

Liturgy
The First Sunday in Lent
Year A

GATHERING

We are gathered to worship the eternal God.
He is the source of love and life,
who creates and sustains us.

**Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.**

How blessed are those whose hope is in the LORD!

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty –
Say to the LORD:

**My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!
His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.**

*For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
to guard you in all your ways.*

*They will bear you up in their hands,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.*

When you call on Him, He will answer.

He will be with you in trouble;

He will rescue you and honor you,

and you will see His salvation.

“Because you have loved Me,” declares the LORD,
“I will deliver you. I will set you securely on high,
because you have known My name.”

**Let the righteous be glad in the LORD, and take refuge in Him!
Let all the upright in heart exult and offer praise!**

– Scripture weaving from Psalms 91 and 64

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe –
His craft and pow’r are great, and armed with cruèl hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus it is He –
Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And tho’ this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him –
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure:
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly pow’rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also –
The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still:
His kingdom is forever.

Words and hymn tune: Martin Luther, 1529. Transl. from German to English by Frederic H. Hedge, 1853.
Setting: Ellen Koehler Copyright ©2015 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.

*LECTIONARY for the first Sunday in
Lent, Year A:*

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

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Traditionally, Lent has been a time of focus and reflection on the atoning and reconciling work of Christ. For centuries, Christians have observed this six-week period preceding the commemoration of the Savior’s death on the cross as a special season of fasting, repentance, and prayer. For many, Lent has taken on the particular characteristic and practice of spiritual discipline—a time of putting something off (a habit perhaps, an attitude, or an indulgence) in order to make time and room in our lives for those activities and attitudes that draw us closer to God and allow us to serve others. In this season, in some ways more consciously than in others, we seek to become ever more like Christ—in His devotion to the Father’s will, in His acts of love and service, and also in His sufferings—that we may be increasingly formed into His image and filled with His heart and mind.

In Year A, the Revised Common Lectionary weaves through the weekly Lenten readings the theme of life—in particular, as seen in a journey (or progression, if you will) from death to life, guided, encouraged, and directed by the holy God of love and hope. We’ll see aspects of this in the psalms and epistle lections, and in incidents from the lives of several familiar biblical figures. The journey from death to life may be figurative or, in some cases, literal. Making these lessons and stories a part of our own Lenten journeys will not only aid us in one of our Lenten goals: to become more like Christ in all things. It will also guide our walk and our worship through these weeks of Lent to the ultimate celebration of “from death to life” — Resurrection Sunday!

In each of the three years of the lec-

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

I Will Exalt You

I will exalt You. I will exalt You.
I will exalt You. You are my God.
Because You're with me, because You're with me,
Because you're with me, I will not fear.

Chorus:

My hiding place, my safe refuge.
My treasure, Lord, You are.
My friend and King, Anointed One.
Most holy.

CCLI Song #5409079 © 2009 Hillsong Publishing Australia;
Brooke Ligertwood.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Let us together profess the faith of the church of all ages
in the words from the pen of the Apostle Paul:

Just as sin entered the world through one man, Adam,
and death came through sin,
so death came to all, because all have sinned.

But the gift of God is not like the trespass.

**For if the many died by the trespass of the one man,
how much more did God's grace
and the free gift that came by the grace of the one Man,
Jesus Christ,
overflow to the many!**

Nor can the gift of God be compared
with the result of the one man's sin:

**The judgment followed one sin
and brought condemnation,
but the gift followed many trespasses
and brought justification.**

For if death reigned through the trespass of the one man,
how much more will those
who receive God's abundant provision of grace
and the gift of righteousness
reign in life through the one Man,
Jesus Christ!

**For just as by the one man's disobedience
the many were made sinners,
so also through the obedience of the one Man
the many will be made righteous.**

— from Romans 5:12-19

Thanks be to God!

tionary cycle, the first Sunday of Lent includes the account of the temptations of Christ in the desert. In this liturgy, we follow not only Christ's victory over Satan there, but also weave through His victory as the Last Adam and His provision and incomparable gift of eternal life.

Music for Ellen's setting of the Gathering hymn, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet. (It is available scored for organ or keyboard on request.)

Here's a link:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/mighty-fortress-our-god>

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Blessed are those
whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are those

*whose sin the Lord does not count against them,
and in whose spirits is no deceit.*

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

**Then I acknowledged my sin to You
and did not cover up my iniquity.**

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”

And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to You.

– Psalm 32:1-6a

[Silent confessions]

Most merciful God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, was tempted in every way,
yet was without sin, we confess before You our own sinfulness.

