

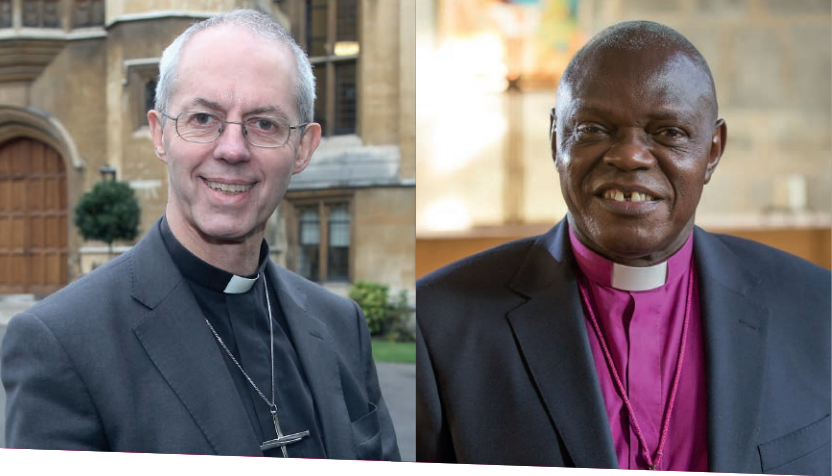


#LIVELENT

LET YOUR LIGHT
SHINE

INTRODUCED BY THE ARCHBISHOPS
OF CANTERBURY AND YORK

FREE SAMPLER



INTRODUCTION

BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK

The gospel is God's rescue mission to bring us from darkness to light. This is the work of Jesus, the light of the world.

But Jesus is not the only one called the light of the world by this title. He himself turns to his followers and says, 'You are the light of the world... so let your light shine.'

To witness is to let your light shine. A light shines simply by virtue of being a light. A follower of Jesus witnesses simply by virtue of being a Christian. We have been brought into his light, now he appoints us to bring his light to others. This is what witness is.

Over the next six and a half weeks these Lent reflections take you on a journey through the Gospel of John and give you an opportunity to explore what the gift of Jesus and the challenge of Jesus mean for you, in the context of your daily life.

In the middle of John's Gospel is a verse that goes to the heart of it:

Jesus said, 'I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly'

It is our prayer that this booklet helps and encourages you as you take hold of God's gift of life and live it – to the full. God offers us this life for the sake of others. The light he gives us in Jesus Christ is not to be hidden but to shine – it's a gift to be lived and shared. Indeed, the more we share it and let it shine, the brighter it burns.

Archbishop Justin Welby

Archbishop John Sentamu

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

#LiveLent – Let Your Light Shine will help you ask yourself two questions:

- How can I receive God's life more fully?
- How can I live God's life more generously, imaginatively and joyfully, in such a way that others can see it, hear it and take hold of it themselves?

Each day there is a short **reading** from the Gospel of John, followed by a brief reflection. This is followed by an invitation to simply stop for a moment and to **pause** and reflect on what the passage might mean to us.

Having paused, it follows naturally that we go on to **pray** about our own discipleship and to ask that others too may discover the fullness of God's life, as we pray in the words Jesus gave us... *Thy kingdom come.*

Finally, there is an invitation to **witness**, to do something each day to help make God's life a reality for others, through your words and your life... *Thy will be done.*

Week 1 GIFT

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

JOHN 1.5





All that we are, and all that we see and know of the world around us, is gift from God. The breath that brings our bodies to life – and the beauty that causes us to catch that same breath.

Yet life is fragile, often painful and sometimes dark. God speaks again into the darkness. God gives again. God makes himself known, fully, in Jesus Christ, the light that shines in the darkness.

The light that shines in the darkness and is not overcome is not earned or bought. It is not the private possession of a few. It is a gift for all. It is Jesus – God's gift to any who welcome and receive him.

This week, thank God for the gift of life, and for the gift that is Jesus. And try to be a gift to others by letting some of God's light shine through you.

