

# Wade In The Water



**WADE IN THE WATER:**  
**Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**  
A Lenten Worship Resource  
Provided by the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **A Lenten Worship Resource**

### **Provided by the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA**

Siblings in Christ,

Lent is a time of growing deeper in faith. Through this theme, we are getting back to the basics of faith formation by remembering the covenant between God and Us through Christ's death and resurrection. Our services walk through the baptismal promises contained within the Lutheran rite of Holy Baptism. This collection of services for the season of Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday, moving through the five weeks of Lent, and into Holy Week, are yours to use and adapt as you wish.

It has been a great blessing to work through these resource writing experiments, and hope that we can continue to provide Advent and Lenten resources in the future. I give great thanks to the Western North Dakota Synod for letting us make this a part of our mission and ministry. I am also thankful for those who entered into this experiment to collaborate and create: Rev. Martha HarriSon, Associate Pastor, Trinity, Bismarck; Rev. Russell Lambert, Pastor, Trinity, Turtle Lake; Rev. Kathi Nygaard, Pastor, Zion, Beulah; and Rev. Mary Wiggins, Associate Pastor, St. John's, Dickinson.

If you are interested in being part of a future writing project, please let me know. Please share this resource among colleagues and friends near and far.

Blessings,

Rev. Tera Kossow, Director for Evangelical Mission, Western North Dakota Synod

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## ASH WEDNESDAY WITH IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*Enter in silence.*

### **GREETING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

**Response after the reading:** God speaks to weary hearts. **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17**

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10**

**Response after the reading:** God speaks to weary hearts. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *You can use any Lenten acclamation from the preferred liturgy used by your congregation. During Lent we avoid using the jubilant "Alleluia" acclamations.*

**GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

### **SERMON**

#### ***SERMON PROMPTS for each reading***

**Joel 2:** *Lent is often seen as a time of fasting... from Diet Coke, or chocolate, or red meat, or whatever. I doubt God cares much about this kind of fasting. "Rend your hearts" would certainly indicate that God is concerned with our faith formation. How might we "rend our hearts" as a Lenten discipline? Some believe it's better to take on new good deeds such as working a food pantry, helping local under-privileged kids, starting a mentor program for all kids... endless possibilities.*

**Psalms 51:** *One could spend a fair amount of time on what it means to sin, how one can confess, how often should/can we confess, etc. In some rabbinic Hebrew circles, sin can mean those times when we don't present God to others in an appropriate way (wrathful God? Nationalist God?) Does confession need to take place publicly, alone, both? Is there a correct posture or does our "posture" come from our heart (ref. Joel 2 "rend your hearts"). Is there ever a time when we don't need to confess?*

**2 Corinthians:** *Lent is a penitential time in which we are called to remember Jesus' sacrifice for us. It's all God's work, to be sure, but we make baptismal promises for "our side of the covenant". The next five weeks will be spent discussing these promises. What does this text tell us about God's side of the covenant? What does it say about a God who goes to such lengths to show love for us? We often tell ourselves that we are not worthy of God's grace. What if we spent time trying to see ourselves as God see us, through Jesus? What could that potentially stir up in us?*

**Matthew 6:**

*This text can be problematic, causing us to shy away from Christian service. Jesus simply tries to show us that God cares more about what's on the inside than the outside. One might find ways to talk about this practically. In all this remember that if you use personal stories, you cannot be the hero. Any personal stories must be about God's heart for creation, including humanity, through Jesus.*

*Does Jesus condemn public prayer, or does he condemn prayers that are meant to make us the hero for praying?*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*suggestions:* **ELW 801 Change My Heart, O God**

**ELW 685/LBW 406 Take My Life, That I May Be**

**INVITATION TO LENT**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. We are invited, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**IMPOSITION OF ASHES** *Ashes can be purchased from any church supply company if your church does not burn their own palms. Ashes should not be mixed with water because the ash/water mixture is very caustic. Some use the ashes dry to mark the forehead with the sign of the cross. Others mix the ashes with olive oil. Care must be taken to get the mixture to the correct consistency... not too dry, not too oily... it's a delicate balance. You can also use an "ash stick" or "ash tin" containing a mixture of ash, bees wax, and coconut oil, from Whitetabhives.com (there is a limited supply available through the synod office for \$7).*

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Please come forward to receive the imposition of ashes.

*As people come forward, the minister marks the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

*During this time, hymns or penitential psalms may be sung, or silence may be kept. After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues:*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation, that we may show forth your glory in the world. By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior, bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection. Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

### **OFFERING**

#### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING** *Use whichever liturgy is familiar for your congregation.*

*Preface, Dialog, Holy Holy Holy, Thanksgiving at the Table/Words of Institution*

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**LAMB OF GOD**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION AND DISTRIBUTION**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**SENDING HYMN**

*suggestions:* **ELW 801/LBW 423 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service**  
**ELW 319/LBW 99 O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days**

**DISMISSAL**

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **Week 1: Living Among God's Faithful People**

### **WELCOME**

### **DIALOGUE**

What does God call us to do?

**To live among God's faithful people.**

To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.

**Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.**

Serve all people following the example of Jesus.

**Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.**

### **OPENING SONG**

*Song suggestions are for all songs for the week they are suggested.*

Wade in the Water (ELW 459), Baptized & Set Free (ELW 453), God Be with You Until We Meet Again (ELW 536), One Bread, One Body (ELW 496, WOV 710), Blessed Be the Tie (LBW 370, ELW 656) All Are Welcome (ELW 641), In Christ There is No East or West (LBW 359, ELW 650)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Gracious God, we gather here as your church. Help us to immerse ourselves into the diverse, beautiful mess of the world, living boldly as people marked with the cross of Christ forever. May the world know your love through us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Acts 2:41-47; Galatians 3:23-29, 4:1-7

### **SERMON**

#### ***Sermon Prompts***

**Week 1: Acts 2:42-47: Baptism:** Baptism joins us to the community of faith called the Church. This passage describes a community of faith that operates in the power of the Holy Spirit. The virtues of justice, worship, and mutuality are signs of the Spirit within a community that understands itself as united in purpose and identity. What common values tie members of the congregation and unite them to action?

The fellowship described in this passage is more than simple friendship, it is a deep communion based on the new life in Christ. The church is more than a Jesus Club where we gather to see our friends for an hour or so each week. What does it mean to be linked together in Christ for our lives beyond the walls of the church? How is church different from any other organization that does good things?

*Eating Together:* Sharing a meal together creates bonds, and the first Christian community committed to this every day. There is an intimacy that occurs when we sit close to one another and can engage in conversation. In what ways have you and members of the congregation experienced connection in meals with family around the table? Has this been lost in today's fast-paced society?

*Prayer:* The disciples were praying together when the Pentecost movement started what we now know as the Church. Prayer is always important in the Bible, both individual prayer and in this case, corporate prayer. Praying together can help us be aware of issues and concerns we may not have otherwise considered.

## **SONG OF THE DAY**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION in three sections interspersed with the sung refrain.**

***Refrain suggestions:*** O Lord, Hear My Prayer ELW 751

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying ELW 752

*If you choose not to use a sung refrain, just replace, "we pray" with:*

*Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.***

Holy God, you allow us to share some of your love for the world and have created us to be in relationship with one another. Remind us that we are created in your image and help us to welcome others with the wide-open welcome of Jesus which we received in our baptism. Help us be your church wherever we go.

