



Creative Resources for Lent and Eastertide

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Sacred Seasons: Creative Worship Tools for Your Church

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Seeds of Hope, Inc., is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group intends to seek out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable, and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

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Joy Comes in the Morning

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a word about this packet

As always, the material in this packet is your congregation's to use freely. We have tried to pull together creative and inspiring resources that you can use to raise awareness of issues surrounding economic justice and food security (especially from a biblical perspective) in your congregation. We endeavored to choose a variety of age groups, worship areas, events, and angles, so that you would have a potpourri of art and ideas from which to choose.

We make a conscious effort to maintain a balance between the apostolic and the contemplative—on the one hand, the dynamic challenge to stay true to God's mandate to feed the poor and struggle for justice, and on the other hand, our own compelling need for nurture and healing while we work toward those dreams. May it be so.

Gratefully,
The Staff and Council of Stewards

A Candle at Midnight

We are an Easter people, we say, and our song is Hallelujah. But it seems that, much of the time we are not in Eastertide. Our world doesn't always seem like a resurrection morning. In fact, those moments—those sparkling moments—seem to be few and far between.

It seems that, especially now, with countless people of the world suffering from war, genocide, and catastrophic natural disaster, the darkness deepens. Many of us feel as though we stand in the rubble of our endeavors, covered in the ashes of our dreams.

But darkness and chaos have to cover the face of the deep, one of my students wrote a few years ago, before the spirit can brood over it and call out life. I suppose that's as good a description of Lent as I've ever read.

So in these pages we have prepared for you, we are fully aware that we are sitting and walking in darkness, with perhaps only one feeble candle sputtering against the wind and cold. Deborah Harris, a creative writer who has helped us for many years as a consultant with themes and with naming things (we call her the Slogan Queen), talks of holding vigil in the night against the pain and fear.

Depression is worse at night. Illness seems to be worse at night. Once a woman called a friend of mine in the dead of the night, upset and afraid to be alone. My friend didn't know what to do except talk to her. She at last offered to go to the woman's house, but the woman said, "Wait—I can see some light. The sun is coming up. I'll be all right now."

So, while we are living in the dead of night, light a candle, Deborah says—a candle at midnight. We don't wait for Holy Saturday to begin

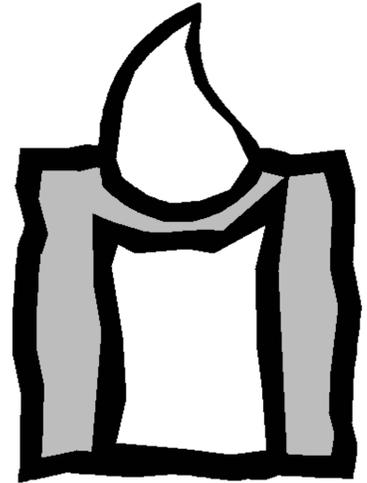
our Easter vigil. We start it now. We light as many candles as we can to illuminate the night.

Weeping may linger for the night, the Psalm 30:5 says, but joy comes in the morning. We cling to this knowledge.

It becomes our mantra. Because, yes, we are an Easter people, we are a sunrise people, but midnight is where we are now.

—Katie Cook

Sacred Seasons editor



A More Traditional Approach

This packet is designed to take your congregation on the journey through Lent with resources that are both traditional and creative. We have relied heavily on lectionary readings (based on the Revised Common Lectionary) and traditional hymns from several Christian traditions to help you in preparing for the many services that occur during this season. We have not tried to reinvent the many services that we have already published for Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, or the children's dramas, or monologues for Easter Sunday morning, trusting that you will go to some of our older packets for those resources.

For this packet, for these times, we seem to have gravitated back to the old words and songs—perhaps for comfort. Some of the readings and hymns could come under the theme "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." We have tried to intersperse some newer words and thoughts with the traditional liturgies. Hopefully this will help you lead your congregation through a worshipful and hopeful Lenten season into a truly joyous Eastertide.

We kept the homiletic content short, choosing two poignant meditations by Brett Younger and Joy Jordan-Lake, both of whose work you have seen before. The art is eclectic and mostly by artists whom you have met before. —lkc

Bulletin art

*Weeping may
linger for the night,*



*but Joy comes in
the morning.*

art by Lenora Mathis

Weeping with God

A Meditation

by Brett Younger

We know how the story goes. We've heard it far too many times.

Sarah is married, the mother of two, a boy and a girl. One morning in the shower she feels a lump. She wants to ignore it, but knows that's not much of a long-term strategy. A few days later she hears her doctor say, "We need to run some tests."

For the longest time she doesn't tell anyone but her husband about the cancer, but when she begins treatment, she tells the people at her church.

They all say, "We'll be praying for you." A few encourage her to pray knowing that God will heal her. The subtle implication is that she has to believe that she'll be healed or it won't work. Faith sounds like denial.

They keep telling Sarah, "You're looking good" which is a nice compliment, but the question "Compared to what?" pops into her head.

An older woman says that back in her mother's day this kind of cancer was a death knell. They've made so many advances and isn't Sarah lucky that she doesn't have to do the really bad kind of chemo. Is there a good kind of chemo?

The hushed tone in which they ask, "How are you?" becomes unnerving. She wishes she could say, "The treatment is making me constipated, but thanks for asking." Instead she replies, "Okay, I guess."

People keep telling her how brave she is. What choice does she have?

She gets a lot of rah rah, "You can beat this. You can win. You're tough."

She feels guilty about it, but she starts to resent a few people. They mean well, but they must not be able to hear what they're saying.

What are they thinking when they imply that this is an educational exercise? "God means this for good, Sarah." How dare a healthy person suggest that cancer is in her best interest? As a self-improvement strategy, suffering is highly overrated.

