



Lent 2026

'Loose the chains of injustice'

75% of the world's blindness is avoidable. This means that every day, people are losing their sight because of diseases or conditions that could be prevented or treated. This Lent, we're inviting churches, communities and individuals to learn more about the cycle of poverty and disability, reflect on the injustice of avoidable blindness, and to share our vision of a just world in which all people with sight loss and disabilities enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential.



Opening Prayer

Loving God, we pray for increased solidarity with marginalised people, and in particular with the disability movement, this Lent. We pray that justice will roll down like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (AMOS 5:24)

The cycle of poverty and disability

Poverty and disability are deeply linked - which means that when responding to the injustice of global poverty and inequality, we must ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind.

If you live in poverty, you are much more likely to be blind, or live with some form of disability, due to lack of access to medical care and poor living or working conditions. If you have a disability you are much more likely to experience poverty, because people with disabilities are routinely denied the chance to go to school, earn a living or access healthcare. This is the cycle of poverty and disability - and breaking this cycle is crucial if we are to fulfil the call to build a more equitable world for all.

Batwel's story

"Before I lost my vision, I was able to preach at church, farm easily and lead the people... Now, I can't do things by myself, I have to rely on my children for everything. It has turned my life upside-down."

When cataracts caused Batwel to go blind at 85, he found himself unable to work, care for his family, or preach. Accessing free cataract surgery at Nkhoma District Hospital, Malawi, has transformed Batwel's life - restoring not only his sight, but his confidence, joy and independence.



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Bandana's story

Bandana, 6, lives in rural Nepal, South Asia, and had been blind all her life. She'd never gone to school or played with friends.

"Because we had no money, we were not able to afford treatment," her mother,

Lila, explained. It was when Lila learnt that Biratnagar Eye Hospital, with CBM, supports access to free sight-saving care that Bandana was diagnosed with cataracts,

and had sight-saving surgery. When Bandana's bandages were removed, and she could see clearly for the first time, Lila recalls, **"My daughter looked at my face so nicely, and I became very emotional."**



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Bible Study - Isaiah 58:6-7

Read these verses from Isaiah. You could have one person read them out loud - pay attention to the words and phrases that stand out to you. If you feel comfortable, you could go round and share what these words and phrases were, before considering the reflection and questions below.

**"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"**

In the preceding verses, God, through the prophet Isaiah, condemns the hypocrisy of people who fast obviously and ritualistically, whilst fighting and speaking unkindly to each other. In verses 6-7, it becomes clear that a different, perhaps unexpected, type of 'fasting' is desirable. This fast asks us to abstain not necessarily from food or drink, but from our tendency towards indifference and selfishness in a world where people face the injustices of poverty, hunger and oppression. Giving something up during Lent can help us focus our attention on God and exercise gratitude. But the fasting that God has chosen calls us to act compassionately towards our neighbour, and to use our own power, and our privilege, to 'loose the chains of injustice'. Lent gives us a particular opportunity to consider how we might respond to God's instruction to fast in this way.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Isaiah calls us to 'loose the chains of injustice'. What are these chains and injustices in our own lives or beyond? What might they be for people living with treatable or preventable blindness?
2. In what ways can we take up the call to fast from indifference and injustice this Lent?
3. What gives you hope - in your own life, and in the wider world? How can hope sustain our fast?

Going further

- If you have time, you could take a look at the whole of **Isaiah 58**. What else stands out to you?
- Look at **Matthew 5:13-16**. What else does this suggest about seeking justice, and how we should fast?
- Watch our 'World in Focus' film here to learn more about how, together, we can build a world in which nobody is needlessly blind: www.cbmun.org.uk/worldinfo



Closing prayer

God of justice, you have called us to fast from injustice, and to untie the cords of the yolk. This Lent, renew our commitment to breaking the cycle of poverty and disability, and sustain our hope for a world in which nobody is blind just because they are poor.



For more information about our work, and further resources, including posters, reflections, and our daily **Prayer Diary**, go to cbmun.org.uk/churches, or give us a call on **0800 567 7000** - we'd love to hear from you.

