our hearts; the ways we cross lines and the ways in which we fall short; the bad things we have done and the good we have not done.</p> <p>For all of these things, Christ our Saviour offers his life. For all of our weakness and imperfections, Jesus has forgiven us and given his life on the cross so we might be made new. This is why we celebrate and give thanks. This is the heart of our remembering.</p>
<p>Pause</p>	<p>Jesus' words, 'for the forgiveness of sins,' reveal the heart of the new covenant. The Eucharist reminds us we are set free and made new by God's grace. How does it feel to know you are forgiven, once and for all?</p>
<p>21st Feb Saturday</p>	<p>I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you</p>

Day 4	<p>Luke 22.14-20</p> <p>The Institution of the Lord's Supper When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'</p> <hr/> <p>Luke's account has all of the essential elements we find in Paul and Mark and Matthew, but Luke adds something more again. Luke's gospel stresses the love of Jesus for his disciples, called apostles in verse 14. Jesus eagerly desires to share this Passover with them. It is a final meal before his Passion, the end of something as well as the beginning of a new kind of celebration.</p> <p>Luke sets Jesus' prophecy about betrayal after the meal not before it which sharpens the sense of the breaking of fellowship. Luke will go on to describe the dispute about greatness, again emphasising the new community, the beginnings of the Church.</p> <p>Like Mark and Matthew, Jesus also looks to the future. Given that Jesus understands he will die in the hours to come, there is a very strong sense that this will not be the end of the story: Jesus will drink the fruit of the vine again with them in the coming kingdom of God. Jesus understands and shares with his friends both the meaning of his death and the promise of new life.</p>
Pause	<p>Jesus' eager desire to share this Passover with his friends shows his deep love for them. How eager are you to share the deep love of Jesus with your friends and the different people in your life?</p>

Week 2

<p>22nd Feb First Sunday of Lent Day 5</p>	<p>Film 1: The Servant (who welcomes us)</p>
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<p>23rd Feb Monday Day 6</p>	<p>Five loaves and two fish</p> <p>John 6.1-14</p> <p>Feeding the Five Thousand</p> <p>After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'</p> <hr/> <p>John's gospel was the last of the four to be written down. John is writing for a church which already has the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. There is no story of the institution of Holy Communion in the Upper Room in John. The Fourth Gospel will focus there on the foot washing and the new commandment.</p> <p>Instead, John gives us this sign: the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Some of the words and themes will be familiar. Jesus is the host and servant at this feast. He provides for all who come from just five loaves and two fish. Out of scarcity, there is abundance, just as it was with the wine at the wedding in Cana, the first sign.</p> <p>And note the way in which Jesus takes the loaves, gives thanks, breaks them and gives them to the people. This is a foretaste of the Eucharist. The rest of the chapter will unfold its themes.</p>
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	<p>The passage begins in a similar way to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. We might expect that teaching will follow. But first there is this wonderful sign and sacrament. We do need to hear Jesus' teaching still: but we also need profound physical signs of God's grace and to know that in every service of Holy Communion, Jesus is present as our host.</p>
Pause	<p>Imagine a Eucharist where many more receive than were expected, leaving the cup and plate empty halfway along the altar rail. The priest returns to the altar to consecrate more. How does the image of Jesus feeding the 5000 shape your response?</p>
24th Feb Tuesday Day 7	<p>Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you</p> <p>I Kings 19.4-8</p> <p>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.</p> <hr/> <p>This story of Elijah is for everyone who feels tired and exhausted, for crisis moments in our lives when we feel we cannot go on. Elijah is at the very end of his strength.</p> <p>What does God do in this moment? There is no pep talk, no rebuke, no frustration. Instead, God provides an angel. The angel bakes a cake (probably more like a flatbread than a Victoria sponge). The angel provides a jar of water. The angel feeds Elijah in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights as he journeys towards the Mount of God and has the strength to hear God's voice again.</p> <p>Elijah's story is a profound picture of Almighty God, maker of the heavens, entering our story in tenderness, with gentleness and providing exactly what is needed. This is part of the meaning of the</p>

	<p>profound meal of Holy Communion. We become tired and weary, trudging through the desert. We lack the spiritual food we need.</p> <p>Jesus invites us simply to come and eat and rest in his presence. All of the work has been done, the price has been paid. We come with empty hands to receive what has been provided and find strength. We need to meet this divine appointment God has made: Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.</p>
Pause	<p>‘Trudging through the desert’ is the biblical equivalent of the idiom, ‘wading through treacle’. If you or someone you know is in a season of ‘trudging’ or ‘wading’ ask Christ to send an angel today.</p>
25th Feb Wednesday Day 8	<p>“...you that have no money, come, buy and eat”</p> <p>Isaiah 55.1-3</p> <p>An Invitation to Abundant Life Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.</p> <hr/> <p>This song from Isaiah was sung originally to the exiles in Babylon, far from home. The exiles are cast down. They look back and feel they have let God down. There are massive forces ranged against them. The prophet is singing to inspire fresh hope.</p> <p>The song uses an image drawn from Proverbs and the wisdom literature: an invitation from Lady Wisdom to come and feast (Proverbs 9.1-4). Here the prophet’s emphasis is on grace.</p> <p>This meal, like Elijah’s, is served in the desert. This meal is not for one exhausted prophet but for everyone: the whole community is invited. There is to be a rich banquet. This feast is especially for</p>

	<p>those who have no money, for the poor, those who cannot provide for themselves.</p> <p>The invitation is an invitation to listen (v.3) and to enter into a new covenant, an everlasting covenant, based on grace and strong and steadfast love.</p> <p>The song invites us to remember, each time we come to Holy Communion that we are invited to a party, to a rich feast; that the invitation is for everyone; that there is no charge; that all are welcome.</p>
Pause	<p>Sometimes, we listen intently so that we might seek to understand the heart's cry of those before us. Sometimes, however, we listen intently only so that we might say our piece as soon as possible. How might this prophetic song help us to listen to all as we gather at God's table?</p>
26th Feb Thursday Day 9	<p>You prepare a table before me.....</p> <p>Psalm 23 Psalm 23 The Divine Shepherd A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.</p> <hr/> <p>Almost every time Christians read Psalm 23, we focus on the wonderful imagery of the shepherd. There are echoes of Elijah and</p>