For those who govern and all in positions of authority that you grant wisdom and compassion. Establish peace among the nations and harmony within our communities. Mend divisions caused by misunderstanding and mistrust. Bring an end to discrimination and prejudice. And we pray...

*Sung refrain*

For all who are grieving, ill, afraid, in pain, or in despair, that you would bring comfort and healing. Feed hungry people living in food deserts. Shelter those who are unhoused. Protect any at risk from exploitation and abuse. Give us hearts full of compassion, we pray:

*Sung refrain*

For the diversity of people in your church and world, O God. Open our eyes to the beauty that is present in the many and diverse people of our communities and our worlds and instill in us a loving spirit of curiosity to learn more from those who are different from us. We pray....

*Sung refrain*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of you, O merciful God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Together we pray as Jesus taught us...



## **LORD'S PRAYER**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We bring our offering to you, O Lord. Renew us in the gifts of discipleship we received in baptism. May the Holy Spirit use these gifts to stir the embers of faith, create bold leaders, and transform us to be communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Amen.**

### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **Week 2: Hear the Word and Share the Supper**

### **WELCOME**

### **DIALOGUE**

What does God call us to do?

**To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.**

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.

**Serve all people following the example of Jesus.**

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

**To live among God's faithful people.**

### **OPENING SONG**

*Song suggestions are for all songs for the week they are suggested.*

Wade in the Water (ELW 459), Baptized and Set Free (ELW 453), Word of God Come Down to Earth (ELW 510, WOV 716), All Things Bright and Beautiful (WOV 767), Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil (ELW 512, WOV 713), Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing (ELW 545, LBW 259), This is Christ's Body (ACS 967)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Gracious God, open our ears to hear your word as we gather to worship. Nourish us in the meal we share. Forgive us and renew us, so we may be strengthened to care for the poor, marginalized, afflicted and suffering. May we embody the same grace which Christ has gifted us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

1 Cor. 11:23-34, Luke 24:13-35

### **SERMON**

#### ***Sermon Prompts***

**Week 2: Luke 24:13-35** tells the story of Risen Christ's encounter with two of his disciples traveling to Emmaus after the events of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. They do not yet realize the good news of the Resurrection. And Jesus meets them in a season of grief over what had taken place. Where are some of the places in which Christ has met you? What are some situations in which Christ's presence seemed hidden until after the fact.

*Word:* In the conversation, the disciples share with the stranger (aka Jesus) the good news of Christ's death and resurrection. And once the truth of the resurrection is revealed to them, they go and share it with the other disciples. Like the disciples as the gathered assembly, we too share the news of Jesus. In that conversation, Jesus as the

stranger reveals to them the truths about Jesus revealed in Scripture. God's word in scripture reveals the character of God and the good news in Jesus Christ. Is there a particular piece of Scripture that has helped you understand Jesus better?

*Supper:* Meals are a central theme in Luke's Gospel and in the life of Jesus followers then and today. At Emmaus, Christ's identity is revealed to his disciples in the breaking of the bread, echoing Jesus' word in Matthew's Gospel "Where two or three are gathered I am there among you." And echoing the moments of the last supper, where Jesus instituted the meal of Holy Communion.

What are some of your stories of times in which you have felt Christ's presence in the gathering of the assembly around the meal of Holy Communion?

## **SONG OF THE DAY**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION in three sections interspersed with the sung refrain.**

*Refrain suggestions:* O Lord, Hear My Prayer ELW 751

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying ELW 752

*If you choose not to use a sung refrain, just replace, "we pray" with:*

*Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.***

We pray for a world torn apart by conflict and war and disease, a world that lives uneasily in a climate of fear with no clear vision for future days

For a world that thinks less of others than of self, a world where division between nations, race, religion, neighbor and family leads to distrust, we pray...

*Sung refrain*

We pray for a world that is short on happiness, too busy to enjoy this world you have created, too preoccupied with living to appreciate life.

For a world where spiritual longing is satisfied by fashionable notions and temporary solutions with no thought for tomorrow, we pray...

*Sung refrain*

We pray as we come together to meet you in worship, O God.

For the gift of worship, the time where we meet you, O God, in word and experience the real presence of your Son in the meal and for the gift of newness of life, forgiveness, and redemption given to us freely though our faith in you, we give you thanks and we pray...

*Sung refrain*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of you, O merciful God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We bring our offering to you, O Lord. Renew us in the gifts of discipleship we received in baptism. May the Holy Spirit use these gifts to stir the embers of faith, create bold leaders, and transform us to be communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING** *Use whichever liturgy is familiar for your congregation.*

*Preface, Dialog, Holy Holy Holy, Thanksgiving at the Table/Words of Institution*

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **DISTRIBUTION**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. **Holy God, we thank you for the blessings you give us through the Word and this meal. As you have nourished us in body, mind, and spirit, strengthen us to go into your world to do your will. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **Week 3: Proclaim the Good news in Word and Deed**

### **WELCOME**

### **DIALOGUE**

What does God call us to do?

**Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.**

Serve all people following the example of Jesus.

**Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.**

To live among God's faithful people.

**To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.**

### **OPENING SONG**

*Song suggestions are for all songs for the week they are suggested.*

Wade in the Water (ELW 459), Baptized and Set Free (ELW 453), Take My Life (ELW 685, LBW 406), Lord Be Glorified (ELW 744), I Love to Tell the Story (LBW 390, ELW 661), Let Us Talents and Tongue Employ (ELW 744), The Church of Christ in Every Age (LBW 433, ELW 729)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Gracious God, we thank you for the good news of Christ Jesus, which is not only a message of comfort but also one of conviction. Move us to take the risk of speaking out on behalf of those who have no voice, to act on behalf of those who have no agency and to include those who are on the margins. Use our words and our actions to reflect the goodness of your love. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Luke 9:1-6, Acts 1:1-11

### **SERMON**

#### ***Sermon Prompts***

**Week 3: Luke 9:1-6:** As baptized believers, we are called and sent to proclaim God's Good News by how we live and by what we say. Often our mindset is that if we warm a pew at church, we've done our duty. Nothing could be further from the truth. It would be good to discuss what it might mean to "be the church", rather than just going to church. Not everyone is called to rostered ministry, but all the baptized are called to share the Good News. What might that mean to the average church goer on any given day? What if we took this call seriously?

### **SONG OF THE DAY**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION in three sections interspersed with the sung refrain.**

***Refrain suggestions:*** O Lord, Hear My Prayer ELW 751

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying ELW 752

*If you choose not to use a sung refrain, just replace, “we pray” with:*

*Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.***

God of community, build up your people the Church in every place and nation and continent that all of the world may experience the love and acceptance of Jesus Christ through our words and actions.

For those who are guiding our nation at this time and shaping national policies. Establish your righteousness in courts and halls of power throughout the world. Deter leaders from relying on their own strength and instruct them in caring for those who are most vulnerable among them. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

For individuals who are isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability. We especially remember those whose mental health needs and addictions can be exacerbated by isolation and those for whom home is not a safe place.

For people who have little strength to face this day. Especially in the midst of weakness, uncertainty, and hopelessness, sustain us with the abundance of your strength and your compassion. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

For those who speak truth to power, grant courage to do what is right in your eyes. Protect them from hatred, vitriol and violence. Open the ears and hearts of those who need to hear those words, that they may be filled with compassion for all people. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

For the vision to serve our community and the world that surrounds us. Empower us, O God, to step out of our comfort zone to proclaim your good news in all that we say and do, so that your light may be seen in our lives. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of you, O merciful God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Together we pray as Jesus taught us...

