

Season of Lent

Crafting the Liturgy — Seasonal Planning Page

Lent is a season well spent examining our connection to Christ and how our own need for him is a critical aspect of our lives. Times of solitude and meditation are encouraged during this season as we reflect on our own broken nature and what Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. The discipleship practices of prayer, generosity, worship, study, fasting, and service all can help us to focus on Jesus' sacrificial love.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SEASON

The following are some ideas for helping to make the season distinct and memorable. Congregations are free to adapt these suggestions, or follow the local customs of the congregation.

Preparing the Worship Space

Having a stark, sparsely decorated worship space can lend to the solemnity of the season of Lent. Modest plants, banners, and adornments prevent distracting the worshipping community from focusing on extraneous things rather than the cross. Consider using grapevine wreaths or strands to add texture to the otherwise clean, smooth lines of linens and paraments. During Holy Week, a set of "stations of the cross" may be added where other banners had once hung.

Add elements to the space that can be used in conversation during the season. Use this as a means for spiritual formation for the community of saints who might not understand the meaning of Lenten symbols. Such elements might include nails, a linen robe, a crown of thorns, etc.

Liturgical Color

The liturgical color for Lent is purple, a color of royalty. During Holy Week a wine color is appropriate, too, as it represents the shedding of Jesus' blood. On Good Friday, the color is black (if paraments are used at all).

The Gathering

Use the Kyrie in Lent because it is a time for us to cry out to God for mercy. For something different than the traditional Kyrie, consider using the very solemn, "Lord Have Mercy," by Steve Merkel (CCLI# 2989578). A cantor might sing the verses with the congregation joining in on the chorus.

The Creed

Use the Apostles' Creed during Lent as the church reflects on the power and promises of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The Offering

Consider singing "Change My Heart, O God" (CCLI# 1565) as the Offering Hymn for Lent. It reflects the penitential nature of the season and can be sung as the gifts are brought forward to the altar.

The Lord's Supper

Lent is a perfect time to focus on instruction about the Sacrament of the Altar. In the early church, the catechuminate was excused during Holy Communion and admitted to the table only at their baptism at the Vigil of Easter. Use this time to bolster the community of faith in their knowledge of our Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist. On Maundy Thursday, have first communicants partake of the Lord's Supper on the night when Jesus instituted the Sacrament. Instruct people who have never been a part of the distribution of the Sacrament to serve in that role during Lent.

REMINDERS FOR THE SEASON

- ✦ Check out Sola's Lent midweek programs for worship.
- ✦ If you need ashes for Ash Wednesday, there is a palm-burning liturgy that can be used with a small group — students, perhaps — to help you prepare them. This liturgy can be found on SOWeR's Lent Season page.
- ✦ Consider sending daily emails with the upcoming Sunday's lessons. Use the text study sheets and/or the weekly worship planning sheets as material to begin your reflections.
- ✦ Remember to "hide the alleluia" either on Transfiguration Sunday or the First Sunday in Lent. This is a great way to get children involved in the worship service and explain a tradition of the church. There are some pre-made "alleluias" on the Lent Season page of SOWeR.
- ✦ As you celebrate Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, consider making your own bread. When something small is changed, like having real unleavened bread rather than wafers, it can connect to the senses and spark thought in a believer's mind.
- ✦ Instruct altar workers on the process of stripping the altar for Maundy Thursday. Conduct a practice session if they aren't confident with the flow of removing each piece from the altar and chancel space.
- ✦ Get readers their lessons ahead of time if you plan on doing a chorale reading for any of the worship services during Holy Week. There are downloadable resources on SOWeR.

LESSER FESTIVALS

March 19: St. Joseph

The Church remembers St. Joseph for his faithfulness in fathering Jesus. Obedient to the angel's instruction that he should marry his fiancé Mary as planned and raise the Son of God as his own, Joseph was a pillar of goodness and faith.

Bible Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4-16; Psalm 37:1-7; Romans 4:13-18; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

COMMEMORATIONS

Feb. 18: Martin Luther (November 10, 1843 – February 18, 1546), Doctor and Confessor

Mar. 17: Patrick (4th century AD – c. March 17, 460 AD), Missionary to Ireland

Mar. 31: Joseph (c. 1600 BC – c. 1490 BC), Patriarch

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday

The tone of Ash Wednesday is one of repentance as the cleansing ashes of Christ's love are inscribed upon our foreheads, the same place where in our baptism we were anointed, washed, and claimed as God's own. Jesus reminds his followers that they are to approach their acts of piety with humility and gratefulness, rather than publicly for the praise of others. Christ is our one true treasure that gives life.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Joel 2:12-19

The prophet pronounced the destruction that would come on the day of the Lord and called God's people to repentance. The promise attached to sincere repentance and undivided devotion to the Lord was his never-failing mercy and grace for the gathered assembly.

