

The NET

The congregational newsletter of
Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, St Andrews



29th January 2020

A letter from the Rectory

As this month's edition of The NET goes to press the season of Lent is already drawing near. The English word 'Lent' doesn't have any specifically religious or theological origin. It comes (according to the fount of all knowledge – Wikipedia!) from an Old English word referring to theseason of spring, and so simply marks the change in the seasons. The official Latin term (which you'll still find in the Scottish Prayer Book) for the Christian season of religious observance is 'quadragesima', which sounds splendidly solemn and perhaps even a little daunting, but means simply 'fortieth'—i.e. the season beginning on the fortieth day before Easter.

You may have noticed that numbers matter a lot in the Bible, and none more so than the number 40. So, in the story of Noah in Genesis chapter 7, we're told that God sent a great flood caused by 40 days and nights of unrelenting rain. (As I write this,



Storm Christoph is only just retreating from our shores, which adds something to the experience of revisiting that particular story!) Likewise in Exodus chapter 24, Moses spends 40 days and 40 nights on Mt Sinai in the presence of God, a feat that makes our occasional 24 hour prayer vigils seem a bit trivial by comparison. Israel wanders in the wild-erness for 40 years (Numbers 14.33), and the

prophet Jonah announces to the occupants of Nineveh that they have exactly 40 days to turn their lives around or else face the judgment of God. Much to Jonah's chagrin, they turn from their evil ways, adopt a penitent attitude, and God withholds his judgement (Jonah chapters 3 and 4).

So, numbers often have a special significance in the Bible, and the number 40 is like that. And the instance which is best known to us, perhaps, is the story of Jesus's temptation in the wilderness by Satan which was, we are told, like Moses's prayer vigil on Mt Sinai, like Israel's wilderness wanderings, like the other examples I've already mentioned and numerous others scattered around the pages of the Bible, marked by the number 40. It lasted not 39 days, nor 41, but precisely 40 days.

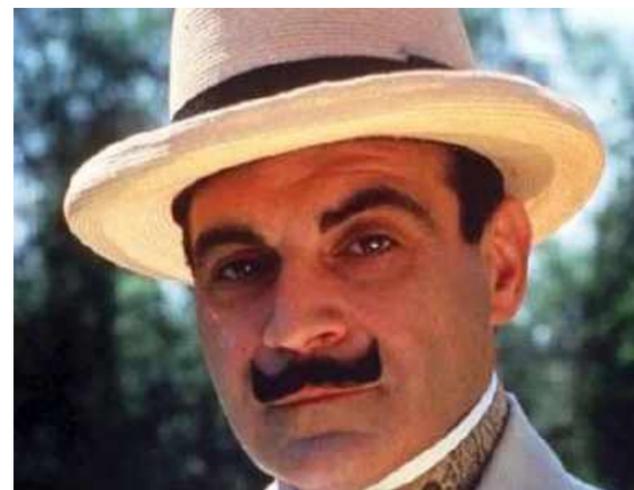
The wilderness is also a very significant place in the Bible. On the one hand, it is a place of considerable discomfort and danger. There are wild animals, no creature comforts, and the possibility of being mugged by the brigands and other sociopaths who hang out there, beyond the reach of the law. But on the other hand the wilderness is also frequently a place where people encounter God and are encountered by God. It is place where, precisely because there are none of the things which, in day to day life, threaten to absorb our attention or allegiances, and perhaps because of the 'edgy' experience of risk and danger (no doubt these days there would be expensive adventure holidays advertised to experience 'extreme praying', or something like that), people are brought face to face with the more fundamental and important things about themselves, and face to face with

God. That can be disconcerting in itself, of course, but is often transformative and redemptive.



Jesus spent 40 days in this environment immediately after his baptism, as a sort of spiritual boot camp to prepare him for the rigours of his ministry. It was painful, costly, but served to consolidate his relationship with God his Father. And the season of Lent is intended to be precisely that for us as Christians if we observe it. It is a time to set aside deliberately the things that so easily distract us much of the time (or some of them anyway), and through the discipline and discomfort spread over 40 days, to seek an encounter with God that will be transformative of our living, our praying, and our discipleship as those who would follow Jesus in the way that led him through suffering and death to resurrection and glory.

