

# The Parish Church of St Oswald, Norbury



[www.stoswalds.org.uk](http://www.stoswalds.org.uk)

February 2020

Dear friends,

I hope that this finds you well and hopeful as the days lengthen a little, as we look forward to spring and summer hoping that, with the protection of the vaccine we can look forward to a time when we can gather together more safely. For the time being, though, we continue to hold our main Sunday and mid-week services online.

I am delighted to be sending you details of the services and activities that will be taking place at St Oswald's during Lent, and I hope that, if you can, you will join in with some of these. If you are not able to access them please do pray for the life of our church and our parish in these difficult times.

If you're of the persuasion of giving something up for Lent, you may feel that this year you've given up so much, or had so much taken from you that it is hard to know just what you might do or stop doing. Of course the Lenten journey is about far more than abstinence. Perhaps this year, the Lenten season might offer some time to reflect on the significance of what we have given up or have lost and to consider the times when we have recognised our dependence on God and known ourselves to be blessed by him.

One thing is for sure, during these times God has been with us. He always has been and always will be part of our story. And so I commend to you the Church of England's daily reflections for Lent *God's Story, Our Story* which remind us that God is with us in the stories of our lives and that he welcomes us to be part of his story. The reflections are also available on a mobile phone app and in booklet form. Copies of the booklet will be available in church on Ash Wednesday or on request from me.

Last year our Lenten journey was suddenly interrupted and set off course by the first Covid Lockdown. Amazingly, through prayer and incredible teamwork, we managed to celebrate Easter in a way that was different, but nevertheless joyful and very special. I will never forget welcoming the dawn of Easter Sunday with a vigil led from my garden accompanied by birdsong as the rising sun lit the East end of the church.

This year's journey begins with uncertainty – at the time of writing I have no idea what our Holy Week commemoration and Easter celebration will be like. However I am certain that, as we did last year, we will adapt to whatever is safely possible. This year, though, we've learned how to worship and celebrate at a distance and we can prepare for that, but we live in hope that there will be opportunities to celebrate together in person.

For the time being, our regular Sunday and mid-week worship will continue online and we will let you know when we think that we can safely return to the church building

I hope and pray that this will be a season of reflection, generosity and blessing for you and for all those who you love and pray for.

With love and prayers

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