

Practice Makes Possible



Lent 2024

Invitation to a Holy Lent

Lent is one of the oldest fasts in the Christian tradition.

Some scholars date its earliest form in the late second century.

In the western tradition, Lent is forty days long.

It begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on

Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) after sunset.

The forty-day season includes every day between Ash Wednesday and Easter except for Sundays, which the tradition has always regarded as Little Easters.

Lent is marked by dedication to prayer and deeper spiritual disciplines.

Christians often fast during this period of time or embrace other practices that help them spiritually prepare for Easter.

At First Free, we are offering a rhythm to our Lenten life that focuses on prayer, fasting, worship, and generosity.

This is an intentional season of prayer for us.

Each of these activities invites us to move into a deeper communion with the Lord as we journey with Him to the cross and the resurrection.

On the pages that follow, you will find an invitation to prayer at 12:24 p.m. each day, a guide for prayer with other churches in Seattle, along with a daily devotion of prayers, mid-day prayer in the Chapel each Wednesday, and a version of the Wesley Fast. Our theme for Lent is "Practice Makes Possible".

This worship series will explore how we use the means of grace like prayer, the Bible, communion, to chart a deeper experience of Jesus in our lives.

May we all take this opportunity to draw near to Jesus during these forty days.

Grace for the Journey,
Pastors Craig & Camille

Acts of Lent @ FFMC

ACT 1: This Prayer Guide & Journal

In the pages that follow, you will find prayers for each of the 40 days of Lent. These prayers have been carefully curated for our congregation's use. We hope you will set aside time during each day to read these

prayers, pray these prayers, and reflect on them. Consider using them during your morning or evening devotional time. Allow God to speak and move in these words each day. There is some space after each of the prayers for your own notes, reflections, and prayers.

ACT 2: Mid-Week Midday Prayer in Demaray Chapel with

We have recently partnered with a city-wide prayer movement called *PraySeattle*. Churches across the city will be following the “40 Days of Prayer” booklet, which we have inserted in this prayer guide. In addition, as part of *PraySeattle*, we are hosting guided prayer stations based on the Lord’s Prayer in **Demaray Chapel each Wednesday from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.** This is a self-guided time for you to reflect on Jesus’ teaching on prayer. Please come and go as you please at the 3rd Ave W Chapel entrance each Wednesday.

ACT 3: Unifying Prayer @ 12:24 p.m.

The Apostle Paul encourages us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:16-18). His exhortation to us is based on the life of Jesus, who often spent time alone with God in prayer. Many of Jesus’s greatest miracles and other powerful deeds happened after these moments of prayer.

Our church is being challenged to set aside 12:24 p.m. as a moment of prayer. This time of day will remind us of the importance of being consistent in prayer during the year 2024. 12:24 p.m. can be set as a reminder on your phone each day to pause before our Lord. You may only be able to pause for a short moment or join with others in prayer. What a powerful statement of unity it will be for our whole church to pause at the same minute each day in prayer.

ACT 4: The Wesley Fast | Thursday Sunset to Friday, 3:00 p.m.

Fasting has been used by Christians for centuries. Jesus told his disciples that they would one day fast after what would be his ascension (Matthew 9:15). Fasting is most often associated with abstinence from food. This does not need to be the case for us. We may choose to refrain from food, a certain kind of food, an activity, or something else we “give up.” We may also consider “taking on” a new practice, act of service, or generous action during a fast.

Whether we give something up or take something on, the purpose of the fast is to jar the mind and heart. When remembering the fast, we must be pointed to why we are fasting. We are in prayer and devotion to the Lord. Each moment of remembering what we gave up or took on should remind us to pray and to recall our deep need for grace since we might fail in a fast. (As a matter of fact, success in a fast is not measured by one’s ability to keep the fast!) Fasting is about welcoming the ever-deepening, abiding presence of Jesus Christ in our physical bodies.

Ash Wednesday

God, You're right, I cannot live a holy life unless You help me.
My wisdom won't make me holy, if You stop guiding me;
My courage won't help, unless You defend me;
My pure living won't do the trick, unless You protect me;
My vigilance won't insure holiness, if You don't watch over me.
For, if You leave me,
I sink, I perish;
but Your presence inspires me,
puts new life into me.