**LORD’S PRAYER**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We bring our offering to you, O Lord. Renew us in the gifts of discipleship we received in baptism. May the Holy Spirit use these gifts to stir the embers of faith, create bold leaders, and transform us to be communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Amen.**

### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **Week 4: Serve All People Following the Example of Jesus**

### **WELCOME**

### **DIALOGUE**

What does God call us to do?

**Serve all people following the example of Jesus.**

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

**To live among God's faithful people.**

To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.

**Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.**

### **OPENING SONG**

*Song suggestions are for all songs for the week they are suggested.*

Wade in the Water (ELW 459), Baptized and Set Free (ELW 453), Will You Let Me Be Your Servant (ELW 659), We Give Thee, but Thine Own (LBW 410, ELW 686), Lead Me Guide, Guide Me (ELW 768) Jesu, Jesu (WOV 765, ELW 708), We Place Upon Your Table (LBW 217, ELW 467)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of service. We are recipients of your love made known in Christ. Fill our hearts with compassion, so we might serve out of a spirit of love rather than under the mantle of obligation. Help us to be your eyes, ears, hands and feet to care for your world. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Romans 12:9- 21 and Mark 10:42-45

### **SERMON**

#### ***Sermon Prompts***

**Mark 10:42-45** discusses the nature of power and the importance of serving others. This is Jesus' response to James and John requesting seats of prestige on his left and his right.

Jesus redefines what leadership looks like in the kingdom of God. Jesus is the ultimate example of a servant, and he calls his followers to serve others in love.

The leadership virtues which Jesus extols include humbleness and mutual respect. Then and now, they are counter-cultural values. How do we live in this world reflecting the virtues of Jesus for the world? The passage from Romans 12:9- 21 provides examples of what love in action looks like. Paul echoes Jesus in calling attention to love as the key



moral norm for God's people. Jesus had said that all the law and the prophets hang on two commands: love God and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40).

What does it mean to be "servant of all"? How do we as the church speak truth to power that would "lord over" people, especially the most vulnerable among us: the poor, refugees, those without voice or agency (chronic mental illness, addiction, LGBTQ community, people of color, those who are abused)? How do our conversations at the grocery store and the ball game or the gas station reflect the values of Jesus that we claim as our own as Christians?

Jesus' death puts his life and death in opposition to expressions of power. Through Jesus' vulnerability to die a horrible, tragic, gruesome death on a cross, his true power will be revealed. In his resurrection, we are set free from the powers of sin that control us.

## SONG OF THE DAY

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** in three sections interspersed with the sung refrain.

*Refrain suggestions:* O Lord, Hear My Prayer ELW 751

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying ELW 752

*If you choose not to use a sung refrain, just replace, "we pray" with:*

*Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.***

As God's people called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the Church, the human family, and all the world.

We pray for all who seek to rebuild communities shattered by the circle of economic injustice, poverty, and violence. We pray for all women who suffer from violence, and yet continue to care for family and children, to grow and prepare food, carry water, earn a living and offer support to others. We pray for all whose homes are lost to floods, typhoons and hurricanes, and for those whose lands and homes will be swallowed by the sea. For peace on Earth and peace with the earth, we pray...

*Sung refrain*

God of all creation, grant wisdom and knowledge to us, the humans that you set as caretakers of the earth and seas and skies and creatures, that we will work to restore what has been depleted and damaged so all may experience that which you made and declared good.

Merciful God, instill in the leaders of towns, counties, states, municipalities, and nations a desire and vision to work for justice for all people, bring an end to divisions between people so that we might work together for peace. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

God of compassion, you call us to serve all people following the example of Jesus. Help us to see the Lord in and attend to people who are unseen, forgotten, underserved or ignored in our congregations, communities and society — elders who are homebound; people who are quiet, those who are incarcerated, individuals who struggle with chronic mental health issues, those who are unhoused and people living in shelters, care facilities and group homes.

Healing God, give ear to all who call upon you for any need of body or spirit (*especially*). Provide for those who do not have enough to eat, those who are unemployed or underemployed, and those who rely on the generosity of others. We pray...

*Sung refrain*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of you, O merciful God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Together we pray as Jesus taught us...

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **OFFERING**

#### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We bring our offering to you, O Lord. Renew us in the gifts of discipleship we received in baptism. May the Holy Spirit use these gifts to stir the embers of faith, create bold leaders, and transform us to be communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Amen.**

#### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

# **WADE IN THE WATER: Living Into Our Baptismal Covenant**

## **Week 5: Strive for Justice and Peace**

### **WELCOME**

### **DIALOGUE**

What does God call us to do?

**Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.**

To live among God's faithful people.

**To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.**

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.

**Serve all people following the example of Jesus.**

### **OPENING SONG**

*Song suggestions are for all songs for the week they are suggested.*

Wade in the Water (ELW 459), Baptized and Set Free (ELW 453), Change My Heart O God (ELW 801), God of Grace and God of Glory (LBW 415), This is My Song (ELW 887), Faith of Our Fathers (LBW 500, ELW 812), The Church of Christ in Every Age (LBW 433, ELW 729), Let Streams of Living Waters (WOV 763, ELW 717), Bring Peace to Earth Again (ELW 700)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Gracious God, we thank you for the promise of a world of justice and peace. Fill us with empathy and curiosity. Help us be brave enough to spread your love by speaking truth to power and addressing the systemic brokenness of the world. Help us, in the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

1 John 4:7-21, Micah 6:6-8

### **SERMON**

#### ***Sermon Prompts***

**Micah 6:6-8:** Many homes have the last part of this verse, cross-stitched and framed, hanging on a wall. It's a beautiful saying, but it has stellar implications. Our part of the baptismal covenant, and a promise we make, is to "strive for justice and peace in all the earth". What is justice? Google says it is "treating people with fairness and dignity, and following God's standards of right and wrong". There are different thoughts on justice.

One is retributive justice, i.e., "getting what one deserves". This is the kind of justice our penal system is built on, but this isn't always God's idea of justice, and certainly not the justice being talked about by Micah in this verse. This kind of justice is the justice described by Google. This kind of justice is not a top-down economy, but rather an

equitable situation wherein all have their needs met always. The church has not always done a good job with this, but the Holy Spirit still lives and moves.

Kindness is the way we are called to live with each other. When we are loving and kind, we can help others grow in their faith life, without being judgmental. It is, in this writer's estimation, a close relative of justice. What might it look like to be kind in this sort of way?

Finally, what does it mean to walk humbly with God? Again, I think it all plays back into justice. It's all an attitude of the heart that comes as we live into our baptismal covenant.

Peace is not just an absence of conflict, but rather a wholeness, completeness, shalom into which God has created us, and into which Jesus has called us.

## **SONG OF THE DAY**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION in three sections interspersed with the sung refrain.**

***Refrain suggestions:*** O Lord, Hear My Prayer ELW 751

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying ELW 752

*If you choose not to use a sung refrain, just replace, "we pray" with:*

*Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.***

Holy God, whose Spirit swept over the face of the water at creation, hear our prayers for all who suffer a lack of water today.

We pray for a just and peaceable sharing of water among nations and peoples. We pray for all who put their lives at risk for their land and forests, rivers and springs. For peace on Earth and peace with the earth, hear our prayer.