Sarah fleetingly considered slapping the woman who said, "You know God doesn't put more on us than we can carry." This theory taken to its logical conclusion means that Sarah and her children would

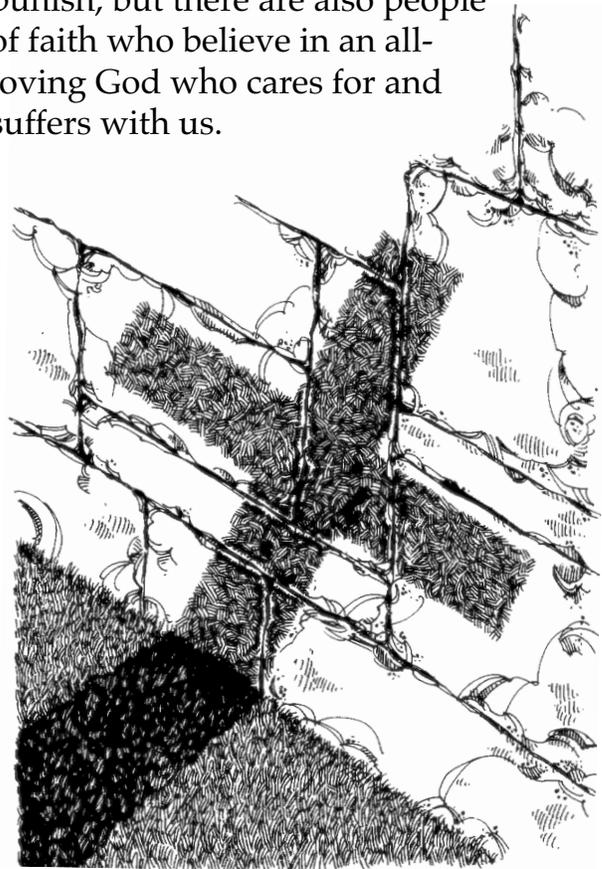
be far better off if Sarah were a weaker person.

What about this one? Someone actually quoted, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." Who wants to worship a God who takes a mother, wife, and daughter away from the people who need her?

And worst of all, "We know this is God's will." It makes God sound horrible, picking her to give cancer to, removing hair and body parts she would rather have kept.

A man she didn't know very well sent out an e-mail that began, "Dear Prayer Warriors, I know that you believe that God heals, so I'm writing to ask you to pray for our friend Sarah." She couldn't

Some churches and temples believe in an all-powerful God who chooses to heal or punish, but there are also people of faith who believe in an all-loving God who cares for and suffers with us.



explain why it made her uneasy, but is God waiting for e-mail prayer warriors to let God know what needs to be done? Does God count prayers to determine who gets thumbs up or thumbs down?

Sarah grew so uncomfortable with sunshiny pat answers that a couple of times she used her illness as an excuse to hide at home.

Her family has conversations that stop when she walks into the room. One of the worst things about cancer is seeing it hurt the people she loves. She

When we experience exhaustion, failure, and despair, God doesn't sympathize with our suffering from a safe distance; God shares it by entering our lives. For Christians, the central truth of the cross is that God suffers with us.

caught her husband watching a pompadoured faith healer on television. He acted embarrassed, but if she hadn't walked in, would he have called the number at the bottom of the screen? A prayer cloth couldn't hurt.

She's never felt lonely before, but her friends treat her differently. People have stopped telling her their problems. She's no longer "Sarah the one who does so much good work." Now she's "Sarah who has cancer." A few of her friends are less likely to be there when she's not doing well.

One of her oncologists is the same way. When the news is bad he looks as though he's disappointed with her, as though she failed treatment rather than the other way around, as though she's going to be a blemish on his scorecard. Her doctors—and she has enough to fill the Supreme Court—seem competent. They're comfortable talking about what radiation and chemotherapy might or might not do, but none of them are much help in telling her how to care for her children.

She hates her wig and is sick of throwing up. She's been mutilated, poisoned, and burned. She's angry when she's not depressed. When she wakes up in the morning, her first thought is, "I have cancer." God is a million miles away, twiddling his thumbs.

There is, of course, another way her story could go. How different would Sarah's story be if her faith and her community helped her deal with cancer honestly? Some churches and temples believe in an

all-powerful God who chooses to heal or punish, but there are also people of faith who believe in an all-loving God who cares for and suffers with us.

There are certainly people who prayed for healing and were healed, but there are also good people who prayed and died too soon. When you put these two sets of experiences (people who prayed and were healed and people who prayed and weren't) together, you end up with hard questions. Were the prayers of those who prayed for healing and were healed more valid than the prayers of those who weren't healed? That doesn't make sense. Maybe it's better to ask hard questions than it is to pretend to have all the answers.

Our sanctuaries have to be places to be real, to weep, pray, sing, and be silent in the face of sorrow. Whenever anyone hears the word "malignant," God's heart is the first to break. It's not God's will that anyone should die too soon. God is caring for us in every situation as much as God can, or else God isn't God. God is not an all-controlling being who punishes us for unknown reasons. God is an all-compassionate being who shares in our suffering.

One of Sarah's friends brings her a copy of Martha Popson's *The Survivor's Prayer*:

God, I keep saying, God I can't do it this time. The pain, the pain.

Sure you can, she says, you can. I know you can.

But God I don't know this time, the pain can't be hidden.

Honey, I won't leave, God says, and wipes my brow and kisses me even though she didn't have to.

God, I keep saying, God, I hurt.

And she says, Oh honey, I know you do."

Another chicken soup-bearing friend brings a column by Molly Ivins, a breast cancer survivor, that says, "I suspect that cancer doesn't give a rat's ass whether you have a positive mental attitude. The only reason to have a positive mental attitude is that it makes life better. It doesn't cure cancer."

Some of Sarah's best friends are the ones who don't say anything at all. Silence is usually better than "You'll be fine."

Her friends call and Sarah is glad to talk to women who have been through it. She learns to speak with her family honestly concerning her fears about what may come. They help each other laugh. She loves her husband and children more

passionately than before.

She makes her doctors tell the truth and tells them exactly what she wants and how they are going to help her get there.

Maybe it takes more faith to live with cancer than it does to be healed from cancer.

She and those who love her pray for healing, and it's healing that includes more than a return to normal health. Healing also means patching up relationships, forgiving everyone including herself, and finding some peace. It's the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, wholeness in the face of her illness, emotional healing, coping with grief, being reconciled to herself, others, and God.

Prayer isn't telling God what to do, but is the means by which Sarah shares her heart with God. Prayer is being held in God's love and comfort, knowing that God is always working for our healing.

When we weep, God weeps. When we suffer, God suffers. When we hurt, God hurts. If we have cancer, then God has cancer. When we experience exhaustion, failure, and despair, God doesn't sympathize with our suffering from a safe distance; God shares it by entering our lives. For Christians, the central truth of the cross is that God suffers with us.

