

PRAYER GUIDE FOR LENT & EASTER WEEK 2020



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Cover: *Christ the Bridegroom* by Deacon Matthew Garrett. Image used by permission. www.holy-icons.com

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The church (or liturgical) year was developed during the first centuries of the early church as a tool to help the people of God remember and celebrate the full mystery of the Gospel. Each season of the liturgical year calls us to focus on different aspects of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, as well as his ascension, the day of Pentecost and his promised return.

To that end, each season has its own colors, prayers, rituals and moods to aid in our remembrance and celebration. The color for Lent is purple, which symbolizes somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer. It is also a royal color that reminds us of the contempt and scorn that Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, endured in his death. Some traditions use black on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, which reminds us of our sin and the cost of redemption. The color for Easter and Eastertide (the 50 days before Pentecost) is white, which symbolizes purity and wholeness. It reminds us of Jesus's triumph over death and the new life he brings.

By marking the passage of time redemptively, the liturgical calendar reminds us that God has acted and continues to act in history, redeeming people for himself. Taken together, we see that the liturgical year acts in concert with Scripture and our weekly and daily worship, amplifying the invitation to lose ourselves in the good news of Jesus so that we might truly find ourselves and live.

LENT: REPENTANCE, REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and is observed for 40 days (the 6 Sundays that fall during the season are usually not considered part of the season) and can be simply defined this way: Lent is a season in which we prepare for the celebration of Easter through repentance, reflection and other acts of spiritual renewal.

Different Christian traditions have different approaches to how Lent should be observed. For many, Lent means refraining from certain things, or fasting. Some traditions prescribe periodic days of complete fasting or set a schedule of when to fast from what. For others, the fast is simpler and involves the giving up of an indulgent food, beverage or activity. Some traditions advocate abstention of anything that constitutes celebration, such as parties, weddings or dances.

Fasting has always been an important spiritual discipline in the Christian tradition, but is sometimes misunderstood. Here are some helpful ways to think about fasting.

As we abstain from food and other excesses, we deprive ourselves of the things that make us feel self-sufficient and protected. Like Jesus did in the wilderness, fasting causes us to experience vulnerability and temptation. It's in this place where we confront the temptation to live apart from God as our own gods. It's in this place where we confront all the things we "consume" (busyness, entertainment, apathy, religiosity, etc.) in order to avoid the chaos within us (fear, cynicism, jealousies, addictions, secrets, etc.). It's in this place that we see how the brokenness within feeds the brokenness without. It's in this place that we confront death. It's in this place we seek forgiveness and here the invitation to live into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ anew.

Ultimately, fasting (and Lent as a whole) points us to and prepares us for Easter. It draws our attention to the fact that our only comfort in life and in death is that we are not our own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. In Jesus new life is possible because he has defeated death. Through Jesus we are restored to God and to one another and to ourselves.

Ronald Rolheiser summarizes all of this well. He writes: "Celebration survives on contradiction. To feast, we must first fast. To come to real consummation, we must first live in longing. To taste specialness, we must first have a sense of what is ordinary."

PRACTICING THE LENTEN FAST

We recommend fasting by giving up a food, beverage, or activity that you often turn to for comfort. Perhaps this is chocolate, chips, beer or wine. Perhaps it is watching TV or spending time on social networks. As you consider what to abstain from, you may feel the need to abstain from more than one thing.

Some traditions keep the fast all through Lent. Others allow breaks on Sundays. This is up to you.

If you would like to practice a full day of complete fasting (no food, but water/juice allowed), we recommend doing so on Good Friday. This is the traditional day for fasting for many Christians around the world.

Remember, the Lenten fast is not a diet or a self-improvement regiment. It's an opportunity to enter into the wilderness.

THE GUIDE

While fasting can be helpful, we want you to remember that Lent is more than negation or not doing something. So we offer this guide to help you enter into Lent more fully. Use the guide for personal, family or community devotions. Or use the guide when you're fasting and need encouragement.

The guide offers weekly prayers and daily readings primarily from the Gospel of Mark*. The guide begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday after Easter. Almost every reading has a suggested focus in case you're short on time or need shorter readings for family/group devotions. We believe this daily guide will help you as individuals, roommates, groups, and families to enter into the story of the Gospel in new and deeper ways.

It is a great joy for us to be your pastors. We are so thankful that God has brought us together and we are honored to be able to worship and serve our Lord together with you. May Christ grant us all a blessed Lent and Easter!