#### *Sung refrain*

We pray for those who struggle, for those who don't have enough, who don't have access to adequate resources for housing, safety, education, employment, food and nutrition and medical services. Help us to share what we can and give us courage to speak out against unjust systems. For peace on Earth and peace with Earth, hear our prayer.

#### *Sung refrain*

We pray for all students, the future leaders of nations and peoples, the future leaders of the market and economies, of faith communities, the future leaders in arts and education that they may hear and promote your call to justice and peace. We pray for those who are unaware, those who cannot bear the knowledge of the suffering of others, or feel helpless in the enormity of the crisis, that you will open their hearts, reveal their strength, and open their voices in prayer and action. For peace on Earth and peace with the earth, hear our prayer.

*Sung refrain*

We pray for a world that needs to know your love, your hope, your peace, your joy and salvation, a world that needs to know it is special, unique and is uniquely loved by a gracious and merciful God.

*Sung refrain*

Holy God, we pray for just peace: Open our hearts, so that we who seek your way of life may be bold in witnessing to your longing for justice and peace: That all may be free from fear and from want; That enmity, exclusion and oppression may be overcome; And that the whole of Creation may rejoice and glorify you. We pray for peace on Earth and peace with the earth,

*Sung refrain*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of you, O merciful God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Together we pray as Jesus taught us...

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**OFFERING**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We bring our offering to you, O Lord. Renew us in the gifts of discipleship we received in baptism. May the Holy Spirit use these gifts to stir the embers of faith, create bold leaders, and transform us to be communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Amen.**

**LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

## **VISUALS**

Purple is the liturgical color assigned for the season of Lent. Purple represents the solemnity of the season and the royalty of Christ. Consider adding the presence of purple fabrics in the worship space during Lent. The addition of black fabric, which can represent grief or mourning, is a possibility to enhance your worship space on Good Friday. If your space has the capability, lower the brightness level of your lights in your worship space during the season of Lent and during Holy Week.

Because Lent was traditionally a season for baptism and our mid-week service is themed around Baptism, consider filling your baptismal font with water and if possible, of moving your baptismal font to a place of prominence so it can be seen by the worshiping assembly. Consider incorporating fabrics that remind you of water (ex. Blue).

Some symbols associated with baptism are:

- Water and waterdrops

- Seashells

- Cross which is a symbol we connect with Christ

- Dove which we connect to the Holy Spirit and which appears in the story Jesus' baptism.

Considering incorporating these items somehow in your bulletins or other visuals.

**Images that can be used as bulletin art can be accessed here:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xgKIOi4UCxgjLmyy8vC0tLxZ17VR3zv?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xgKIOi4UCxgjLmyy8vC0tLxZ17VR3zv?usp=drive_link)

Additional Clipart for Bulletins can be found on Sundays and Seasons.com

Royalty Free photos that you can search to provide other visuals for Lent and Holy Week can be found Unsplash.com, Pexels.com, or Pixaby.com

Note: When looking for art for use in worship, make sure you have the correct copyrights and are using artwork that is described royalty free, in the public domain or is labeled with a CC0 Public Domain Designation. Make sure when using visual images for worship that they do not contain watermarks.

## **ADDITIONAL SERMON HELPS**

**From Living Our Baptism: Five Gifts of Discipleship during Lent written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade**

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<https://www.elca.org/our-work/congregations-and-synods/faith-practices>

**Week 1 Live among God's faithful people**

Lent always begins with the reading of Jesus being tempted in the desert. He is able to resist and choose God's way. Sometimes we are not as strong, choosing paths which are not healthy or of God. It is not easy. But God gives the gift of community to teach us, accompany us, and encourage us. In the beginning of Paul's letter to the Philippians, Apostle Paul reflects his love for Christian community.

**Week 2 Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper**

For centuries, Christians have been encouraged to give up something during the season of Lent, and in doing so, increase an appreciation of the sacrifice of Jesus. Apostle Paul recognizes his own personal sacrifices to follow Jesus, but he confesses how much he has gained. The sacrifices pale in comparison to the gain in Christ. More than anything, Paul wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Hear the word of God.

**Week 3 Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed**

Lent invites us to go inward and become more contemplative. This is an important part of the Lenten journey, but Jesus did not die to keep it a secret. His death and resurrection are meant to be the good news proclaimed from the housetops. Apostle Paul found courage to boldly proclaim Christ—despite imprisonment and threats of death. He even discovered how God used the negative experiences of his life to proclaim Christ.

**Week 4 Serve all people, following the example of Jesus**

We associate acts of loving kindness and mercy with the season of Lent. Through art, music, preaching, teaching, and other means, the church tells the story of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. But the example of Jesus is more than his death. Throughout his life, Jesus served. He was a servant leader, one who was willing to get down on his knees and wash the feet of the disciples.

**Week 5 Strive for justice and peace in all the earth**

Holy Week tells the story of Jesus—a story filled with injustice and violence. Though innocent, Jesus was sentenced to a violent death. Where is justice and peace? On our behalf, Jesus encountered injustice, violence, and death itself in order to bring a new order—one in which the lion and lamb might lie down together. Until that time comes, we continue to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. We press on.

**THOUGHTS ON PALM/PASSION SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK**

PALM SUNDAY: On this day, we begin with Jesus entering Jerusalem, and end with his crucifixion. It may feel like we are getting ahead of ourselves with ending there since we will enter into Holy Week, replaying this story over three days. Many of those who are assembled on this Sunday may not be present during some or all of the Holy Week Services, and for them, this is the way they will receive this story.

You can order palm branches from a florist, or from a Christian supply store such as Autom. This year's palm branches can be dried and saved to make next year's ashes for Ash Wednesday.

HOLY WEEK: The Holy Week services are actually one long service spread over two or three days. For this reason, we do not have all the elements of a typical worship service on any of the three days.

For Maundy Thursday, you may incorporate these elements in the liturgy:

The Declaration of Absolution takes the place of Confession and Forgiveness. In this rite, the congregant hears that all their sins are forgiven. Here's a sample:

#### DECLARATION OF ABSOLUTION

Let us make confession to God. Almighty God, merciful Father: I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to you all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended you. I justly deserve your punishment, but I am sorry for my sins, repent, and pray for your boundless mercy. For the sake of the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, forgive my sins, strengthen me by your Holy Spirit, and bring me to life everlasting. **Amen**

*You may come forward to kneel/stand to have the pastor declare to you the absolution of all your sins.*

*Pastor: By the command of Christ, I declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins.*

*Congregant: **Amen.***

Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins, giving us power to proclaim the mighty deeds of God who called us out of darkness into the splendor of his light. By the command of Christ, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the  $\text{✠}$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

The Stripping of the Altar happens at the end of the worship service. "Stripping of the altar" is a Christian practice where all items are removed from the altar and chancel area. The removal of altar linens, candles, and other decorations reflects the moment when Jesus was stripped of his garments during his arrest and trial, and prepares us for the somber reflection of Good Friday. It signifies the removal of outward signs of celebration to focus on the moment of Christ's suffering and impending death.



During this time, you can invite the assembly, either spoken or in writing, to take time to meditate on the words of Psalm 22 as it is read. There is no benediction. Following the psalm and stripping of the altar, all leave the church in silence.

Foot Washing appears in the gospel texts during the Last Supper narrative. This optional rite is a way to show the power of Jesus' example of servant leadership. Depending on the size of the assembly, you might have everyone come up as they are comfortable, or you could wash the feet of council members or a volunteer.