	<p>Isaiah 55 in the beautiful images of the Lord who makes us lie down in green pastures, leads us beside still waters and restores our soul.</p> <p>But there is a second powerful image in the Psalm. The Lord is my shepherd but also my host. The Lord prepares a table for me. The Lord himself becomes like a servant for me. The Lord prepares a dwelling place for me so that I might dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.</p> <p>As Christians read Psalm 23 so we encounter Christ who calls himself the good shepherd, who knows his sheep. These are the ways Christ loves and cares for us, his friends and disciples. As we read the Psalm, we are reminded that Christ is also our host. Christ has appointed for us a place to meet him, at a table prepared for us, with the symbolic meal of bread and wine with all these elements mean, a place where we can come and rest and be and live; a place of anointing, of healing, of strength restored.</p>
Pause	<p>You might find all manner of things if you look underneath an Altar. As the Lord prepares a table for us, we could just focus on what is on top, but what lies beneath is also important to God. Picture a Morrison Air Raid Shelter a sturdy kitchen table under which you can shelter from danger.</p>
27th Feb Friday Day 10	<p>Then he poured water into a basin</p> <p>John 13.1-5</p> <p>Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet</p> <p>Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.</p> <hr/> <p>And so we come to John's account of the Upper Room and to this further demonstration of Jesus love for his disciples. There is an extraordinary juxtaposition of ideas in verses 3 and 4. Read them slowly and carefully.</p>

	<p>Jesus knows exactly who he is: he has come from God and he is going to God. And yet – and also therefore – he got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around his waist. Each action is described slowly and carefully and with great wonder.</p> <p>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.</p> <p>The passage tells us very clearly what kind of a host Jesus is in every Eucharist. Not the kind who welcomes us in grandly but expects others to do the work. The kind of host who kneels at the feet of his guests to wash them and refresh them and who centres the meal on those who come.</p> <p>Jesus is clear that this great symbolic action holds a lesson for every single disciple: “you also ought to wash one another’s feet”.</p> <p>How many opportunities for service – for washing feet – might there be in every service of Holy Communion? In stewarding, welcoming, practical service and care of the building. Which ones are you called to fulfil?</p>
Pause	<p>The outer robe of Jesus changed three times in as many days. Here, he voluntarily removed it, to serve. Good Friday sees a purple robe forced upon him. Holy Saturday sees Him wrapped in grave clothes, like Lazarus. Easter morning finds him mistaken for a gardener. When you picture Jesus, what is he wearing?</p>
28th Feb Saturday Day 11	<p>Come and have breakfast</p> <p>John 21.4-14</p> <p>Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, ‘Children, you have no fish, have you?’ They answered him, ‘No.’ He said to them, ‘Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.</p> <p>When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three</p>

	<p>of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.</p> <hr/> <p>After the resurrection, the risen Jesus continues to be host and servant. By the lakeside Jesus continues to involve his disciples in the provision of the meal, just as at the feeding of the five thousand. There is again first scarcity but then abundance as at the wedding and on the hillside.</p> <p>But Jesus has already built a fire, caught fish of his own and baked bread. All of this meant several hours of work to enable Jesus to offer his profound invitation: come and have breakfast.</p> <p>As we prepare for Holy Communion tomorrow, on the second Sunday of Lent, we remember that the risen Christ calls us and invites us. Christ has prepared the table for us. Christ is the meal: the bread and wine are his body and his blood. In every Eucharist Christ is serving us drawing us deeper into fellowship with Jesus and with one another.</p> <p>As Christ draws us to the feast, so we come and so we commit ourselves to welcome others to share the banquet, to share the fellowship and together be sent out into the world.</p>
Pause	<p>It is surprising, but true, that there is a Beyoncé track called, 'When Jesus says yes, nobody can say no.' This passage reminds us that being called by the Lord of the Dance always retains that element of surprise – but, crucially, also an invitation to be weighed. Are we eager to hear Jesus say 'Yes'?</p>

Week 3

1st March Second Sunday of Lent Day 12	Film 2: The Lamb (who redeems us)
2nd March Monday Day 13	<p>Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world</p> <p>John 1.29-34</p>

	<p>The Lamb of God</p> <p>The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'</p> <hr/> <p>John the Baptist's words could be the heading for the whole of the Fourth Gospel. The words take us into the heart of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.</p> <p>Who is Jesus? The vulnerable one who has come to offer his life to take away our sin. What has Jesus accomplished? The taking away of that sin not for one family or nation, not for one generation but the sins of the whole world (the cosmos) through his life and ministry and through his death.</p> <p>In one short confession, John the Baptist paints the whole drama of salvation. The sin of the whole world is vast and beyond human reckoning or understanding. Yet the offering of Jesus life and death serve to take away every sin, every stain, every falling short.</p> <p>Lent is a season for taking seriously our own sin: the many ways in which we fall short of God's purpose in our lives; the many times we have turned away. As we share in the Eucharist as we journey through this season, we remember in this service that Christ has died for the sins of the world. We come to meet the Lamb of God.</p>
Pause	<p>Every time we break and share 'ordinary' bread and wine together in faith, we receive more of the 'extraordinary' gift of God in knowing Jesus Christ. Where else in the 'ordinary' of our lives is the Holy Spirit inviting you to draw nearer and deeper into this 'extraordinary' relationship?</p>
3rd March Tuesday Day 14	<p>It is the Passover of the Lord</p> <p>Exodus 12.1-13</p> <p>The First Passover Instituted</p>

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

The image of the Lamb of God is rooted in the Passover meal. According to Exodus, God sends a series of plagues on the Egyptians because they will not free the Israelites from slavery to freedom in the promised land. Each plague is more severe than the last. The final plague is the death of the firstborn.