Ash Wednesday, Week 1

Life

READ John 1.1-5

'What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.'

Today is Ash Wednesday, a day to remember that we are 'dust and ashes' and to look our mortality in the face. We do so not to make us miserable or morbid. The reason is actually just the opposite. As we embrace our mortality we find freedom to take hold afresh of the gift of life.

Like Lent, the Gospel of John begins with words about life. The beautiful diverse and fragile life of creation. The personal, precious and complex life of our own existence. All this is a gift, spoken into being by God through Jesus, the Word.

The life we live is not always beautiful or easy. It is often dark. As we see within it the gift of God and the beauty of God, we discern a light that shines brightly and can never be put out.

PAUSE

Take time today to see the signs of life around you and within you; and say thank you.

PRAY ...*Thy kingdom come*

In a moment of stillness, acknowledge God as the source of all life and, as you are able, place your own mortal life in God's eternal hands.

WITNESS ...*Thy will be done*

Amid the fragility of life around you, offer a word of gentleness and strength. Amid the darkness of life, be a presence that brings light and hope.



Thursday, Week 1

Love

READ John 1.6-13

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

Jesus, the Word through whom all creation exists, becomes part of that creation, born as a baby in vulnerability. He embraces and knows all the fragility, beauty and sorrow of life.

As we look at Jesus we see how life can be when it is lived to the full – a life marked by trust and forgiveness, by prayer and faith, by goodness and grace even when things are tough.

As we receive Jesus we receive the gift of his life. Our lives, like his, shaped in every moment and each situation by relationship with God the Father. It is love which gives us life: the deep unconditional love of God who calls us his children.

PAUSE

Take time today to think about what it means for you to receive Jesus and the life and love God offers us through him.

PRAY ...*Thy kingdom come*

Ask God for the gift of faith to open your heart to the love of God that is always open to you; and pray for all the children of God.

WITNESS ...*Thy will be done*

Make time today to live the unconditional gift of God's love. In a relationship, seek simply to give, to love and not seek anything in return.



Did you know that the 2017 #LiveLent campaign from the Church of England reached over 2.5m people on social media?

We are hoping to engage even more people during Lent 2018, which begins on 14 February (Ash Wednesday) and finishes on 1 April (Easter Day).

There are lots of ways you can take part in **#LiveLent** online and share it with your friends, family, church and community.

- Buy booklets from www.chpublishing.co.uk
- Find out more at www.churchofengland.org/lent
- Sign up for the **Let Your Light Shine** daily reflections by phone or e-mail
- Download the **#LiveLent app** for iOS or Android devices
- Download a **5-session Lent course** based on the weekly themes in *Let Your Light Shine* together with videos and other materials to support churches and groups.
- Find a range of graphics and other **resources to share** on social media in support of the campaign.

'It is our prayer that this booklet helps and encourages you as you take hold of God's gift of life and live it – to the full.'

FROM THE INTRODUCTION BY ARCHBISHOPS JUSTIN WELBY AND JOHN SENTAMU

#LiveLent – Let Your Light Shine takes you on a six-week discipleship journey through the Gospel of John, exploring what it means to be a witness.

For each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day there is a short reading, a pause for reflection and prayer, and an idea for a simple action that will enable the light of Jesus to shine through our everyday lives.

#LiveLent – Let Your Light Shine is written by John Kiddle (author of the best-selling **#GodWithUs**) in association with **Thy Kingdom Come**, the global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus.

Live Lent: Let Your Light Shine booklets are available now from www.chpublishing.co.uk

Single copy 978 1 78140 082 1 £2.99

Pack of 10 978 1 78140 083 8 £25.00

Pack of 50 978 1 78140 084 5 £115.00

To find out more about the **#LiveLent** campaign, join in online and download supporting resources, including a 5-session Lent course, visit churchofengland.org/Lent

The #LiveLent project is part of the Church of England's **Renewal and Reform programme**, aimed at helping us become a growing Church for all people and for all places.