See page 25 for a Guided Meditation on Foot Washing, an alternative option to foot washing or hand washing.

#### GOOD FRIDAY

On Good Friday, we encounter Jesus on the cross, ending his earthly life. Any cross that was not removed from the sanctuary may be covered with a black cloth/shroud. This can happen in silence at the beginning of the service, or as the readings refer to the death of Jesus.

#### EASTER VIGIL/HOLY SATURDAY

This service brings us from the Good Friday death of Jesus to the joy of Easter and the empty tomb. This service can be quite long, so if you choose to have an Easter Vigil, you will have to be mindful of the time, and possibly adapt it to fit your needs. Here is an abbreviated service adapted from Sundays and Seasons that might take about 90 minutes. You can make changes to shorten it as needed. This service uses four pillar candles placed on the altar and lit one by one after the readings, bringing the light of Christ that was extinguished on Good Friday back to the worship space.

## GUIDED REFLECTION ON FOOTWASHING

*(\*the participants should each receive a “towel”. This can be towels from the Dollar Store, a bundle of shop rags or even fabric scraps from your church’s quilting supplies. Some churches have an over- abundance of towels in their kitchens that can be used for this, too).*

*Note: On this night we have heard our Lord’s commandment to love one another as he has loved us. We who receive God’s love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other as Jesus became our servant. Our commitment to this loving service is signified in the washing of feet, following the example our Lord gave us on the night before his death.*

*People are kind of uncomfortable with foot washing or even handwashing as part of our Maundy Thursday worship service. That discomfort can detract from the purpose. Still, it can be an incredibly moving moment when someone else cares for you by washing your feet. It is both an intimate and humbling act. But tonight, rather than having a physical washing of our feet, we will do something else; a guided meditation, which will also make some of you uncomfortable. Being uncomfortable is part of the experience. Certainly, Jesus made his disciples uncomfortable with his actions, so we probably shouldn’t expect it to be easier for us.*

*It is no accident that a command to love comes coupled with a moment of vulnerability. On the very night that Jesus commands us to love one another, we find him down at the feet of his protesting disciples, enacting a most vulnerable form of love: washing away the dust, dirt, and grime.*

*It’s probably important to remember the story isn’t about the foot washing, it’s about the foot washer.*

*The gospel of John tells us that Jesus removed his outer robe and wrapped a towel around his waist. The towel has long been a symbol of servant leadership. Each of you have been given a towel tonight. Before we get started with our meditation, I invite you to get your towel out. Feel it in your hands. Think about the many ways in which people provide love and caring that involve towels, whether that is bathing the elderly or a newborn, washing the dishes after feeding a large or small group of people, wiping dirt from skinned knees and tears from dirty faces. Think about the towels used to disinfect public spaces to help keep us all safe.*

### **Guided Meditation:**

Keeping your towel with you, get comfortable. Settle into your own space not in contact with other people. You may want to set your feet on the floor so you have a more stable base. Take a couple of deep relaxing breaths.

This type of activity is most effective when we leave behind as many distractions as we can. I invite you to close your eyes so you can focus on my words and shut out the sounds of the world around us. Take time to listen and imagine as we journey back in time and insert ourselves into the story of the last supper.

You are one of the disciples present that night around the table with Jesus. I invite you to imagine that you are in the Upper Room where Jesus and his friends have gathered.

What does that room look like in your mind's eye? Take a moment to look around and notice who and what is in that space. You are ready to celebrate a centuries old tradition together, to share the Passover meal. What sounds do you hear? What are some of the smells around you?

You are seated at the table and you see Jesus stand up and you wonder what he is doing. He takes off his outer robe and ties a towel around his waist. Everyone around the table is staring at Jesus. What are you thinking in this moment?

You hear the sound of water as Jesus takes a pitcher and pours water into the basin. You watch as Jesus gets down on his knees and begins to wash one of the disciple's feet. How does that disciple respond to Jesus?

You watch as Jesus gets up and goes to the next person, kneels and washes their feet. How are you feeling as you observe this scene?

Again, and then again, Jesus rises, kneels, washes. Bartholomew, Thomas then Andrew then Judas.

Jesus comes to Peter. What does Peter do? You listen as Peter and Jesus speak. What are they saying to each other?

You realize you are next. Jesus is coming toward you with the basin and towel. What are you thinking as he gets closer to you?

Jesus is kneeling right in front of you. You are as close to Jesus as you have ever been. What does Jesus look like?

What emotions does Jesus' closeness bring up in you?

You feel him lift up your foot and gently dip it in the water. The water is warm. You let your foot rest in the water as Jesus uses his hands to wash your tired feet. Allow yourself to abide in Jesus' presence for a moment.

Share with him whatever is on your mind. Ask Jesus what you need most right now.

Notice how he listens, how he looks you in the eye as he dries your foot and then picks up the other one and places it in the water. You ask Jesus for something. What is it?

What does Jesus say in response?

Jesus takes his time washing and drying your feet. How do you feel as he places your foot back on the ground and gets up from his knees? Is there anything else you want to tell him?

Before Jesus moves to the next disciples, he offers you a blessing. What is the blessing that he gives just to you?

As Jesus takes his seat back at the table, you hear him ask, “Do you understand what I’ve done to you?” How do you answer him?

Jesus says, “I’ve given you an example.”

How will you follow Jesus’ example? What will you remember about this time in the Upper Room with Jesus?

As you’re ready, open your eyes and return to your space.

I hope that was a time of rest for you, a time of renewal when you could set aside what anxieties you’re feeling in this moment.

Holy Week reminds us of the lengths that God will go to be in relationship with us. Holy Week reminds us that Jesus cares for us, that he knows what we need and that we are to ask and we will receive.

Take your towel home with and find ways in which you can follow Jesus’ example of servant leadership; bake a loaf of bread for your neighbor and wrap it in the towel, change the oil in someone’s car, wash the outside windows for someone who shouldn’t be up on a ladder. (*this may vary depending on what type of “towels” you use for this activity*)

I hope that when you encounter towels of any kind this week, you’ll be reminded, yes, about servant leadership, but you’ll also be reminded of God’s tender and loving care for you and that you can abide in God’s promise of rest and peace and provision and new and abundant life.

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY COMBINED SERVICE**

*In some situations, it may be better to do a combined service for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, such as someone who is doing services at multiple congregations. What follows is a sample service.*

*Notes: For the combined service, the altar chancel area is stripped before the service begins. On the altar you should have the communion elements, 7 lit candles, and a cross if you have an altar cross. Following communion, the elements and the cross are removed, leaving only the lit candles. Have a candle snuffer available on the altar. You may want to have a small light if the candles will not be enough light for you to read by.*

### **THE LORD'S SUPPER AND TENEBRAE Maundy Thursday & Good Friday**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus surrounded himself with people who, like us, had failings and shortcomings. The events of Holy Week reveal the disciples' human nature and weaknesses: Judas betrays Jesus for a pocketful of coins; the disciples sleep while Jesus agonizes in the garden; Peter's anger causes him to take up a sword and strike the high priest's slave; the chief priests act out of fear or jealousy of Jesus; Pilate's willingness to hand over a man he believes to be innocent; and perhaps most poignant of all, Jesus' own very human desire to escape the Crucifixion. And is it possible that even today, our own human nature, weaknesses, and failings cause us also to betray, deny, convict, and crucify again?

