



Morning Joint Service and Gift Day led by Deacon Jane Mills

Unbounded Love

Lent 2024

As spring approaches and signs of new life begin to appear, the minds of many people turn to the traditional 'spring clean' a time to clean out, reorganise, refresh and restock our homes.

In some ways Lent is an opportunity for the church to do the same. We can 'dust off the cobwebs', review the way we live out our faith and attempt get our priorities in perspective, in doing so we may begin to recognise the value of who we are/what we do and open ourselves to exploring with God what it is we may be called to do.

Each year in Lent we remember Jesus' life and ministry, beginning with his baptism and temptation through to his final dramatic week in Jerusalem.

Jesus encountered many people on that journey as he taught, served and healed. Jesus journeyed alongside people, he laughed with them, cried with them and learned

from them. Some made him glad, others angry, yet he loved all of them in word and deed, asking his followers to do the same.

As we prepare to celebrate Easter once more let us also seek to love those we encounter, unbounded by history, tradition and expectation, as we share the journey of Lent anew.

Last year some of us met at Stratford to explore our church vision, agreeing that this should be reviewed annually. Our superintendent, Iain, has challenged all the churches to explore ideas of church growth. Lent seems like a perfect opportunity to do both!

So, to the opportunities to engage this year. In addition to the usual opportunities to pray and worship – see notices and website – we share ways to give to charity and via the Gift Day at Stratford – where, 10 years since the development of our Eco building, we ask the congregation to help the ongoing attempt to be more sustainable.

There are opportunities to explore; at Stratford we look at themes of Personal and Church Growth, and at Henley we consider 3 lesser-known characters from Lent to explore issues of our own faith.

Over the coming weeks I pray that we can inspire each other through prayer, worship, fellowship and action as we explore and celebrate all God is doing in us and through us and boldly step forward in love and faith.

Yours with love. *Jane*

Ps. I take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and support following my dad's accident. He is recovering remarkably well, all things considered!

Lent and Holy Week opportunities

Henley Churches Together Lent Course

10.45 at the parish Hall from Thurs 22nd Feb.

Stratford Lent Course

2.30pm at Stratford Methodist Church from Mon 26th Feb.

Maundy Thursday

Meal including worship, 6pm at Stratford Methodist

Good Friday

Stratford Churches Together Walk of Witness 10am: gather at Bancroft to process through the town.

Henley Churches Together service and witness 10.30am: at the market cross and ending at Baptist church. A service of Tenebrea, 8pm at Rother Street URC, Stratford

Church News and Dates

Saturday 24th February - Book Fayre in Wesley Hall 10.00am to 12.00 noon, drinks will be served.

Thursday 29th February 2pm - talk by Maureen 'Meeting my sister'.

This week's **Foodbank** items for collection box in welcome area - Small quantities of soap, jam, tinned - potatoes peas sweetcorn and carrots, instant mash.

Josie Bayliss wants to thank people for continuing to donate their **used stamps for the Dog's Trust** in the box in the welcome area. Over £3000 has been raised from this nationwide over the past year.

The Sunday Service at Stratford is on same zoom link each week, please use the following details: Meeting ID: 686 330 1343 Passcode: 697215

Any items for the notices, including health or family news, please give to the stewards or email a.peacop@ntlworld.com before Wed lunchtime.