



Benefice Bugle!



March 2021

Living Lent

How are you living Lent? There are different ways to go about it. See the last page of all for one person's solution! It is a time of waiting for us all this year, as we hope for better times, maybe even an open church at Easter, or soon after, and the chance to meet together for real with those we love.

See the following pages for many different ways of living Lent together this year.



Living Lent Day by Day

Mondays 7.30 am (for early risers!)
Morning Prayer with our Swedish link parish

Wednesdays 7.45 - 9.00 pm

We start together with some social time and worship,
then divide after 15 minutes into two groups. You choose!
Group A “Locked down, still open?” Faith in a time of pandemic....
Group B “Let Us Dream” Reading the Pope’s book together....

Fridays 12.00 pm
Midday Prayer

Sundays 9.00 pm
Night Prayer

Holy Week

Please look out for updates as things might change!

28 March: Palm Sunday Service at 10.30 am at Middleton Stoney (TBC)
Zoom Service at 10.00.

29, 30, 31 March: Evening Service at 8.00 pm (Zoom)

1 April: Maundy Thursday Service at 8.00 pm (Zoom)

2 April: Good Friday events between 12.00 and 3.00 pm (TBC) Compline at
8.00 pm (Zoom)

EASTER DAY (TBC - to be confirmed)

0930

Family Communion at Bletchingdon, Middleton Stoney and Wendlebury

1100

Family Communion at Chesterton, Kirtlington and Weston

*For Easter Day booking will be required via your churchwardens
(see under Contact Details below)*

Email akemanbenefice@gmail.com for more information

Services

Every Sunday at 1000 on Zoom.
A different style of service each week.

Do join us!

Email akemanbenefice@gmail.com for joining info.

PLUS



A special time for the youngest members of our congregation, with activities including Bible stories, games and craft, at 10.15 for 15 – 20 minutes. The link will be sent out with the service link each week, or ask joannaclifford.keman@gmail.com for it.

Living Lent on Wednesday evenings: a time to think and pray together.

A good number of people gathered on the first Wednesday in Lent on our old friend Zoom. It was good to see one another in the week, and we started by chatting and singing together. Then individuals went into one of two 'breakout rooms' for an hour's discussion. One group, led by Gareth, discussed the Pope's book, reviewed by Gareth on page 5.

'The Pope's Group' (!) had a good discussion about the very challenging prologue and first chapter, which we had all much enjoyed. The Pope encouraged his readers to avoid the sin of indifference, and to look for (and be) God's mercy that breaks out at 'overflow moments' of crisis. We wondered together how we can keep going the sense of community and care that has been created by our lockdown experiences.



Michele Mapp reports on what happened in the other group:



Lockdown, still open?

The focus for this week's discussion was one of God's most common instructions in the Bible - 'Do not be afraid'. Paul wrote in the first century to the early church in Rome, a vulnerable community at the threat of persecution and hardship: 'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:38-39). Two thousand years later throughout the world many people still live with those same fears along with conflict, violence, hunger, injustice and oppression - and now a pandemic. Yet in the midst of this God tells us - 'Do not be afraid!'. Then as now, we must remind ourselves of Paul's words, that our ultimate security is with God and nothing can ever part us from God and God's love.

The passage above sparked lively discussions about our fears, our trust, and faith, in the capabilities of global leadership, who we look to for hope, where we find peace, comfort and inspiration, how we pray and what inspires us to pray. We discovered we looked to poetry, pieces of music, the voices of choirs and the power of nature... we find joy in discovering a bee on a flower in the garden just outside the window and inspiration to pray whilst walking along the seafront admiring the majesty of the waves rushing to the shore. The session closed considering how we think about prayer, our faith in God, and in ourselves and one another as the prospect of lifting restrictions is on the horizon. We proposed going about our lives in the week ahead praying that we will not forget the kindness we've shown one another, the planet and ourselves throughout the crisis. Also to pray that our love for God and our will to serve Him and to do good remains strong, and throughout - to remember what Paul has told us, that nothing will separate us from the love of God