**We have hungered after that which does not satisfy; we have
compromised with evil; we have doubted Your power to protect us.
Forgive our lack of faith; have mercy on our weakness. Restore in us
such trust and love that we may walk in Your ways and delight in
doing Your will, to the glory of Your name. Amen.**

Agnus Dei

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.
(repeat)

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Grant us peace.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Grant us peace, grant us your peace.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The word of the Lord; His promises are trustworthy and true:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

**You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;
You surround me with songs of deliverance.**

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but those who trust in the LORD,
lovingkindness will surround them.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones;
and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart!

– from Psalm 32:7-11

Passing of the Peace

The prayer of confession is taken from Reformed Worship, a quarterly journal of resources for planning and leading worship. CRC Publications, #34, December 1994. (Resources are declared to be in the public domain.)

URL: <http://www.reformedworship.org/article/december-1994/genuine-sorrowwholehearted-joy-why-when-and-how-confession>

This setting of Agnus Dei is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet and scored for voice and piano. It is also included in the collection, Singing the Liturgy, Volume 1. You may hear Agnus Dei in the Audio Media Studio.

Here are the links:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/agnus-dei>

https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/agnus-dei-clip

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and expressions of devotion and thanksgiving. . .

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green.
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel;
By faith I know but ne'er can tell.
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought.
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive.
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Words: from *Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs*,
compiled by Joshua Smith, New Hampshire, 1784.
First published in London by "R. H." in 1761.
Tune: Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987), 1967.
Setting: Ellen Koehler. ©2014

THE WORD

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

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again!

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

**Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen**

Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Come behold the wondrous mystery,
In the dawning of the King.
He the theme of heaven's praises,
Robed in frail humanity.
In our longing, in our darkness,
Now the Light of life has come.
Look to Christ, who condescended,
Took on flesh to ransom us.

Come behold the wondrous mystery,
He the perfect Son of Man.
In His living, in His suffering,
Never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam,
Come to save the hellbound man.
Christ, the great and sure fulfillment
Of the law, in Him we stand.

Come behold the wondrous mystery,
Christ the Lord upon the tree.
In the stead of ruined sinners
Hangs the Lamb in victory.
See the price of our redemption,
See the Father's plan unfold.
Bringing many sons to glory; \

Grace unmeasured, love untold.
Come behold the wondrous mystery,
Slain by death, the God of life.
But no grave could e'er restrain Him.
Praise the Lord, He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliverance;
How unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected,
As we will be when He comes.

What a foretaste of deliverance; how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes.

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Benediction

May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May the Lord smile on us, shine His light upon us.
May the Lord lift us, turn His face towards us,
Give us His peace, give us His peace.

Blessed we came to this place today,
And blessed now, we will go.
In the name of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

Go now in peace; go now in peace.

CCLI Song #7000703 ©2013 Atlas Mountain Songs | Said and Done Music | sixsteps Music |
Thankyou Music | worshiptogether.com songs. Matt Redman, Jonas Myrin

Benediction:

Brothers and sisters, as you go forth into the world,
do so remembering that it is God, our Refuge and our Fortress,
who gives perseverance and encouragement.

Amen.

Now may the Lord direct your hearts
into God's love and Christ's perseverance,
as you walk in Christ's own footsteps,
taking on His likeness,
in this journey of Lent.

**We remember, and we go with grateful hearts
into the world to love and serve the Lord.**

Amen. Thanks be to God.

A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –

“Human desires are tempted only by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. The devil tempted the Lord by these three. He was tempted by the lust of the flesh when, while hungry from fasting, He was told, ‘If thou be the Son of God, speak to these stones that they become bread.’ Listen to His response: ‘Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word of God.’ He was also tempted by the lust of the eyes to perform a miracle, when He was told, ‘Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.’ . . . Listen to His answer and, when you face similar temptations, say the same thing: ‘Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ . . . How else was the Lord tempted? By the ‘pride of life.’ When the devil carried Him up to a high place and said to Him, ‘All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.’ . . . What answer did the Lord teach us to give by His answer to the devil? ‘It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve.’ Holding these things fast, you won't have the strong desires of the world. . . . [and] the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life won't change you. . . . For if you love the world, you cannot love God.”

– Augustine

Lectionary for next week: Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
John 3:1-17

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You will notice that our usual closing of the benediction, “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” is missing. That is because it’s customary during Lent to refrain from saying “Alleluia!” In a sense, we fast from this exuberant expression of praise, which makes it all the more meaningful and glorious when we declare on Resurrection Sunday, “Christ is risen, Alleluia!”