The Israelites are given a sign to spare them from this plague: each household is to kill a lamb and put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and the lintel of their home as a sign of God's protection and deliverance. This sign then becomes the Passover meal, eaten by the people of Israel in every generation to remember their deliverance from Egypt.

God's purpose in Christ is to call all people of every nation to freedom and to become one people. And so the Son of God makes his own offering of himself as the Lamb to take away the sin of the world. And the Church, the new people of God, celebrate and

	remember this profound truth in their own symbolic meal of bread and wine.
Pause	Where do you yearn for a greater sense and reality of God's freedom in your life? It can be powerful to write things down, prayerfully offer them to God and then destroy the paper as a physical expression of handing them over.
4th March Wednesday Day 15	<p>Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?</p> <p>Genesis 22.6-8</p> <p>Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.</p> <hr/> <p>Abraham and Sarah have waited all their lives for a promised son. Now they have been blessed with Isaac in their old age and they love him beyond measure. Yet God tests Abraham by inviting him to offer his own son in the land of Moriah.</p> <p>Abraham and Isaac make this terrible journey together to the mountain. Isaac is bound and laid on the altar. Abraham takes up the knife. But in the final moment, God provides a ram for the offering. The story gives us insight into the mind and heart of God.</p> <p>The Mountain of Moriah in a later age is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Through Abraham's anguish we see the crucifixion through the eyes of God the Father. For something greater and deeper happens at the Place of Skull on the day we call Good Friday. The Father does indeed provide a lamb for the burnt offering. The Lamb of God offers his own life to take away the sin of the world.</p>
Pause	How do you imagine God looks upon you? Take time to sense the gaze of a compassionate Father who wants to embrace you – speak to him about your deepest longings and needs, listen to his loving voice.
5th March Thursday Day 16	<p>Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter</p> <p>Isaiah 53.4-9</p>

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

This song from Isaiah describes in great detail the suffering of the servant of the Lord. Christians see this passage as another prophecy of God's Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus. God's anointed one will come not as a conquering king but as a servant, as a son.

He will come not to force his reign on an unwilling world but to offer forgiveness. He will be a servant who will suffer. This suffering is about more than the difficulty of his task or his rejection by others.

There is a meaning and a purpose to the servant's suffering: that purpose is forgiveness and healing: "But he was wounded for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole".

Note this little word "for". The same word is used by Jesus at the institution of Holy Communion: "This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins".

	<p>Jesus identifies in his own words the meaning and purpose of his death. This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.</p>
Pause	<p>You are invited to place yourself ‘at the foot’ of the Cross. Jesus has borne the weight and the cost of all our sin – all our mistakes and mess-ups. In honest confession, what do you need to lay down at his feet?</p>
6th March Friday Day 17	<p>The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep</p> <p>John 10.11-18</p> <p>‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.’</p> <hr/> <p>John deploys many different images in the gospel which all relate to one another and flow from the Scriptures. Here the picture shifts from the Lamb to the Shepherd. But each sheds light on our understanding of Jesus and on what Jesus has done.</p> <p>Here the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. We might notice two things. The first is Jesus’ agency in his own death. He lays down his life voluntarily. Although others play their part in the crucifixion, Jesus offers up his own life. This is the very centre of his mission: the reason he came.</p> <p>The second is the motivation. Why does the good shepherd lay down his life? Notice the same word recurring once again: for the sheep, on our behalf. This is again, in the words from Isaiah, for our transgressions, for our iniquities, for our healing.</p> <p>The Jesus of the gospels is far, far more than a good man or a wise teacher. There is deeper meaning in his life, in his incarnation. God identifies with humanity in solidarity and love. There is a deeper</p>

	<p>meaning in his death, his life offered freely to take away the sins of the world.</p>
Pause	<p>‘This is my body...This is my blood, given for you’. Jesus’ words are spoken in a deeply personal way. What is it like to be reminded that God’s love has gone this far - for you? How might Jesus be inviting you to make a personal response to him?</p>
<p>7th March Saturday Day 18</p>	<p>It is finished</p> <p>John 19.28-30</p> <p>After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.</p> <hr/> <p>Jesus’ final cry from the cross is not a cry of surrender or defeat but a cry of triumph: It is finished. The work Jesus came to do has now been accomplished as the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The Passover lamb has been offered to take away the sins of the world. It is now possible for those who believe and trust in him to receive this forgiveness, for the rift between God and man to be mended. In the words of John 1, all who believe in his name have the power now to become children of God.</p> <p>Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that every time we celebrate the Eucharist, every time we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. The death we proclaim is the self offering of the Son of God to take away the sin of the world, the opening of the way to freedom, to wholeness and to forgiveness.</p> <p>We make this proclamation to the world, as an act of witness and the retelling of the wonderful story. But we make this proclamation in every Eucharist most of all to ourselves, to one another, as a powerful, living reminder that we, even we have been forgiven, that we are loved so deeply, that we are set right with God now and for eternity.</p>
Pause	<p>Who do you know someone who needs the joy and release of hearing Jesus’ words: ‘It is finished’? Pray for them by name now. Can you commit to praying for them regularly?</p>

Week 4

8th March Third Sunday of Lent Day 19	Film 3: The Bread of Life (who feeds us)
9th March Monday Day 20	<p>The food that endures to eternal life</p> <p>John 6.25-34</p> <p>When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.’ Then they said to him, ‘What must we do to perform the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’ So they said to him, ‘What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’</p> <hr/> <p>The crowds want more bread. But what kind? Jesus leads them (and us) step by step to a deeper and better understanding of what kind of bread we want and need for life in all its fulness.</p> <p>The starting point is yesterday’s provision of a free meal. It’s easy to see why the crowds want more of this. But they have misunderstood the miracle. The feeding of the 5,000 is not some kind of new normal in which people no longer have to work for food. The feeding is a sign, like all the miracles in this gospel, of a deeper, spiritual reality, of the gift of spiritual food.</p> <p>The crowd begin to understand. But Jesus’ talk of food that endures is challenging and leads them to ask for another sign, like the sign of manna in the time of Moses.</p>

