

**LENT talks: Social Justice. All Saints Church Tuesday 24 February to 17 March at 20.00**

**What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  
Micah 4 :6**

**1. Social Justice an introduction (Tuesday 24 February)**

The word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying: Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. But they refused to listen, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears in order not to hear. They made their hearts adamant in order not to hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. Just as, when I called, they would not hear, so, when they called, I would not hear, says the Lord of hosts, and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and for, and a pleasant land was made desolate. Zechariah 7: 8- 14



**To seek to transform unjust structures of society.** Social justice is a large topic! Our theme for this year’s Lent course originates from discussions at Harnham PCC around the topic of courageous advocacy around the Fourth mark of Mission - we will consider this call to all of us in depth as part of our Lenten devotions.

**God of the oppressed, let justice flow like a river:** may dignity be extended to those who suffer, let those living with discrimination come to know equality, may those caught in the grip of poverty and injustice be met with dignity, equality, justice and love. Strengthen us to work for justice with wisdom, perseverance, and a heart of compassion. Amen.

**Revd Becky Roberts** will lead an introductory overview of social justice using examples from the Bible, social science and Harnham Census stats. She is Vicar of Harnham, and Rural Dean of Salisbury. She wrote her MA dissertation on the effectiveness of cultural exchange programmes in social change in the light of the work of Paulo Freire.

Neil Turpin LWL will lead Compline.

**Social Justice, community in the countryside (Tuesday 3 March)**

Acts 4: 32-37

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. There was a Levite from Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.



In rural areas today, the issue of isolation, land use and affordable housing are all concerns. There is much emphasis on ‘Land Justice’ in the Bible: the sacredness of the earth and care for the poor and needy through the use of the land. Christians are reminded that Jesus was a champion for the marginalized and the early church members were committed to equitable distribution of possessions. We are also challenged to reflect on rural Harnham- what could social justice look like here?

**Merciful Lord, you know our struggle to serve you:** when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts, come to our aid and turn us back to you again; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Revd Jonathan Plows** will lead a talk concerning justice and community in rural areas. He is Rector of the Wylve and Till Valley Benefice, Wiltshire and Rural Dean of Stone Henge.

Jacqui Brown, LWL will lead compline.

### **3. Social Justice and health (Tuesday 10 March)**

Matthew 25: 35-36

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

In our world today, the issue of health access remains a significant concern. The disparities in health care highlight a profound truth that caring for the sick and vulnerable is not merely a kind act but a divine mandate.

Christians are challenged to be agents of healing justice, advocating for equitable health resources for all, regardless of background or circumstance - to recognize the dignity of every individual. Jesus' ministry was characterized by compassion and action among the sick and oppressed. We are invited to reflect on our own experiences of health and healing and to understand that not everyone has had the same opportunities.



**Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you:** give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

**Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green** will lead a talk from his own experience in life and in health care. His talk will concern compassion in Healthcare. He was the first National Clinical Director for Children in Government in the Department of Health in London, then first Children's Commissioner for England; he was elected President of the British Medical Association. He was also Chair of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education and member of the Archbishop's Education Board. [www.aynsley-green.com](http://www.aynsley-green.com)

Debbie Musselwhite, LWL will lead compline.

### **4. Social justice and education (Tuesday 17 March)**

Let the children come to me and do not hinder them. Matthew 19: 14

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 26 He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' 27 He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'

And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.' But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise. Luke 4: 25-37



**Loving God, We thank You for the gift of learning,** for the curiosity You place in every heart, and for teachers, parents, and communities who nurture minds and shape futures. Strengthen educators with patience, wisdom, and joy. Guide leaders to make choices that open doors for all, where every child is valued as Your beloved child. Amen.

A local educator will lead a talk on justice in Education from their local perspective of inclusion and changing demographics. Speaker tbc.

Katy Carter LLM will lead compline.