

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go



art by Sally Lynn Askins • after Ford Madox Brown

Worship Resources for the Creative Church Lent/Eastertide 2014

Sacred Seasons, a series of worship packets with a peace and justice emphasis,
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Sacred Seasons:



Worship Tools with an Attitude—Toward Justice, Peace & Food Security for All of God's People.

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Editorial Assistants: Alyssa Miller, Poplar Yuan
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Statement of Purpose

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

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to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. For 22 years, the group has sought 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.

Editorial Address

The Seeds of Hope ministry is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor@clearwire.net. Web address: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2014.

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A Word about This Packet

The theme of this packet, the 17th Seeds of Hope Lent/Eastertide packet, is “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go,” based on the 1882 George Matheson hymn, with three new verses written by our own lyricist and copy editor, Deborah Harris. You will find these lyrics on page 4. (You will also find Deborah’s prayer for Ash Wednesday on page 19.)

On the cover and on page 30, with the benediction, are two new art pieces created especially for this packet by Sally Lynn Askins. The piece on page 30, “Syrian Mother & Child,” was drawn as an act of prayer for the people of Syria.

Ever since learning from Syrian members of Seventh & James, our host church, that half of the population of Syria is either internally or externally displaced, Sally has held a burden for those people in her heart.

We have endeavoured to set the tone for this Lenten season with a sermon by Erin Conaway, the Seventh & James pastor. Erin is exceedingly generous with his sermons and other written materials and is supportive of the Seeds ministry in a number of ways.

The sermon is taken from Micah 6, and is a challenge for all of us to choose our Lenten disciplines with attention to what the prophets have told us that God requires.

Right next to that sermon is “Giving up Depression for Lent,” a group of five Lenten disciplines from Cameron Watts. Cam, pastor of Aylmer Baptist Church in southwestern Ontario, frequently contributes poems and other creative writings for *Sacred Seasons*.

It might appear that Cam’s suggestions for self-care are in opposition to Erin’s sermon, but we think they fit neatly into the third of Erin’s (and Micah’s) admonishments—to walk humbly with our God.

You will also find a children’s sermon in the form of a reading and pantomime, written by Mark McClintock, whose writings for children have often enhanced our materials. Mark is the director of PASSPORTkids!, an ecumenical summer camping program for children. He lives in Birmingham, AL.

Most of the remainder of the packet consists of lessons and hymns for Ash Wednesday, the Sundays in Lent, Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Our Spring

2014 Professional Writing intern, Alyssa Miller, contributed to every one of these, poring untiringly over hymnals and lectionary texts until her eyes were glazed over.

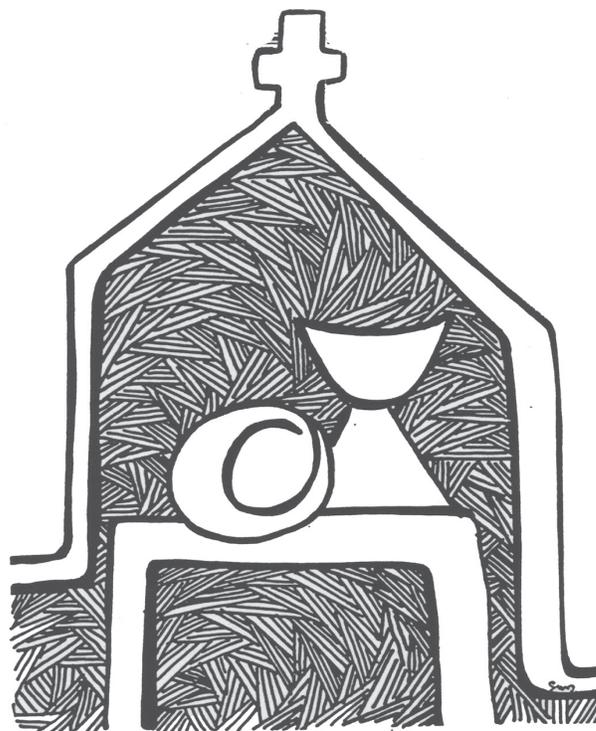
We continue to be profoundly grateful for all of the people who are so generous with their time and creative gifts, and who think of us when they have written worship materials or conceived of innovative ideas for worship themes.

We are also deeply grateful for all of you who subscribe to *Sacred Seasons*, and who make use of these gifts in your worship and work.

As always, we want you to feel free to play around with these liturgies and services, and adapt them to your congregation’s needs and resources. If you come up with something creative and different, we would love to hear about it.

The contents of this packet are your congregation’s to use freely and share with others as the need arises. We really do pray that our materials, and this packet in particular, will help you and your congregation to observe a holy and meaningful Lent and Easter.

—Gratefully,
The Seeds Staff and Council of Stewards



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Theme Interpretation

Note: All of the liturgies in this packet, leading up to Holy Week, are based around the four stanzas from George Matheson's hymn, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go," with three additional stanzas by Deborah Harris.

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

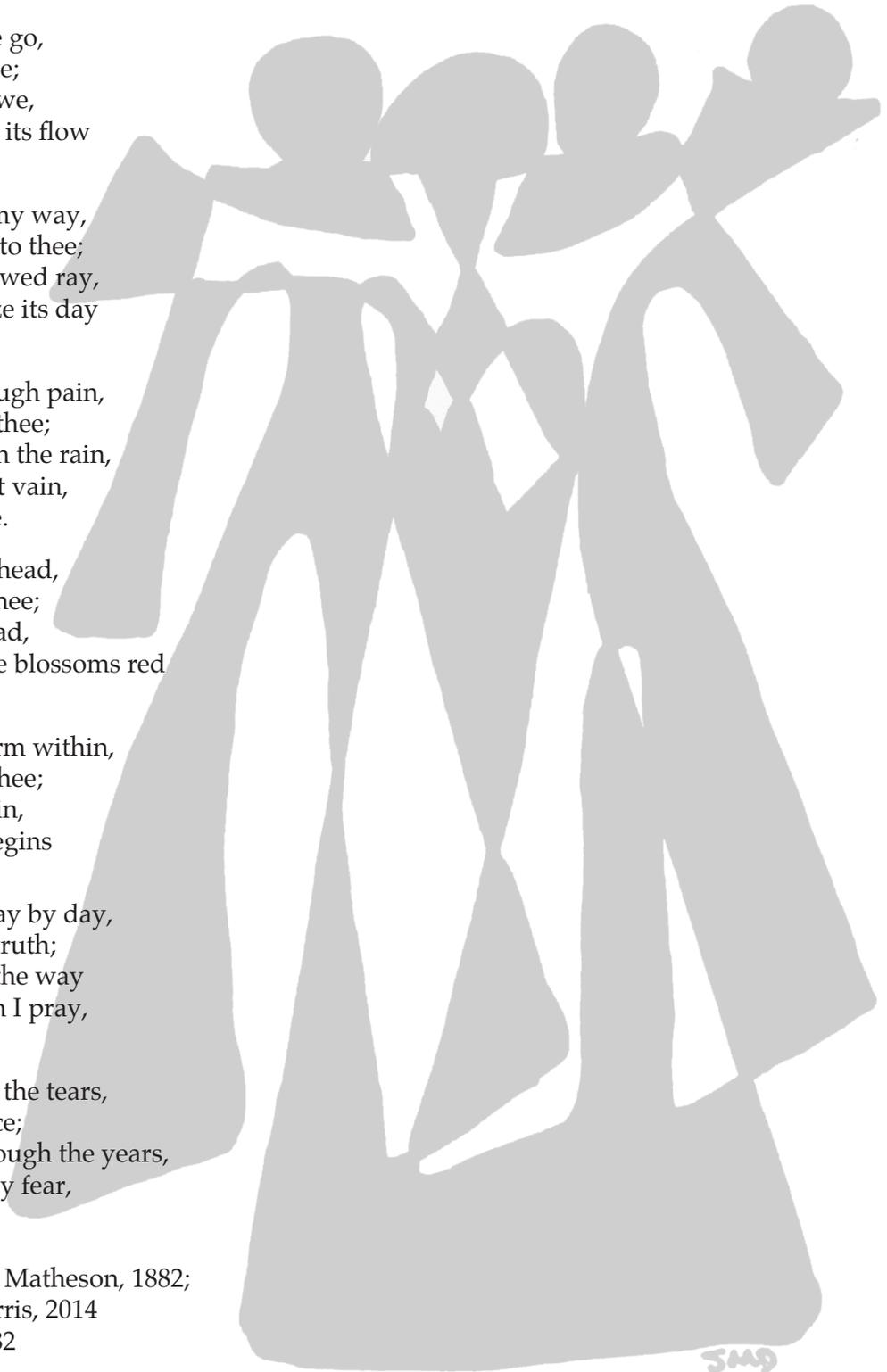
O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