	<p>Jesus draws them deeper. The manna itself was a gift from God and also in its way a sign of a greater reality to come: the bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. The crowd long for this true bread. Do we?</p>
Pause	<p>Jesus redirects our hunger from perishable food to the 'food that endures to eternal life.' He invites us to seek both daily and eternal sustenance in him, the true bread from heaven. What do you hunger for?</p>
10th March Tuesday Day 21	<p>Bread from heaven</p> <p>Exodus 16.4-8</p> <p>Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?' And Moses said, 'When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.'</p> <hr/> <p>Because Jesus draws the parallel between manna and the bread of life, there are lessons in the story of the manna for the ways we understand the Eucharist.</p> <p>The most basic is this: the Israelites are travelling through a physical desert. They need food and drink to survive. They have no way of producing that food and drink from their own resources. God must provide for them day by day</p> <p>The parallel for the Church is real. We may have enough to eat physically (though many in the world do not and many more rely on food banks). But all of us are journeying through a spiritual desert. All of us are aware of our inner deserts. To survive in these deserts we need spiritual food and spiritual drink to sustain us.</p> <p>We have no resources of ourselves to help ourselves. We are dependent upon the Lord's provision. That provision is made for</p>

	us in the worship of the Church. We come, we gather, we listen and we receive spiritual food for the journey, daily bread.
Pause	God provides manna for his people in the wilderness, teaching them to depend on him and trust his provision each day. In the Eucharist, God provides spiritual food—daily bread for the journey. How is God inviting you to rely on him for what you truly need each day?
11th March Wednesday Day 22	<p>It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat</p> <p>Exodus 16.13-21</p> <p>In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: “Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.”’ The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed. And Moses said to them, ‘Let no one leave any of it over until morning.’ But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul. And Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.</p> <hr/> <p>There is a second key learning from the manna for our own practise. The manna is given each day and lasts only for a day, except on the day before the Sabbath when enough can be kept for the day of rest. Each can gather only what they need and everyone has sufficient. But this spiritual food, even though it is bread from heaven, will not keep.</p> <p>Why is this? To remind the Israelites as they journey through the desert first that all are equal before God, everyone is given the same gift according to their need. And second as a daily reminder of God’s miraculous provision for our spiritual needs. A gift which is given every day can never be taken for granted.</p>

	<p>The idea of the manna which falls every day is, of course, taken up by Jesus into the Lord's Prayer: Give us this day our daily bread. We are to pray not only for our physical needs to be met each day, by God's grace, but for spiritual food to sustain us in the journey. Holy Communion when we gather together is part of that provision.</p>
Pause	<p>God's gifts are new each morning. We cannot store up grace; instead, we must return daily to be fed. Take a moment to notice, with thanksgiving, the new gifts God has given you today.</p>
12th March Thursday Day 23	<p>I am the bread of life</p> <p>John 6.35-40</p> <p>Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'</p> <hr/> <p>Now comes the big reveal. Jesus is more than the one who provides physical bread or spiritual food. Jesus is himself the bread of life. The seven I am sayings in the gospel each build a picture of how Jesus is divine, the Son of God. The name of God in Exodus 3.14 is revealed as "I am who I am". In each of these sayings Jesus is describing his own divinity and all he brings to humankind.</p> <p>The seven I am sayings begin with "I am the bread of life" and end as we shall see with "I am the true vine". Bread and wine run through the gospel. Each one is a powerful picture. In saying that he is the bread of life, Jesus is giving himself to each of us, if we will receive him. Jesus himself is our daily bread, our food for the journey.</p> <p>What does this mean? Ponder these three truths today. Jesus himself is our satisfaction in this life: Whoever comes to me will</p>

	<p>never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Jesus is our guarantee that each of us is loved and accepted: Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away. Jesus himself is our promise and guarantee of life eternal: All who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day.</p>
Pause	<p>Jesus offers not only daily sustenance, but himself as “our daily bread” and hope forever. How might you more fully receive and be nourished by him?</p>
13th March Friday Day 24	<p>The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh</p> <p>John 6.41-51</p> <p>Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven.’ They were saying, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, “I have come down from heaven”?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught by God.” Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.’</p> <hr/> <p>The crowds find these claims of Jesus hard and begin to challenge them. Jesus claims that he is the bread who has come down from heaven – but the crowds know where he has come from. He is Joseph’s son. How can this be?</p> <p>Jesus draws them back from the physical to the inner spiritual realities. But Jesus also acknowledges here and throughout the gospel that only those who are drawn by the Father will be able to see and understand these realities.</p> <p>Three times in all Jesus declares I am the bread of life or I am the living bread that came down from heaven (35, 48, 51) more than</p>

	<p>any other I am saying. There is a deliberate contrast between those who ate the manna, who died in the wilderness, and those who believe in Jesus, the living bread, who will live for ever. So great is this gift.</p> <p>But the gift and image of bread is linked then at the end of the passage with the cross and with the gift of Holy Communion: the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.</p>
Pause	<p>What does Jesus' claim that he is 'the living bread that came down from heaven' mean to you? How might this inform how you receive this living bread during Holy Communion?</p>
<p>14th March Saturday Day 25</p>	<p>The one who eats this bread will live for ever</p> <p>John 6.52-59</p> <p>The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.</p> <hr/> <p>Again, the Jews challenge Jesus' words: How can this man give us his flesh to eat. They look for physical, literal answers again. Jesus draws them back to spiritual signs.</p> <p>Jesus now points the Jews and us not backwards to the manna or even back to the miracle on the hillside. Jesus points forward to the great sacrament of the Church: Holy Communion.</p> <p>Those who know and love Jesus as Lord and Saviour are invited to receive the bread of life and the cup of salvation. The bread and wine are the outward and physical signs of the inward and spiritual grace. We are invited to share in the body of Christ, shed for us, and the blood of Christ, poured out for us. His sacrifice becomes part of us. We become part of him, one bread and one body, and deeply part of one another.</p>