Lent is also traditionally a season during which discussion groups of one sort or another are organised to aid the development of the 'little grey cells', and help us in the task of loving



God with all our heart, soul and mind that is the core of Christian discipleship. Even folk who are generally allergic to being part of small groups

will, interestingly, often be happy to join one for the fixed term of Lent. (Perhaps, given their professed allergy, it seems to be a suitably self-denying thing to do, like wearing a hair shirt or taking cold showers twice a day.) Whatever the reason, 'Lent groups' are undeniably a thing, though it is a while since our congregation hosted any. This year, with so many of us grateful for such opportunities for seeing other faces and hearing other voices as are available to us, it may be that belonging to such a group holds even more attractions than usual. In any event, we are planning to run a group (or as many groups as are needed) in the congregation each week during Lent (which begins this year on Wednesday 17th February). More details will be available shortly,

and thereafter we shall be asking whether you might like to join in. Alternatively, we can supply details of where you can buy a nice hair shirt online...



Lent is when I determine which addictions I may still have some control over.



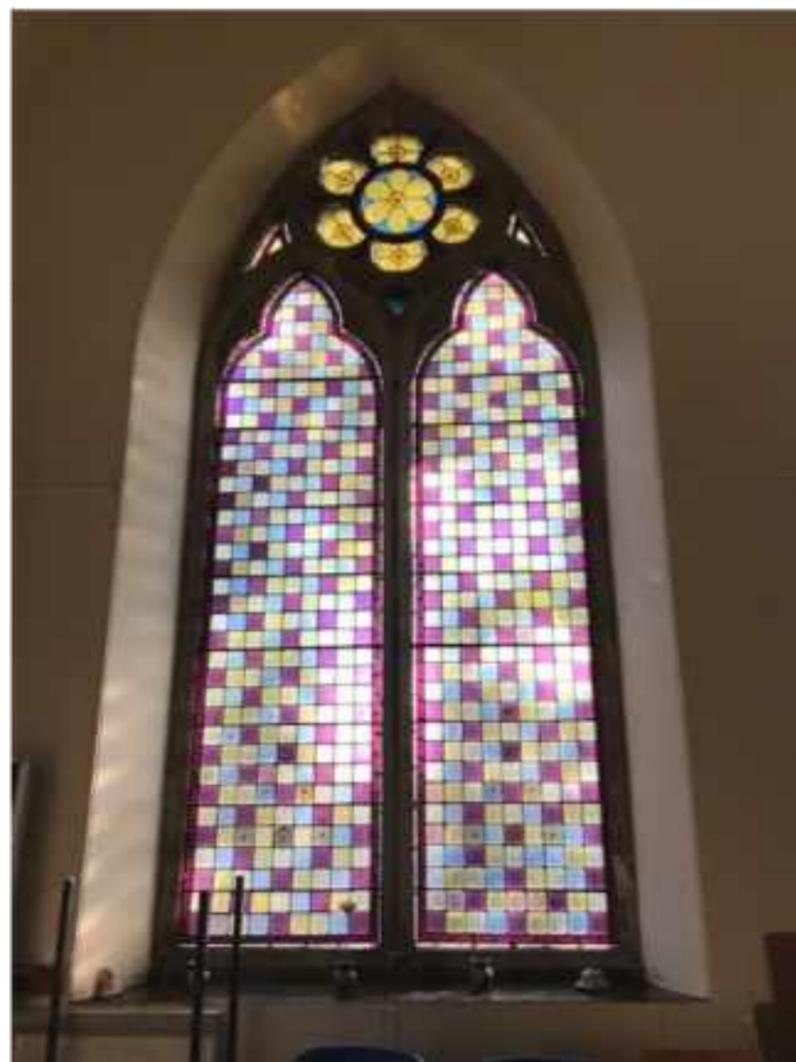
An Energy-Efficient Church Hall

David Cole-Hamilton reports on behalf of the Eco-Congregation Group

We have recently received word that we have been awarded a grant of £14,373.38 by the Community Climate Asset Fund, which is run by Keep Scotland Beautiful on behalf of the Scottish Government to reduce the carbon footprint of the Church Hall building. Part of the money has been used to install smart control of the heating so that the system can be adjusted as and when the different rooms are in use. The remainder will be used for installing a special double glazing that is suitable for stained glass windows (work to be carried out in February), for replacing all stirp lights with LEDs and for placing reflective panels behind all the radiators. We anticipate that this will cut the energy use in the hall by around 30 %.