Knowing that God goes through it with us doesn't take the sorrow away, but it offers hope beyond our grief. Even at our most frightened, God is with us. Sarah's faith is in God who holds her in God's hands, no matter what comes. Her faith is deeper and more meaningful than the faith she had before she became ill. It's nowhere near worth the cost, but she has a sense of being more and not less because of her illness. Some days she thinks her faith is growing faster than her cancer.

When she wakes up in the morning, sometimes her first thought is, "I have cancer," but then her second thought is, "I have today."

God is her companion each day,

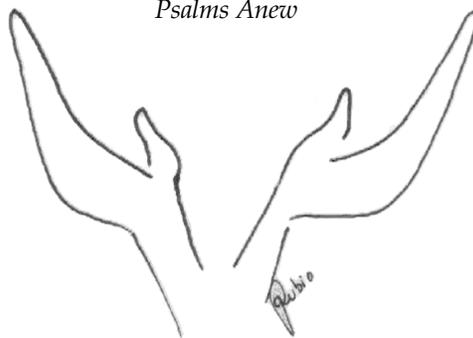
her comfort, strength, and hope.

—Brett Younger is a pastor in Fort Worth, Texas and a frequent contributor to *Sacred Seasons*.

A Healing Psalm

*God is close to the broken-hearted
and rescues those
whose spirit is crushed.*

Psalm 34,
Psalms Anew



When my heart is broken,
God is near.

When tears are in my eyes,
God wipes them away.

When my sorrow is deep,
God cries out with me.

When there is a pain
in the center of my being.
God puts her hand on the painful place
and says
"My grace
is enough to see you through;
My grace is enough."

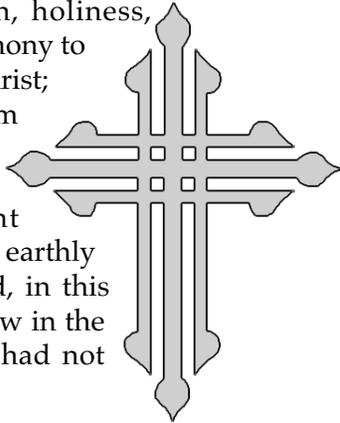
And I am at peace at last
free at last
through my pain.

*by Katie Cook
February 1990*

Quotes, Poems, & Pithy Sayings

The church has failed to follow her appointed pathway of separation, holiness, heavenliness, and testimony to an absent but coming Christ; she has turned aside from that purpose to the work of civilizing the world, building magnificent temples, and acquiring earthly power and wealth, and, in this way, has ceased to follow in the footsteps of Him who had not where to lay His head.

—C. I. Scofield



We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

—Viktor Frankl

Most people are willing to take the Sermon on the Mount as a flag to sail under, but few will use it as a rudder by which to steer.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

...when we finally know we are dying, and all other sentient beings are dying with us, we start to have a burning, almost heartbreaking sense of the fragility and preciousness of each moment and each being, and from this can grow a deep, clear, limitless compassion for all beings.

—Sogyal Rinpoche

Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people...re-examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul...

—Walt Whitman

People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child—our own two eyes. All is a miracle.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Deep unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state.

—George Eliot

Jesus' ministry was clearly defined, and the alternatives to the illusion and temptations of the desert were spelled out. A choice was made—life abundant, full, and free for all. Make no mistake about it, the day that choice was made, Jesus became suspect. That day in the temple he sealed the fate already prepared for him. How was the world to understand one who rejected an offer of power and control?

—Joan B. Campbell



art by Susan Smith

Readings & Hymns for Ash Wednesday

*Note: For a complete service of ashes, see the Sacred Seasons
Lenten/Eastertide packets from 1998 or 2002.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

“’Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(Hymn 220 in The Worshiping Church)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822
Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853
Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ’Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
’Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

2. ’Tis midnight; and from all removed,
the Savior wrestles one with fears;
e’en that disciple whom he loved
heeds not his Master’s grief and tears.

*Note: This hymn could be done by a choir,
soloist, or ensemble.*

READING FOR FOUR VOICES

FIRST READER: Blow the trumpet in
Zion; sound the alarm on my holy
mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the
land tremble, for the day of the Lord
is coming...

SECOND READER: Shout out, do not
hold back! Lift up your voice like a
trumpet! Announce to my people their
rebellion, to the house of Jacob their
sins.

THIRD READER: Yet even now, says
the Lord, return to me with all your
heart, with fasting, with weeping, and
with mourning;

FOURTH READER: Rend your hearts
and not your clothing.

SECOND READER: Return to the
Lord, your God, for God is gracious
and merciful, slow to anger, and

abounding in steadfast love, and relents from
punishing.

FIRST READER: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify
a fast; call a solemn assembly;

THIRD READER: Day after day they seek me and
delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation

O God, how well we remember
the celebrations of last year—
the hopes and dreams
and wild expectations
that we dared to allow in our hearts.
And now, how troubled
we are to recall our failures!
We have not lived up
to our own expectations.
We have not measured up to your call.
The world has not been healed.
There is no peace.
The poor are still hungry.
Our dreams have burned to the ground.
The songs and carols of Advent and Christmas
brought a brief respite
from the darkness,
but now we stand on the brink of Lent.
We are weary and frustrated.
We are fearful of what
you might now ask us to do.
Help us to bring today
the ashes of our dreams,
and present them to you
for transformation.

—Katie Cook



art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God.

SECOND READER: Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why do we humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

THIRD READER: Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. You fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

SECOND READER: Return to the Lord, your God, return to the Lord with all your heart.

FIRST READER: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly.

—taken from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 and Isaiah 58:1-12

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 51:1-17

EPISTLE READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

LEADER: Dear people of God, the first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time for reflection, confession, and a restoration of fellowship within the church. It became a time for all Christians to renew their covenant with God, and to strengthen their faith.

I invite you therefore, in the name of the universal Body of Christ, to the observance of a holy Lent, to self-examination, prayer, fasting, and self-denial; to reading and meditating on God's word.

Almighty God, you have created us out of the

dust of the earth; Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our dependence on you, that we may remember that by your gracious love we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, who became dust like us. Amen.

