

Weaving the threads



Lord God, help us to recognise that we are privileged to be part of your tapestry, and to understand our awesome responsibility, of ensuring that the picture that emerges is of your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Leap into Lent

by Ricarda Witcombe

An ancient Latin hymn includes these words: "Now is the healing time decreed / for sins of heart and word and deed, / when we in humble fear record / the wrong that we have done the Lord."

It is quoted in the Church of England's introduction to the season of Lent in *Times and Seasons*. In ancient days Lent's purpose was twofold – baptism preparation for new Christians, and reconciliation of those who

had been excluded from the Church because of serious fault or apostasy. It is a healing time. The Ash Wednesday liturgy urges us to "call to mind our sin and the infinite mercy of God" – so we begin this healing time by bringing the reality of our lives to God, hiding nothing. There is a relief in such honesty, for we see that it is God's mercy that is infinite, and not our sin. Lent is about celebrating forgiveness in its very deepest sense. 🍷

Ricarda Witcombe is a hospital chaplaincy team leader based in Coventry.

“Everything may not be perfect. There are things that may need to change, but you have the grace to be happy today.

Joel Osteen (born 1963), American pastor, televangelist and author

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on*
Exodus 24:12-end and Matthew 17:1-9

It's easy to see why today's Old Testament and Gospel readings have been paired in the lectionary. In Exodus, Moses takes Joshua into the mountain, where the glory of the Lord burns and God gives Moses the covenant with the people. In the account from Matthew, when Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus on the mountaintop, the echoes from long ago resonate with the disciples – and with us today, as we hear the two accounts side by side. Together, the Gospel writer and the compilers of the lectionary are showing how Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law and the prophets, and that he and his followers are new players in the story of God's encounters with God's people.

It surely helps us in our faith lives to know this, just as it helped the disciples. But it's a different matter to know how to respond. Peter's suggestion to build three dwellings, or tents, sounds like an attempt to preserve the moment for posterity – which of course is neither possible nor appropriate.

Perhaps a better response is simply to understand what a privileged insight it is, to see the hand of God at work throughout history – weaving threads and bringing together Jesus, Moses and Elijah, along with the writers of Exodus and Matthew, the disciples and, indeed, us today – and to recognise that we are privileged to be part of the divine tapestry as its pattern emerges. 🍷

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

When it's a long dark winter after a wet or gloomy autumn the promise of spring and sunshine and dry weather can seem so far away. But in the hedge adjacent to the lambing field there are already small white flowers. These are probably too early to be

pollinated and so won't go on to produce the tiny red jewels that are wild strawberries. It will be the later flowers in May that will succeed in bearing the tiny sweet fruit that I pick and eat and share with the chickens as they wander by. So what's the point of those early flowers? I wonder a lot. Could it be that plants are optimistic, or rather that abundance is written into everything in nature? Could this be the nature of God in creation: that there is always so much possibility – always enough to feed us all and some left over. 🍷

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Tuesday 25th Feb – 7pm – Fellowship. Come along and join in the discussion or just come along and listen.

8pm – Choir

Thursday 27th Feb – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

After reading this book for the whole church address on 2nd Feb I've had a few folk showing interest in buying one (or 2)! It's a fantastic book about love, separation anxiety, hopefulness and many more issues, if you'd like a copy please talk to me or sign your name on the form in the hall or phone 873886, current price £6.22, I'll put an order away in a few weeks. Thanks, Tracy Linklater.

Readings

Exodus 24 v 12-18

2 Peter 1 v 16-21

Hymns

474 – Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater son

356 – Meekness and Majesty

355 - You Lord are both Lamb and Shepherd

476 – Mine eyes have seen the glory

169 - Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet

Prayer of Intercession

L; Lord look with favour

All: Lord, transfigure and heal

Doxology Hymn 786