With great love for you all,

The Pastoral Staff of Resurrection Brooklyn

* The schedule of readings is adapted from "Lent for Everyone" by NT Wright

START OF LENT:

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE START OF LENT

Father in Heaven, the light of your truth gives sight to the darkness of sinful eyes. May this season of repentance bring us the blessing of Your forgiveness and the gift of Your light.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

—A Lenten Prayer from the International Committee on English in the Liturgy

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR THE START OF LENT

O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow; enlarge it that you may enter in.
It is ruinous, O repair it!
It displeases Your sight.
I confess it, I know.
But who shall cleanse it, to whom shall I cry but to you?
Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, and spare Your servant from strange sins. Amen.

—A Prayer from St. Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430)

READINGS FOR THE START OF LENT

- · Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.1-20, focus on 1.1-9
- · Thursday after Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.21-45, focus on 1.21-28
- · Friday After Ash Wednesday: Mark 2.1-17, focus on 2.13-17
- · Saturday After Ash Wednesday: Mark 1.9-15

SONG FOR THE START OF LENT (See Appendix)

In Christ Alone

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE START OF LENT

Gracious Father, help us, this Lenten season, to confess our sin honestly and to receive with gladness the new life you give to your children. *Amen.*

WEEK 1

OPENING PRAYER FOR WEEK 1

Almighty God.

whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit

to be tempted by Satan;

Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations;

and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us,

let each one find you mighty to save;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. Amen.

—A Lenten Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR WEEK 1

O Lord and Master of my life,

give me not the spirit of laziness,

despair, domination, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of sobriety,

humility, patience and love to your servant. Yes, O Lord and King,

grant me to see my own transgressions

and not to judge my brother,

for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

—A Prayer of Confession from St. Ephraim the Syrian (AD 305-373)

READINGS FOR WEEK 1

· Sunday: Psalm 25.1-10

· Monday: Mark 2.18-28, focus 2.18-22

· Tuesday: Mark 2.1-19, focus 2.13-19

· Wednesday: Mark 3.20-35, focus 3.20-30

· Thursday: Mark 4.1-20, focus 4.1-9

· Friday: Mark 4.21-41, focus 4.35-41

· Saturday: Mark 8.31-38

SONG FOR WEEK 1 (See Appendix)

How Deep the Father's Love For Us

CLOSING PRAYER FOR WEEK 1

Lord Jesus, as you speak to us, give us ears to listen to what you have to say to us. And as you reveal yourself to us, may we give ourselves to you. *Amen.*

WEEK 2

OPENING PRAYER FOR WEEK 2

Convert us anew this Lenten season, O God our Savior, and shape our lives with your word of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen*.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR WEEK 2

Heavenly Father, like Adam and Eve we often listen to the wrong voice, turning away from your Word. We are shamed by our disobedience, our deafness, our limited ability to do the right thing at the right time, or even sometimes to know what is the right thing and the right time. Forgive us, Lord, for we are weak. *Amen.*—A Lutheran Prayer of Confession for Lent

READINGS FOR WEEK 2

· Sunday: *Psalm 22.22-31*

· Monday: *Mark 5.1-20*

Tuesday: Mark 5:21-43, focus 5.25-34
Wednesday: Mark 6.1-29, focus 6.14-29

· Thursday: Mark 6.30-44

· Friday: Mark 6.45-56, focus 6.45-52

· Saturday: *John 2.13-22*

SONG FOR WEEK 2 (See Appendix)

Amazing Grace

CLOSING PRAYER FOR WEEK 2

Lord, teach us to forgive as you forgive; make us your people. Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. *Amen.*

WEEK 3

OPENING PRAYER FOR WEEK 3

Heavenly Father, as you sent Abraham out to a new place and a new land, so you invite us to anticipate worlds and realms beyond our imaginations. As we journey in faith, bless us with your presence that our new life in your new world may be as real as this day we call "today." *Amen*.

-—A Lutheran Prayer for Lent

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR WEEK 3

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. *Amen*.

—Based on Psalm 51

READINGS FOR WEEK 3

Sunday: Psalm 19Monday: Mark 7.1-13Tuesday: Mark 7.14-23

Wednesday: Mark 7.24-37, focus 7.24-30
Thursday: Mark 8.1-30, focus 8.22-30
Friday: Mark 9.2-29, focus 9.2-13

· Saturday: John 3.14-21

SONG FOR WEEK 3 (See Appendix)

Before the Throne of God Above

CLOSING PRAYER FOR WEEK 3

Loving God,

you call us back to you with all of our hearts. Gives us ears to hear your invitation to feast with You and all your saints. Give us faith to respond. In the name of Jesus, *Amen*.

WEEK 4

OPENING PRAYER FOR WEEK 4

God of spirit and truth, you alone satisfy our dry and weary souls. Let us drink from the spring of your mercy so that we may never be thirsty for the gift of your saving love; through Jesus Christ, the water of life. *Amen*.