Psalm 51:1-13 (14-19)

King David, having been convicted of his sins against God, confessed his guilt and pleaded for forgiveness. He was greatly distressed that he might be removed from the presence of God. That would have been certain death to the king who strayed from God's ways and took what he wanted even though it didn't belong to him.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

St. Paul explained that Jesus, the sinless lamb of God, took on the sin of all humanity even though he himself had no sin. In exchange, we sinners are granted Christ's righteousness. We who believe are made ambassadors for Christ and servants of God who are called to endure affliction, hardship and scorn in his name.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Jesus warned his disciples about showing off their devotion in front of others. God sees our motives and examines what is in our hearts. Believers have no need to impress anyone, but are taught to pray, give, and fast out of our deep sense of love for God and what he has first done for us.

Rend Your Hearts

David's Cry for Forgiveness

Ambassadors for Christ

Pray in Secret

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles' Creed.

There is a pre-formatted Ash Wednesday Liturgy that can be downloaded and printed on the "Liturgies & Services" page of SOWeR. You can also copy and paste the liturgy from the PDF into a bulletin if that is preferable.

Use the PDF printable page, "Why the Ashes on Ash Wednesday" to help bring young worshipers understand why we do what we do on this day in the church year. (Find it on SOWeR.)

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
What Has Our God Required of Us?	---	---	---	---	---	web
I Lay My Sins on Jesus	305	---	606	---	---	web
Just As I Am	296	---	570	592	193	193
Today Your Mercy Calls Us	304	---	915	---	---	web
Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain	301	---	435	---	188	188
Chief Of Sinners Though I Be	306	---	611	609	187	187
Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service	423	---	848	712	---	---
Where Charity and Love Prevail	126	---	845	359	---	---
Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow	282	---	880	568	---	---
Abide With Me	272	---	878	629	62	62

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Lamb of God (CCLI #16787)
Lord, Listen to Your Children ... (CCLI # 22829)
We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise (CCLI # 9990)
Once Again (CCLI # 1564362)
You are Holy (CCLI # 2240619)

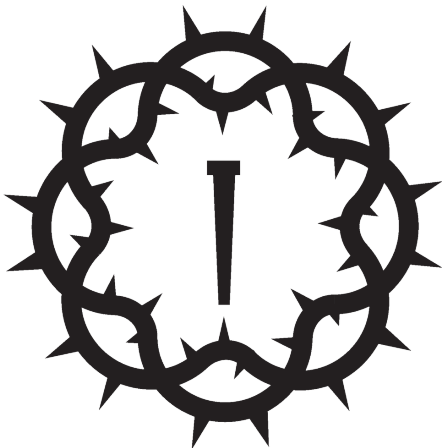
The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Lent 1

February 22, 2026

First Sunday in Lent

This Sunday’s Gospel marks the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry as the Spirit pronounces him “Son of God” and drives him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. We, too, in our baptism, are pronounced children of God, which means we will face similar trials and temptations as our Lord did. The good news for us is that we will never be alone in our trials; Christ goes before us and remains with us.



THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Genesis 3:1-21

Temptation in the Garden

The serpent craftily convinced Eve to mistrust the goodness of God and eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil even though she and Adam were forbidden to do so. God pronounced the consequences of the first humans’ disobedience. Our continuing struggle is our lack of faithfulness toward the faithful God.

Psalm 32:1-7

God Offers Forgiveness

The psalmist recounted the joy of having experienced God’s forgiveness. The pain of holding in guilt contrasts with the relief of acknowledging and coming to terms with sin by bringing it to the Lord in honesty and hearing his saving Word in return.

