



Words for the Way

An online Lent Course for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

Return

Thursday 23 February 2023



The Return to the Fold by Anton Mauve (Dutch, Zaandam 1838–1888 Arnhem), Oil on canvas (from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Psalm I

1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.

4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

What do you think of when you hear the word return? Return from a long trip where long distances have been travelled, or return from a small wander on paths well-travelled. In Lent we are invited to intentionally return to God, to be reminded of those things that allow us to delight in the Lord. We're asked to examine our lives and invited to return to the fold, whether as humans we have strayed far or near but we stray, we stray from our faith commitment, from our baptismal promises (if we are baptised) and the times we have re-affirmed them. God calls to us in love and invites us to respond, that call never ceases. It's no co-incidence that the Scottish Episcopal Church's Daily Prayer for Lent is subtitled: Returning to God.

What does the word return mean to you? What images does it bring to mind? What does return mean to you on your own faith journey?

You're invited to spend some time reflecting on these questions, you may wish to note them in a journal and revisit them through Lent and spend time in prayer with God in thanksgiving and penitence.

Conclusion (from Ezekiel 36)

1 I will gather you from every country,* and bring you home to your own land.

2 I will pour clean water over you,* and cleanse you from your idols.

3 A new heart I will give you,* and put a new spirit within you.

4 I will take from your body the heart of stone.* and give you a heart of flesh.

5 I will put my spirit within you.* and make you walk in my ways and observe my decrees.

6 You will live in the land that I gave to your forebears;* you will be my people and I will be your God.

From SEC Daily Prayer – Morning Prayer: Returning to God



Image <https://pixy.org/4226001/>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

.The word for each day is taken from Trevor Hudson's *40 words for 40 days Pauses for Lent*.