Clearly, I am inconsistent,
But You stabilize me; truly, I am lukewarm,
But You inflame me.
Really, I ought to think humbly of myself!
If I pull off something good, I ought to pass it off!
I ought to submit to your unfathomable judgements, Lord.
You alone are great.
Immeasurable greatness! Uncrossable sea! ...
You are infinite; I am finite.

How can a ceramic jar take credit for its design in the presence of the Designer?
How can one boast if they are truly subject to You, God?...
For, after all, even those who flatter are mere persons;
They will be gone someday, gone like the sound of their words.
But Your truth stays forever!
Amen.

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a` Kempis
Paraphrased by Donald E Demaray

Thursday | After Ash Wednesday

Lord Jesus, teach us to fast.

Something in all of us is good with the “old wine”, the old more familiar ways.

You said it clearly that the time would come for the friends of the bridegroom to fast. We know that time is now – the age of the new wine of the Holy Spirit.

Some of us are feeling really burdened because we aren't fasting. We renounce that burden as not from you.

Your yoke is easy, and your burden is light. The fact that it feels burdensome to us is the sign, it is not from you but from our own broken ways.

I refuse to take fasting on as another burdensome requirement. I will instead simply and constantly consecrate myself to you, Jesus, and welcome to indwelling Holy Spirit to fill me. I receive your gentle leadership and guidance in a new way of fasting.

We know we have problems with food and all manner of disordered eating. We know the solution is not just a better diet and more ordered eating. It is the ever-deepening abiding presence of Jesus Christ in our physical bodies.

Come, Holy Spirit, transform my heart, mind, soul, and strength so that my consecration becomes your demonstration; that our lives become your sanctuary. For the glory of God our Father. Amen.

Luke 5:36-39, John 14:15-18

Seedbed.com by J.D. Walt

Friday | After Ash Wednesday

Listen, O Lord, to my prayers. Listen to my desire to be with you, to dwell in your house, and to let my whole being be filled with your presence. But none of this is possible without you.

When you are not the one who fills me, I am soon filled with useless thoughts and concerns that divide me and tear me away from you. Even thoughts about you, good spiritual thoughts, can be little more than distractions when you are not their author.

O Lord, thinking about you, being fascinated with theological ideas and discussions, being excited about histories of Christian spirituality and stimulated by thoughts and ideas about prayer and meditation, all of this can be as much an expression of greed as the unruly desire for food, possessions, or power.

Every day I see again that only you can teach me to pray, only you can set my heart at rest, only you can let me dwell in your presence. No book, no idea, no concept or theory will ever bring me close to you unless you yourself are the one who lets these instruments become the way to you.

But Lord, let me at least remain open to your initiative; let me wait patiently and attentively for that hour when you will come and break through all the walls I have erected. Teach me, O Lord, to pray. Amen.

From *A Cry for Mercy* by Henri J. M. Nouwen

Saturday | After Ash Wednesday

Lord, how great is our dilemma!
In Thy Presence silence best becomes us,
But love inflames our hearts and constrains us to speak.
Were we to hold our peace the stones would cry out;
Yet if we speak, what shall we say?
Teach us to know that we cannot know,
for the things of God knoweth no human, but the Spirit of God.
Let faith support us where reason fails,
And we shall think because we believe,
Not in order that we may believe.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer

Sovereign Father, heavenly King,
Thee we now presume to sing;
Glad thine attributes confess,
Glorious all, and numberless.

Charles Wesley

Monday | After the 1st Sunday of Lent

Spirit of Jesus –
Come with fire that refines,
Water that refreshes,
Wind that topples,
Breath that fills.

Kindle a global revival of empathy, justice, and active peacemaking.
Birth a witness of Love that is bigger and better than we inherited.
Liberate us from privilege and oppression.
Unshackle the gospel from nationalism, colonialism, white supremacy, and every other lens that shrouds the Good News.
Give us an abundance of grace for others and ourselves.
Grant us compassion for those who suffer.
Free us from the influence of money, power, and acclaim.

Restore our reputation for caring for the poor, loving our neighbors, being ambassadors of peace and stewards of the earth.
Unlock the immense resources hoarded in the Western Church and release them for your name's sake.
Encourage us, so we do not grow cynical, isolated, and burnt-out.
Fan our hopes, our joys, and our connections.
Allow us rest when we need rest.
Enable us to see you in each person we encounter.
Show us mercy, in our humanity.