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Free Gift of Grace

Paul compared the means by which sin entered the world through Adam and with the way righteousness was given through Jesus Christ, driving home the concept that, through Jesus, righteousness is the free gift of God’s grace.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Temptation of Jesus

Jesus’ preparation for his public ministry involved time in the desert during which he was tempted to display his power and use it for his own benefit. The temptation served to solidify Jesus’ understanding of himself and his ministry and displayed his humility and obedience to the will of his Father. Nothing Satan offered Jesus would make him turn away from his mission on earth. Jesus was focused and faithful.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

Focus on the fact that there is a clear difference between temptation and testing in the Scriptures. The devil tempts. He twists God’s word so that it sounds reasonable, but there is always something “off.” God never tempts — he tests. His testing is to help us learn his ways and to help us trust that he is in control and will always be with us. Testing is educational.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
The Sun Beat Down Upon His Head	---	---	---	---	---	web
Just As I Am	296	---	570	592	193	193
O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days	99	---	418	319	---	---
In the Cross of Christ I Glory	104	---	427	324	138	138
Lord Jesus, Think on Me	309	---	610	599	178	178
Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word	230	---	655	517	71	71
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me	---	660	---	325	---	---
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	482	---	425	803	132	---
Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing	259	---	924	545	54	54
What A Friend We Have in Jesus	439	---	770	742	223	223

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:

Forgiveness
(CCLI# 6423944)
Song of Repentance
(CCLI# 4694713)
Lord, I Need You
(CCLI# 5925687)
Give Me Jesus
(CCLI# 4874344)
One Thing
(CCLI# 7047247)

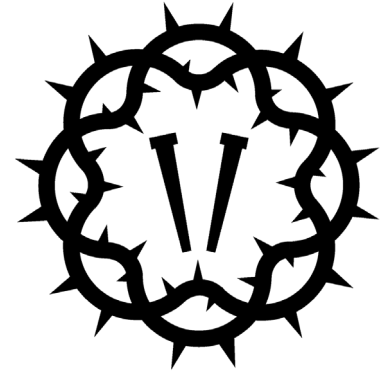
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Lent 2

March 1, 2026

Second Sunday in Lent

Our God is faithful and his promises are trustworthy and true. In return for his abiding love, He calls us to faithfulness to him. Abram was called away from home to start life anew under the protection of God. His faithful obedience to the Lord is lifted up as an example by St. Paul thousands of years later as the apostle teaches the church in Rome to rely on God, who will lead them in all of his ways.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-9

God's Covenant with Abram

The one who would become the patriarch of Israel was called to leave home and land and journey far away to become a great nation. Abram would be blessed by God to be a blessing to others. In his old age, he left all he knew and ventured to a foreign land to make his way to Canaan, as God instructed.

Psalm 121

God is our Help

The psalmist sang of the source of help, which is God's abiding presence in all circumstances. God's presence can be counted on day, night, and in the midst of all evil. He has vowed to remain with us now and forevermore.

Second Reading: Romans 4:1-8, 13-17

Faith as Righteousness

Paul drew on the example of Abraham's faith in God's covenant promise and that faith as the source of Abraham's righteousness as he exhorted the church in Rome (and us) to realize that the promise of God's righteousness is for all who share the faith of Abraham, trusting in God's promises alone.

Gospel Reading: John 3:1-17

A Secret Meeting with Jesus

In an exchange with Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, Jesus explained that one must be born of water and the Spirit in order to see the kingdom of God. Jesus declared that his God-given mission of being sent into the world was not to condemn the world, but rather that all might be saved.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles' Creed.

Consider focusing on the Third Article of the Creed today — how we come to faith in Christ. Encourage families to spend some time this week discussing how the Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church." This is not something we do for ourselves, and faith is not a "good work." Discuss how this idea applies to Nicodemus as he comes to Jesus at night and in secret.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Beneath the Cross of Jesus	107	---	---	338	142	142
God Loved the World	292	---	571	323	---	---
Lift High the Cross	377	---	837	660	269	269
All Who Believe and Are Baptized	194	---	601	442	75	75
If You Will (But) Trust in God to Guide You	453	---	750	769	222	222
Baptized in Water	---	693	---	456	---	---
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	479	---	702	759	243	243
Blessed Assurance	---	699	---	638	190	190
It is Well with My Soul	346	---	763	785	224	224
Great is Thy Faithfulness	---	771	809	733	211	211

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:

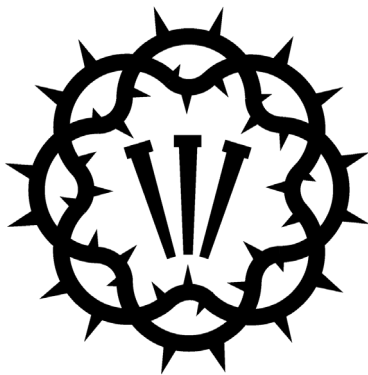
By Faith
(CCLI# 5469291)
It is Well
(CCLI# 7021972)
God of Wonders
(CCLI# 3118757)
Here's My Heart
(CCLI# 517898)
Faith
(CCLI# 3001613)