O Peace that calms the storm within,
I seek safe harbor now in thee;
I bring my failings yet again,
That in thy saving grace begins
The healing that I need.

O Faith that strengthens day by day,
I stand courageous in thy truth;
That love and mercy lead the way
To righteousness for which I pray,
And justice I pursue.

O Hope that looks beyond the tears,
I long to live in thy embrace;
With mindful purpose through the years,
And joy transforming every fear,
At last to see God's face!

Words: Verses 1-4, George Matheson, 1882;
Verses 5-7, Deborah E. Harris, 2014
Music: Albert L. Peace, 1882
Tune: ST. MARGARET



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Justice, Kindness & Humility

An Examination for Lent

by Erin Conaway

Micah 6:1-8

We can hear the biblical bailiff in the background calling out, “All rise, the honorable Lord Almighty presiding and prosecuting.” This courtroom is grand in scale and beauty and, as we rise for the judge, we hear God offer instructions.

“Plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.”

That doesn’t sound good. And, hearing that we are on the docket, the question seems to be: *What did we do, Lord?*

God responds, broken-hearted and angry: “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

God asks the question: *What have I done to you?* This is, of course, a relational question and God demands an answer. What would we say? What could we say?

For a moment, let’s think about that one together. If this question were not safely tucked away on a written page in a small book in the middle of our Bibles—that section we perhaps don’t read as frequently as some of the other sections; if this question were heard in this room today, in whatever God’s angry voice must sound like, what would we say?

“O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you?” Wearied us, Lord? I don’t know if that’s the word I would use, but when I think about it I might say your mysteriousness can get a little

wearisome. I mean, it would be really nice just to know sometimes—to really *know*.

But then, I guess I’m not so good at doing the things I’m really clear about, so maybe the mystery isn’t all that wearisome. There is a lot of pain in the world. That sure gets old. But it’s not you causing it, and our sense is you don’t like it any more than we do. I can’t think of any ways you’ve wearied us, Lord.

“What have you done to us?” God answers the question for Israel in this text. Perhaps they were silently thinking about it too long. Or maybe God didn’t want them to mess up the moment with a bunch of babble.

“What have I done to you? I brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery. I gave you guides and leaders and saved you from famine and drought and brought you through wars and rumors of war.”

Remember now, God says, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord. Interesting choice of



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

adverbs there. Rather than describing the acts of the Lord in terms of might and awe and majesty, God describes them as *saving*. “Remember now, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord. Remember, that you may know.”

“What have you done to us, God?” You’ve given us a church. You called together this band of sisters and brothers at Seventh & James Baptist Church on June 26, 1898, and you have sustained your people in this place since that time.

You’ve seen us through wars and the rumors of war; you’ve sustained us through drought and

As the reality of the situation settles in, after we have gone through our list of things we could bring and found them wanting, the prophet answers the question about what we are to bring before the Lord.

famine, the Great Depression and this current Recession. You’ve guided us through the end of slavery of many types, and you call us to confront the ones still present in our world and in our community. You’ve loved us through difficult conflicts and brought about life in places we only saw death.

You’ve redeemed us through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, your son. And you’ve filled us with your Holy Spirit, comforting us, calling us to live deeper in our togetherness, to go out further in your name. We must remember now, that we may know the saving acts of the Lord in this place.

What has God done to *you*? Not just to us, but to you? What has God done in your life? The question often comes as we seek to justify our bad behavior. But it is answered in the overwhelming grace of God’s hand at work in our lives. Remember now, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.

Rightly undone by the contrast of God’s gracious faithfulness and our putrid unfaithfulness, the prophet echoes the cries of our hearts: *What can we do, what can we bring, to be equals in this covenant?* How do we even the scales or even stand to be in the same courtroom with our God, who has done so

much on our behalf—even in the face of our treason and treachery?

Burnt offerings of year-old calves? For some reason, we seem to feel that blood should be spilled to rectify this terrific imbalance. If not calves in their prime, then what about rams? Not just one ram, which is a valuable offering, but what about thousands of rams?

We could cover the altar and the Temple lot with the blood of rams. Cover the altar, like we long to be covered from the shame we feel.

What about oil? We could bring oil—we could gather it in from around the world so that rivers of oil would run into this courtroom, making a spectacle of our earnestness and gratitude. Not just rivers of oil, but 10,000 rivers.

We could literally divert the oil of the world to flow into this place to please you, O God, to show you that we understand the severity of your mercy and grace. As John Donne confesses, “When thou hast done, thou hast not done, for I have more.”

It’s not enough; we’re still not there. Even with this garish display of gratitude—even if we could make rivers of oil flow in the direction of our choosing and we could cover the altar with the blood of thousands of rams—it isn’t enough to cover the shame.

“Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” There is nothing left. The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul. What a wickedly honest assessment of the disparity between what we are bringing to the table and what God has brought.

Of *course* God does not want us to sacrifice our children. God has never wanted that. And even when God’s people thought this was the thing to do, based on their shame and the practices of cults all around, God was quick to express outrage and revulsion at their misguided attempts to right their own wrongs.

We understand the desperation; we get the scale of it. It’s out of balance, and there is nothing we can pile on our side of it to make it swing even. We are stuck.

The clank of the scale hitting rock bottom still rings in our ears and we dangle in the air, exposed and ashamed. And there is not a thing in the world—in the entire world—we can do about it. Even our most perverse machinations of sacrifice and guilt cannot tilt the scales in our favor.

As the reality of the situation settles in, after we have gone through our list of things we could bring

and found them wanting, the prophet answers the question about what we are to bring before the Lord.

"He has told you, o mortal, what is good." God has already given this instruction and you keep thinking it must be wrong, there must be something lost in translation, there has to be another way.

This is such a personal statement, the Hebrew word here is *adam*. It is the word for us, each one of us. This is not a blanket statement to a nation or to a people or even to a church.

This is a statement to you, and you, and you, and me. What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

Do justice. This is not something for which we can just wish for. Justice is something we must do. We must act justly towards one another. What does that mean? This is about loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. Doing justice means we must treat everyone with respect and dignity, knowing we are all children of God and brothers and sisters to one another.

I had the privilege of seeing *To Kill a Mockingbird* last night at the Waco Civic Theatre, and John Deaver plays the role of Atticus hauntingly and inspiringly well.

Atticus struggles to help his children understand that Tom Robinson is a man who deserves justice just as much as any of the other people in their town—including those who would deny him justice at the end of a mob's rope.