Let us love more fully than we thought possible.
Let us not be quick on the draw, ready to retaliate, escalate, assassinate.
Let our collective fervor for justice eclipse institutional concerns.
Let us trust and follow the wisdom of those who have been marginalized.
Let us persevere in creating safe places of worship to eat bread and drink wine together.

Let us stand for Love and with Love, following the way of your Son as best we're able.
Let us not fear an experiential spirituality.
Let us listen to the wondrous bodies you gave us.
Let us hear you voice and tangibly feel you with us.
Let us discern your guidance.
Let us abide in and with you.

Show us what you're doing, so we can work together. Move where you will, when you will, in whatever way you will.
Come, Holy Spirit, and restore your Church. *Amen*

“A Prayer for the Church” by Rev. Emily Swan

Tuesday | After the 1st Sunday of Lent

O Lord, who else or what else can I desire but you? You are my Lord, Lord of my heart, mind, and soul. You know me through and through. In and through you everything that is finds its origin and goal. You embrace all that exists and care for it with divine love and compassion.

Why, then, do I keep expecting happiness and satisfaction outside of you? Why do I keep relating to you as one of my many relationships, instead of my only relationship, in which all other ones are grounded? Why do I keep looking for popularity, respect from others, success, acclaim, and sensual pleasures? Why, Lord, is it so hard for me to make you the only one?

Help me, O Lord, to let my old self die, to let die the thousand big and small ways in which I am still building up my false self and trying to cling to my false desires. Let me be reborn in you and see through you the world in the right way, so that all my actions, words, and thought can become a hymn of praise to you.

I need your loving grace to travel on this hard road that leads to the death of my old self and to a new life in and for you. I know and trust that this is the road to freedom.

Lord, dispel my mistrust and help me become a trusting friend.

Amen.

From *A Cry for Mercy* by Henri J. M. Nouwen

Wednesday | After the 1st Sunday of Lent

Oh, God beyond time, beyond the number line, the hourglass. Beyond moons that wax and wane and waves that push and pull along our fragile ground. Oh God beyond days and weeks and months, God uncontained by our twenty-four hours, free of our borders and yet still within them.

God who is here. God of the meetings, the emails, the PTA, the neck ache, the child crying over homework, the car leaking oil, the head lice, and the sheets to wash. Oh God of the groceries and the knife against the butcher block moving slow across the cucumber. God of the sun's path across a sky we cannot reach. God of midday, God of afternoons and the laughter of children, the clap of a ball on concrete. God of evening color and the muted spread of light in the clouds as the night leaks in. God in the hand I hold, God of the one I love.

God beyond time, we come to you pulled by the bullet points in our calendars, by the titles we keep beside our names, by the goals we've charted and the accomplishments we list to define our value. You see each image we upload to our pocket screens: altered, filtered, and pinned to virtual walls. You, God, touch our distortions and soothe the edges of our efficiency, and only you can make us real.

God beyond the boxes we build to contain our lives, the hours we track and tally. God outside of time, yet here: Come to us, relieve our ragged breaths, slow our steps, relax the red lines that spike in our brains. Tell what is true. Show us how time rolls like calm water, let us cup it quiet in our hands.

God, teach us to pause in this moment, to tuck ourselves into the curve of your slow arm, that we may know the miracle of now, the gift of this moment: you beside and beyond us, welcoming us outside of all we measure, and standing with us in it. May we see the goodness of our still hours and days, sunrises, sunsets, and the darkness where our rest is found.

Order us, that we may stand within time holding your hand. That we may know we are enough, not because of what we make of these hours, but because within these hours – with you – we are being made.

"A Prayer Against Efficiency" By Micha Boyette

Thursday | After the 1st Sunday of Lent

Lord, Jesus, teach us to fast and pray.

I confess you have food that I know nothing about.

I want to know that food. I want to learn to savor and eat that food. I long to hunger and thirst for righteousness in the way I hunger for food and thirst for drink.