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Lent 3

March 8, 2028

Third Sunday in Lent



The story from Exodus for today points to humanity’s perpetual lack of faith as the Israelites complain about a lack of water in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to strike a rock and water gushed forth, filling all Israel’s needs for refreshment and life. In the Gospel, a woman comes to faith in Jesus when he asks her for a drink during an exchange at Jacob’s well. She soon discovers Living Water in him.

THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

Water from a Rock

The Israelites, disgruntled over a lack of drinking water while traveling in the wilderness, expressed their frustrations to Moses. Moses responded, asking them why they insisted on testing the Lord. He cried out to God in his own frustration, and God provided for their needs, producing water flowing from a rock.

Psalm 95:1-9

The Rock of Our Salvation

The psalmist urged the people not to be like their ancestors who fussed and complained at Massah and Meribah, but rather to sing praises to God for his greatness. God is our God, and we are the people he loves and for whom he provides.

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

Peace Through God

Since we are justified by faith, we are able to face life’s adversities with hope. In fact, we rejoice in our sufferings because of the character and hope which develop in the midst of them. The gift of peace comes with the great gift of being made right with God through faith in Christ.

Gospel Reading: John 4:5-26 (27-30, 39-42)

Living Water

Jesus breached social and religious boundaries when he spoke to a woman of Samaria at the village well. In the process, he revealed to her his true identity as the Messiah and offered her Living Water. She was so overwhelmed by all that Jesus knew about her that she ran back to town and proclaimed in faith whom she had seen. Many came to believe that Jesus is the Messiah of God because of her testimony.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

Think of all the ways in which we depend on water for life. Water is such an ordinary thing, but when we lack it, we can find ourselves in trouble. With today’s Scriptures focusing on water, it would be a perfect time to highlight how many people around the world suffer from nonpotable water and water shortages. Consider taking a special offering for a well for your global mission partners.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	497	---	699	332	241	241
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing	499	---	686	807	227	227
Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer	343	---	918	618	---	---
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me	327	---	761	623	226	226
Built on the Rock	365	---	645	652	91	---
There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy	290	---	---	587	186	186
When Peace Like a River	346	---	763	785	224	224
In Christ There is No East or West	359	---	653	650	---	---
Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service	423	---	848	712	---	---
Jesus, Refuge of the Weary	93	---	423	---	---	---

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:
How Great is Our God (CCLI# 4348399)
Living Water (CCLI# 5050284)
As the Deer (CCLI# 1431)
Is Anyone Thirsty (CCLI# 1083795)
Open the Eyes of My Heart (CCLI# 2298355)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Lent 4

March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Themes of light and darkness, sight and blindness pervade the lessons for this Sunday. As humans mired in the sin that holds us captive, we fail to recognize our blindness. Christ calls us into the light of his life, love, and mercy as he beckons us to come and follow him. In that following, we come to see things in ways we have never seen them before, and the light of Christ shines through us.



THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 42:14–21

God Restores His People

God spoke to Israel, who could not hear or see his holy presence but stooped to worship false gods and carved idols. The Lord had held his peace long enough; now he would cry out like a mother about to deliver a child. His word would create a new reality in which darkness was turned to light and the rough places were made level.

Psalm 142

God Our Refuge

In the midst of trial, abandonment, and persecution, the psalmist had nowhere to turn — except to God. God would listen to the psalmist’s cries for help, and he would be the source of refuge for the one in anguish.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8–14

Children of Light

Paul used the images of light and darkness as an analogy for life before and after new life in Christ. The apostle exhorted the Christians in Ephesus to walk as “children of light,” discerning the will of God, doing nothing that was couched in darkness or sin.

Gospel Reading: John 9:1–41

The Blind Will See

Jesus healed a man who was blind from birth. This action led to a confrontation with the Pharisees because it occurred on a Sabbath day. The subsequent conversations brought some to faith, but they brought the Pharisees to a state of frustration. Jesus cautioned the religious leaders regarding the assumption that they saw things clearly, stating that those who were blind saw and those who had sight were living in blindness.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

Consider focusing on what Jesus said in this Gospel lesson about sin and suffering as we often wonder why a person suffers so much. Jesus pointed out that it was not sin that caused the man to be born blind, contrary to what the people thought. Instead, his disability was used to bring glory to God through Jesus’ healing of his eyes.