Note: Suggested hymns for use during imposition

"Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"

Words and Music: American Spiritual

1. Jesus walked this lonesome valley.
He had to walk it by Himself;
O, nobody else could walk it for Him,
He had to walk it by Himself.

2. We must walk this lonesome valley,
We have to walk it by ourselves;
O, nobody else can walk it for us,
We have to walk it by ourselves.

3. You must go and stand your trial,
You have to stand it by yourself,
O, nobody else can stand it for you,
You have to stand it by yourself.

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

American Spiritual

Tune: CLOSER WALK, Irregular

1. I am weak, but thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long as I walk,
let me walk close to thee.

Refrain

Just a closer walk with thee;
grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
daily walking close to thee:
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

2. Through this world of toil and snares,
if I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.

3. When my feeble life is o'er,
time for me will be no more;
guide me gently, safely o'er
to thy Kingdom shore, to thy shore.

BENEDICTION: Go in peace, and make an appropriate beginning of Lent as we bear witness with these ashes. May God bring us through these weeks to the joy of resurrection. Amen.

Readings & Hymns for the First Sunday in Lent

CALL TO WORSHIP

“’Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(hymn 220 in *The Worshipping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ’Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
’Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

2. ’Tis midnight; and from all removed,
the Savior wrestles one with fears;
e’en that disciple whom he loved
heeds not his Master’s grief and tears.

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

LITANY FROM THE PSALMS:

ONE: Happy are those whose transgression is
forgiven, whose sin is covered.

MANY: Happy are those to whom the Lord
imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there
is no deceit.

ONE: While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

MANY: For day and night your hand was heavy
upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat
of summer.

ONE: Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did
not hide my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my
transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt
of my sin.

MANY: Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer
to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty
waters shall not reach them.

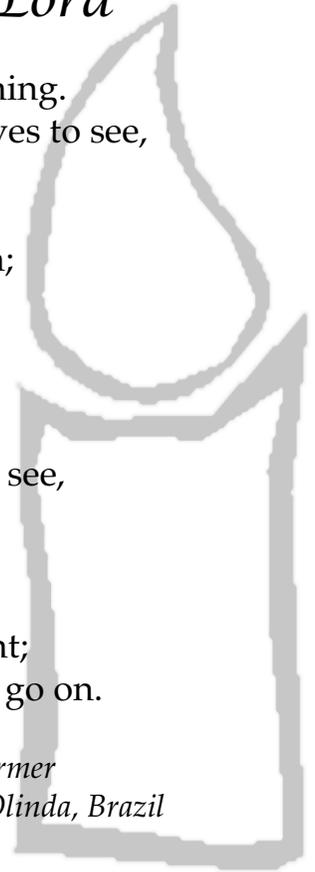
ONE: You are a hiding place for me; you preserve
me from trouble;

MANY: You surround me with glad cries of
deliverance.

It’s Midnight, Lord

The spirit is breathing.
All those with eyes to see,
women and men
with ears for hearing
detect a coming dawn;
a reason to go on.
They seem small,
these signs of dawn,
perhaps ridiculous.
All those with eyes to see,
women and men
with ears for hearing
uncover in the night
a certain gleam of light;
they see the reason to go on.

—Dom Helder Camara, former
Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, Brazil



ONE: The Lord says, I will instruct you and teach
you the way you should go; I will counsel you with
my eye upon you.

MANY: The Lord says, Do not be like a horse or a
mule, without understanding, whose temper must
be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay
near you.

ONE: Many are the torments of the wicked, but
steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

MANY: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

—taken from Psalm 32

READING FROM THE EPISTLES

Romans 5:12-19

HYMN:

“Forty Days and Forty Nights”
(found in the Cyber Hymnal)

Words: George H. Smyttan,
in *The Penny Post*, March
1856

Music: “Heinlein,”
Nürnbergisches Gesangbuch,
1676; Melody attributed to
Martin Herbst (1654-1681);
Harmony by William H. Monk
(1823-1889)

1. Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.

2. Sunbeams scorching all the
day;
Chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
Prowling beasts about Thy way;
Stones Thy pillow; earth Thy
bed.

3. Should not we Thy sorrow
share
And from worldly joys abstain,
Fasting with unceasing prayer,
Strong with Thee to suffer pain?

4. Then if Satan on us press,
Jesus, Savior, hear our call!
Victor in the wilderness,
Grant we may not faint nor fall!

5. So shall we have peace
divine:
Holier gladness ours shall be;
Round us, too, shall angels
shine,
Such as ministered to Thee.

6. Keep, O keep us, Savior dear,
Ever constant by Thy side;
That with Thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.

GOSPEL READING
Matthew 4:1-11

Litany for Early Lent

by Buddy Vess

ONE: Lent is a time of journey. We, like the people of God, Israel, have come to Canaan, our place of promise. A promised land was salvation to them in their journey. Ours is life in Christ.

The day the manna ceased, they feasted from the bounty of the new land. As you prepare to come to this feast, may you find strength for your salvation journey. Come to this table to find strength during your spiritual journey during Lent.

May the Spirit find room in your heart as you partake of the blessed elements prepared for you this day.

Remember to increase in the wisdom and knowledge of God, who has created us to be who we are and who has affirmed every part of us. Remember that God sent Jesus to be our Redeemer and that the Holy Spirit is with us always.

During this Lenten season, let us strive for wholeness through prayer, commitment, the study of God’s word and in living the life of righteousness.

Just as Jesus committed to ministry even when it meant risking his own life, and through that commitment gave His life to a ministry of justice, healing, and compassion—

Many: So may it be with us.

ONE: Just as Jesus was able to withstand temptation through the knowledge of Scripture and teaching—

Many: So may it be with us.

ONE: Just as Jesus in giving found glory through God the Creator—

Many: So may it be with us.

—Buddy Vess is a minister in the Washington, DC area.

art by Lenora Mathis



Readings & Hymns for the Second Sunday in Lent

CALL TO WORSHIP

“’Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(hymn 220 in *The Worshipping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ’Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
’Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

additional verse:

Tis midnight, and we join him there,
kneeling, sweating drops of blood;
Tis midnight, and, too much to bear,
We pour out our griefs to God.

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Genesis 12:1-4a

LITANY FROM THE PSALMS

ONE: I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will
my help come?

MANY: My help comes from the Lord, who made
heaven and earth.

