

NEWSWIRE: 7th March 2025



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-

A message from Duncan

Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the season of Lent. Perhaps not the most attractive or exportable of church seasons. It begins with a reminder of our mortality - *“Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return”* - and continues with a call to self-examination, repentance and fasting. It seems like hard work, and in some ways it is, but in these days where nothing seems certain it is a valuable opportunity to express our trust in God alone and to consecrate ourselves to him through prayer, bible study and renewed commitment to the Way of Christ. By these disciplines we are tilling the soil of our hearts and our churches in preparation for God’s fruitful work amongst us. We empty ourselves that we might be filled, we humble ourselves that we might be exalted, we quieten our hearts that we might hear the voice of God, we close our eyes to the distractions of the world that we might see the glory of God. We do not know the future in the life of our church, nation or world, indeed in our own lives, but through our drawing near to God we ready ourselves for what is ahead.

And let me encourage you, as you lean into God, hold onto anything he says to you. Even when you might not fully understand what is being said, or even doubt that it is from God. Carry it with you, think about it, pray about it. One verse from the Ash Wednesday readings that I will carry is 2 Corinthians 6.1. Paul says to the Christians in Corinth, *“we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”* It is a corrective against the apathy, diminishing faith and cynicism that so easily creeps in through the ups and downs of life. It is a reminder to ensure the free gift of God’s grace is active in my life; to clear the clutter of my heart so that Christ’s will might come to fruition in my life. It is a cry: Let it not all be in vain.

But you will have your own call from God. Listen for it. Keep it. Put it to work in your heart. And as we let the word of God loose in our lives we wait, with anticipation and faith, to see what he will do with us and through us.

*God our Father,
in your love and goodness
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence
with prayer, fasting and generosity;
accept our Lenten discipline,
and when we fall by our weakness,
raise us up by your unfailing mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Collect for the first Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

SERVICES ON SUNDAY

9am - Holy Communion at St Leonard's

Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-4

9.30am - Morning Worship at St Peter's

Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 4:1-11

9.30am - Morning Worship at St Leonard's and live streamed on [this link](#)

Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

If you have difficulties accessing the service on the livestream link above, please try accessing [our youtube channel](#) directly.

4pm - Families@4 at St Leonard's



NEXT WEEK

Monday 10th March

Bump to One meet on Mondays from 10.30am to midday in St Leonard's

Walkie Talkies meet on Mondays (term time) from 10am to 11.30am in St Leonard's church hall.

Tuesday 11th March

Mum's Bible Study meets on **Tuesday** mornings (term time) from **10 - 11.30am**. Please contact Jo Shaw for more details. Email: jollypops@gmail.com

Tinies and Toddlers meet on **Tuesdays** (term time) from **1.30pm - 3pm** in **Cassington Village Hall**.

Wednesday 12th March

Warm Welcome Wednesday from 10.30am to midday in **St Leonard's** church.

NEXT SUNDAY - 16th March

9.30am - Holy Communion at St Peter's

10.30am - Morning Worship at St Leonard's and livestreamed

Looking further ahead

The funeral of the late Shirley White will be held at **St Leonard's church** at **12.30pm** on **Friday 21st March**

Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Cassington - Sunday 23rd March (pm)

Eynsham - Sunday 6th April

Mothering Sunday service at 3.30pm at St Peter's followed by afternoon tea.

Craft and Chat. Saturday 8th March 14:00 - 16:00 22 Falstaff Close. We meet to chat, have a coffee and work on our craft projects. Please feel free to come along, just let me know so I can put out enough chairs. Thanks Jennifer (jenniferclarke@gmail.com)

Mothers' Day lunch Sunday 30th March. Are you on your own for Mothers' Day? Would you like to come and join me for a simple soup lunch? I'll make several pots of soup and ask you to bring bread or cheese. If you'd like to join me please let me know. Thanks Jennifer (jenniferclarke@gmail.com)



Lent Course - We will be following the 24-7 Prayer course II "Unanswered Prayer" during Lent this year. You can find out more information about the course on [this link](#).

Some homegroups will be running the course as part of their regular meetings. If you are not in a homegroup but would love to join in with a course, please could you indicate by signing up below. There is one sign up for a daytime (afternoon) course and one if you could only manage an evening course. The link will take you to a course which says it is happening on a Wednesday. But it will either be a Wednesday or a Thursday depending on the availability of the group and those co-ordinating the group.