How do we glorify God in the midst of our suffering?

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Be Thou My Vision	---	776	---	793	230	230
Jesus, Refuge of the Weary	93	---	423	---	---	---
Renew Me, O Eternal Light	511	---	704	---	---	---
Holy God, We Praise Your Name	535	---	940	414	13	13
Amazing Grace	448	---	744	779	199	199
Word of God, Come Down on Earth	---	716	545	510	---	---
Healer of Our Every Ill	---	738	---	612	---	---
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light	---	649	411	815	---	---
Give Me Jesus	---	777	---	770	214	214
The King of Love My Shepherd Is	456	---	709	502	198	198

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:

Mercy
(CCLI# 7000689)
Stronger Than Ever
(CCLI# 5310728)
In Your Light
(CCLI# 6256726)
Endless Light
(CCLI# 6177300)
I Am Free
(CCLI# 4220974)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Lent 5

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent



Today we are reminded of the blessed promise that God brings life out of death. Whether it is breath to dead, brittle, dry bones or hope for those stuck in sorrow and despair, new life emerges by God’s mighty hand. Jesus demonstrates this power to those around him as he raises Lazarus from the dead after four long days. This miracle foreshadows his own impending death and resurrection.

THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14 **Valley of the Dry Bones**
God revealed through a vision to the prophet Ezekiel his promise to restore the decimated and exiled nation of Israel: a valley of dry bones was brought back to life. Ezekiel was then told to prophesy to Israel revealing God’s promise, and that, through God’s faithfulness, Israel would know that God is the Lord of life.

Psalm 130 **My Soul Waits for the Lord**
The psalmist cried from the depths of despair, acknowledging that although none are worthy to stand before the Lord, God is a merciful and forgiving Lord.

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11 **Life in the Spirit**
Paul contrasted life in the Spirit with living according to the flesh, which leads to death. He reminded the church in Rome that if the Spirit of God dwells in them through Jesus Christ, then just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so also would their mortal bodies be given resurrection life.

Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45 (46-53) **Lazarus is Raised**
When Lazarus became ill and died, Jesus was days away from Bethany. When he finally arrived four days after his friend’s death, Jesus brought him back to life. This miraculous action amazed all those gathered around the tomb of Mary and Martha’s brother. When word of Jesus’ last and most extraordinary miracle reached the Pharisees, they realized they would not be able to control Jesus’ growing impact on the people, and thus they began to plot to have him killed.

Suggestions for the Sunday:

Liturgical Color: Purple

During the Season of Lent:

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

The Gospel story foreshadows Jesus’ own death and resurrection, even as it is the last straw for those who wanted Jesus to disappear from the scene. His raising of Lazarus from dead after four days (meaning it was way past time for a resuscitation) caused many to praise him and come to believe in him. God is able to do the impossible! As the angel said at the announcement of his birth, “With God all things are possible!” (Luke 1:37)

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
What Wondrous Love is This	385	---	543	666	254	254
Glory Be to Jesus	95	---	433	---	136	136
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	482	---	425	803	132	132
Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing	559	---	528	886	30	30
Through the Night of Dark and Sorrow	355	---	---	327	---	---
In the Morning When I Rise (Give Me Jesus)	---	777	---	770	214	214
There is a Balm in Gilead	---	737	749	614	---	---
Jesus, Come! For We Invite You	---	648	---	312	---	---
O Christ, Our Hope	300	---	553	604	---	web
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less	294	---	575	596	293	293

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at “Hymns and Music.”

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:
Trading My Sorrows (CCLI# 2574653)
The Way (CCLI# 7023304)
God Will Make A Way (CCLI# 458620)
My Life is in You (CCLI# 17315)
Take My Life (CCLI# 1617154)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Palm/Passion Sunday

March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion

As Holy Week begins, we are drawn into the dramatic turn of events of the last days of Jesus’ life. On Sunday he is welcomed into Jerusalem with shouts of joy and roaring hosannas. By the end of the week he is betrayed, arrested, and abandoned by Passover pilgrims and his closest friends. Things turn quickly from a parade to a death sentence carried out on a cross between two thieves.



THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Processional Gospel Reading: John 12:12-19 **Triumphal Entry**
Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem to shouts of “Hosanna!” and a crowd calling him the King of Israel. The Pharisees continued to be threatened by Jesus’ presence.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a **The Lord Vindicates His Servant**
Isaiah declared that no amount of persecution or malevolence could disgrace him, for the Lord God is his help. He had been given the wisdom of the those who have been taught by the Lord. If God is our help, who then can declare us guilty?

Psalms 31:9-16 **Let Me Not Be Put to Shame**
The psalmist cried out in pain. Misery and despair came upon him, and he asked the Lord to deliver him from his plight. He who had been forgotten by men asked to be remembered by the Lord.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11 **Every Knee Shall Bow**
Paul reminded the congregation at Philippi that Jesus humbled himself by becoming human. He adopted a servant nature and was fully obedient to God — an obedience that included death on a cross.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 26:1—27:66 **The Passion of Jesus**
Matthew recalled the events leading up to Jesus’ death by crucifixion, beginning with the chief priests’ and elders’ plot to kill Jesus after the Passover but before the Sabbath. Unfortunately, Jesus’ own followers would participate in his demise.

Suggestions for the Sunday:
Liturgical Color: Purple
During the Season of Lent:
• Use the Kyrie.
• Omit the Hymn of Praise
• Use the Apostles’ Creed.
Encourage children to line up before worship begins for a palm procession. During the Opening Hymn have them come in singing and waving their palm branches.
Make sure that the congregation has a written list of the worship schedule for Holy Week. Use social media to get the word out about upcoming services, including next Sunday’s Easter worship times.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
All Glory, Laud, and Honor	108	---	442	344	146	146
Prepare the Royal Highway	26	---	343	264	102	102
Jesus, Priceless Treasure	458	---	743	775	457	457
My Song is Love Unknown	94	661	430	343	---	---
The Royal Banners Forward Go	124	---	455	---	125	125
Lift High the Cross	377	---	837	660	269	269
Ah, Holy Jesus	123	---	---	349	133	133
Jesus, I Will Ponder Now	115	---	440	345	---	---
There in God’s Garden	---	668	---	342	---	---
There is a Green Hill Far Away	114	---	---	---	137	137

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The Reclaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at “Hymns and Music.”

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:
Grace (What Sets the Sinner Free) (CCLI# 5807114)
Sing Hosanna (CCLI# 5779015)
Hosanna, Praise is Rising (CCLI# 4662491)
Blessed is He (CCLI# 593956)
Betrayed with a Kiss (CCLI# 4816209)

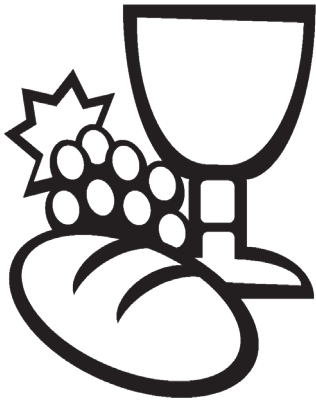
The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 2026

Maundy Thursday

Today recalls Jesus’ last supper with his closest friends, during which he institutes what the church knows as the sacrament of Holy Communion. As a sign of his servant-love, Jesus washes his disciples’ feet and gives them a new commandment, that they should love one another as he has loved them. We see ourselves in the disciples, who will abandon their Lord in various ways as Jesus makes his way to the cross.



THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Mandatum Reading: John 13:1-35

Love One Another

Jesus’ new love commandment was demonstrated by the washing of the disciples’ feet. He commanded them to wash one another’s feet, as well — an act of humility and service signifying Jesus’ great love for all people.

First Reading: Exodus 24:3-11

The Passover of the Lord

The Israelites were given instructions to prepare for their flight from Egypt in the aftermath of God’s judgment upon Pharaoh, the massive loss of life among the Egyptians. Instructions included how to mark their dwellings to ensure that the Angel of Death would pass over their homes.

Psalm 116:12-19

Sacrifice of Praise

The psalmist sang praises to the Lord; he was grateful for all the Lord has given. A sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving served as a witness for all to see and repeat.

Second Reading: Hebrews 9:11-22

St. Paul recounted the words of Jesus at the Last Supper that bind the body of Christ together into one holy communion. All were invited to come to the table in true unity.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 26:17-30

The Lord’s Supper

Jesus instructed his friends on preparing for them a Passover meal. This would be their last supper together before he was arrested and crucified.