ONE: He will not let your foot be moved; he who
keeps you will not slumber.

MANY: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber
nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your
shade at your right hand.

ONE: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the
moon by night.

MANY: The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will
keep your life.

ALL: The Lord will keep your going out and your
coming in from this time on and forevermore.

— *taken from Psalm 121*

HYMN

“As Pants the Hart for Cooling Streams”
(from the Oremus Hymnal: www.oremus.org)



art by Rebecca Ward

Words: New Version of the Psalms of David, 1696

Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Tune: CONSOLATION, Meter: CM

1. As pants the hart for cooling streams
when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, O God, for thee
and thy refreshing grace.

2. For thee, my God, the living God,
my thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
thou Majesty divine?

3. Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
the praise of him who is thy God,
thy health’s eternal spring.

4. To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory, as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

EPISTLE READING

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

GOSPEL READING

John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9

Readings & Hymns for the Third Sunday in Lent

CALL TO WORSHIP

“‘Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(hymn 220 in *The Worshiping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ‘Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
‘Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

2. ‘Tis midnight; and from all removed,
the Savior wrestles one with fears;
e’en that disciple whom he loved
heeds not his Master’s grief and tears.

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Exodus 17:1-7

LITANY FROM THE PSALMS

ONE: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let
us make a joyful noise to the rock of our
salvation!

MANY: Let us come into God’s presence
with thanksgiving; let us greet the Lord
with songs of praise!

ONE: For the Lord is a great God, and a
great King above all gods.

MANY: In God’s hand are the depths of
the earth and the heights of the
mountains. The sea belongs to the Lord,
for God made it, and the dry land was
formed by God’s hands.

ONE: O come, let us worship and bow
down, let us kneel before the Lord, our
Maker!

MANY: For the Lord is our God. We are
the people of God’s pasture; we are God’s
sheep.

ONE: God says, “O that today you would
listen to my voice!”



How beautiful will be the day when
all the baptized understand that
their work, their job, is a priestly work,
that just as I celebrate Mass at this altar,
so each carpenter celebrates Mass at his
workbench, and each metalworker, each
professional, each doctor with the scalpel,
the market woman at her stand, is
performing a priestly office! How many
cabdrivers, I know, listen to this message
there in their cabs; you are a priest at the
wheel, my friend, if you work with
honesty, consecrating that taxi of yours to
God, bearing a message of peace and love
to the passengers who ride in your cab.

—Oscar Romero,
Archbishop of El Salvador

November 20, 1977

—art: “*Faith, Hope, and Charity*”
by Susan Smith

MANY: We are the people of God's pasture; we are God's sheep. Let us listen to God's voice.

ONE: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

MANY: Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us greet the Lord with songs of praise!

—taken from Psalm 95

EPISTLE READING

Romans 5:1-11

HYMN:

"Jesus Thou Joy of Loving Hearts"
(Hymn #646 in the *Trinity Hymnal*, 1990)

Words: Bernard of Clairvaux, 1150

Trans. Ray Palmer, 1858

Music: Henry Baker, 1854

Arr. Ray Palmer, 1858

Tune: QUEBEC, Meter: L. M.

1. Jesus, thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to thee again.
2. Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on thee call;
To them that seek thee thou art good,
To them that find thee all in all.
3. We taste thee, O thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon thee still;
We drink of thee, the Fountainhead,
And thirst our souls from thee to fill.
4. Our restless spirits yearn for thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad when thy gracious smile we see,
Blest when our faith can hold thee fast.
5. O Jesus, ever with us stay,
Make all our moments calm and bright;
Chase the dark night of sin away,
Shed o'er the world thy holy light.

GOSPEL LESSON FOR THREE READERS

Note: You might consider inviting several youth or children to pantomime this reading as it is read. They could wear "period" costumes or something simple and contemporary. You could set up something that looks like a well, or you could use only a clay jar or bucket as a prop.

NARRATOR: So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "Give me a drink."

NARRATOR: (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him,

WOMAN: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

NARRATOR: (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her,

JESUS: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

NARRATOR: The woman said to him,

WOMAN: "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"

NARRATOR: Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

NARRATOR: The woman said to him,

WOMAN: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

NARRATOR: Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "Go, call your husband, and come back."

NARRATOR: The woman answered him,

WOMAN: "I have no husband."

NARRATOR: Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"

NARRATOR: The woman said to him,

WOMAN: "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."

NARRATOR: Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

NARRATOR: The woman said to him,

WOMAN: "I know that the Messiah, the Christ, is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."

NARRATOR: Jesus said to her,

JESUS: "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

NARRATOR: Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

WOMAN: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"

NARRATOR: They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging

him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, JESUS: "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

NARRATOR: So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them,

JESUS: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

NARRATOR: Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony,

WOMAN: "He told me everything I have ever done."

NARRATOR: So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

— taken from John 4:5-42

O Lord God...we pray you, regard with divine pity the pains of all your children, and grant that the passion of our Lord and his infinite merits may make fruitful for good the miseries of the innocent, the suffering of the sick, and the sorrows of the bereaved; through him who suffered in our flesh and died for our sake, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

—from the Scottish Prayer Book



Readings & Hymns for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

CALL TO WORSHIP

“’Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(hymn 220 in *The Worshipping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ‘Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
‘Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

3. ‘Tis midnight; and for other’s guilt
the Man of Sorrows weeps in blood;
yet he that hath in anguish knelt
is not forsaken by his God.

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 16:1-13

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 23

Note: Since the congregants are very familiar with this psalm, you might consider having it read in a language other than English.

HYMN

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”
(Hymn #221 in *The Worshipping Church*, 1990)

Words: Attr. Bernard of Clairvaux,
12th Century

Trans. (English) James W. Alexander, 1830

Music: Hans Leo Hassler, 1601,

arr. J. S. Bach, 1729

Tune: *PASSION CHORALE*, Meter: 7.6.7.6.D.

1. O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns,
Thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

2. What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,

was all for sinners’ gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
‘Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

3. What language shall I borrow
to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to Thee.

LITANY FROM THE EPISTLES:

ONE: For once you were darkness,

Each of us is called to prophetic agony—to speak the Word, to do justice and righteousness. We are most truly ourselves when we live within God’s insecurity, acknowledging Yahweh’s sovereignty over creation, taking full responsibility as contingent creatures who yet must decide and act. Future is created out of past by those who live the present. Wherever history is unfolding, faith demands response. In the face of God-encounter, indifference does not suffice.