Doing justice means standing with those who cannot stand for themselves. Our place must always be with the oppressed and the downtrodden.

Our role must be to work for, and sometimes fight for, those who are systemically and culturally disadvantaged because of any number of reasons—none of which have to do with their standing as God's children or our sisters and brothers.

Doing justice means we dare not limit the scope of our contentment to the ones we love and with whom we live and work and move. We "get" doing justice in that sense. None of us would question going to the mat for a loved one who was being denied justice. But God calls us to have that same zeal, that same fervor, that same commitment to justice for everyone...no exceptions.

We should fight for disadvantaged children like we fight for our own. We should defend the rights of others with the same vigor we would defend our own rights. We should work for the good of our

least-favorite people—even, and perhaps especially, our enemies—as we would work for the good of our best friend or dearest sister or brother.

Doing justice requires work and vigilance on our part, because, whether or not we feel it, we are the privileged ones. We are in power. And doing justice requires that we use our power to work for the good of all of God's children, to strive for the equality of all of our neighbors.

Love kindness. The word translated "kindness" is a word used often in the Hebrew Bible. It doesn't have an easy English meaning. The notion is one of love and faithfulness. It is the best thing between you and your partner or spouse.

It is the commitment between you and your best friend. It is the devotion you feel to your children when things are at their best—and their most difficult. It is the highest ideal of love. It's pure and holy, loyal and true.

Kindness can seem like a cheap translation until you try to practice kindness with those closest to you. It's easy to be kind to people who just touch the peripheries of our lives.

None of us would question going to the mat for a loved one who was being denied justice. But God calls us to have that same zeal, that same fervor, that same commitment to justice for everyone...no exceptions.

We can be kind to servers at restaurants, repair-persons in our homes and church members we only see on Sunday mornings.

That should be easy to do, because we don't have to do it for a very long period of time. We all know that kindness to the people we encounter only in short spurts isn't always easy—but it's a lot easier to be kind to people whom you like, and who like you, and who do things for you, than it is to those with whom you must navigate the strains and stresses of life.

Being kind to our children and our parents and our spouses and partners and roommates is often

a lot harder than being kind to our mechanic and our teller and our grocer. We think of kindness as politeness, and we think the people we love should love us enough to see past when we're not polite. But kindness is more than being polite.

Kindness is the real love we show. It's giving the benefit of the doubt to our loved one when they say the wrong thing. It's hearing past the angry words of our children as they learn to express all of the swirling emotions inside them.

It's listening beyond the complaints of our parents who are afraid of the way their world and their control in the world are shrinking so quickly.

It's cleaning the toilet, washing the towels, writing the note, buying the coffee, seeing the effort, laughing at yourself, pumping the gas, calling the uncle, playing with Legos, teaching someone to cook, listening to the same stories over and over again, straightening the tie, holding hands, having long lunches, sharing fears, buying socks, taking the fish off of the hook—all of the wonderful things we do, big and small, to say "I love you" in ways that can't be contained in words.

As the character Russell says in the movie *Up*, recounting the times he and his father sat on a curb and counted red and blue cars, "Sometimes it's the boring things you remember the most...ya know?" And we are not only to live in kindness towards one another; we are to love it.

Love kindness—love being faithful to God and to one another. Love showing that devotion in the way you do all of the little things that make up our lives together.

And walk humbly with our God.

Walter Brueggeman says that the term "humble" occurs only one other time in the Hebrew Bible. Proverbs 11:2 reads, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is to the humble."

Pride and humility contrasted with one another—one a walking companion of disgrace and shame, the other a traveling companion of wisdom.

How could we be anything but humble as we walk with God, who so tips the scales of the courtroom against our sin and guilt? With God, who is our redeemer and keeper, our defender and friend? How could we be anything but humble, knowing that we don't deserve the grace we have received?

God has told us in this text that no amount of ritual sacrifice will make our relationship right, so we must learn to walk humbly in this grace.

Lent provides a perfect time to renew this challenge, to examine our hearts and lives, to make another step along this path.

**We will spend our lives
unpacking these three
things: doing justice, loving
kindness, and walking
humbly with God.**

As we begin the Lenten season, some of us will be choosing a discipline to follow for these weeks. Some will choose to give up something. Some will choose to spend more time in prayer or read a book especially chosen for the season.

As we contemplate this time leading up to Holy Week and Easter, let us remember that we have been told what God really wants.

We will spend our lives unpacking these three things: doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. Let us begin together to think on these things as we enter into Lent, so that we will come into the Easter season with the deep joy of a new dawn.

May God show us the way. Amen.

—Erin Conaway is the pastor of Seventh & James Baptist Church, where the Seeds ministry is housed.

When love beckons to you, follow him,

Though his ways be hard and steep.

And when his wings enfold you,
yield to him

Though the sword hidden
among his pinions may wound you.

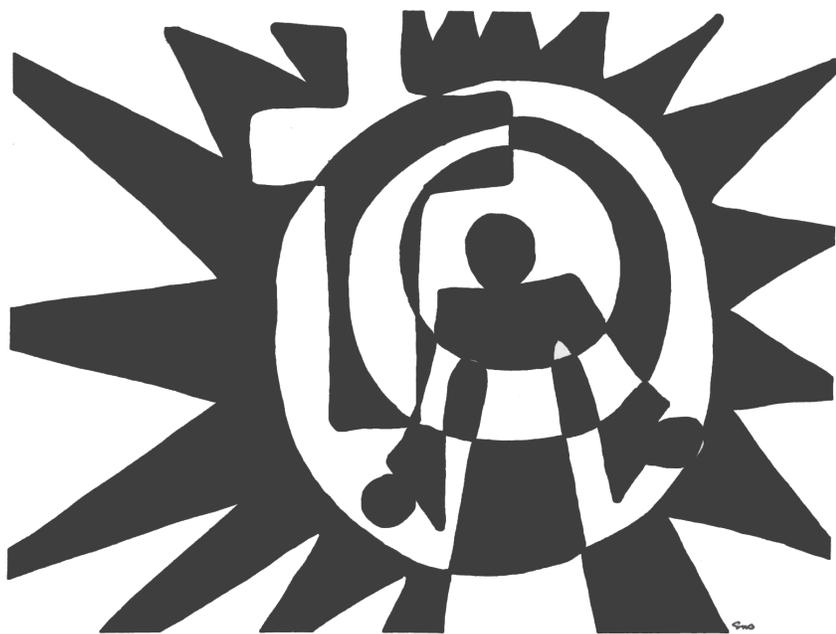
And when he speaks to you
believe in him,

Though his voice may shatter
your dreams as the north wind
lays waste the garden.

—Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Giving up Depression for Lent

by Cameron Watts



Art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Editor's note: Cam Watts, a pastor in Southwestern Ontario, has contributed a number of creative writings for Sacred Seasons over the years, invariably opening our eyes to a fresh vision of the Christian life. He says that his congregation has experienced a great deal of sadness lately. The following suggestions for Lenten disciplines are designed to dispel some of the darkness that we all face, given with grace from a fellow struggler.

Here are five disciplines for your Lenten Journey. They come with a brief explanation and a caveat.

One of the reasons we give up something for Lent is to make room for something else in our lives, upon which God invites us to focus. These disciplines turn that around, offering things you might do to nudge depression aside.

That is not to say that depression is without value. For many of us it is the reality with which we struggle and which inspires us to creativity.

The caveat is the recognition that there is a significant difference between situational depression and clinical depression. Neither is something to be wished away, but most of us who have experienced situational depression know that it will, eventually,

go away. Not so clinical depression, which often is the result of a chemical neurological imbalance and requires treatment and therapy (which is good for situational depression too) and, possibly, medication.