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Purple or scarlet

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

Make sure to have anointing oil ready for individual blessings if you plan to do that during worship.

Have basins, towels, and pitchers prepared for the Mandatum. If your congregation has never done a footwashing before, ask a few people to come forward first so that others will be more apt to follow.

Have altar workers lined up to help with the stripping of the altar at the conclusion of the service.

Consider chanting Psalm 22 during the stripping of the altar.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Where Charity and Love Prevail	126	---	845	359	---	---
O Living Bread from Heaven	197	---	642	542	84	84
Let Us Break Bread Together	212	---	---	471	83	83
Abide With Me	272	---	878	629	62	62
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence	198	---	621	490	80	80
Eat this Bread, Drink This Cup	---	706	638	492	---	---
Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service	423	---	848	712	---	---
O Love, How Deep	88	---	544	322	---	---
Come, Let Us Eat	214	---	626	491	---	---
Ubi Caritas	---	665	---	653	---	---

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CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:
(There is) Love (CCLI# 5203347)
The Problem is Me (CCLI# 4797184)
All I Want (CCLI# 5900774)
Lift Your Head, Weary Sinner (CCLI# 7022191)
Lord, Have Mercy (CCLI# 2989578)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.

Good Friday

April 3, 2026

Good Friday

This holy day recalls the last hours of Jesus’ life as the suffering servant is nailed to the cross, fulfilling his mission as the sacrificial Lamb of God. The sinless One takes on humanity’s sin as he is betrayed by his closest companions, arrested and sentenced to a shameful death, even as Pontius Pilate finds no fault in him. We see ourselves in the angry crowd and lament our own denial of our Lord.



THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13—53:12 **Pierced for Our Transgressions**

Isaiah spoke of the one to come who would suffer for our sin, despised and rejected, afflicted and crushed by our iniquities. Like a lamb to the slaughter, so this innocent one would be put to death for the sins of the wicked. Many would be counted as righteous because of his intercessory suffering.

Psalm 22 **Why Have You Forsaken Me?**

The psalmist cried out to the Lord in the midst of feelings of being rejected and forsaken. The same words that Jesus would utter from the cross are first heard here in this psalm of lament. Mocked, scorned, and put to shame, the psalmist still confessed the Lord as God and cried for help even as his body wasted away.

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9 **Jesus, Our Great High Priest**

Jesus Christ, our great high priest, understands fully this human life, having lived as a man, suffered for our transgressions even though he was without sin, and cried for deliverance as he was hanging on the cross. This Jesus offers us undeserved mercy and grace even as his suffering has become the source of our eternal salvation.

Gospel Reading: John 18:1—19:42 **Betrayal, Arrest, and Crucifixion of Jesus**

Though it was unlawful for religious people to carry out any executions, the people surrounding Jesus pushed for his trial and crucifixion. The Roman leaders were all too satisfied to oblige, even if just to quell the unrest among the Jewish pilgrims.

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Black (or none)

- Use the Kyrie.
- Omit the Hymn of Praise
- Use the Apostles’ Creed.

Keep the chancel simplified following the previous worship’s stripping of the altar. Place black shrouds on the altar and all other appropriate furniture in the worship space.

Consider lighting the chancel space with multiple candles instead of electric light to create a solemn mood as the sun goes down and the worship space grows dark.

You will find the Bidding Prayer for Good Friday on the Lent Season page of SOWeR.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
Beneath the Cross of Jesus	107	---	---	338	142	142
Ah, Holy Jesus	123	---	---	349	133	133
Go to Dark Gethsemane	109	---	436	347	145	145
Were You There?	92	---	456	353	147	147
Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed	98	---	437	337	143	143
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded	117	---	449	352	116	116
In the Hour of Trial	106	---	---	---	141	141
Jesus, in Thy Dying Woes	112	---	447	---	113	113
The Old Rugged Cross	---	---	---	---	139	139
What Wondrous Love is This	385	---	543	666	254	254

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW= Lutheran Book of Worship, WOV= With One Voice, ELW= Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB= The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC= The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at “Hymns and Music.”

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles:
Betrayed with a Kiss (CCLI# 4816209)
Lord, I Need You (CCLI# 5925687)
At the Cross (Love Ran Red) (CCLI# 7017786)
Worthy is the Lamb (CCLI# 3217555)
Above All (CCLI# 2672885)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.