	<p>There is a promise here repeated for the future: Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.</p> <p>But there is an equally powerful promise for the present we need to hear this day which we will explore more in the imagery of the vine. This is our place of rest and peace in the present: Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.</p>
Pause	<p>In Holy Communion, we abide in Jesus, and he in us, united as one body. How does this mystery of shared life shape your faith and relationships today?</p>

Week 5

15th March Fourth Sunday of Lent Day 26	Film 4: The Vine (who offers rest and life)
16th March Monday Day 27	<p>King Melchizedek of Salem brought bread and wine Genesis 14.17-20</p> <p>Abram Blessed by Melchizedek After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.</p> <p>Scholars believe that Genesis 14 is a very ancient text within the Book of Genesis. The chapter describes a battle between eight "kings" of the cities in the desert region south of Jerusalem. Abram's nephew, Lot, is taken prisoner so Abram is drawn into the conflict.</p> <p>Abram's return route brings him to Salem, thought to be an early name for Jerusalem. The King of Salem, Melchizedek, is also a priest of God and brings out bread and wine – the first and prophetic</p>

	<p>mention of these great symbols of faith in the scripture. Melchizedek blesses Abram in his victory.</p> <p>This is not Melchizedek's only appearance in the Bible. Psalm 110, addressed to the king in the worship of the temple, calls the King, the anointed one, a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek. This in turn leads to the reflections in the Letter to the Hebrews about Jesus being a priest not in the line of Levi but in this more ancient priesthood (5.10). The elements of bread and wine stand in this deep tradition of worship and prophecy.</p>
Pause	Melchizedek is a mysterious figure: we know little about him. Where have you encountered God's blessing or signs of God's grace from people whom you didn't know from unexpected people?
17th March Tuesday Day 28	<p>Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed Proverbs 9.1-6</p> <p>Wisdom's Feast Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town, 'You that are simple, turn in here!' To those without sense she says, 'Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight.'</p> <p>In some parts of Proverbs, the quality of wisdom is personified. She becomes more than a human attribute but an attractive character in her own right. Wisdom invites the young to befriend her. Wisdom was created at the beginning of God's works: "rejoicing before him always....and delighting in the human</p>

	<p>race” (8.30). This idea of Wisdom grows and feeds into the understanding of the Word of God we find in the prologue of John’s gospel and John’s understanding of Jesus.</p> <p>In Proverbs 9, Wisdom again builds her house and sets her tables. She sends out servant girls to invite people to the feast – an image Jesus draws on in some of the parables. It is Wisdom who gives the first invitation on the scriptures to come and eat and specifically to “eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed”.</p> <p>The bread and the wine here suggest more than food and drink to give strength for the journey. Here the bread and wine represent ingesting wisdom – a deep, practical understanding of how our best life is to be lived. Wisdom is more than keeping rules.</p>
Pause	<p>During a recent visit to our link diocese in Växjö we were struck by the central place of hospitality as coffee and cake signalled welcome, at almost every stop on our journey. Where might we, like Wisdom, be able to set our table and extend that invitation of hospitality, to create room for fellowship, and open space for wisdom to grow as life is shared?</p>
18th March Wednesday Day 29	<p>A feast of well matured wines</p> <p>Isaiah 25.6-10</p> <p>On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.</p>

	<p>The Moabites shall be trodden down in their place as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.</p>
	<p>Isaiah sings of another, a different kind of feast. This is a breathtaking vision of God's kingdom. This is a vision for all the peoples of the earth. The food is described as rich, filled with marrow. The wines are described as well matured, strained clear, the very best wine there can be.</p> <p>What is the reason for this rich feast, this celebration on the mountain of the Lord of Hosts? The reason is that Isaiah has seen a day when the Lord will destroy on this very mountain "the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever".</p> <p>This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus and in Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead: the very centre of our faith. Death for Christians is always an enemy, and an enemy who has been defeated. The meal we share in Holy Communion is itself a celebration that death has been overcome and that we are invited to share in life eternal.</p>
Pause	<p>Consider how might this vision of unity and joy call you to build bridges, to heal divisions, and to celebrate the richness of life God gives to all peoples?</p>
19th March Thursday Day 30	<p>But you have kept the good wine until now</p> <p>John 2.1-11 The Wedding at Cana On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept</p>

	<p>the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.</p> <hr/> <p>There are seven signs in the Gospel of John and seven "I am" sayings. The first of the signs is the miracle at Cana: the transformation of water into wine. The final "I am" saying is Jesus' declaration in John 15, "I am the vine". The imagery of the wine of the Eucharist runs through the entire gospel.</p> <p>Here the sign is one of transformation and abundance in the face of scarcity. The six stone water jars hold around 180 gallons of wine. The water from the well is transformed into rich, wine, the best wine.</p> <p>The sign is about more than the power of Jesus' words and actions. The wine is a symbol of joy and celebration, of abundant life, of the transformation Jesus brings to our ordinary lives. The daily bread of the Eucharist symbolises the ordinary, the every day. The wine takes us to the heights of celebration and the depth of suffering. All of our life is here.</p>
Pause	<p>How might the God who makes the finest wine from water transform our lives, if we ask? You may like to pray this ancient prayer based on Ephesians 3:20-21: "Glory be to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine"</p>
20th March Friday Day 31	<p>I am the vine</p> <p>John 15.1-4</p> <p>Jesus the True Vine</p> <p>'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.</p> <hr/> <p>Our lives are meant to be purposeful, to bear fruit. So many lives never reach their potential. The call of Christ to each of us is to bear</p>