Situational depression is like the air mattress that has a slow leak and when you get on it depresses, leaving you feeling a little wobbly or even seasick. Clinical depression keeps you from even trying to get on the air mattress. You find yourself asking "What's the point?" because you know you will sink.

These disciplines, based on things we can do to help us deal with depression, are offered in aid of the restoration of our souls.

They are not curative, and are not a substitute for treatment of clinical depression. They are offered by a fellow pilgrim who hopes they can help you along the road.

Week One Find Your Voice

Isaiah 42:1-9

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice
in the earth;*

*and the coastlands wait
 for his teaching.
 Thus says God, the Lord,
 who created the heavens
 and stretched them out,
 who spread out the earth
 and what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people
 upon it
 and spirit to those who walk in it:
 I am the Lord, I have called you
 in righteousness,
 I have taken you by the hand
 and kept you;
 I have given you as a covenant to the people,
 a light to the nations,
 to open the eyes that are blind,
 to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
 from the prison those who sit in darkness.
 I am the Lord, that is my name;
 my glory I give to no other,
 nor my praise to idols. See, the former things
 have come to pass,
 and new things I now declare;
 before they spring forth,
 I tell you of them.
 —Isaiah 42:1-9*

One of the best images in Scripture is the promise of God to those of us who are bruised reeds or flickering wicks. God will neither break nor quench us.

*Most of the people in the world
 go out to work, day after day,
 with their voices chained in their throats.
 —Maggie Anderson*

Each day this week find a safe place where you can speak out loud without fear of ridicule, perhaps by yourself, perhaps with a group of trusted friends, sisters and brothers. Take a whole entire minute and recite your good qualities, what makes you worthwhile, your accomplishments and skills. If you are with others, listen to each of them for their minute.

Later, or on another day, perhaps in the same setting, take a whole entire minute and recite things you would like to change about your life. If you are with others, listen without challenging their recitations. When you are done, say "Amen."

While Isaiah 42 does not describe depression, depression and despair are the backdrop for the

passage: the children of Israel were in captivity with a thinly-strained hope of returning home. They were not abandoned.

*I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
 I have taken you by the hand and kept you;*

YOU are not abandoned.

Perhaps in another time and place this week, find a moment of quiet and take three deep breaths. As you inhale, repeat in your heart: "I am not abandoned."

As you exhale, repeat in your heart: "I am kept by God."

Week Two **Get Outside** Philippians 4:1-13

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be

content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

—Philippians 4:1-13

But there is another truth, the sister of this one, and it is that every man is an island. It is a truth that often the tolling of a silence reveals even more vividly than the tolling of a bell. We sit in silence with one another, each of us more or less reluctant to speak, for fear that if he does, he may sound like a fool. And beneath that there is of course the deeper fear, which is really a fear of the self rather than of the other, that maybe the truth of it is that indeed he is a fool. The fear that the self that he reveals by speaking may be a self that the others will reject just as in a way he has himself rejected it. So either we do not speak, or we speak not to reveal who we are but to conceal who we are, because words can be used either way of course."

—Frederick Buechner, *The Hungering Dark*, writing of John Donne's statement, "No man is an island."

Get outside. This is not easy to urge on another when one lives anywhere north of the Mason-Dixon Line. It's cold out, and cold and diminished light are powerful allies of depression.

Physical activity for 30 minutes three times a week is good for you and pushes back at the cold. Twenty minutes of aerobics every day is even better (and you can do it inside).

Take a hike. Take someone with you. Or don't. Talk. Or don't. Do some people-watching, and give thanks for the variety in creation. Or get where there are no other people and give thanks for the stability and elasticity of creation.

And maybe with your inside voice (or your outside voice if it's safe) recite a litany of longings, even if it seems to be into the hungering dark. Paul grew to appreciate that this made for peace.

*When despair grows in me
and I wake in the middle of the night
at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought*

*of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

—Wendell Berry,

The Peace of Wild Things

Week Three

Re-connect

Revelation 3:20

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

—Revelation 3:20

The house lights go off and the footlights come on. Even the chattiest stop chattering as they wait in darkness for the curtain to rise. In the orchestra pit, the violin bows are poised. The conductor has raised his baton. In the silence of a midwinter dusk, there is far off in the deeps of it somewhere a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You walk up the steps to the front door. The empty windows at either side of it tell you nothing, or almost nothing. For a second you catch a whiff of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you've never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart.... The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment.

—Frederick Buechner

Whistling in the Dark: A Doubter's Dictionary

Depression can find great relief in solitude, with the closing of the door and the turning of the lock against obligation. It does not rejoice in a vacation, but rather builds its own dark strength in itself. However, connection with people with whom you have shared laughter keeps your mind active, and distracted.

Make a plan to arrive at someone's door (warn them first, or invite them to your door) when the anticipation of it opening is almost as good as the invitation inside.

*We have not come here to take prisoners,
But to surrender ever more deeply
To freedom and joy.
We have not come into this exquisite world
To hold ourselves hostage from love....*

*We have a duty to befriend
Those aspects of obedience
That stand outside of our house
And shout to our reason
"O please, O please,
Come out and play."*

*For we have not come here to take prisoners
Or to confine our wondrous spirits,
But to experience ever and ever more deeply
Our divine courage, freedom and
Light!*

—Hafiz,
We Have Not Come to Take Prisoners

Week Four Go It Alone

Proverbs 1:1-6

*The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
For learning about wisdom and instruction,
for understanding words of insight,
for gaining instruction in wise dealing,
righteousness, justice, and equity;
to teach shrewdness to the simple,
knowledge and prudence to the young—
let the wise also hear and gain in learning,
and the discerning acquire skill,
to understand a proverb and a figure,
the words of the wise and their riddles.
—Proverbs 1:1-6*

We all have something that we enjoy doing by ourselves. Writers write, crafters craft, runners run. We may enjoy the company of others but there are moments of concentration antagonistic to the interrupting presence of another.

Wisdom gifts us with skills we use for others and for ourselves. We don't all always need someone to recognize what we have wrought in private; we are satisfied in ourselves with our own creations and accomplishments.

Create and cherish some moments of self-satisfaction. Clear the clutter off your workbench and pick up that project again. Make the sound of the measured cadence of your soles on the road. Unroll your yoga mat. Type without looking at your keyboard so you see the forming words of your sonnet.

*Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the music of laughter break
through your soul.*

*As the wind wants to make everything dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.*

*Like the freedom of the monastery bell,
May clarity of mind make your eyes smile.*

*As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.*

*As silence smiles on the other side of what's said,
May a sense of irony give you perspective.*

*As time remains free of all that it frames,
May fear or worry never put you in chains.*

*May your prayer of listening deepen enough
To hear in the distance the laughter of God.*

—John O'Donohue
A Blessing for Equilibrium

I believe that

imagination is stronger than knowledge—
myth is more potent than history—
dreams are more powerful than facts—
hope always triumphs over experience
laughter is the cure for grief—
love is stronger than death.
—Robert Fulghum

art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Week Five

Come to the Table

Song of Songs 2:1-4

*I am a rose of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys.
As a lily among brambles,
so is my love among maidens.
As an apple tree among the trees
of the wood,
so is my beloved
among young men.
With great delight I sat in
his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet
to my taste.
He brought me to the
banqueting house,
and his intention towards me
was love.
— Song of Songs 2:1-4*

Comfort food. We all have something we sit down to that warms us and makes us remember that the world is okay. Depression can dull the taste buds, but an old familiar taste and texture can spark a long-forgotten neural path to well-being. It might be an apple and slice of cheese and bread and butter. Or a Salisbury Steak Swanson TV Dinner. Or a handful of berries picked from beside a railway track on a hot summer day. Pick your meal and plan it for one day this week—your choice as to whether or not to share it with others.