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'Let us Dream' by Jorge Mario Bergoglio

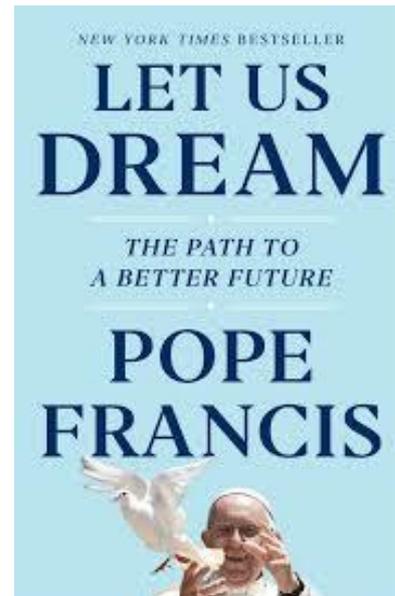
Rector's Review

A member of my book group is a very keen Roman Catholic. Whenever it was his chance to choose a book he would nominate the latest papal encyclical. Not everyone's idea of bedtime reading - though they were often surprisingly good!

'Let us Dream' by Pope Francis is a very different kind of document, and highly readable.

Bergoglio gave a clue to the style of his papacy in his choice of name, and the simplicity and directness of his writing is very much in the tradition of his namesake.

I say 'his writing', but in truth this timely and apposite book is a transcription of recordings made by the Pope in response to questions put to him by the 'ghost' author, Austen Ivereigh. At least, that's how it started. But in the months June-August 2020 the two of them entered into a deep collaboration, the Pope sending sometimes daily transmissions of thoughts, ideas, quotations, and biblical references.



The Pope's thinking arises out of his reflections on the Covid crisis, but goes both further and deeper. With candour and a degree of disclosure that is unusual for a Pope, he reveals how three crises in his own life changed him dramatically for the better, to someone who is more in touch with his own inner processes, more related to the reality of being human in the modern world.

Francis argues that we cannot return to the pre-Covid state. Citing his own experience, he says that if we have the courage to change we can emerge better than before. He offers a scathing critique of the systems and ideologies that have conspired to bring us to where we are. He reminds us of our responsibility for the poor and marginalised. As we have discovered so dramatically in recent months, if one part suffers we all suffer. He speaks as a priest and theologian, but draws widely on the thinking of scientists, economists, activists and others.

In the Greek myth, Ariadne hands Theseus a ball of thread to track his way out of the labyrinth. The ball of thread we have been given is our creativity to move beyond the inexorable logic of the labyrinth, to decentre and transcend. The gift is the Spirit calling us out of ourselves, the 'twitch upon the thread', leading us to a shared future full of possibility.

I commend this challenging and refreshing book to you (£10.99 Simon and Schuster). We have the chance to discuss it together on Wednesdays during Lent, at our **Living Lent** sessions at 7.45pm. See above.

Gareth Miller

Mothing Sunday is coming up. We will have a special service on zoom at 10am to which all are very welcome, especially those with families.

Sign up for the preparatory day...



Cheer for Mums!
Zoom activity afternoon
for all ages

With craft, games, and a special guest visit by Erika Biscoe of Cherish 
www.cherishministry.org.uk
to show us how to give
mum a loving hand massage