One condition of the grant is that we encourage you and all other users of the building to think about your own cabin emissions and whether you can reduce them (See also the article Green Lent in this issue of The Net). To this end, you will see notices going up in the hall and foyer giving tips about what you might do. These notices are being designed by a Signs Committee consisting of Joanna, Lily and Kimberly Drage. Please look out for them and think about what YOU can do to help reduce the carbon footprint of our whole community!

~ David



Community Climate Asset Fund



When the colour of Lent is green...

Alan Werritty suggests a way of killing two birds with one stone

For many of us, Lent is a season when we might 'give up' things – chocolate, sweets and alcohol come readily to mind. But given the Climate Emergency and the build-up to the United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow this November, an alternative which you may like to consider instead is to try actions to reduce your carbon footprint.

The Eco-Congregation Group offers the following practical suggestions as to how you might undertake a "Green Lent" – and ideally continue to do so after Easter.

Energy:

- If you have central heating, lower the thermostat by 1°C and put on an extra sweater;
- If you haven't already done so, convert all light bulbs to LEDs;
- Explore moving to an energy supplier that offers tariffs based on electricity from renewable sources and gas either bio-generated or covered by carbon offset schemes.

Travel:

- Given current Covid restrictions, walking or biking is good for you! Think about walking or biking for all or part of a local journey;
- Planning a holiday in 2021? Why not consider making it UK-based and use low carbon transport where possible;
- Explore making your next car purchase an electric vehicle.

Food:

- Reduce or give up red meat for Lent and explore vegetarian/vegan recipes;
- Favour locally-produced products and seasonal fruit and vegetables;
- Where possible, purchase produce with minimal/no plastic packaging.

Consumption:

- Commit to stop using single-use paper/plastic plates and cups;
- When buying appliances check for energy consumption and their estimated lifespan;
- Separate out food waste from what goes to landfill and compost or use local food waste bins.

You might also like to discuss some of these suggestions within your Covid-restricted household. How many within your household shares/agrees with such actions? How might they be made permanent after Lent? Which actions are likely to have the biggest impact in reducing one's personal carbon footprint?

The above list is only "a starter for 10". The Eco-Congregation Group hopes to re-visit each of the above categories in coming issues of *The Net* when we will explore them in greater depth.



In the meanwhile we invite you to join us in making this Lent a commitment to a more sustainable lifestyle.

PS: Might you be interested in joining a *Carbon Conversations* group, where you would find out much more on the main causes of carbon emissions and how you might reduce them? They are facilitated by experts and take up 2 hours per week for 5 weeks. A new round of *Carbon Conversations* is starting up on **7th February**. Please contact me at a.werritty@dundee.ac.uk if you are interested.

~ Alan





Coffee and Chat...

Mondays at 11am
on Zoom

from Monday 1st February



<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72982070004?pwd=ekp0VEISUDRuUEVCOWFzNHQ2L2NLUT09>

Meeting ID: 729 8207 0004

Passcode: 6XC65r

Everyone Welcome!!

... for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8

"They only saw Jesus--and then but the outside Jesus, or a little more. They were not pure in heart... They saw Him with their eyes, but not with those eyes which alone can see God ... the thought-eyes, the truth-eyes, the love-eyes can see Him." (George MacDonald)

Christ risen was rarely recognized by sight. They had to get beyond the way he looked. Evidence stronger than his voice and face and footstep waited to grow in them, to guide their groping out of despair, their stretching toward belief.

We are as blind as they until the opening of our deeper eyes shows *us* the hands that bless and break our bread, until we finger wounds that tell *our* healing, or witness a miracle of fish, dawn-caught after our long night of empty nets. Handling his word we feel his flesh, his bones, and hear his voice saying *our* early-morning name.



(Luci Shaw)