Healthy food. We all have a guilty pleasure when we eat,

so be of good conscience and indulge your life-affirming diet. Choose your meals with thought for who might have to do without when you eat and with how you will feel—energized or sleepy—when you are finished.

*The world is not a courtroom,
there is no judge, no jury, no plaintiff.*

*This is a caravan,
filled with eccentric beings
telling wondrous stories about God.
— Saadi ■*

Paint a colorful expression

Strokes that lead to love
That guide to good.

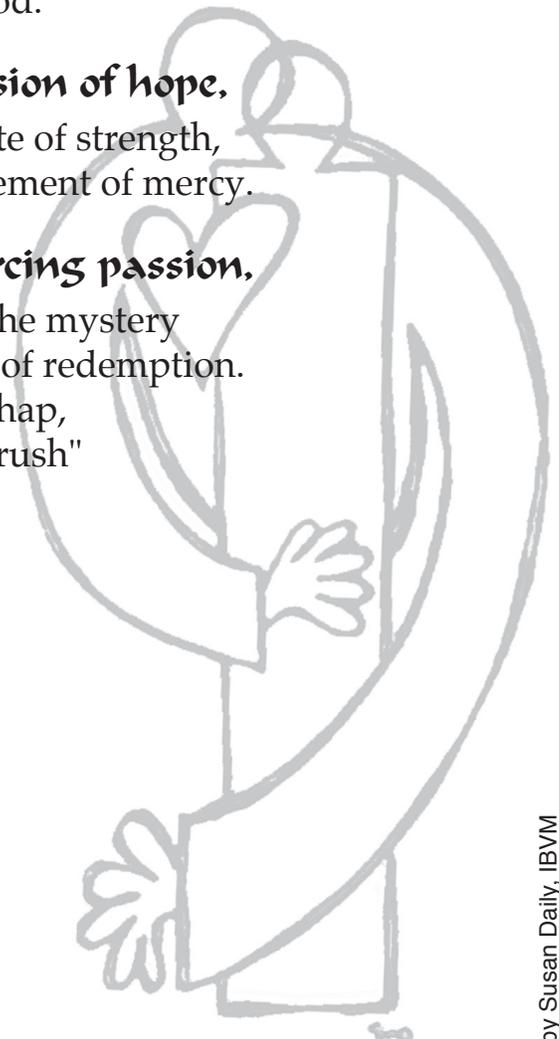
Paint a dimension of hope,

And the silhouette of strength,
Mix it with an element of mercy.

Paint with piercing passion,

That marvels at the mystery
And the rhetoric of redemption.

—Heather Herschap,
"God's Paintbrush"



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

The Parable of the Peanut Planter

A Reading for Children

by Mark McClintock

Note: You will need four readers and several pantomime actors for this children's reading, which is taken from Jesus' parable of the sower in Matt. 13:1-23. It is appropriate for a children's group or story time, but it could also be performed by children for the entire congregation.

READER 1

This is one of Jesus' parables.

READER 2

What's "parables"?

READER 3

It's two male cows. You know: a pair o' bulls.

READER 4

That's not right. Parables are stories—stories that teach a lesson.

READER 1

And tonight's story is the Parable of the Sower.

READER 2

I have a sore on my elbow. *(Points to bandage on elbow.)*

READER 3

Ick, I don't want to hear about a sore. That's gross.

READER 4

Not a sore. A sow-er.

READER 2

What's that?

READER 1

A person who plants seeds.

READER 3

Then why isn't it called the parable of the planter?

READER 2

I like Planters Peanuts. Especially the honey-roasted kind.

READER 4

This has nothing to do with Planters Peanuts!

READER 3

Maybe the seeds the planter is sowing are peanut seeds.

READER 2

Yeah! The parable of the Peanut Planter!

READER 4

Whatever. *(Rolls eyes.)*

READER 1

(Sighs) Okay. This is the Parable of the Peanut Planter. Once there was a peanut planter.

(PEANUT PLANTER enters and pantomimes sowing seeds.)

READER 2

He's not a very careful planter. Look—peanut seeds going everywhere!

READER 4

Some of the seeds landed on the road, where they immediately got squashed when the tractor went by.

(A FARMER enters with a cardboard cut-out tractor and, making a rumbling noise, pretends to ride over the ROAD SEEDS, who fall down flat. The FARMER exits.)

READER 3

Ewwwwwwww.

READER 4

Then the crows came and ate them up.

(CROWS swoop in, cawing, and pantomime pecking and nibbling at the ROAD SEEDS.)

READER 3
I think I'm going to be sick.

CROW
Yummmm, peanut butter!

(CROWS fly away, cawing.)

READER 1
Some of the seeds landed on a rock outcropping that hadn't been plowed very well.

(ROCK SEEDS slowly begin to stand up.)

READER 2
Look! They're growing!

READER 4
But the seeds couldn't take root in the rocks, so they died of thirst.

(ROCK SEEDS pantomime "wilting" and end up lying on the floor.)

READER 3
I think I'm going to cry.

READER 1
Some of the seeds landed in a patch of sticker burrs.

(BURR SEEDS slowly begin to stand up, and the STICKER BURRS stand up with them, with menacing fingers.)

READER 3
(Covering eyes) Can't watch! Too scary!

READER 4
They tried to grow, but the sticker burrs choked them.

(The STICKER BURRS pantomime strangling the BURR SEEDS, which fall down.)

READER 2
Bullies!

READER 1
Then there were the seeds that fell in the good, fertilized soil. They grew tall.

(The SOIL SEEDS slowly stand up and stretch their arms above their heads, smiling.)

READER 3 *(Pinching nose)*
What's that smell?

READER 2 *(Pinching nose)*
I think it's fertilizer.

READER 4
Those seeds grew into peanut bushes with ten, twenty, one hundred times more peanuts than there were before. The end.

READER 2
Wait a minute. I don't understand this story. What does it mean?

READER 3
Yeah, can we rewind and watch it again from the beginning?

READER 2
Sure! I have the remote!

(Clicks on remote button)

(All the story actors quickly do all their actions "in reverse".)

READER 1
All right. The planter is like Jesus, and the peanut seed is Jesus' teachings.

(PEANUT PLANTER enters, waving his arm as if teaching)

PEANUT PLANTER
Love God with all your heart. Love your neighbor as yourself.

READER 4
The peanut seeds on the road are people who hear Jesus but ignore him and choose to let other things be more important.

(The CROWS enter wearing headphones and jamming, give headphones to the ROAD SEEDS who put them on and walk off jamming with the CROWS.)

READER 2
I told you they were nuts.

READER 1
The seeds on the rock are people who are happy to know about Jesus but don't spend time with him. So when things get hot and troublesome, their faith dries up.

(The ROCK SEEDS stand up.)

ROCKSEED 1
I love you, Jesus!

ROCK SEED 2
Thank you, God!

ROCK SEED 1

(Wiping sweat from brow) Wait—you want me to love my enemy?

ROCK SEED 2

(Wiping sweat from brow) Why did you let my bike get stolen?

(ROCK SEEDS march off in a huff.)

READER 4

The seeds who landed in the sticker burr patch are also people who hear Jesus and love him. But worry and money choke their belief.

(BURR SEEDS and STICKER BURRS stand up. STICKER BURR 1 holds up a clock and a mirror in front of BURR SEED 1.)

