

Dear Friends,

The liturgical season of Lent is traditionally a time of fasting, prayer and reflection. It is important to be aware of our shortcomings, and of our need for God, but the inward-looking part of the Lenten discipline is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a necessary element of a larger enterprise. The time Jesus spent in the wilderness was preparation for his ministry: the reflection was a springboard for action.

It can be hard to know exactly where our efforts are most needed, how we can use the limited resources of time, energy and money at our disposal to best effect. We are small players on a big stage, and it is easy to feel that what we do is not really of any significance. That, perhaps, is one of the biggest temptations we have to resist. I believe that everything we do *does* matter.

Fair Trade Fortnight is a good reminder of that. Not so long ago, campaigning for Fair Trade was considered to be an eccentric occupation reserved for the 'beard and sandals' brigade, and some of the products were notoriously unpalatable, but thanks to years of pressure from customers all the major retailers now carry fairly traded lines, and also pay more attention to the practices and policies within their own supply chains. How we choose to shop makes a difference.

What and how we give makes a difference, too. Our Winter Support initiative has been well received, not least because in giving vouchers we have enabled people to make their own choices, if only in a very small way. Jesus always took the time to ask people what it was they wanted of him, not simply to assume he knew what they needed. Our gifts to the refuge are also a way of extending a little comfort to some of the most vulnerable in our community, of showing that while they may need to be out of sight for their own safety, they are not out of mind. Similarly, providing hygiene facilities to isolated communities in the developing world may not seem either glamorous or exciting, but it may transform the life of that community.

Let's make a difference this Lent!

Yours in Christ,
Alison

March Calendar

Sun 4 th	Communion Service 10.15am Including reception of new members
Tues 6 th	Coffee 10.30am, Worship 12.00 noon
Fri 9 th	Lent Lunch and Reflection 12.30pm Featuring Fairtrade stall and film Student Feast Night, 6.30pm
Sun 11 th	All Age Mothering Sunday Service 10.15 am Gifts for the Women's Refuge
Tues 13 th	Coffee 10.30am, Worship 12.00 noon
Weds 14 th	Elders' Meeting, 7.30pm
Fri 16 th	Lent Lunch and Reflection 12.30pm Student Feast Night, 6.30pm
Sat 17 th	Elders' Reflection Day, 10am – 4pm
Sun 18 th	Morning Worship 10.15am
Tues 20 th	Coffee 10.30am, Worship 12.00 noon
Fri 23 rd	Lent Lunch and Reflection 12.30pm Student Feast Night, 6.30pm
Sun 25 th	Joint Palm Sunday Service with Holy Trinity Micklegate Bar 10.45am, Service at 11am
Tues 27 th	Coffee 10.30am, Worship 12.00 noon
Thurs 29 th	Maundy Thursday Meal and Tenebrae 6.30pm
Fri 30 th	Churches Together Walk of Witness and Service Details to be advised



St Columba's URC York

Newsletter

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Please pray for:

- Those being received into membership on March 4th
- The Synod Meeting on March 10th
- The Elders' Reflection Day on March 17th
- The women and children at the refuge and those who work there
- Those known to us who are suffering in body, mind or spirit
- Our Mission Partners in the Community Foundation
- Homeless people across York and the wider area
- The various groups which use our building
- The Churches Together Walk of Witness
- Christians facing persecution this Eastertide



March 2018