[DAYTIME LENT COURSE SIGN UP](#)

[EVENING LENT COURSE SIGN UP](#)



Pastoral Care Training Day:

9.45am-3.15pm, Saturday 22nd March, St Leonard's Church Hall

On March 22nd we are planning for a Pastoral Care Training Day. We have been aiming to establish a Pastoral Visiting Team for the Benefice but this training day will appeal to many others who are involved in pastoral care in different contexts: including homegroups and other ministry areas. Attending this training does not comprise a commitment to become an official part of the visiting team. We want to keep the training open to as many as possible in order to learn from each other. We will be considering how our faith informs our pastoral care, desirable skills and qualities, helpful guidelines, safeguarding, as well as sharing our collective wisdom and experience together.

Please sign up for the training by Wednesday 13th March to help us plan.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

St Leonard's Electoral Roll - Many thanks to everyone who has already completed a new Electoral roll form. If you wish to be included on the Electoral Roll you **must** complete [a form](#), even if you have been on the roll in previous

years. You can do this easily online or you will also find paper application forms in church.



Youth weekend away - please pray

This time next week we will be taking a group of our young people away for the weekend to Adventure Plus in Clanfield, Please pray

- For safety, good organisation and activities
- For fun, building friendship and no-one feeling left out
- For everyone to know the touch of God in their lives and to move on in their faith journey

We would like a small team of people to commit particularly pray for us over the weekend several times a day so if you would like to do this please contact Margaret Thornton.

Duncan's Sabbatical

Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers in the diocese are encouraged to take a three-month sabbatical for every ten years of ministry. This sustained period away from normal duties promotes professional development and personal enrichment. I have been in ministry for 12 years now and I have the privilege, for which I am immensely thankful, of being able to take a sabbatical this year for the months of May, June and July. The Sabbatical consists of three elements. Firstly, times of retreat for deepening my relationship with God. I am heading to north Wales for a 6 day silent retreat in a Jesuit Retreat centre, and a walking retreat camping in Herefordshire churches. Secondly rest and refreshment, which is not just holiday, but restorative activities: I intend to be writing music and engaging in art, as well as spending time away with the family. The greater part of the time is spent in personal and professional development through study and theological reflection. I will be studying the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy) with a particular focus on the law in Exodus and Leviticus, and how Jesus fulfills the law, and how the church is, in turn, to fulfil the law in the New Covenant (following on from our time in the Sermon on the Mount last year). It feels like I have bitten off more than I can chew in the time but we'll see how I get on!

I would like to thank Margaret in particular for organising preachers and service leaders in my absence, many of whom are doing more than usual to cover for me - thank you. We have a number of visiting preachers who I know will be a blessing to the worshipping life of the Benefice. Revd. Andrew Bunch, our Area Dean, will be stepping into various legal responsibilities, and we are making progress with ensuring there is pastoral support available in my absence. If you have any queries or concerns please do get in touch.

Vacancies at the King's School in Witney

Vacancies for two part time Maths teachers and a part time Head of Art and Design have arisen at the King's School in Witney. For more information follow [this link](#).



Dear St. Leonard's Church Family,

I'm reaching out to ask for your support in raising funds for the Access - London to Amsterdam 2025 event in June, which benefits Young Lives vs Cancer. This cause is close to my heart, and with your generosity and prayers, we can make a real difference in the lives of young people facing cancer.

Every donation, no matter how small, can provide vital support to those in need. If you feel called to contribute, it would mean so much to me and to the young lives we are helping. Together, as a church family, we can bring hope and make a positive impact.

You can donate on this [link](#) to the charity fundraising page, or use the QR code in the photo above. I can also accept cash donations, which I will add the charity page on your behalf.

Thank you for your kindness, support, and prayers. God bless you!

Kind regards, Ginta

Please pray for:

- Dave following his recent move to a care home.
- Ben and healing for his mental health.
- Scarlett's recovery from long Covid.
- Katie suffering with epilepsy. Please pray that the right medication be found to control her seizures.

To add names to the prayer list, please contact the Church Office (stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com) Names will be added to the list by express permission, and only first names will be published.

www.stleonardseynsham.org.uk | www.stpeterschurchcassington.org | [Youtube channel](#) | [facebook page](#)

Church Office - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9am – 1pm

Tel: 01865 883325 E-mail: stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com

Revd Duncan Fraser: 07810 324088 (Day off – Friday)