BURR SEED 1

I'm going to be late! Will those people like me? My hair looks like I slept under a vacuum cleaner!

(STICKER BURR 2 holds up fake money and an electronic game cartridge.)

BURR SEED 2

I'm going to work eighty hours this week so I can make more money! Whoa—I've got to have that newest game!

(STICKER BURRS wrap their arms around BURR SEEDS' necks like buddies and escort them offstage.)

READER 1

But the seeds who landed in the good soil are people who spend time every day with Jesus, who pay attention to his teachings, and who think about Jesus in everything they do.

(SOIL SEEDS stand. One bows and prays. One stretches arms and looks up.)

READER 4

Because they know Jesus so well, they begin to live and act like Jesus.

SOIL SEED 1

(Going to READER 2) You look thirsty. Can I get you some water?

SOIL SEED 2

(Going to READER 3) I'm going to church. Would you like to come with me?

READER 2

Wow! I want to be like a seed planted in the good soil.

READER 3

Yeah, I wonder if I could spend some time each morning with Jesus before school.

READER 2

He sure tells a really great story!

READER 3

Let's go read some more!

(SOIL SEEDS and READERS 2 and 3 exit.)

READERS 1 & 4

(Together to congregation) What about you? If you have ears, listen up!

—Mark McClintock is Coordinator of PASSPORTkids, a summer camp for third-through-sixth-grade children. PASSPORT is a national non-profit student ministry empowering students to encounter Christ, embrace community and extend grace to the world.

Involving your Children in Lent & Easter

Here's a way to teach your children about the liturgical seasons of Lent and Eastertide. This will work best if you wait until just before Ash Wednesday to burn some of your palm leaves from last year.

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 "Allelujachs" in hymns.

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

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

Be the light of the world, [Jesus] says. Where there are dark places, be the light especially there. Be the salt of the earth. Bring out the true flavor of what it is to be alive truly. Be truly alive. Be life-givers to others.

That is what Jesus tells the disciples to be. That is what Jesus tells his church, tells us, to be and do. Love one another. Heal the sick, he says. Raise the dead. Cleanse lepers. Cast out demons. That is what loving each other means.

If the church is doing things like that, it is being what Jesus told it to be.

—Frederick Buechner

The body of Christ should live out, for all to see, the meaning of being trustworthy stewards of God's creation. This will be seen in how we view our possessions, in our style of living, in how we respond to global economic injustice and in how we show love for one another by sharing ourselves and what we own.

If we belong to one another spiritually, then economic bonds must join us. And if we have been deeply touched by God's compassion, we will naturally feel a call to help the hurting world God so loves.

—Senator Mark O. Hatfield

I am a man who has hoped,
in time, that his life, when
poured out at the end,
would say,
"Good-good-good-good-
good!"
like a gallon jug of the prime
local spirit.

I am a man of losses, regrets, and griefs.
I am an old man full of love. I am a man of faith.
But faith is not necessarily, nor not soon,
a resting place.

Faith puts you out on a wide river in a little boat,
in the fog, in the dark.

Even a man of faith knows that...

we've all got to go through enough to kill us.

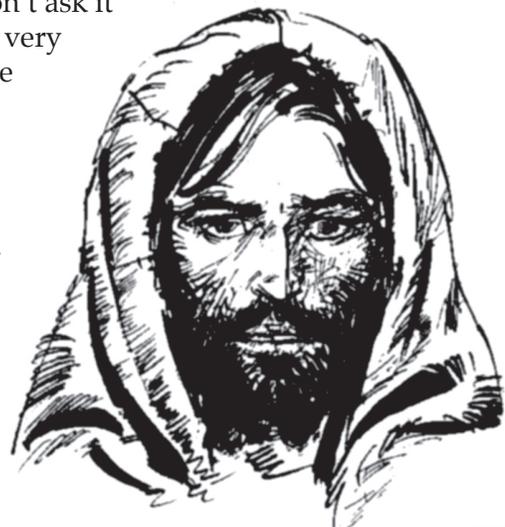
—Wendell Berry, Jayber Crow

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 23, Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem and he unleashed a diatribe against the scribes and Pharisees. At the end, he quoted one of the Psalms in a lament over the city, saying that he longed to gather Jerusalem's children together as a hen gathers her brood—but the city was full of stubborn, misguided people.

What was Jesus trying to tell his followers? What was he trying to tell the religious leaders of his day? What is he trying to tell us today? He talked about the poor and the marginalized more than anything. "I was hungry and you fed me," he said. "You give them something to eat." "I want you to be servants, not masters." "Don't worry about tomorrow." "Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself." "Love your enemies." What do we do with these sayings? How are we supposed to be like this man?

The "WWJD" trend has, in some ways, cheapened the question, "What would Jesus do?" But it's still a good question. In fact, I think it's one of the most important questions we will ever ask. In any given situation, what would Jesus do? If we don't ask it as individuals, we might very well be missing the whole point of the gospel. If we don't ask it as a people, we might very well see Jesus looking out over our nation, our churches, and grieving for our stubbornness.

—Katie Cook



Lessons & Hymns for Ash Wednesday

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Note: For a complete service of ashes, see the Sacred Seasons Lent/Eastertide packets from 1998 and 2005 at www.seedspublishers.org/worship

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 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

Hymn

"Our Cities Cry to You, O God"

Text: Margaret Clarkson, 1987

Music: comp. Alfred V. Fedak, Selah Publishing Company, Inc., 1989

Tune: HANDS OF THE POOR

Common Praise # 591

(c. Hope Publishing Company)

Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 51:1-17

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

—George Matheson, 1882

Epistle Reading

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Hymn

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

Text: William Williams, 1745

trans. Peter Williams, 1771

Music: John Hughes, 1907

Tune: CWM RHONDA

Chalice Hymnal #622

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.

Prayer

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.

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.

Gracious God of Lent,

Ash Wednesday is not my favorite;
I don’t relish wearing ashes and thinking about
returning to the dust from whence I came.

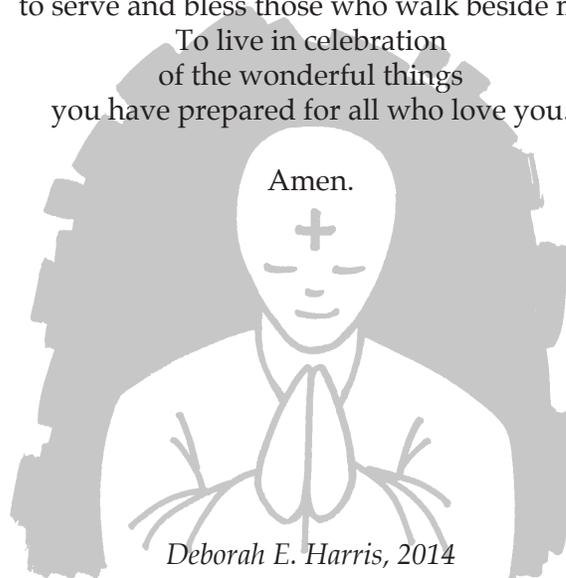
Yet even as I admit my resistance,
I must confess the arrogance behind it.
For you, Yourself, entered into this finite universe,
and its natural cycle of living and dying,
to be with us—with me.

You lived with the sure knowledge that
one day you would die,
but most importantly, you lived!
And everything about you
bore witness to the True Love
that cradles us all and sings a lullaby of life to come.

So, this year, let Ash Wednesday prepare me to live!
To live more gratefully—
more awake to precious moments and opportunities
to serve and bless those who walk beside me.

To live in celebration
of the wonderful things
you have prepared for all who love you.