—Based on John 4

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR WEEK 4

Good God, we confess how we have rebelled against you. We are controlled by doubt and fear, and in our doubt we have gone our own way. We have been quick to blame others for our weakness and slow to accept responsibility for ourselves. Forgive us, and grant us your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

READINGS FOR WEEK 4

· Sunday: Psalm 107.1-3, 17-22

Monday: Mark 9.30-50, focus 9.33-41
Tuesday: Mark 10.1-16, focus 10.1-12

· Wednesday: Mark 10.17-31

· Thursday: Mark 10.32-45, focus 10.35-45

Friday: *Mark 10.46-52*Saturday: *John 12.20-33*

SONG FOR WEEK 4 (See Appendix)

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go

CLOSING PRAYER FOR WEEK 4

Holy God, by the grace of Jesus Christ you know the tests and trials we face. Walk with us through this wilderness. Come to us with ministers of healing and visit us with messengers of hope, so that we may return to you in faith, believing the good news of the gospel; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

—A Presbyterian Prayer for Lent

WEEK 5

OPENING PRAYER FOR WEEK 5

O God, you desire that all people should eat and be satisfied. As we follow Jesus and are transformed by his death and resurrection, may we spend our lives so that all may share in your bounty. *Amen*.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR WEEK 5

Our Father, have pity and mercy on us. We have sinned against heaven and you. We are not worthy to be called your children. Accept us at least as hired servants. O merciful God, forgive us all the sins we have committed against you. We pray this in the name of Jesus. *Amen.*

-Based on Luke 15

READINGS FOR WEEK 5

Sunday: *Psalm 119.9-16*Monday: *Mark 11.1-11*

Tuesday: Mark 11.12-35, focus 11.15-19
Wednesday: Mark 12.1-17, focus 12.1-12
Thursday: Mark 12.18-44, focus 12.18-27
Friday: Mark 13.1-31, focus 13.1-23

· Saturday: Mark 13.32-37

SONG FOR WEEK 5 (See Appendix)

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

CLOSING PRAYER FOR WEEK 5

Lord, Jesus, I have called upon you, answer me: hear and receive my words. Let my prayer be like incense in your sight, the offering of my hands like the evening offering. Set a guard, Lord, before my mouth, a guard before my lips, that my heart may not turn to evil words and I may not do deeds of wickedness.

—From Psalm 141

HOLY WEEK

OPENING PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

Merciful God, this Holy week we turn our hearts again to Jerusalem, and to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Stir up within us the gift of faith that we may not only praise him with our lips, but may follow him in the way of the cross. Through Jesus, *Amen*.

—A Prayer For Lent from the Reformed Church in America.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR HOLY WEEK

We confess we are rebellious. Our faith is often more show than substance, our hearts are in need of cleansing. Have mercy on us, Son of David, Savior of our lives. Help us to lay at your feet all that we have and all that we are, trusting you to forgive what is sinful, to heal what is broken, to welcome our praises and to receive us as your own. *Amen*.

READINGS FOR HOLY WEEK

· Palm Sunday: Psalm 118.1-2, 19-29

Monday: Mark 14.1-9
Tuesday: Mark 14.32-52
Wednesday: Mark 14.53-65
Maundy Thursday: Mark 14.10-26
Good Friday: Mark 15.1-41

· Holy Saturday: Mark 15.42-47

SONG FOR HOLY WEEK (See Appendix)

Were you There

CLOSING PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

Almighty God, in your tender love for us you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross for us. Grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen*.

EASTER WEEK

OPENING PRAYER FOR EASTER WEEK

Christ our Savior, you call us by name, leading us from death into eternal life. Awaken and unbind us by your Word, so that we may live and grow in faith, sharing your saving love with others; for you are the resurrection and the life. *Amen.*

—Based on John 11

PRAYER OF CONFESSION FOR EASTER WEEK

READINGS FOR EASTER WEEK

Easter Sunday: Mark 16.1-8
Eastery Monday: Mark 16.9-end
Easter Tuesday: Matthew 28
Easter Wednesday: Romans 5.1-11

Easter Wednesday: Romans 5.1-1.
Easter Thursday: Romans 6.1-14
Easter Friday: Colossians 2.6-15
Easter Saturday: 1 Peter 3.18-22

SONG FOR EASTER WEEK (See Appendix)

And Can It Be

CLOSING PRAYER FOR EASTER WEEK

God our Redeemer, keep us firm in faith and safe from all evil. Open our eyes, that we may awaken and watch for the coming of your dawn, and the fulfillment of your promised realm, where there is no more pain or sorrow, in your eternal life with Jesus Christ our risen Lord. *Amen.*

12

HOW DEEP THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR US

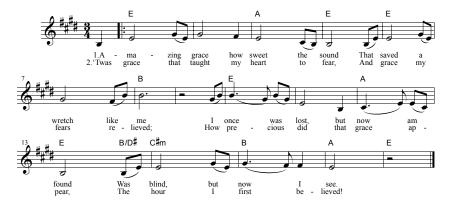
Words & Music: Stuart Townend



13

AMAZING GRACE

Words: John Newton & John Rees (v.5) Traditional American Tune



- 3. Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
- 4. And when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease; I shall possess within the veil, A life of joy and peace.
- 5.When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we've first begun.

BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD ABOVE



1. Be - fore the throne of God a - bove; I have one strong and per-fect
2. When Sa - tan tempts me to de - spair and tells me of the wrong with 3. Be - hold him there! The Ris-en Lamb; my per-fect spot - less Right-eous -



plea. A great High Priest whose name is Love; who-ev-er lives and pleads for in, up-ward I look and see him there; who made an end to all my ness. The great un- change - a - ble I Am; the King of Glo-ry and of



me. My name is grav- en on his hands; My name is writ- ten on his sin. Be-cause the sin-less Sav-ior died; my sin-ful soul is count-ed grace. One with Him-self I can-not die; my soul is pur-chased by his

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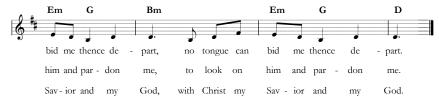
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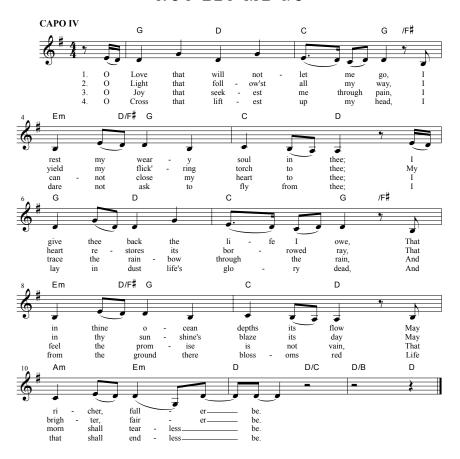
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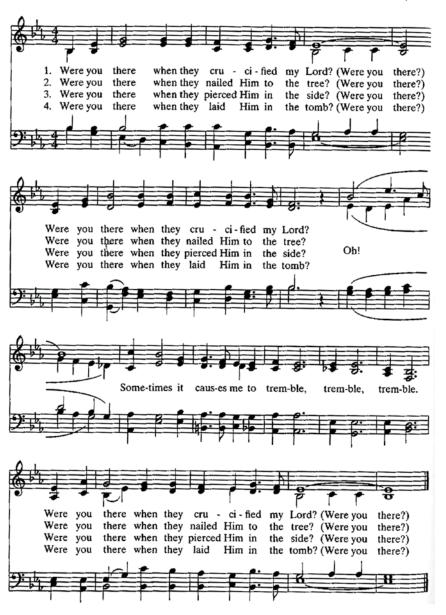
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Words: Charles Wesley Music: Scott Roley





- In Christ a-lone, my hope is found,
- 2. In Christ a-lone, who took on flesh,
- 3. There in the ground his bo-dy lay,
- he is my light, my strength my song; fullness of God in help - less babe!
- light of the world, by dark ness slain;
- No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;



This cor - ner stone, this sol - id ground, firm through the fiere - est drought and storm.

This gift of love and right-cous-ness, scorned by the ones he came to save.

Then, bursting forth in glo-rious day, up from the grave he rose a - gain!

From life's first cry to fi - nal breath, Je - sus commands my des - ti - ny.



What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease.

'Till on the cross as Je - sus died, the wrath of God was sat - is - fied.

And as he stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;

No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ev - er pluck me from his hand;



My comfort - er my all in all, here in the love of Christ I stand.

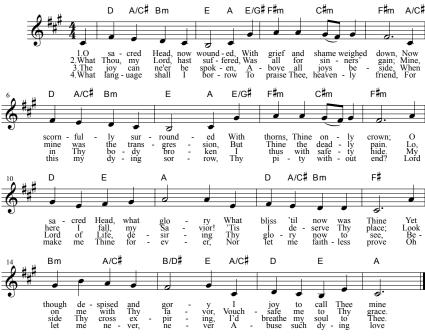
For ev -'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

For I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

'Til he re-turns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand!

O SACRED HEAD, NOW WOUNDED

Words: Bernard of Clairvaux Trans. by Jaems Alexander Music: Hans Leo Hassler Adapt. by Hans Hassler



5. Forbid that I should leave Thee O Jesus leave not me!
By faith I would receive Thee Thy blood can make me free When strength and comfort languish And I must hence depart Release me then from anguish By Thine own wounded heart

6. Be near when I am dying Oh show Thy cross to me And for my succor flying Come Lord and set me free These eyes new faith receiving From Jesus shall not move For he who dies believing Dies safely, through Thy love



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