



CELEBRATING LENT & EASTER TIDE AT ST MATTHEW'S 2026

Shrove Tuesday (or Pancake Tuesday) is the last day before Lent begins. Traditionally this is the day where food made with butter, eggs or fat would need to be consumed before Lent starts. “Shrove” is derived from an old English word meaning ‘to be cleansed’. Thus it has a double meaning; concerning the cleansing of our houses of ‘non Lenten’ foods and also the cleansing of our souls by repentance of sins in preparation for absolution.

ASH WEDNESDAY marks the first day of Lent. Palm crosses from last year’s Palm Sunday service are burnt, the ashes made into a paste and placed upon our foreheads in the sign of a cross. We do this to commence a season of 40 days of deep personal reflection, spiritual growth and repentance in order to prepare for our Easter celebration. The imposition of ashes is a time honoured symbol of repentance, originating in the Old Testament. We are also encouraged to each adopt a ‘lenten discipline’; namely to fast, pray and give (a generous gift of charity). We are urged to take up an extra spiritual practice and/or abstain from something of pleasure for the period of Lent. The purpose of this is to prompt us to remember to turn to God as we follow this new practice.



LENT is derived from an old English term, meaning to ‘lengthen’. This refers to the lengthening of days due to the onset of Spring (in the Northern Hemisphere). Thus, Lent is a season of spiritual growth and renewal for us personally. This personal renewal is like the renewal that occurs in nature during Springtime.

MOTHERING SUNDAY is a day that honours our Mothers and our 'Mother churches' (being the church in which we were baptised). Historically, this was also the annual Sunday where servants of great English households were permitted to return to their homes and visit their mother. Since this day marks the half way point during Lent, it is also a day to relax our Lenten disciplines in order to celebrate all aspects of motherhood. Accordingly, it is also known as Refreshment Sunday.



PALM SUNDAY is the last Sunday before Easter, where we remember Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. The crowd welcomed Him by praising Him and waving palm branches. During this service we hand out palm crosses as spiritual prompts for use during the year and St Matthew's becomes bedecked in palms.

Service Times

Ash Wednesday - 18 February: 10.30am and 6pm

Mothering Sunday - 15 March
9am Service Simnel Cake blessing
and celebration of Mothers' Union
150th anniversary followed by
High Tea morning tea.

Palm Sunday Service & Procession
29 March 9am

Maundy Thursday Christian Seder Meal and Foot
Washing 2 April - 6pm

Good Friday - 3 April 9am and 2pm (Stations of the Cross
reflection to follow services -
facilitated after 9am and self
paced after 2pm service.

Easter Sunday - 5 April 9am
including Lighting of the New
Fire and Pascal Candle Procession.



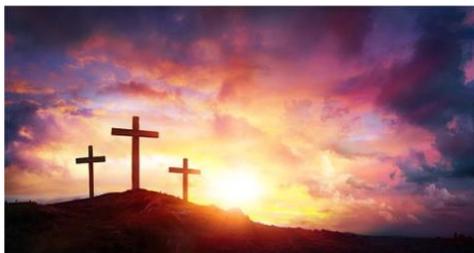
MAUNDY THURSDAY marks Jesus' last meal with his disciples hence known as 'The Last Supper'. Have you seen our own Last Supper tapestry in the Lady Chapel? At this important occasion, Jesus washed the disciples feet, shared a Passover meal, inaugurated the eucharist and also gave the new commandment to "*love one another, as I have loved you*". This proclamation of this new commandment leads to the day being given the name 'Maundy' via the Latin and Middle English terms that are also the origin and derivation of the word 'mandate'.



SEDER MEAL We will also be sharing a Christian Seder Meal on Maundy Thursday which will illustrate how Jesus adapted the traditional Jewish Passover meal in his inauguration of the sacrament of the eucharist. The Jewish Passover refers to the Angel of Death passing over the Israelites immediately before their exodus from Egypt and then being led by Moses through the desert to the promised land.



GOOD FRIDAY is the day when we remember Jesus' trial, scourging and finally his crucifixion upon the Cross (also known as 'His Passion'). During this service we will recall Jesus' Passion, death and his entombment. The Sanctuary will be stripped bare and, following this, an opportunity will be given for personal prayer inspired by the events



leading up to Good Friday using a 'The Stations of the Cross' reflection. It is called 'Good Friday' because this day represents the pivotal point in history whereby salvation was made available for all people and a new covenant [or Testament] was inaugurated. This was all made possible by His Crucifixion and resurrection. These events thus enabled a fresh relationship to arise between humankind and God.

EASTER SUNDAY

Christ is Risen - He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah !

Easter Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus' conquering death and his resurrection to new life. This is the most important day in the Christian calendar, as Jesus' resurrection provides the promise of eternal life for all those who believe in Him. 'Easter' is a term derived from a Saxon festival celebrating new life returning to nature in Spring. Some traditions, such as Easter bunnies and chocolate eggs, are derived in part from some of these Saxon traditions. Other Easter traditions are derived from the Jewish Passover (for example eating specially prepared buns). From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs represent Christ's empty tomb and were in part derived from one of the events in the life of Mary Magdalene who was reputed to have miraculously turned the colour of an egg red.



*We wish you and yours a Holy Lent
and
a Blessed Easter from Revd Morris and
all of us at
St Matthew's.*

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