This Holy Communion and Tenebrae service offers an opportunity for us to become more aware of our own humanity and our relationship with Christ. Allow the text and music to draw you into the action and events that led to the actual crucifixion and to relate them to the events and actions in your own life.

**ELW 666/LBW 385** What Wondrous Love Is This

**Matthew 26:17–22**    **ELW 494/LBW 200** For the Bread Which You Have Broken v.1-2

**Matthew 26:26-29**    **ELW 494/LBW 200** For the Bread Which You Have Broken v.3-4

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

We take the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ, by his command, to take into our being the earthly existence of God's grace. Christ welcomes you to this table. Come, for all is ready.

**POST COMMUNION PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, in a wonderful sacrament, you strengthen us with forgiveness that comes only through your suffering, death, and resurrection. May this sacrament of your body and blood so work in us that the love of God will show forth in the way we live, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*Extinguish 1<sup>st</sup> candle*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** *Petitions end, "Hear us, O God." Please respond, "Your mercy is great."*

United by the servant love of God in Christ, we pray this holy night for the needs of the world.

You call your people to hand on what we receive from you. Form all the baptized into teachers of faith. From one generation to the next, give your church hunger for your promises in the sacraments and joy in receiving and sharing your word. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your creation provides all that we need. Cleanse and protect the water you have given for washing and drinking, water on which all life depends. Sustain crops and herds that provide food; teach us how to live so that there is enough for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You redeemed your people from slavery. Preserve people throughout the world who flee violence and oppression. Establish just leadership in place of tyranny and peace in place of war. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus loved his followers to the end. Grant assurance of that love to all who need it: those living with guilt, those struggling to forgive, those who are lonely or overlooked. Heal the sick and embrace the dying. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus washed the feet of the one who betrayed him. Inspire this congregation's ministries of service, guiding us to love as Jesus loved us. Give us renewed courage to serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your glory shone in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We thank you for generations of the faithful who have proclaimed our Lord's death. Unite us with them in hope until he comes again. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear these and all our prayers, O God, in the name of the one who loves us to the end, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

**ELW 752/WOV 775** Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

*Extinguish 2<sup>nd</sup> candle*

**Matthew 26:30-46**

**ELW 347/LBW 109** Go to Dark Gethsemane v.1

*Extinguish 3<sup>rd</sup> candle*

**Matthew 26:47-75**

**ELW 347/LBW 109** Go to Dark Gethsemane v.2

*Extinguish 4<sup>th</sup> candle*

**Matthew 27:1-2, 11-44**

**ELW 347/LBW 109** Go to Dark Gethsemane v.3

*Extinguish 5<sup>th</sup> candle*

**Matthew 27:45-54**

**ELW 803/LBW 482** When I Survey v.1

*Extinguish 6<sup>th</sup> candle*

**Matthew 27:57-66**

**ELW 353/LBW 92** Were You There

*Extinguish 7<sup>th</sup> candle*

We long for the Light that is the Light of all life. **The Light that no darkness can overcome!**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Behold, the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Savior of the whole world. **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

*In this time of silence, you are welcome to stay and pray, leaving in silence until we gather at the tomb on Easter morning.*

## Easter Vigil

### Introduction

This is the night of salvation! At the Vigil of Easter, we gather around fire, word, water, bread, and wine, proclaiming through story and song that ours is a God who continuously brings life out of death. On this night we experience again the heart of God's baptismal promise and the center of our faith: we are claimed and cleansed, renewed in the death and resurrection of Christ. We gather with all the saints of every time and place to celebrate the good news: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

*Worship begins in silence, with the lights dimmed.*

### HYMN ELW 353/LBW 92 Were You There

This is the night. **This is the night.**

In which, in ancient times, you delivered our forebears, the children of Israel, and led them, dry-shod, through the sea.

This is the night. **This is the night.**

In which the darkness of sin has been purged away by the rising brightness.

This is the night. **This is the night.**

In which all who believe in Christ are rescued from evil and the gloom of sin are renewed in grace and are restored to holiness.

This is the night. **This is the night.**

In which, breaking the chains of death, Christ arises from hell in triumph. O night truly blessed, which alone was worthy to know the time and the hour in which Christ arose again from hell!

This is the night. **This is the night.**

Of which it is written: "The night is as clear as the day," and, "then shall my might be turned into day." The holiness of this night puts to flight the deeds of wickedness; washes away sin: restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn; casts out hate; brings peace; and humbles earthly pride. Therefore, in this night of grace, receive, O God, our praise and thanksgiving for the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, reflected in the burning of this candle. We sing the glories of this pillar of fire, the brightness of which is not diminished, even when its light is divided and borrowed, for it is given to represent the power of your own Holy Spirit, to be with us in all places and in all times, without end.

*Altar and lectern candles are lit from the pascal candle.*

This is the night. **This is the night.**

In which heaven and earth are joined—thing human and things divine. We, therefore, pray to you, O God, that this candle, burning in honor of your name, will continue to vanquish the darkness of night and be mingled with the light of heaven. May Christ, the Morning Star, find it



burning, that Morning Star who never sets, that Morning Star who, rising from the grave, faithfully sheds light on the whole human race. And we pray, O God, that you rule, govern, and preserve with your continual protection, your whole church, giving us peace in this time of our paschal rejoicing; through the same Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray together our prayer of the day. **Eternal giver of life and light, this holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your church with the Spirit given us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth and may shine as a light in the world, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **THE WORD**

**First Reading: Genesis 1:1—2:4a**

*The first pillar candle is lit.*

**Second Reading: Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21**

*The second pillar candle is lit.*

**Third Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11**

*The third pillar candle is lit.*

**Fourth Reading: Daniel 3:1-29**

*The forth pillar candle is lit.*

*The cross is unveiled. The lights are turned on. The church bells are rung.*

### **LIGHTING THE PASCAL CANDLE**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

The light of Christ, rising in glory, dispels the darkness of our hearts and minds.

*The pascal candle is lit.*

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

### **THE EASTER PROCLAMATION**

Rejoice, now, all heavenly powers! **Sing, choirs of angels!**

Exult, all creation around God's throne! **Jesus Christ is risen!**

Celebrate the divine mysteries with exultation, and for so great a victory, sound the trumpet of salvation.

**Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your king!**

Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! **Darkness vanishes forever.**

Rejoice, O holy church! **Exult in glory!**

The risen Savior shines upon you!

**Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people.**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that with full devotion, we should praise the invisible God, and the only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, by his precious blood, redeemed us from bondage to the ancient sin. For this indeed is the Pascal Feast in which the true Lamb is slain, by whose blood the doorposts of the faithful were made holy.

**New Testament Reading: Romans 6:3-11**

**HYMN** ELW 380/LBW 147 Hallelujah! Jesus Lives

**Gospel: John 20:1-18**

**HYMN** ELW 363/LBW 132 Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain

**AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in Jesus who gave his life for the world, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

God of the church, you lit the new fire of resurrection in the holy darkness of the tomb. Rekindle faith in our hearts, that your church may arise in the promise of new life and hope. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of creation, the earth itself waits for healing and redemption. Protect coastlines and reefs, forests and prairies, and the atmosphere from which we draw the breath of life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, too often the injustice of the cross echoes in human systems of power. Break cycles of vengeance and violence between peoples and nations and bring liberation to every place of captivity. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of compassion, you know every heart that aches with loss and every mind that knows the weight of the tomb. Keep vigil with those who live with mental illness. Comfort the grieving and strengthen all who are close to death. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of grace, grant joy to those celebrating baptism and to all who welcome them into the community of faith. Inspire and lead people of all ages to share the good news in ways that reach new people. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of resurrection, the empty tomb proclaims that death itself is Swallowed up. As we remember those whose lives on earth have ended, comfort us with the promise of resurrection. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, loving God, for the sake of the One who loved us to the end, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. **Amen.**

### **OFFERING**

Beloved people of God, on this most holy night when our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life, we gather with the church throughout the world in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of Jesus Christ. Through light and the word, through water and oil, bread and wine, we proclaim Christ's death and resurrection, share Christ's triumph over sin and death, and await Christ's coming again in glory.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

As you are seated for the offering, share a word of peace with your neighbor.