	<p>fruit that will last – fruitfulness which will borne out of both joy and sacrifice and suffering.</p> <p>We encounter Jesus in the Eucharist not only in the wine, representing his blood shed for us, but in this profound picture of the vine. A vine is unlike every other tree in that every single branch is rooted directly into the main stem of the vine.</p> <p>So we do not come to Christ through intermediaries (such as ministers or even the wider church). We come to Christ directly, we know Christ for ourselves by being rooted in him as a branch is rooted in the vine.</p> <p>Christ's life then flows into and through our lives and enables us to bear the good fruit of justice, of kindness, of lives transformed by the gospel. The wine in</p>
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	which we share in every Eucharist reminds us of this call to fruitfulness and the call to put down deep roots in Christ.
Pause	Christ calls us to bear fruit that will last. What might that look like in your life?
21st March Saturday Day 32	<p>Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit John 15.5-11</p> <p>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.</p> <p>It would be easy to hear the call to bear much fruit as a call to busyness, to activism, to rushing around trying to do good to others. But this is not how the Christian life works at all, according to John 15.</p> <p>There is one primary call for every disciple. One word is repeated seven times in this brief passage. The word is abide. The word is a rich and deep one in John's gospel. It means to remain, to make your home in, to rest, to dwell, to be still, to sink your roots into.</p> <p>This is the very opposite of activism but it is not pietism either (pietism is focussing entirely on your relationship with God to the neglect of the world). To abide is to centre every life every day on God in Christ and to allow God's joy and love to flow through us to make a difference in the world. Sharing in the Eucharist, in bread and wine, is at the centre of this abiding.</p>
Pause	Sharing in the Eucharist; allowing God's word to dwell in us; following Christ's commands; all of these are part of abiding in Christ's love. How can you place them more fully at the centre of your daily life?

Week 6

22nd March Passion Sunday Day 33	Film 5: The Son of God (who draws us into the worship of heaven)
23rd March Monday Day 34	<p>The LORD appeared to Abraham...</p> <p>Genesis 18.1-8</p> <p>A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah</p> <p>The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.</p> <hr/> <p>Abraham and Sarah experience a divine encounter: an appointment with God. The opening verse of the chapter is very clear: the LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre. The capital letters in our bible indicate the divine name. The presence of the LORD is conveyed not by one person but by three. Christians have seen here a representation of the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit meet with Abraham and Sarah.</p> <p>Where do they meet? They meet around a table, a meal. The meeting begins in the heat of the day but continues for some time. There is water for the washing of feet (4). There is the opportunity to rest in the shade (5). There is bread made by Sarah (6). There is</p>

	<p>a fatted calf to celebrate Almighty God visiting Sarah and Abraham. There are curds and milk.</p> <p>Take a moment to wonder: the living God, the maker of heaven and earth, comes to meet with us in a simple meal, around a table, and brings a message of profound hope for the world.</p>
Pause	<p>What brings you to the meal? What do you have in your heart as you prepare to meet the living God who gave his life for you? What might God be asking you to bring to the table?</p>
<p>24th March Tuesday Day 35</p>	<p>Remove the sandals from your feet.....</p> <p>Exodus 3.1-6</p> <p>Moses at the Burning Bush Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.</p> <hr/> <p>Moses is drawn to the fire in the wilderness, the fire which burns but which does not consume. The first word Moses hears is his name, a word of welcome and recognition. As you enter the church to pray, as you pause in the stillness of the morning, listen to God speaking your name. Hear the gentle, gracious invitation.</p> <p>But we need to hear the second word as well. "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet for the place on which you are standing is holy ground".</p>

	<p>Moses is entering a thin place, a holy place. Moses needs to remember the majesty and presence of the living God before he hears God's holy name. The whole story of the burning bush is caught in the first line of the Lord's Prayer: Hallowed by your name.</p> <p>We do not often take off our shoes when we bow down in prayer or when we enter a church. What are the physical signs and symbols which remind us that we are on hallowed ground as we come to holy communion?</p>
Pause	<p>The Liturgy of the church has always invited us to examine ourselves before we meet God in Holy Communion. What might you do to prepare yourself in body, mind, and soul to meet God on this holy ground?</p>
25th March Wednesday Day 36	<p>Holy, holy, holy is the Lord</p> <p>Isaiah 6.1-8</p> <p>A Vision of God in the Temple</p> <p>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:</p> <p>'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'</p> <p>The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'</p> <hr/>

	<p>Isaiah's vision captures every one of his senses. He sees the LORD, high and lifted up. He hears the song of the seraphim, the mysterious heavenly creatures. He smells the smoke from the sacrifice and the incense rising. He tastes and touches the burning coal held to his lips. His whole being is caught up in this encounter with the living God.</p> <p>The dynamic of Isaiah's vision is the dynamic of holiness. Isaiah becomes aware through all of his senses, in deep, mysterious ways that God is holy, that God is other, that God is weighty, that God is pure, that God is beyond our understanding.</p> <p>This fresh, deep awareness of the living God causes Isaiah to see himself in a new mirror. He sees himself in the light of God's glory and splendour. He understands in new ways the depth of his own uncleanness: "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips".</p> <p>But that is not the end of the story. God meets Isaiah where he is in the coal taken from the altar and offers him a new commission. The same drama is offered to us in every Eucharist as we draw near to the living God.</p>
Pause	<p>What might we want to say to God? What do we need God to hear? What might we long God to heal and purify with his refining fire?</p>
26th March Thursday Day 37	<p>But you have come to Mount Zion...</p> <p>Hebrews 12.18-24</p> <p>You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.' Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.') But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all,</p>