Action-ready bumper resource pack supplied,
including a Cherish Gift Bag

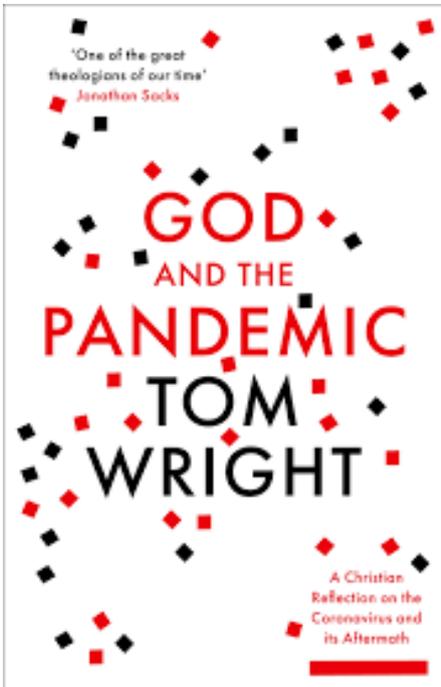
Saturday 13th March
3 - 4.30 pm

Numbers are limited: sign up asap with
joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com
before 8th March to receive the link and
the resource pack
£10 per child

Put on by the churches of the Akeman Benefice

Pandemic Panic

Shuba writes about a book that has inspired her...



For Christmas 2020 our Rector gave us the book *God and the Pandemic* by The Rt Rev'd Prof Tom Wright, which has been an eye-opener for me. Over the course of the Covid 19 crisis I encountered many heady explanations and probing questions. Was this going to be the Biblical apocalypse end-time Christian prophets proclaim, the final herald of Christ's 'second coming'? If not, why is God allowing so great a catastrophe? Since reading Wright's book I have found direction, purpose, understanding and hope as never before during lockdown. Written in April 2020, the book is, I believe, prophetic for today. Wright explodes Christian conspiracy theories: *"Some people think they know exactly what's gone wrong and what God is saying through it all. Some are saying this is the sign of the End... the coronavirus is hailed as the sign that it's all about to happen."* He very compellingly argues: *"any claim to tell from world events when the 'second coming' will occur is to claim to know more than Jesus himself (Mark: 13.32)"*

I am especially fascinated by Wright's in-depth penetration of the original Greek of Romans 8: 28 and his examination of the many more recent efforts to give a fresh and most coherent translation, than the ones that conform to the Authorised King James version translation (pp. 46-51). I have since adapted the following for Rom. 8:28 as canonically the most accurate: 'In all things God works together with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose, to bring about what is good.' I now believe the right Christian response to the pandemic is to untiringly support and care for each other. Christians also need to pray fervently and urgently for wise statesmanship and leadership which could correctly analyse the situation and sketch a vision for how to frame best policies to address the pandemic. Rather than take a Stoic and passive stance, Christians should uphold human initiatives for *"fresh and healing policies and actions across God's wide and wounded world"* (p.75). In conclusion Wright projects: *"it could be that in the days to come we will see signs of genuine new possibilities, new ways of working which will re-generate old systems and invest new and better ones, which we could then recognise as forward-looking hints of new creation."* (p.75)

I was so inspired by this book that I wrote the poem below:-

COVID19 PANIC

Wish I could 'do calm',
And fear no harm,
Nor fear more sorrow
Before tomorrow,
Bringing another lockdown day,
Calls 'Stay home! Keep the virus away'.

Hope over the horizon,
Rainbow of revelation:
That processes of disaster
Never grind forever;
After every end comes a new beginning,
Earth on its axis never stops rotating.

Prophets foretelling gloom,
Say Covid spells doom:-
The awaited 'end of the world',
Creation to destruction hurled:
"We can do nothing, and God will not do a thing,
While apocalypse pandemic sweeps away
everything"!!

When all is said and done
And no fore-telling has won,
Except love that marches on,
Except, unfazed still, Creation,
Overarched by the rainbow returning,
Carries on to a better re-setting.

Shuba Ktorides

*(All quotations from "God and the Pandemic"
are by kind permission of Prof Tom Wright)*

Other news:



Parentalk finishes this month. 11 sets of parents have been taken through the lovely and lively videos made by Care for the Family, led by Vicky Lavy, and assisted by a magnificent team of small group facilitators from this benefice. Many thanks to Aki Olver and Jackie Meek from Chesterton and Clare Charlesworth and Judy Grimshaw from Kirtlington who have guided the discussions. The topics include **Ways to Show Love, Boundaries and Battles, Parenting with Elastic**. And tips shared have included: *Catch a time to praise them; Look after yourself; Set a time to talk; Say sorry*. Much wisdom has been shared!