Amen.



Deborah E. Harris, 2014

art by Peter Yuichi Clark

Lessons & Hymns for the First Sunday in Lent

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

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

Hymn

“Father, Hear the Prayer We Offer”

Text: Love Maria Willis, 1906

Music: St. Sylvester, John B. Dykes, 1862

Comp. Johann Ludwig Steiner

Tune: GOTT WILL'S MACHEN

Church Hymnary # 255

(c. Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson,
Hymns of the Spirit)

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.

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

Epistle Reading

Romans 5:12-19

Hymn

“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”

Text: John Newton, 1779

Music: Southern Harmony, 1835

harm. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

Tune: NEW BRITAIN

Chalice Hymnal #546

(c. stanza 7: John Rees)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 11

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

—George Matheson, 1882

art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Lessons & Hymns for the Second Sunday in Lent

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 17:1-7

Hymn

"Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord"

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1857

Music: St. Cecilia (Hayne), Leighton G. Hayne

Comp. Frederick C. Maker, 1881

Tune: INVITATION

Trinity Hymnal (rev. ed.) # 686

(c. Merton Tune Book, 1863)

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 *Psalms* 121

Epistle Reading

Romans 5:1-11

Hymn

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1740

Music: Aberystwyth, Hollingside

Tune: ABERYSTWYTH

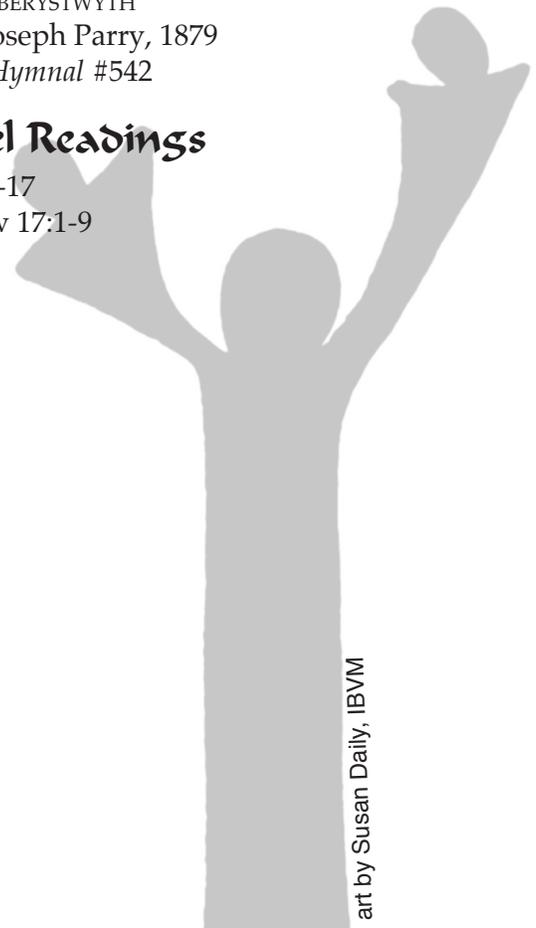
comp. Joseph Parry, 1879

Chalice Hymnal #542

Gospel Readings

John 3:1-17

Matthew 17:1-9



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.
—George Matheson, 1882

Lessons & Hymns for the Third Sunday in Lent

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 17-7

Hymn

“O Praise Our Great and Glorious Lord”

Text: Harriet Auber, 1960

Music: St. Matthew, Old 81st (old 77th)

Tune: MAOZ ZUR

adapt. Eric Werner

Hymnal 1982: according to the use
of the Episcopal Church #393
(c. Conference of American Rabbis)

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!”

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

“Christ Is Our Cornerstone”

Text: Unknown

Trans. John Chandler, 1837

Music: St. John (Parish), Parish Choir, 1851

Tune: DARWALL’S 148TH

Comp. John Darwall

Christian Worship: a Lutheran Hymnal #528

(c. Latin hymn, 8th century CE)

Gospel Reading

John 4:5-42

art by Susan Daily, IBVM

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

— George Matheson, 1882

Lessons & Hymns for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Hebrew Scripture

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Hymn

“Blest Are the Pure in Heart”

Text: John Keble, 1836

Music: Unknown

Tune: FRANCONIA

Adapt. William Henry Havergal

Comp. Johann Balthasar König

Comp. Derek Holamn

Common Praise #439

(c. Mitre Hymn Book, 1836)

Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 23

Litany from the Epistles

ONE: For once you were darkness,
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,
and 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

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1868

Music: St. Columba, ancient Irish melody

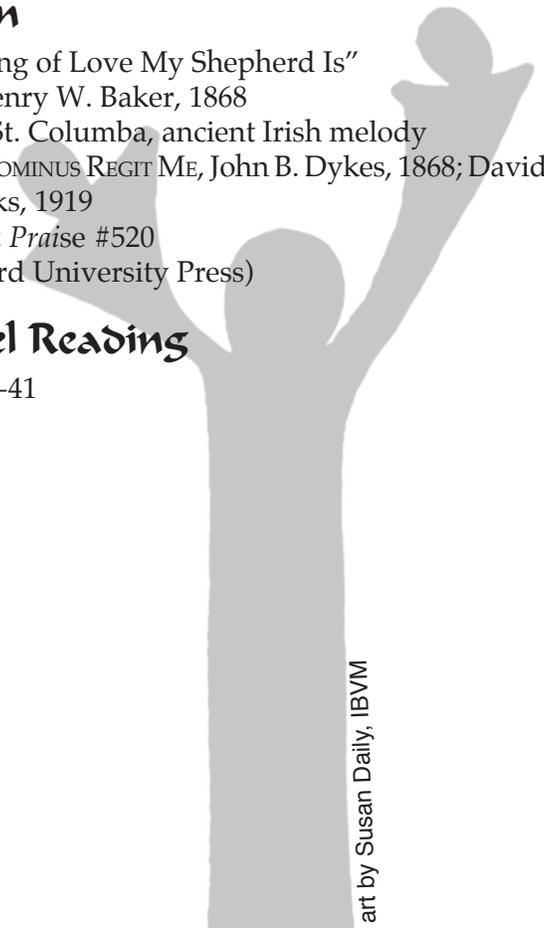
Tune: DOMINUS REGIT ME, John B. Dykes, 1868; David
Willcocks, 1919

Common Praise #520

(c. Oxford University Press)

Gospel Reading

John 9:1-41



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

O Peace that calms the storm within,
I seek safe harbor now in thee;
I bring my failings yet again,
That in thy saving grace begins
The healing that I need.
— *Deborah Harris, 2014*

Lessons & Hymns for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Prophets

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Hymn

“Breathe on Me, Breath of God”