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. **Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. **Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ✠ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

## **FAITH AT HOME PRACTICES FOR LENT AND HOLY WEEK**

Activities to use in your congregation or to share with your members to do at home.

Water is a symbol of baptism, consider coming up with a congregational activity involving water. Such as raising money for building wells, holding a letter campaign to area legislative representatives advocating for clean water access, or collect hygiene items for your local food pantry or other nonprofit organization.

Have members save one coin every day of the 40 days of Lent. Have members bring in their collection to worship on Palm/Passion Sunday. Donate the money collected to a local charity of the congregations choosing.

Pickle Jar/Coffee Can Offering: Have congregation members bring in their loose change over the course of Lent to place in a large jar or coffee can. The congregation can watch the collection grow throughout the season. As a twist: Have a friendly contest between you and another neighboring congregation to see who can raise the most of a common cause.

Prayer Jar: Families can decorate a jelly jar or a glass. Then have them write out people they wish to pray for on popsicle sticks and place in the jar. Display the jar in a place people can see. Then each day of Lent, draw a stick and pray for that person. Repeat until Easter.

Lent Bingo: See attached

Flat Jesus: See attached


40 Days of Lent Coloring Calendar: See attached

Lent In A Bag: See attached



## **INTRODUCING...FLAT JESUS!**

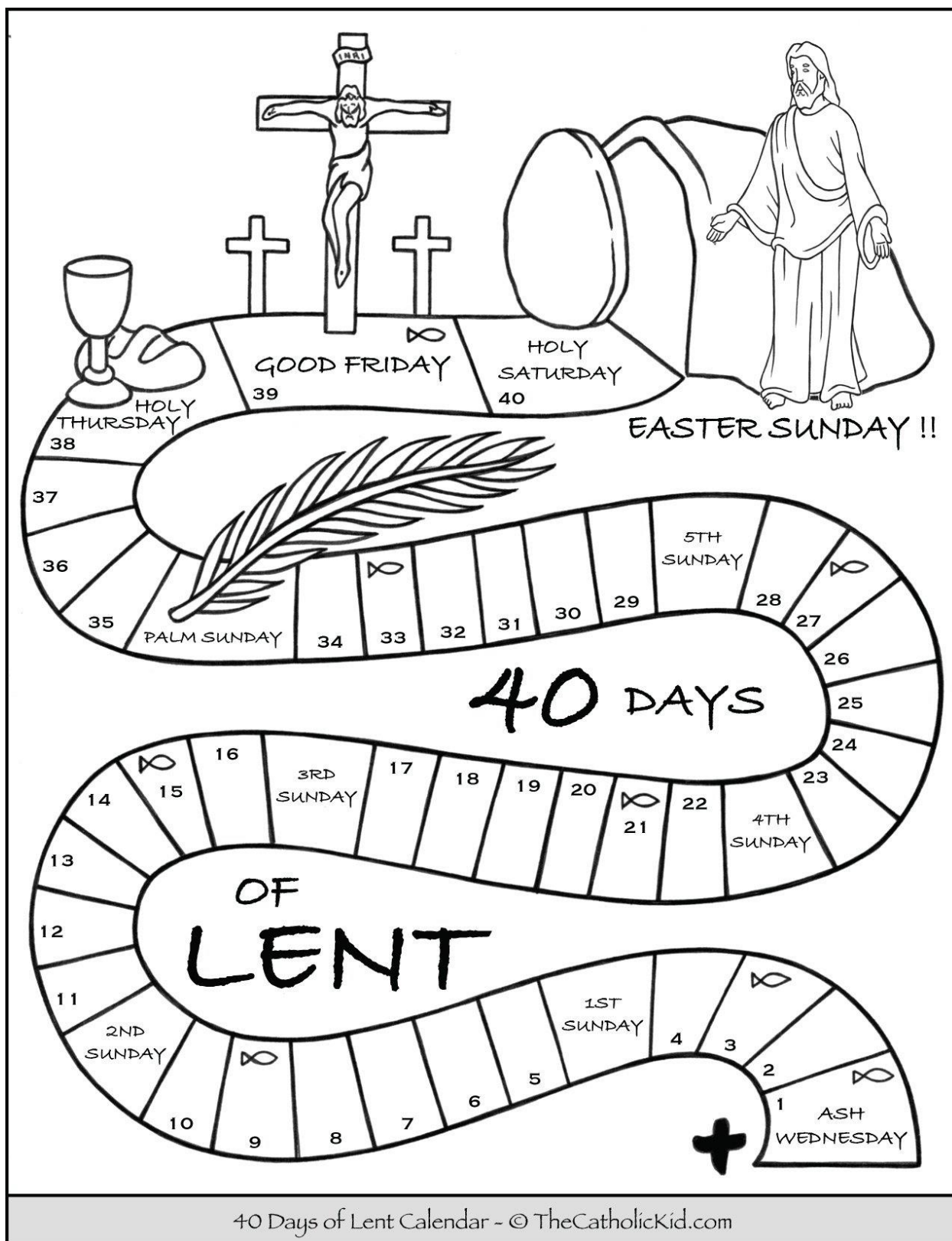
During the season of Lent, we invite you to take Flat Jesus with you to some or all of the following places.

- ☐ Color and cut out your Flat Jesus!
  - ☐ Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return—take an Ash Wednesday selfie with Flat Jesus.
  - ☐ Attend a Wednesday evening Lent worship service at St. John and introduce Flat Jesus to your Pastor!
  - ☐ Remember your baptism show Flat Jesus your church's baptism font.
  - ☐ Psalm 150:1- "Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament." Take Flat Jesus with you to Church!
  - ☐ Acts 1: 5, "For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with  the Holy Spirit ." Take a picture with Flat Jesus with some water
  - ☐ Romans 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Show Flat Jesus how you serve others!
  - ☐ Jeremiah 31:33 "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Take a photo with people you love and Flat Jesus.
  - ☐ Micah 6:8 "What does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"
- Take Flat Jesus on a walk around your neighborhood.
- ☐ Wave palms with Flat Jesus on Palm Sunday, 3/13
  - ☐ Worship with Flat Jesus on Maundy Thursday, 3/17
  - ☐ Worship with Flat Jesus on Good Friday, 3/18 at 7:00PM

# LENT

# BINGO

Attend Ash Wednesday Service	Pray for foster children	Light a candle	Read Mark 10:43-45	Give food to local food pantry
Sit in silence for 1 minute	Buy a ELCA Global Gift	Read Micah 6:6-8	Pray for those in prison	Go for a walk
Pray for Peace	Pray for your elected officials	+	Share a random act of kindness	Read Galatians 3: 25-28
Read: Joel 2 12-13	Give your loose change to local charity	Try praying in color	Read 1 Cor. 11:23-26	Pray for your family
Give to your church	Read Acts 1: 6-8	Go without phones for the night	Attend Midweek Service	Pray for the elderly



## **Lent in a Bag**

*You will need a bag or other container to hold your items. Inside the bag you should place a small jar or sealed bag of sand, a Paperwhite flower bulb, a rock, a shell, a human figure, and a candle. If you do not have these items, you could use pictures of them.*

This bag and the six items are symbols to focus on individual, as a family, or for group meditations and conversations during the Season of Lent. There is no assigned order, although if you want your bulb to bloom by Easter, plan on using it earlier! Questions intended to start conversation, ideas for experiential moments, and scripture verses are noted. Use whatever version of the scripture stories you like, whether from a traditional Bible translation or a children's Bible.

