



COMPANIONS OF BARNABAS
a missional community in the Wesleyan tradition

SIX LENTEN PRACTICES

WEEK IV: CONNECTING

'Lent' is the Old English word for Spring, the season that ends Winter and in which new life begins again. Drawing on the ancient Celtic tradition of these islands, these six Lenten practices that will help us to prepare for the feast (of Easter) by focussing on nature, learning and the ordinary. In this, we will be accompanied by a number of Saints whose lives embodied these practices.

The six practices are:

1. *Giving*
2. *Planting*
3. *Noticing*
4. *Connecting*
5. *Learning*
6. *Sending*

The popular misconception of Lent is that it is about giving up pleasure in order to become more holy. Our Celtic forebears knew that it was about a much deeper search for true pleasure and satisfaction which could only be found by removing distractions and becoming attentive to the God who dwells in the ordinary and the simple. It is a rediscovery of (or reorientation to) the things that truly matter: beauty, truth, hope and love.

There will be a blog post and podcast each week to guide us and help us to focus. The pattern will be the same each week:

- *Entry into stillness*
- *Introduction to our saintly companion*
- *Listening to Scripture*
- *Waiting for the Word*
- *Practicing Lent*
- *Blessing*

Entry into stillness

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you:
as the day rises to meet the sun.

Glory to God, Source of All,
Word of Truth, Breath of Life,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be
for ever. Amen.

Canticle

Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me, lowly and
meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak; in the
mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me, lowly
and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.

(Northumbria Community)

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 -1179,) was a German church leader, visionary mystic, and composer.

Hildegard was born of noble parents and was educated by the Benedictines. Hildegard was 15 when she joined the Benedictine order and pursued a religious life. She succeeded her mentor, Jutta as prioress in 1136. She had experienced visions since she was a child, but it was only aged 43 that she admitted this to the church authorities. A committee of theologians met and confirmed the authenticity of Hildegard's visions, and she was encouraged to record them in writing.

When she founded a new community near Bingen, she continued to exercise the gift of prophecy and to record her visions in writing.



Hildegard was a talented poet and composer, and a writer and pioneer on diverse topics, including lives of saints, medicine, natural history, and scientific observation. She was also a travelling evangelist throughout Germany.

Pope Benedict proclaimed Hildegard a doctor of the church, one of only four women to have been so named.

Her writings on creation spirituality are amazingly prescient for our day and age:

"We shall awaken from our dullness and rise vigorously toward justice. If we fall in love with creation deeper and deeper, we will respond to its endangerment with passion."

Listening to Scripture

Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.
They will receive blessing from the Lord,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.
Selah

Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory.
Selah

Waiting for the Word

We spend some time reflecting and listening for the Word.

Practicing Lent

This week why not:

- spend some time just listening to nature and marvelling at the birdsong and emerging beauty?
- listen to some of Hildegard's music and use it as a prayer?
- prayer for women in positions of leadership in our churches?

Blessing

Circle us, Lord
Keep strife without, keep peace within;
keep fear without, keep hope within;
keep pride without, keep trust within;
keep evil out, keep good within.
May we walk in the hope of your
presence;
fill us with your light and love; be with us all through
this day Source, Word and Spirit.

Further reading

- Selected Writings by Hildegard of Bingen, (editor Oliver Davies), Penguin Classics
- <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/med/hildegarde.asp>
- <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>