Our schools have been working extremely hard with nearly 50% attendance as well as internet lessons happening every day. They look forward to starting to feel more normal when the home-schooled half returns but it will be a strange change of dynamics for all concerned; do go on praying for them, and for the collective worship team that continues to try to encourage them with videod worship sessions and teaching.

There has been a number of **funerals**. Do pray for the families of:

Mary Hine, Dorothy Duck, Phyllis Pritchard, Geoffrey Warburton, Clifford Allen

Living Lent is continuing to be alive and enlivening. Numbers at zoomed services have remained strong. Friday prayer and Sunday compline have made promising starts with quite a few people appreciating the time of quiet reflection.

Gareth tested our mettle with a **PLQ - a pre-Lent Quiz!** Congratulations to winners Sue and Andrew Tee.

There was a very interesting presentation at **Deanery Synod** by PACT (Parents and Children Together), an adoption and family care agency. There was also a lively discussion about the proposal to have individual cups at communion when we meet again. Interestingly, there was a tied vote!

New Website: we hope to launch our brand-new benefice website in time for Easter. Watch out for this exciting development!

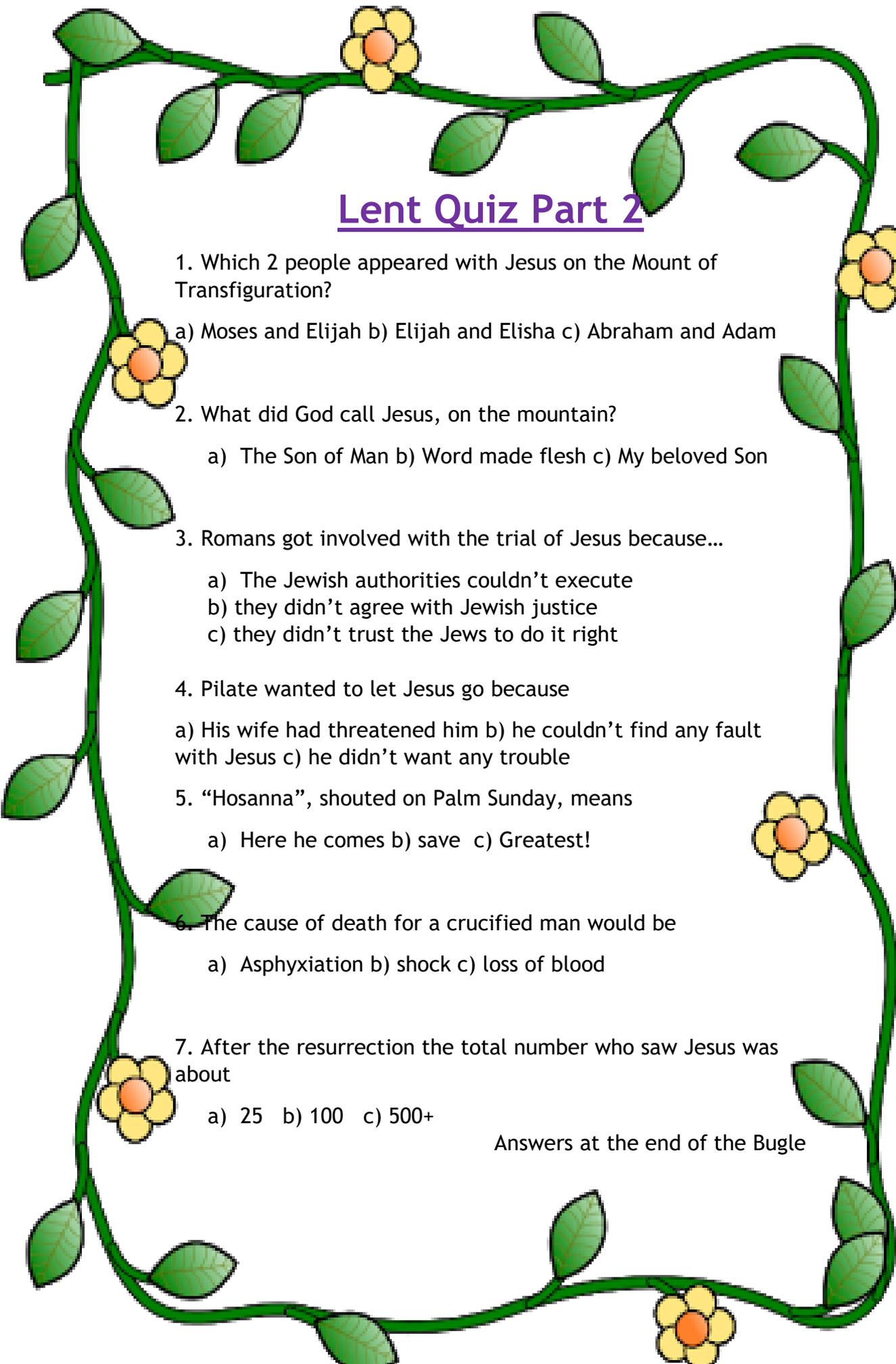
Bishop Gavin, the bishop-elect of Dorchester, was welcomed in an online ceremony on 28 February. He will be consecrated on 14 April. We look forward to welcoming +Gavin to our benefice in due course.

