

Adult Lent Group 2020



Signs of Life: Why Church Matters is an opportunity for participants to engage with aspects of liturgy and scripture: *light, water, food, shelter, community*. Each session aims to help us to connect the Sign of Life to our own worship, spiritual practices and to help us to learn to pray what we live and live what we pray.

At this time when churches are closed to public worship, it is more important than ever than we stay together as 'church', the body of Christ, and remain faithful in prayer for one another and in serving the community in any way we can.

Our Adult Lent Group this year, was looking at various signs of life associated with church life. We would like to share some of the reflections, readings and prayers relating to each sign with you all.

The signs we were exploring were:

- Light
- Water
- Food
- Shelter
- Community

All of these become increasingly pertinent at times such as those we are all facing just now.

During the course of this week, we will upload copies of the handout sheets from each session together with any additional resources, such as relevant bible readings, to aid your personal reflections.

I hope this helps with your own prayer life and to feel part of the church community at this incredibly difficult time for everyone. Perhaps you can call a friend and reflect on each symbol together?

In love and prayer

Carole



When water is blessed for baptism, we tell the story of how water has become to us a sign of life. We remember that in the beginning, the Holy Spirit moved over the waters. We remember that through water God led the children of Israel out of bondage into freedom. We remember that through water Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan, and in our own baptism, we move from the bondage of sin and death into the freedom of resurrection and everlasting life.

Baptism is our birth into the church as a whole, and we enter these baptismal waters again when we physically enter the worship space. Some people, when entering a church, put their fingers in the holy water stoop and make the sign of the cross, a representation of going through the veil. It's an experience of entering into the baptismal waters of death and birth; saying that the preoccupations, worries, thoughts, and feelings that might be a distraction are dying in this entrance into God's time, into the time of prayer and worship, and in this entrance into the Christian community. We are made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." And, that is a Christian's identity.

Living out our Christian journey is not one moment of progress and glory, followed by another moment of progress and glory, into the triumph of Christ's risen life. We know there are many moments that call us to die. Baptism is a lifelong covenant that is expressed afresh in so many moments in life, that seemingly have nothing to do with God or church on the surface.

Collect:

Ever-creating Spirit, who brooded over the waters of chaos and brought forth all life from them: We thank you for the wondrous gift of water through which we die with Christ and are raised by you to the new life of grace; and we pray that we may ever be faithful stewards of this gift and make it available, clean and pure, to all living beings, that in so doing the springs of living water promised by Christ Jesus may well up in every human heart; through Jesus our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Question for Meditation:

- Surrendering to the water of baptism allows for us to be reborn by the Holy Spirit into the new life of God. How are you adrift? What keeps you afloat?

Weekly Practice:

- This week, when you wash your hands, notice the water, really feel the water as it flows over your hands.

Prayer for the week

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink, and live.”
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.*

From “*I heard the voice of Jesus say*”,
by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)