—Martin Bell



but now in the Lord you are light.
MANY: We must now live
as children of light, for the fruit
of the light is found in all
that is good and right and true.

ONE: Try to find out what is
pleasing to the Lord.
MANY: We must take no part
in the unfruitful works
of darkness, but instead expose them.

ONE: Everything exposed
by the light becomes visible,
for everything that becomes
visible is light.

MANY: Therefore, we say to each other,
“Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”
— taken from Ephesians 5:8-14

HYMN

“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne”

Words: Emily E. S. Elliott, 1864
Music: Timothy R. Matthews, 1876
Tune: MARGARET, Irregular

3. The foxes found rest
and the birds their nest
in the shade of the forest tree;
but thy couch was the sod,
O thou Son of God,
in the desert of Galilee:

Refrain:

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
there is room in my heart for thee.

4. Thou camest, O Lord,
with the living Word
that should set thy people free;
but with mocking scorn,
and with crown of thorn,
they bore thee to Calvary.

5. When the heavens shall ring,
and the angels sing,
at thy coming to victory,
let thy voice call me home, saying
“Yet there is room,
there is room at my side for thee.”

GOSPEL READING

John 9:1-41

Midnight, January 9, 2005

by David Sparenberg

Women suffer with the earth;
Men bring suffering.

Only when a man is crucified and he cries out with the
mother-blood of his heart and the white innocence of
his wife agony; and the sky convulses overhead and the
earth under the rain of red torment trembles; does he
transcend the arrogance of being a man.

Do you not see in the distant dark that hill and the gleam
of tremulant, God-
sorrow light? How like a shape of skulls
hurt talks to us.

Until then,
the world is lost and every soul, like a homeless child
going from door to door, begs, seeking shelter from the
cold storms of history: the monster occupier in the
shadows with cynical, cruel grin. And the strong hands
of time.

And isn't greed too
a terrible executioner?

But woman and the earth
are deep with silence. And the night is prayed through
in the candle light of tears. Man

must take up his cross — and ask
forgiveness, first for his self-
betrayal, then
of the wretched who are lowly
and who feel abandoned, but
who move like
feathers in the breath of God.
Until then,
we are plunged into the hell of
wars. And isn't indifference too
a murderer?

—David Sparenberg—a playwright,
poet, storyteller, stage director,
Shakespearean actor and new novelist—
lives and writes in Seattle.



Readings & Hymns for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

CALL TO WORSHIP

“’Tis Midnight; and on Olive’s Brow”
(Hymn 220 in *The Worshiping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive’s Brow*, L. M.

1. ’Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
’Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

2. ’Tis midnight; and from all removed,
the Savior wrestles one with fears;
e’en that disciple whom he loved
heeds not his Master’s grief and tears.

ANTIPHONAL READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

FIRST READER: The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me,

SECOND READER: “Mortal, can these bones live?”

FIRST READER: I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Then he said to me,

SECOND READER: “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

FIRST READER: So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me,

SECOND READER: “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says

the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”

FIRST READER: I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me,

SECOND READER: “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act.”

—taken from Ezekiel 37:1-14

LITANY FROM THE PSALMS

ONE: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

MANY: Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

ONE: If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

MANY: But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

ONE: I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in God’s word I hope;

MANY: My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

ONE: O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with God is great power to redeem.

MANY: It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

—taken from Psalm 130

EPISTLE READING

Romans 8:6-11

GOSPEL READING

John 11:1-45

Readings & Hymns for Palm Sunday

CALL TO WORSHIP / GOSPEL READING

FIRST READER: When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me.

SECOND READER: If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

FIRST READER: "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

SECOND READER: The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.

FIRST READER: A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

SECOND READER: The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

FIRST READER: When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?"

SECOND READER: The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

—from *Matthew 21:1-11*

PROCESSIONAL WITH PALM BRANCHES

Let the children (and others) process to the front of the sanctuary with palm branches.

READING FOR CHILDREN

Children who have processed with palms stay at the front and repeat the reply below.

LEADER: Thank God because God is good.

CHILDREN: God's love never quits.

LEADER: Let us tell all the world,

CHILDREN: God's love never quits.

LEADER: Let everyone here tell the world,

CHILDREN: God's love never quits.

—from *Psalm 118:1-2, The Message*

Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah



art by Robert Askins

ONE: The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens— awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

MANY: The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

ONE: I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

MANY: The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

—*Isaiah 50:4-7 (from the Liturgy of the Passion, Sixth Sunday in Lent)*

ALTERNATIVE LITANY FROM THE
PSALMS

ONE: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever!

MANY: Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

ONE: Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

MANY: This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

ONE: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

MANY: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

ONE: This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

MANY: This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

ONE: Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

MANY: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

ONE: The Lord is God; God has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

MANY: You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

ONE: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, God's steadfast love endures forever.
—from Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

BENEDICTION:

"'Tis Midnight; and on Olive's Brow"
(Hymn 220 in *The Worshiping Church*)

Words: William B. Tappan, 1822

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1853

Tune: *Olive's Brow*, L. M.

1. 'Tis midnight; and on Olive's brow
the star is dimmed that lately shown.
'Tis midnight; in the garden now
the suffering Savior prays alone.

4. 'Tis midnight; and from heavenly plains
is borne the song that angels know;
unheard by mortals are the strains
that sweetly soothe the Savior's woe.

Liturgy of the Passion: Psalms



art by René Boldt

ONE: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.

MANY: For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years
with sighing;

ONE: My strength fails because of my misery, and my
bones waste away.

MANY: I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to
my neighbors,

ONE: An object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

MANY: I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;

ONE: I have become like a broken vessel.

MANY: For I hear the whispering of many—
terror all around!—

ONE: As they scheme together against me, as they plot
to take my life.

MANY: But I trust in you, O Lord;

ONE: I say, "You are my God."

MANY: My times are in your hand;

ONE: deliver me from the hand of my enemies and
persecutors.

MANY: : Let your face shine upon your servant;

ALL: Save me in your steadfast love.