WATCH OUT for a special fund-raising event in the churchyard of St Mary's Chesterton on 27th March at 11am, with special home-made



Rosette Cookies and Plantain Fries, in aid of a Covid Charity





Lent Quiz Part 2

1. Which 2 people appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration?

- a) Moses and Elijah b) Elijah and Elisha c) Abraham and Adam

2. What did God call Jesus, on the mountain?

- a) The Son of Man b) Word made flesh c) My beloved Son

3. Romans got involved with the trial of Jesus because...

- a) The Jewish authorities couldn't execute
b) they didn't agree with Jewish justice
c) they didn't trust the Jews to do it right

4. Pilate wanted to let Jesus go because

- a) His wife had threatened him b) he couldn't find any fault with Jesus c) he didn't want any trouble

5. "Hosanna", shouted on Palm Sunday, means

- a) Here he comes b) save c) Greatest!

6. The cause of death for a crucified man would be

- a) Asphyxiation b) shock c) loss of blood

7. After the resurrection the total number who saw Jesus was about

- a) 25 b) 100 c) 500+

Answers at the end of the Bugle

Family activities for Lent part 2

(adults can do this, too!)

Week 3

Make an Easter cake with a difference (see next page). Look up all the ingredients in the Bible and follow the instructions. Try to keep it for Easter Day!

Week 4 with Mothering Sunday.

Join in the Mother's Pampering Afternoon, Cheer for Muns! . Read the story of Jochabed, Moses' mother, and how she took care of her child in dangerous times. Exodus 2: 1-10 Find a doll, and a basket, and act out the story.

Week 5

After Jesus was baptised, and before he started his ministry, he went into the space and quiet of the wilderness to focus more fully on God. He stayed there for 40 days. He was still for all that time. Being still is not an easy thing to do, as you may have discovered! Try to make time to escape the rush and noise of our daily life. What's the longest time you can be still for? Switch off your mobile phone, the TV, the iPad, the PlayStation - all things that cause distraction. Listen to the silence for a few seconds, and be aware of God's presence.