	<p>and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.</p> <hr/> <p>Our worship on earth is joined to the worship of heaven. The Letter to the Hebrews was written to scattered, small Christian congregations under continual threat of persecution. They had no glorious church buildings but met in one another's homes. They had little in the way of music or art or even liturgy to guide their prayers. Their meetings had to be in secret, like those of the persecuted church today.</p> <p>Yet they do have the Eucharist: Christ present to Christ's people in bread and wine.</p> <p>Hebrews argues here that the worship of these early Christians is more powerful than the worship of the great temple in Jerusalem; more powerful even that when God met the Israelites on Mount Sinai and gave them the Ten Commandments.</p> <p>Every time we meet, whether for informal worship; at an early service of Holy Communion; or for a choral Eucharist in the Cathedral, our own worship is joined to the worship of the angels; of the saints who have gone before us; of the spirits of the righteous made perfect and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.</p>
Pause	<p>Stop and wonder at the glory of this truth. However grand or however simple our worship services, the living God of heaven and earth delights to be present with us, healing us and restoring us – and all heaven rejoices with us.</p>
27th March Friday Day 38	<p>Come to me all that are weary and carry heavy burdens....</p> <p>Matthew 11.25-30</p> <p>Jesus Thanks His Father</p>

	<p>At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.</p> <p>'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'</p>
	<p>We end this week's reflections with two passages in which Jesus in prayer confesses his deep knowledge of the Father and his desire to reveal the true nature of God to those who come to him.</p> <p>Jesus knows (and we often do not) that it is not easy to understand or to comprehend God. Our ideas of what God is like are often wrong – something which can affect our whole lives.</p> <p>For that reason Jesus turns here from his confession of his closeness with the Father to the most beautiful and profound invitation founded on his own gentleness. Read these powerful words again as medicine for the soul, whatever burdens you are carrying at the present time. At one time this invitation was part of every Anglican Eucharist and forms the beginning of a set of texts known as the Comfortable Words. This is the nature of the Father whom Jesus reveals to us.</p> <p>"Come to me all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest".</p>
Pause	<p>The Jesus who utters this invitation describes himself as meek and humble. Pause to remember that Jesus comes alongside us in our every struggle, and delights to help us live, as he calls through all the good and all the bad we experience.</p>
28th March Saturday Day 39	<p>....those who will believe in me through their word....</p> <p>John 17.20-26</p>

	<p>‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.</p> <p>‘Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.’</p> <hr/> <p>At the end of this great high priestly prayer, Jesus prays for you and me: for every generation who will come after the apostles and who will believe “through their word”.</p> <p>For what does Jesus our Lord pray? First that we might be one. Jesus prays here for the unity of the church throughout the world; the unity of the church in our town or city or county; the unity of our benefice or congregation. Second that we might be in the Father and in Christ and that they may be in us. That we might abide together. The chief symbols of that abiding, as we have seen, are the body and blood of Christ, shared in the Eucharist. Why does Jesus make this his prayer for us? “That the world may believe that you have sent me” (21). The credibility of the church, the credibility of the mission of Jesus, depends on that mutual abiding, this deep unity in the Body of Christ and our union with the Father and the Son.</p>
Pause	<p>Jesus ends his prayer with the words ‘so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them.’ You are invited to pray that</p>

	God will fill us all with his love that we might find this unity for which he prays.
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Week 7

29th March Palm Sunday Day 40	Film 6: The Apostle (who sends us)
30th March Monday of HW Day 41	<p>“To be with him and to be sent out”</p> <p>Mark 3.13-18</p> <p>Jesus Appoints the Twelve He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons. So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean,</p> <hr/> <p>Jesus call of the twelve is a very significant passage in the earliest gospel. We know that Jesus has been gathering followers, disciples, through the stories of Simon and Andrew and Levi. Now he calls together twelve: the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus is founding a new community, the new Israel for the future.</p> <p>Jesus call of the twelve is with a particular purpose caught in Mark’s beautiful summary of what it means to follow Christ. The twelve are “to be with him and to be sent out” (14). We are created by God and loved and our lives are given purpose. We live our best lives when we are able to find this balanced rhythm of coming together to be with Jesus and being sent out in love and service and God’s mission.</p>

	<p>Every Christian is called to be a disciple. The word means learner, someone who sits at Jesus feet, who is with him. Every Christian is called to be an apostle. The word means one who is sent in love and service to the world.</p>
Pause	<p>As we draw near to the end of the journey of Come and See, we also embark on the journey of Holy Week – the journey with Jesus into suffering and through death to resurrection. How is Jesus calling you to accompany him on this journey? And how is Jesus promising to be with you as you travel?</p>
<p>31st March Tuesday of HW Day 42</p>	<p>A living sacrifice</p> <p>Romans 12.1-2</p> <p>The New Life in Christ I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.</p> <hr/> <p>In the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul describes the remarkable grace and gift of God to every person in creation. God has called us, made us, saved us in Christ. This salvation is by grace alone. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (8.39).</p> <p>After this remarkable exploration of grace and the love of God, comes this appeal. “Therefore” says Paul: because of all that God has done; because of this great love and this glorious salvation which has been explored in such depth – therefore what?</p> <p>Paul reaches for the language and imagery of the temple and of sacrifices offered to God in response to God’s goodness. There is no place for these physical sacrifices in Christian faith. Instead, we are to offer our whole lives, daily, in response to God’s grace:</p>