Suggestions for using the contents of this bag:

Choose one night of the week and invite those around your table to pick one of the symbols as a starting point for conversation.

For individual devotion (daily or weekly), choose one of the symbols for reflection as you make your way through the season of Lent. How does your interpretation of the symbol change over time?

Use each symbol as a conversation starter during weekly Lenten suppers or small group gatherings with your congregation.

**Week 1: Sand** Just between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days to be tested. What constitutes wilderness in your life? What have you learned there? What might you learn there? Read the story of Jesus wandering in the desert. (Luke 4:1-11) Open the sand and touch it.

**Week 2: Paperwhite Bulb** Watching a bulb grow reminds us of the miracle of hope and transformation that is the promise of Easter. The bulb changes, decaying as it transforms into a new life that we can't even really imagine when we plant it. Where is hope in your life? Where is mystery? What transformation do you hope for during the season of Lent? Talk about change. What things can you think of that change? Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Leavened Bread. (Matthew 13:31-32, 33)

Directions for growing your bulb from [about.gardening.com](http://about.gardening.com). Select a container that is 3-4" deep and has no drainage holes. Spread 1-2" of stones, marbles or gravel along the bottom of the container. Position your paper white bulb(s), pointed end up, on top of the stone layer. Add more stones to cover the bulbs up to their shoulders. The pointed tips should still be showing. Add water so that the level just reaches the base of the bulbs. (Allowing the bottom of the bulb to sit in water will stimulate growth; covering the entire bulb with water will cause rot.) The bulbs don't need light at this point. Keep them on the cool side, about 65 degrees. Check your bulbs daily to see if they need more water. When the roots develop, move the container to a sunny window. The sunnier the better, but not too warm. Once the plants flower, they will last longer if moved out of direct sunlight, to a cool spot with indirect or diffused light.



**Week 3: Rock** While in the wilderness, Jesus was invited to transform stone into bread. Though he resisted the temptation there and then, he became justly renowned for feeding people who were hungry for food, love, a word of encouragement, or for simple acceptance. Might there be a stony place in you that needs transforming? Some attitude or habit that, with a little attention, might even become a gift for you and others?" Read the story of Zacchaeus. (Luke 19:1-10) Jesus transforms us and helps us make better choices. Is there a place in your life you could make better choices?

**Week 4: Shell** Historically, the season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Jesus began his ministry after his baptism. As someone who has been or will be baptized, what is your ministry? How are you living out the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant? Read the story of Jesus' baptism. (Luke 3: 21-22) Share memories of your child's or your own baptism.

**Week 5: Human Figure** Because Jesus was fully human, he gets us, understands us from inside our skin, and knows from experience that we're each capable of great things, Godly things. And no matter what we do, he keeps on inviting us to join us in his work which has become our own. As you enter this Lent, what might you plan to do over these 40 days so that the Easter you will more closely reflect you and the Christ who lives in and through you? Read the story of Jesus washing the disciple's feet. (John 13:1-17) How can we live like Jesus?

**Week 6: Candle** Lent begins in the dimness of late winter and ends with the burst of bright spring. Jesus is, according to John's gospel, 'Light of the world' and that Light tells us: You are the light of the world. Don't be hiding under some bushel basket. So where do you shine? How do you keep your light lit? Sing "This little light of mine." How do you let your light shine?

## SERMON HELP FOR WADE IN THE WATER ON SUNDAYS USING THE LECTIONARY TEXTS

In addition to using the *Wade in the Water* theme for midweek worship services, you can also incorporate this theme into your Sunday worship service. You could even replace the regular Sunday liturgy with the services as they are written.

If you would like to use the lectionary texts, here are a few sermon helps for you.

### MARCH 9, 2025 WEEK 1: LIVING AMONG GOD’S FAITHFUL PEOPLE

As you think about living among God’s faithful people, notice the first reading refers to the community living, working, suffering, travelling, making offering, etc., even among those who are Levites and aliens.

In the psalm, our first inclination might be to read “you” in the singular, but consider what it might mean to hear this psalm with “you” being the community of faith in your life, or the community of faith in Christ around the world.

Living among God’s faithful people means surrounding yourself with others who proclaim Jesus is Lord. Who do we surround ourselves with in our daily lives? When we surround ourselves with people/places/things that don’t point us to Christ, are we surrounding ourselves with temptation?

### MARCH 16, 2025 WEEK 2: HEAR THE WORD AND SHARE THE SUPPER

Ponder what it means to hear God speaking to us. How do we know if it is the voice of God, or our own voice guiding us? What are some indications... am I looking for my own self-interest; am I looking to serve God and God’s people?

When considering the second reading and the gospel, think about what being in community and being protected means: sharing not just a community or a dwelling, but also sharing meals and caring for those around you by support and compassion.

### MARCH 23, 2025 WEEK 3: PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS IN WORD AND DEED

Proclaiming the Good News is something to make a daily practice, and not just something we do during a worship service. Even in the most trying times, God is with us, and as Jesus promised, God’s love is for us. What would change in our lives if we tried for even one week to daily share the Good News of God’s love through Christ by simply telling someone, “Jesus loves you, and so do I.”? How would that impact the person hearing those words from you? This is easy if the person we speak to is someone we get along with, but what if we reach out to those who we have been estranged from for whatever reason?

### MARCH 30, 2025 WEEK 4: SERVE ALL PEOPLE FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

There is so much to say about the Prodigal Son, you could pick about nearly every line and find meaning in it! Breaking down the characters and considering their place in the story, along with the one you most identify with, might be a good place to start.

Prodigal means extravagant. The son wants to live an extravagant life before his father dies and he gets his inheritance, only to find himself alone and destitute, having to head back home to beg to be a servant to his father. The brother works hard and follows the rules, waiting for the day when the extravagance of the inheritance will come to him.

The father is so moved when he sees the lost son returning, he wants to lay all kinds of extravagance upon his son, who he thought he would never see again. This angers the “obedient” son. When he voices this, the father tells him that he has had all of this all along.

Where is God in this story? Where is Jesus? Where are you?

APRIL 6, 2025 WEEK 5: STRIVE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

In the gospel, Jesus tells people that they will always have to poor with them. When we think about this, we might benefit from expanding the idea to consider what “poor” might mean. Thinking of things that bring us down, like poverty, we can also think of shame, hunger, illness, addiction, unemployment, separation from friends and family, incarceration, war, people forced from their homes/homelands, etc.

Striving for justice and peace means more than including these in our prayer; it means taking action. What ministry and mission are you involved with that helps to alleviate these things in the lives of others? How can you help to make the world better for those who feel lost and forgotten?