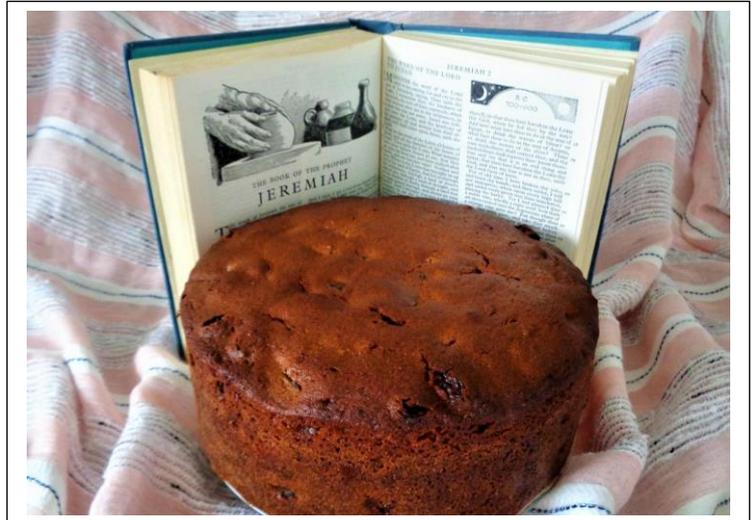
Week 6 getting ready for Easter

Find out about chocolate, where and how it is made. Make a design for the most exciting chocolate egg and send it to your favourite chocolate company. They may use it next year!

Scripture cake.

Try looking up the ingredients. If you get stuck, look at the end of the Bugle for help.

225g Judges 5:25 last clause
225g Jeremiah 6:20
1 tablespoon 1 Samuel 14:25
3 Jeremiah 17:11
225g 1 Samuel 30:12
175g Nahum 3:12
85g Numbers 17:8
350g 1 Kings 4:22
1 teaspoon 2 Chronicles 9:9
1 teaspoon Amos 4:5
A pinch of Leviticus 2:13
6 tablespoons Judges 4:19



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170c/Gas Mark 3 and line a 20cm/8" deep cake tin, greased with butter and lined with greaseproof paper.
2. Using a wooden spoon, beat the Judges 5:25 with Jeremiah 6:20 and the 1 Samuel 14:25 until creamy.
3. Gradually beat in Jeremiah 17:11, beating well after each addition.
4. Stir in 1 Samuel 30:12, using kitchen scissors chop up the Nahum 3:12, discarding the stalks, and stir into the mixture with the Numbers 17:8.
5. Mix 1 Kings 4:22 with 2 Chronicles 9:9, Amos 4:5 and Leviticus 2:13 and fold into the mixture with Judges 4:19, using a large metal spoon.
6. When thoroughly combined, spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and spread evenly.
7. Bake in the preheated oven for around two hours, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.
8. Stand the cake on a cooling wire till completely cool before turning out of the tin and removing the paper. Wrap in foil if you can for a couple of days before cutting up.

Contact details

Do feel free to contact a member of the ministry team if you would like to chat over anything, or a churchwarden if you would like information

Ministry team

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The Scripture cake ingredients shortcut

225g Judges 5:25 last clause = softened butter
225g Jeremiah 6:20 = light brown sugar
1 tablespoon 1 Samuel 14:25 = honey
3 Jeremiah 17:11 = eggs lightly beaten
225g 1 Samuel 30:12 = raisins
175g Nahum 3:12 = soft-dried figs or dates
85g Numbers 17:8 = blanched almonds, roughly chopped
350g 1 Kings 4:22 = plain flour or self-raising without the baking powder
1 teaspoon 2 Chronicles 9:9 = ground mix spice
1 teaspoon Amos 4:5 = baking powder
A pinch of Leviticus 2:13 = salt
6 tablespoons Judges 4:19 = milk

Quiz answers

1 a)

2 c)

3. a)

4. b)

5. b)

6. c)

The Last Word

“What to give up for Lent? My doctor has suggested that I reduce wine, women or song. I have decided to give up singing”

Editor is not revealing which churchwarden sent this message!