—from Psalm 31:9-16, for the Sixth Sunday in Lent

Readings & Hymns for Maundy Thursday

READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

GOSPEL READING & INTERPRETATION

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Note: You might add an interpretive element to this reading by arranging for two people to wash each other's feet as the words are read. If you would like to invite others to join in, arrange for several people to begin the process and provide several bowls and pitchers, as well as a good supply of towels. If the footwashing lasts longer than the Gospel reading, begin instrumental music such as "What Wondrous Love is This" or "O Lamb of God." "How Can I Keep from Singing" would also be appropriate.

A SERVICE OF COMMUNION

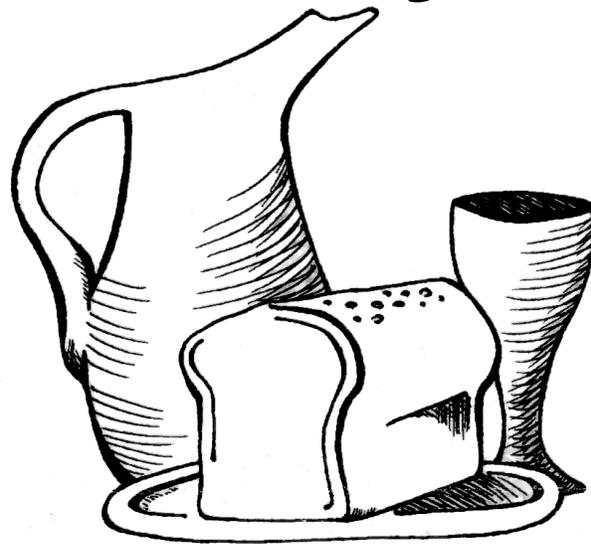
CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: "If our hopes in Christ are limited to this life only, we are the most pitiable of the human race," and yet we live our lives as if there is no hope. We even live as if Christ is not a part of our lives. We prefer to forget what Christ gave for us—what suffering Christ endured. It is easier to remember a resurrection than to remember the suffering. But when that is all we remember, we fail to forget that suffering can be eased, healing can take place, and our complacency forgiven. But these things happen through the power of the resurrection. Let us confess our sins of omission before God.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PARDON

ONE: Everyone who believes has forgiveness of sins through Christ's Name. Let us be thankful for his unspeakable gift to us.



art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

BLESSING OF THE ELEMENTS

ONE: At the feast of the Passover that Jesus shared with his followers on the evening prior to His death, Jesus expressed life through the sharing of food that took on the significance of his body. It was Jesus' desire that the followers repeat this meal as a source of strength, remembering that their Redeemer would provide life for them over and over again. We now come to this table, remembering Jesus' act of self-sacrifice. May we find strength and renewal for our ministry, as did the early disciples, in the sharing of this meal. May we find hope and healing through the power of the resurrection.

The Blessing of the Bread

The Blessing of the Cup

ONE: Please join me in proclaiming the mystery of our faith.

All: Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again, hallelujah!

ONE: Draw near to the table of sustenance and love. And may all God's children everywhere come to know this sustenance and love.

BENEDICTION

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
Hymn #213 in The Worshipping Church

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), 1707
Music: Lowell Mason, 1824, based on plainsong
Tune: HAMBURG, Meter: LM

1. When I survey the wondrous cross
where the young Prince of Glory died,
where the young Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the cross of Christ, my God:
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

3. See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

—Note: The communion portion of this service was adapted from a liturgy by Buddy Vess.

Readings & Hymns for Holy Friday

Note: Have the worship area dimly lit, with the Christ candle burning by itself. After the scripture readings, extinguish the candle and sing the benediction.

READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES
Isaiah 52:13-53:12

READING FROM THE PSALMS
Psalm 22

EPISTLE READING
Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

GOSPEL READING
John 18:1-19:42

BENEDICTION
"O Lamb of God"
(Hymn #833 in The Worshiping Church, 1990)

Words: Agnus Dei
Music: Healey Willan, 1928
Tune: WILLAN AGNUS DEI, Meter: Irregular

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us thy peace.



Thoughts on Body, Blood, Sweat & Sin

by Joy Jordan-Lake

I thought my freshman-year roommate, a South Florida Catholic, was kidding when she explained why campus mass had been so reverent. "Not like," I said, refraining at least from the "Oooo, gross" that came to mind, "real body and blood as in...real? C'mon."

She shook her head at the little Southern Baptist from the Tennessee hills. "As in real."

Some how the Signal Mountain Baptist Sunbeams had neglected my education on transubstantiation, my ideas on communion limited to a shot glass, never quite full enough, of sweet purple Welch's that heightened rather than quenched my thirst for the iced tea we'd be having over lunch only moments from now, if the ushers would just pass the "elements" a little faster and the preacher would hush.

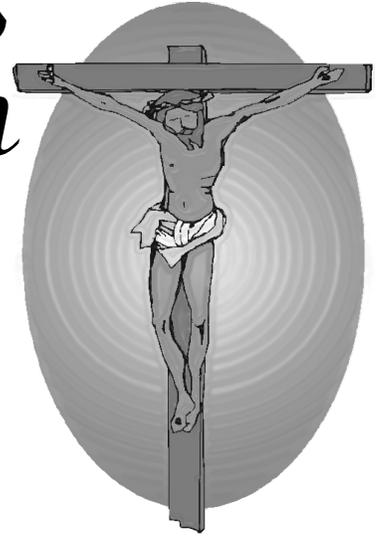
My roommate's crucifix distressed me, too, hanging so matter-of-factly around her neck: Jesus in mortal agony, contorted on perpendicular pieces of sterling silver against a coconut-scented residue of Coppertone Native Tan. I liked my crosses clean, unburdened by ill-clad corpses. Southern Baptist

crosses, after all, came crafted of 24-karat gold, our birthstones in the middle (it is all about us, is it not?)

And then there was that histrionic confession of sin in mass: *Through my fault, through my fault, through my grievous fault.* I'd always subscribed to the Oopsy Daisy approach to sin, and found public chest-pounding a little bewildering.

These days, I'm still Protestant (mostly) and even still Baptist (some days), but here's what I've learned, what I cherish from my Catholic friends: that sometimes we need to focus on body, on blood, on sweat and sin and crosses heavy with human suffering. That sometimes we need to beat our chests hard and bow our heads low, as if what was at stake here were...real.