	<p>“present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”.</p>
Pause	<p>Holy Week is an opportunity to reflect deeply on the gift Christ gives us in dying for us: a gift of grace that has nothing to do with what we deserve. We who have received this gift are called to give ourselves daily as a living sacrifice, because this is how Christ has already given himself to us.</p>
<p>1st April Wed of HW Day 43</p>	<p>The apostle and high priest of our calling</p> <p>Hebrews 3.1-2</p> <p>Moses a Servant, Christ a Son Therefore, brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling, consider that Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses also ‘was faithful in all God’s house.’</p> <hr/> <p>Jesus is named here as the apostle of our confession. Jesus himself was sent by God as part of God’s great mission of love to the world which begins in creation and continues through the patriarchs and prophets and sages and kings of the Old Testament. This great chain of mission reaches its high point in the sending of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ – an image reflected in Jesus own parable of the tenants in the vineyard (Matthew 21.37). But Jesus is not the end of this chain of mission, of sending.</p> <p>Jesus Christ, the apostle, now sends us, Sunday by Sunday, year by year into God’s world to continue God’s great mission of love: to wash feet; to feed the poor; to teach; to heal; to mend and heal and build the world.</p> <p>This is the meaning of the final words in the Eucharist, this solemn charge: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”. It’s not just another way of saying time for coffee or time to go home for lunch. It is a short service commission to dedicate your life this week, in every part, to Christ our Lord.</p>

Pause	<p>At the end of each Eucharist, we are sent with the instruction to be ministers of Christ's presence, to be a living sacrifice. Hearing this commission as we approach Good Friday, we might reflect on how much the mission of Jesus cost him. Does that cost frighten us – or inspire us?</p>
<p>2nd April Maundy Thursday Day 44</p>	<p>For I have set you an example</p> <p>John 13.12-20</p> <p>After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'</p> <hr/> <p>All across the world today, priests and ministers will follow the example of Jesus and kneel and wash the hands and feet of their parishioners, remembering the way in which Jesus knelt and washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper, the place where Jesus also gave the command to celebrate the Eucharist, to do this in remembrance of me.</p> <p>But we sometimes mishear Jesus' instructions. Jesus' words here are not simply for the priests and ministers in the church (though they are absolutely included and the foot washing on Maundy Thursday is a powerful reminder of the call to be servant leaders).</p>

	<p>Jesus' words are for all of us. We are all called, all charged, with this commandment to wash one another's feet for the sake of the gospel: those we like, those we may not like; those who agree with us; those who do not. Because of Jesus.</p>
Pause	<p>The call 'come and see' has morphed, like the call to the disciples, into 'come with me.' Coming with Jesus on the way of Holy Week, the way of the Cross, means coming as a living sacrifice; coming to love and serve the Lord; and now, coming to wash one another's feet. What might this mean for you in practice this Maundy Thursday?</p>
<p>3rd April Good Friday Day 45</p>	<p>Glorify your Son</p> <p>John 17.1-9</p> <p>Jesus Prays for His Disciples After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.</p> <p>'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.</p> <hr/> <p>Christians all across the world will ponder the cross today through readings and processions, through solemn music and in quiet prayer.</p>

	<p>Jesus himself, according to John, on the night before his death, offers this prayer of surrender to the Father: glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.</p> <p>The words indicate clearly, as we have seen in other places, that the cross is not something that is done to Jesus by others or a random accident. Christ's death on the cross is intentional, the work of salvation, a necessary part of his mission to bring reconciliation to the world.</p> <p>But John goes much further. The word glory means many things: fame and fortune; renown; perhaps victory in battle or prominence in public life. We would never use glory to describe a criminal's death in disgrace and persecution; cruel torment, abandonment, betrayal and suffering. But this is the death we remember today. This is the way in which the Father glorifies the Son. This is the measure of the work of Jesus for us.</p>
Pause	<p>Those who witnessed Jesus being crucified watched a criminal taking his punishment, or a tragedy unfolding. Yet God saw his Son glorified. Gore and glory, death and perfection, the end and the beginning: who and what do you see, when you look at the Cross?</p>
4th April Holy Saturday Day 46	<p>As you have sent me into the world.....</p> <p>John 17.10-20</p> <p>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify</p>

	<p>them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.</p> <p>‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,</p> <hr/> <p>On this Holy Saturday Christians in every country are preparing to be baptised on Easter Eve or Easter Day. Baptism, like the Eucharist, is a sacrament of salvation, a reminder of God’s love for us and God’s rescue of us through the cross. Baptism, like the Eucharist, is a sacrament of sending.</p> <p>These are the words of Jesus in the prayer which will be echoed after the resurrection: “As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world”. How has God sent Jesus: in humility and service, with love. How does Jesus send those who are newly baptised? How does Jesus send us?</p> <p>In the same way, of course. In humility and service and with love in a life and ministry which will be rich and full of joy yet often costly and sacrificial. The bread and wine of the Eucharist which are symbols of Christ’s mission become symbols of our own discipleship.</p>
Pause	<p>In the Creeds, we are told that after his death and burial Jesus ‘descended into hell.’ In that gloomiest, coldest, most loveless of places – Love appeared. On this Holy Saturday, as the world is poised for the new life of resurrection, where are the cold and gloomy places of our lives which need to be illuminated by love?</p>
5th April Easter Day Day 47	<p>Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him</p> <p>Luke 24.28-35</p> <p>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the</p>

	<p>table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.</p> <hr/> <p>Thank you for journeying through Come and See this year. We have explored the ways in which we meet with Jesus in the Eucharist as servant and host; as the Lamb of God; as Bread of Life and the true vine, inviting us to rest and fruitfulness. We have remembered the ways in which Jesus the Son draws us into the life of the Trinity and sends us out into God's world.</p> <p>But on this Easter Day we return to the beginning. The ways in which the two disciples recognise Jesus on the Emmaus Road are all available to us. Like them, we are able to gather in fellowship this day and Christ draws near. Like them we are able to listen to the scriptures and their interpretation and find our hearts burning within us.</p> <p>Most of all, like them, we are able to gather around the Lord's table, take bread, give thanks and break and share the bread to recognise the risen Christ among us and then be sent to bear witness to his love. So come, and eat.</p>
Pause	<p>You are invited to pray, with the priest preparing the Table, 'Be present, be present, Lord Jesus, our risen High Priest, and make yourself known in the breaking of the bread.'</p> <p>May Christ be truly present. And may we know him in the breaking open of his Word, in the inbreaking of his Spirit, and above all in the breaking of his bread.</p>