Text: Edwin Hatch, 1878

Music: Unknown

Comp. Robert Jackson

Tune: alt. TRENTHAM

Chalice Hymnal # 254

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

Hymn

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

Text: Robert Robinson, 1758

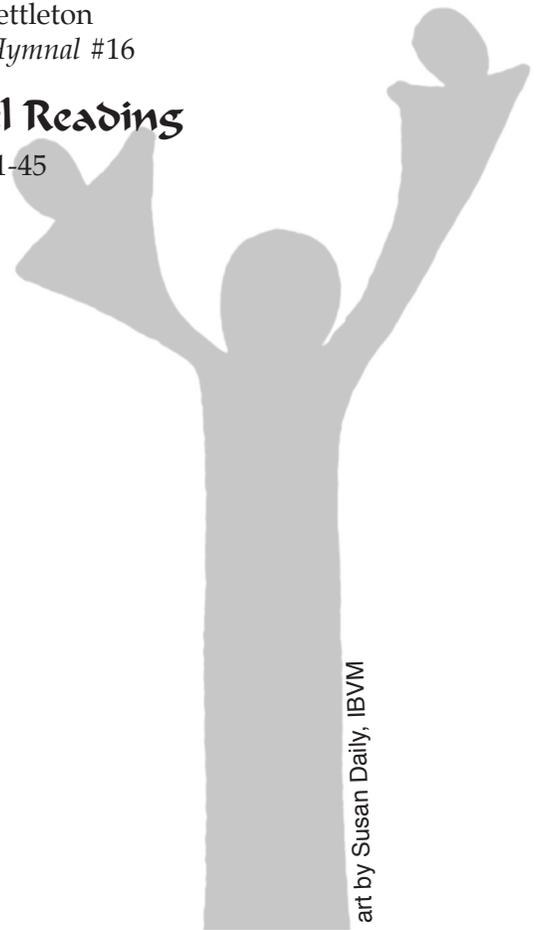
Music: Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, John Wyeth, 1813

Tune: Nettleton

Chalice Hymnal #16

Gospel Reading

John 11:1-45



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

O Faith that strengthens day by day,
I stand courageous in thy truth;
That love and mercy lead the way
To righteousness for which I pray,
And justice I pursue.
— *Deborah Harris, 2014*

Lessons & Hymns for Palm Sunday

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Liturgy of Palms

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*

Procession of the Palm Branches

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

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

Text: Jeanette Threlfall, 1873

Music: Gesangbuch der H.W.K Hofkapelle;

Adapt. and Harm. By W.H. Monk, 1868

Tune: ELLACOMBE

Celebration Hymnal #297

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 *Psalms 118:1-2, The Message*

Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

art by Rebecca S. Ward

O Hope that looks beyond the tears,
I long to live in thy embrace;
With mindful purpose through the years,
And joy transforming every fear,
At last to see God's face!

—Deborah Harris, 2014

Hymn

"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

Text: Franz Mikael Franzen, 1812

Adapt. Charles P. Price

Music: Swedish melody before 1560

Tune: BEREDEN VAG FOR HERRAN

Common Praise #102

Gospel Reading

Matthew 21:1-11

Lessons for the Liturgy of the Passion

Litany from the Prophets

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—wakens 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;

—*from Isaiah 50:4-7*

Litany from the Psalms

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*

Epistle Reading

Philippians 2:5-11

Gospel Readings

Matthew 26:14-27, or 14-66

Matthew 27:11-54



art by René Boldt

Lessons & Hymns for Maundy Thursday

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 12:1-4

Hymn

“Come, and Let Us Sweetly Join”

Text: Charles Wesley, 1740

Music: Hymns and Songs of the Church,
George Wither, 1623

Comp. Orlando Gibbons

Tune: CANTERBURY

United Methodist Hymnal #699

Reading from the Psalms

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Hymn

“Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here”

Text: Brian Wren, 1977, rev. 1995

Music: Unknown

Comp. Dimitri Bortniansky

Tune: ST. PETERSBURG

Common Praise #442

(c. Hope Publishing Company)

Gospel Reading & Interpretation

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Note: You can add an interpretive element to this reading by arranging for two people to wash each other's feet as the words are read. You can invite others to join in or 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 “How Can I Keep from Singing.”

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. It is easier to remember a resurrection than to remember the suffering. But when suffering is all we remember, we forget that suffering can be eased, healing can take place, and our complacency forgiven. 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

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

Blessing of the Elements

ONE: At the feast of the Passover that Jesus observed with his followers on the evening prior to his death, Jesus affirmed 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. 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.

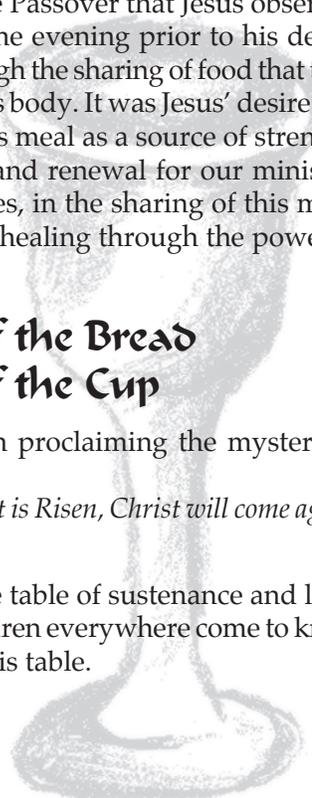
The Blessing of the Bread The Blessing of the Cup

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 the healing power of this table.

Benediction



art by Lenora Mathis

Lessons & Hymns for Holy Friday

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

Note: Have the worship area lit with the Christ candle burning by itself. After the scripture readings, extinguish the candle and ask a soloist to sing quietly "O Lamb of God," Hymn #833 in The Worshiping Church. Ask the worshippers to leave in silence.

Reading from the Prophets

Isaiah 52:13-52:12

Hymn

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Text: Isaac Watts, 1707

Music: The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music, 3rd ed., comp. Lowell Mason, 1824

Tune: HAMBURG

Chalice Hymnal #195

Reading from the Psalms

Psalms 22

Epistle Readings

Hebrews 10:16-25 or

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Hymn

"Depth of Mercy"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1740

Music: Hymns and Songs of the Church, 1623, George Wither

Tune: CANTERBURY

Complete Mission Praise # 820

Gospel Reading

John 18:1-19:42

Benediction/Solo

"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.

Lectionary Readings for Holy Saturday

Job 14:1-14

Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

Psalms 31:1-4, 15-16

Lectionary Readings for the Easter Vigil

Old Testament Readings and Psalms

- Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26
- Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 and Psalm 46
- Genesis 22:1-18 and Psalm 16
- Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 and Exodus 15:1b-13, 17-18
- Isaiah 55:1-11 and Isaiah 12:2-6
- Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32-4:4 or Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6 and Psalm 19
- Ezekiel 36:24-28 and Psalm 42, 43
- Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Psalm 143
- Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Psalm 98

New Testament Reading and Psalm

- Romans 6:3-11 and Psalm 114

Gospel Reading

- Matthew 28:1-10

Lessons & Hymns for Easter Sunday

compiled by Alyssa Miller & Katie Cook

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 of 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!

Reading from the Prophets

Jeremiah 31:1-6

Reading from the Psalms

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Hymn

"Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing"

Text: Brian Wren, 1969, rev. 1995

Music: Olwen Wonnacott

Tune: OLD CLARENDONIAN

Church Hymnary (4th ed.) # 416

Epistle Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 10:34-43

Hymn

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Again"

Text: Michael Weisse, 1531; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1858

Music: attributed to Johann Rosenmuller

Adapt. and Harm. William Henry Monk

Comp. Stephen A. Crisp

Tune: WURTTEMBERG

Common Praise #217

Gospel Readings

John 20:1-18

Matthew 28:1-10

Lessons for Easter Evening

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalms 114

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Luke 24:13-49



Benediction

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,

and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God.
Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;
put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;
for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven.
For God will give you evermore the name,
'Righteous Peace, Godly Glory.'

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height:

look towards the east,
and see your children gathered from west and east
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that God has remembered them.

For they went out from you on foot,
led away by their enemies;
but God will bring them back to you,
carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

For God has ordered that every high
mountain and the everlasting hills be
made low and the valleys filled up,
to make level ground, so that Israel
may walk safely in the glory of God.

The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God's command.
For God will lead Israel with joy,
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness
that come from him.

—Baruch 5:1-9



The art on this page, entitled "Syrian Mother and Child" was created for this packet by Sally Lynn Askins, in prayer for the people of embattled Syria.