—Joy Jordan-Lake is a minister, writer, and professor in Nashville, Tennessee.



Involving Your Children in Lent and Easter

Here's a way to teach your children about the changing of liturgical seasons and a little about the meaning of Lent. This will work best if you usually wait (which I do) until just before Ash Wednesday to burn your palm leaves from last year. There may be some kind of theological reason for doing it right away, but I usually burn them, involving the youth if I can, just before Ash Wednesday.

You could show the branches to the children and perhaps burn a leaf or two to show them what the ashes look like. (Many people purchase their ashes, but I like for mine to have little chunks of palm leaves in them.)

If you don't have leaves to burn, you could simply show the children the ashes, and let them experience how they feel on their fingers. If you have

big shirts for painting or other messy crafts, this would be a good time to get the children to put them on. Talk to them about why people wear the ashes and tell them a little bit about Lent. Take them to the sanctuary and let them watch as the liturgical colors are changed.

Many churches have palm branches for children to process with during the opening of the Palm Sunday service. Usually the children leave the branches scattered at the front of the worship area. This year, ask them to gather a few to be kept for next year's ashes.

On Easter Sunday, give them small finger bells to ring during the "Allelujahs" in hymns.

You'll be surprised at how interested children are in these rhythms of the church calendar. —lkc

butterfly art by Susan Smith

Easter Sunday Morning

PROCESSIONAL

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today"

Note: Many churches give their children small bells to ring during the hymns on Easter Sunday. Every time the hymn lyrics say "Allelujah" or "Hallelujah," the children ring the bells. This adds a festive note to the singing.

LITANY

THE EASTER PROCLAMATION

ONE: We have felt the sorrow and the pain of loss. We have felt the oppression of humankind. We have borne with Jesus the sorrows of this world. But now—a new

thing has happened. Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

MANY: Christ is risen indeed!

ONE: Prophecy has been fulfilled, for God promised through the Prophet Isaiah, "I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." Christ is risen!

MANY: Christ is risen indeed!

ONE: We will then be glad and rejoice forever in this new creation; for God has created Jerusalem as a joy, and all people as a delight, and has made us all a part of that creation through Jesus Christ—the risen one. God rejoices in Jerusalem and in all God's people. No more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. Christ is risen!

MANY: Christ is risen indeed!

ONE: Salvation has come through the power of the resurrection morning. God's promises are sure. God's love is our strength. We are forgiven for our trespasses. We are a resurrected people. Christ is risen!

ALL: Hallelujah! Christ is risen indeed!

CALL TO CONFESSION

ONE: "If our hopes in Christ are limited to this life only, we are the most pitiable of the human race," and yet we live our lives as if there is no hope. We even live as if Christ is not a part of our lives. We prefer to forget what Christ gave for us—what suffering Christ endured. It is easier to remember a resurrection than to remember the suffering. But when that is all we remember, we fail to forget that suffering can be eased, healing can take place, and our complacency forgiven. But these things happen



art by Robert Askins

through the power of the resurrection. Let us confess our sins of omission before God.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

ONE: Everyone who believes has forgiveness of sins through Christ's Name. We are a resurrected people. Hallelujah!

READING FROM THE PSALMS

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

READING FROM THE ACTS

Acts 10:34-43

EPISTLE READING

Colossians 3:1-4

GOSPEL READING

John 20:1-18

—Note: The Easter Proclamation and litany are from a liturgy by Buddy Vess.

Easter Prayer

by Joshua Speight



Christ is risen!

We give thanks for the gift of Easter
That runs beyond our explanations,
Beyond our categories of reason,
Even more, beyond the sinking sense
of our own lives.

Almighty God,

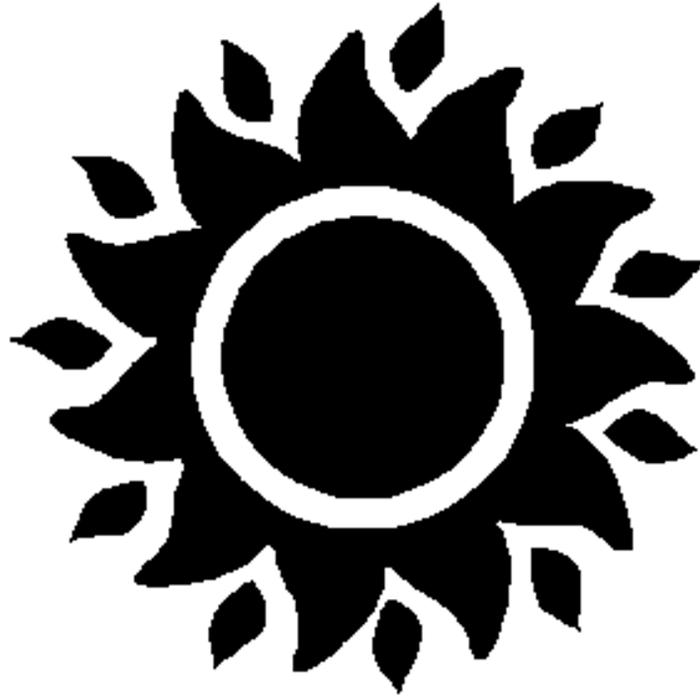
Grant to us that we may seek to live out each day
as members of your kingdom,
Grant to us that we may believe in the resurrection
with our whole heart, mind, and soul,
Grant to us that we may stay steadfast in this faith
so that we may praise and thank you always.

As we remember the Easter event we pray
for the ability to stand up for injustice in the world,
We pray that we will continually seek
the peace of Christ,
We pray for our world
which everyday reminds us of the grace
given to us by God
who came to earth so that we might live.

Hear our thankful, grateful, unashamed Hallelujah!
In the name of the resurrected Christ,
Amen.

—Joshua Speight is a minister in Waco, Texas.

Benediction



*When the noise and haste
surround you
and threaten to take you hostage,
May God's gentle voice soothe you
and guide you to a place
of quiet strength;
When the days seem cold and dark,
and the nights unbelievably long,
May God's smile illumine
and warm you from within;
When you feel alone and dismal,
May God send someone to you with a daisy.
May you truly go forth in joy
and be led back in peace;
May all creation sing around you;
And may the weeds of mourning
turn into flowers
wherever you walk.*

—from "a prayer for Dorisanne" by Katie Cook, 1993