



# Growing Faith

21 - Winter | 21 February 2024

## The importance of lent and why we need it

Written by the Bishop of Blackburn, Philip North

**“Now therefore, says the Lord,  
return to me with all your heart.”**

- Joel 2:12

**When I moved into my new house, I decided to make a new start. I promised I would get some proper exercise every single day. That lasted about a week. I promised I would keep my study tidy and not allow piles of books to gather in every available space. That lasted two weeks. I promised I would avoid unnecessary chocolate eating. That lasted about twenty-five seconds!**



Maybe you are the same. Maybe you have promised to stay up to date with homework, or brush your teeth twice a day, or keep your bedroom clean. But as time goes on, all those promises get forgotten. No matter how hard we try to do our best, bad habits always seem to creep in.

Sadly it can be the same with the Christian life. Those who are Christians know how they want to live. They want to make time every day for prayer. They want to go to Church every Sunday. They want to put their faith into practice through their honesty and courage in standing up for right. They want to share their faith in Jesus Christ with others. But guess what? Bad habits and complacency slip in and before long, friendship with Jesus can feel cold and distant.

That's why we need Lent.

In the Prophet Joel, God says 'Return to me with all your heart.' God knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows that, even though Christians try so hard to be faithful, sin and laziness can get in the way. So Lent, the forty days that lead up to Easter, is the time to return to Him. It is a precious and beautiful season when Christians can mend their relationship with Jesus and start all over again on the Christian journey.

Over the forty days of Lent, many Christians will make a rule so that they can focus their lives back on Jesus Christ. That will include extra time for prayer. It may include living more simply by fasting or giving something up. It may include being more generous with time or money. It may include making space to read about the Christian faith or study the Scriptures. It will certainly include calling to mind sin and asking God for forgiveness.



And all of this is done with joy. Because it is a beautiful thing to return to the Lord and discover anew the amazing depths of his love for us.

So why not set a rule for Lent for yourself? A great new resource is an app produced by the Diocese of Blackburn called Fruitful. You can download it very easily for free and it is packed full of resources and ideas for Lent.

Return to the Lord this Lent. Then at Easter you can experience with ever greater joy the good news that he has set us free to be in his presence for ever.

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# Youth Church Reflection

by E Forrest, Year 12

**Lent for me is a time to grow closer to God focusing on repentance, reflection, and preparation.**

I interpret it like an athlete getting ready for a competition, just like they need practise to be at their best so do Christian's. This lent I have decided to take on praying more and helping local charities.

This helps me to focus on the important issues arising in the world and within our community. This helps me keep faith and hopefully be the best version of myself to return to God at Easter.



## Church Support

## Church Services

Please visit these church websites to see when their services are taking place:

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship: [Website](#)

St John's and St Augustine's Church, Huncoat: [YouTube channel](#)

St Peter and St Paul's Church, Rishton: [Facebook Page](#)

St. John's Church, Baxenden: [Website](#)

Peel Street Baptist Church: [Website](#)

Ernest Street Baptist Church: [Website](#)

All Saints Church, Clayton-le-Moors: [Facebook Page](#)

## A new app by the Diocese of Blackburn



A helpful app filled with videos, readings and courses to help you daily. Click the image above to download it.

## A Prayer

By Lucy, Year 11

Father,

help us to see this holy season of lent as a time of renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Help us turn away from worldly distractions and focus on your presence and purpose. Help us to keep our eyes and hearts on Jesus as we journey through lent trying to understand and accept what god has in store for us. Fill us with your holy spirit and draw us closer to your love and grace.

Amen

St James' Church, Clitheroe: [Website](#)

Burnley Life Church: [Website](#)

St Mary Magdalen's Church, Accrington: [Website](#)

St Andrew's Church, Accrington: [Website](#)

St Peter's Church, Accrington: [Website](#)

Brave Church: [Website](#)

Trinity Church, Great Harwood: [Website](#)



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