



St James's
Church
Piccadilly

Lent Contemplative Space

**A regular space for prayer, readings
and silence throughout Lent**

Fridays 20 February – 27 March 2026

Lent Contemplative Space 2026

- What?** Each session will be facilitated by a member of the St James's Church community and will include a welcome, guided silence, a scripture reading, another reading p, a prayer and time to share reflections.
- Where?** Live streamed on Zoom.
- When?** Fridays in Lent, 6.00 – 7.00 pm
- Who?** Everyone is welcome to attend for all or part of each session.

Friday 20 February

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'

But he answered, 'It is written: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you",
and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."wes'

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.'

Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

For Lent

by Madeleine L'Engle

It is my Lent to break my Lent,
 To eat when I would fast,
 To know when slender strength is spent,
 Take shelter from the blast
 When I would run with wind and rain,
 To sleep when I would watch.
 It is my Lent to smile at pain
 But not ignore its touch.

It is my Lent to listen well
 When I would be alone,
 To talk when I would rather dwell
 In silence, turn from none
 Who call on me, to try to see
 That what is truly meant
 Is not my choice. If Christ's I'd be
 It's thus I'll keep my Lent.

My Lent Prayer

by Madeleine L'Engle

Dear God,

help us to embrace this Lenten period with an open and trusting heart which tries to embrace the beauty and the suffering in the world and in ourselves without fear and apprehension.

Amen.

Friday 27 February

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

God is not a Christian

Excerpt from a sermon preached by Desmond Tutu at St Martin in the Fields after the fall of the Berlin Wall

'God is not upset that Gandhi was not a Christian, because God is not a Christian! All of God's children and their different faiths help us to realize the immensity of God.'

Prayer

Dear God

As we try to answer your call to us in this period of Lenten reflection, give us the courage to step into the world of your generosity, magnitude and mystery.

Amen

Friday 6 March

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Yahya Alhamarna

Yahya is a Palestinian student whose university, Al-Alzhar, was bombed in November 2023

I Ponder
 I think and feel
 That one of the beautiful things
 That happens to a human being
 Is to have enough power
 To sit somewhere
 Far away from the sounds of bombs and
 Fear
 That follow him everywhere
 Carrying with him a small notebook
 And it is in his pocket always
 He writes a lot of things
 Past, present and future
 Hope and fears and plans
 Experience and tears and moments
 They remain preserved in memory
 Writings that narrate what we are living

Sometimes when I am coming back
 From the beach near sundown
 The moon starts to become visible
 I look at the moon
 Like a little child
 And I feel the moon is walking with me
 To every place I go
 She walks with me
 Step by step
 I look at it and smile
 And I wave my hand at it miss sitting with the moon without missiles.

Prayer

Help us do whatever we can to help the plight of the Palestinians and all other countries in the world suffering the ravages of war and occupation.

Friday 13 March

Timothy 4:11-13

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

A poem for Greta Thunberg on her 17th birthday

By Patti Smith

This is Greta Thunberg, turning
seventeen today, asking
for no accolades, no gifts
Save we not be neutral.
The Earth knows its kind

just as all deities, just as
animals, and the healing
spring. Happy Birthday
to Greta who stood today
as every other Friday refusing
to be neutral.

Prayer

Dear God

Let us be grateful and inspired by the example set by Greta Thunberg - for her passion, vision and commitment to speak truth to power, and her call to 'act as if the house is on fire, because it is'.

Amen

Friday 20 March

Corinthians 12:25-27

So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front

by Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbours and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a
card

and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.

So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.

Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.

Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion – put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?

Go with your love to the fields.
Lie down in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is highest your thoughts.
As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

Prayer

Jesus Christ

Help us to follow your example and expand our horizons of possibility. To create God's kingdom on earth where love and justice are the prime motivation for all of us involved in this momentous struggle.

Amen

Friday 27 March

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Whistling Swans

by Mary Oliver

Do you bow your head when you pray or do you look up into that blue space?

Take your choice, prayers fly from all directions.

And don't worry about what language you use,

God no doubt understands them all.

Even when the swans are flying north and making such a ruckus of noise, God is surely listening and understanding.

Rumi said, There is no proof of the soul.

But isn't the return of spring and how it springs up in our hearts a pretty good hint?

Yes, I know, God's silence never breaks, but is that really a problem?

There are thousands of voices, after all.

And furthermore, don't you imagine (I just suggest it) that the swans know about as much as we do about the whole business?

So listen to them and watch them, singing as they fly.

Take from it what you can.

Prayer

Dear Mother God

May we embody the sense of beauty, joy and mystery, captured in this Mary Oliver poem echoing the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart when he says that 'All Creatures are Words of God'.

Amen.

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