Train my spirit to embrace hunger as a gift of divine attunement and not treat it as a problem that must be solved. Holy Spirit, would you displace my appetite? Would you disconnect my hunger from the never-ending eating of more food for my stomach and connect my hunger to enjoying more and more of your presence in my soul? I believe this is possible.

Show me the next step on this path, even a baby step. I want to take it.

What could be better than walking in this world as Jesus walks, doing the things he is doing, saying the things he is saying, talking to the people he is talking to, and loving my family the way he is loving them?

Praying in Jesus's name, amen.

John 4:29-34

Seedbed.com by J.D. Walt

Friday | After the 1st Sunday in Lent

Breath Prayer

- Slowing down – Begin by spending time quietly in God’s presence. Breathe gently, deeply, just enough to make a candle flicker. Breathe in, breathe out.
- Desiring – Imagine God calling you by name and asking, “What do you want?” Write your response: “God, what I most want from you right now is...”
- Connecting – What name or image of God most resonates right now? God, who do you most want to be for me right now?
- Praying – Combine your desire with the name or quality of God that you especially need in this season, such as mercy, love, belonging, or connection. Breath Prayer examples:
 - Jesus, have mercy on me.
 - I am beloved.
 - Abba, I belong to you.
 - “Be still and know that I am God.”
 -

Breathe in, breathe out, praying the phrase as you do. Try incorporating it into your day. Breathe it when you are waiting in line, when you are worried, when you are in the shower, when you need a sense of God’s presence.

From *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* by Ruth Haley Barton.

Saturday | After the 1st Sunday in Lent

God of rest,
Today I make the active choice
To enter into your rest,
And to join with you
In delighting in this good world you have made,
And dreaming of the perfect world you will remake.

I choose to tune out,
Of demands and deadlines,
Of performance pressures,
Of flickering screens,
Of that which robs my soul of joy,
And the ways in which the world
Seeks to define and shape my identity.

I choose to tune in,
To your affirmation and love,
To the celebration of freedom,
To worship and your word,
To the enjoyment of that which fills my soul with joy,
And reminds me of my identity in Christ,
As a deeply loved child of God.

Amen

“A Prayer for Sabbath” <https://christchurchlondon.org/>

Monday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

Meet me, O Christ,
In this stillness of morning.

Move me, O Spirit,
To quiet my heart.

Mend me, O Father,
From yesterday's harms.

From the discords of yesterday,
resurrect my hope.

From the weariness of yesterday,
resurrect my strength.

From the doubts of yesterday,
resurrect my faith.

From the wounds of yesterday,
resurrect my love.

Let me enter this new day,
aware of my need,
and awake
to your grace,
O Lord.
Amen.

Every Moment Holy, Vol 1
by Douglas Kaine McKelvey

Tuesday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

Dear Heavenly Father,

As I pour over Your word each day, I am drawn into an ever-deepening relationship with You. I have begun, in a small way, to glimpse Your glory. The scripture consistently reveals to me a deeper understanding of Your ways.

You give me wisdom in real time, at each point of need. You are changing me, drawing me into a deeper relationship with You. I treasure Your growing presence in my life.

I am awakening to Your abundant presence. Your love, forgiveness, grace, and truth are transforming me in ways I cannot adequately put into words. It is more than knowledge, emotion, or physical response. It is the profound realization of my intimate connection with You.

I long for others to experience this transformation. I come to You now with the most powerful thing I can do on their behalf. I bring them before You and pray for Your transformational work in their lives. Draw them into Your presence so they can experience Your glory.

Your glory is beyond my comprehension. Forgive me when my ego flares and I am tempted to take the glory for myself. Draw me back into Your presence where perspective becomes clear.

I marvel at how experiencing Your glory brings Your followers together. This unity, in turn, draws people to the truth of The Trinity – the unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit...

I want to be faithful. Continue to awaken my spirit to You. Prepare me for the work You have for me to do. May my life draw people into a relationship with You where they can experience Your glory.

Hear my prayer and enable me to serve You for Your glory, Amen.

“The King of Glory – A Prayer of Awakening” by Ed McDowell

Wednesday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

God of majesty and glory,
we are thirsty for your grace.
You made a way for us in the wilderness,
and still, in our foolishness, we go astray.
We hide our eyes from your presence.
We do not listen to your word.
We are lifeless when we ought to dance,
and speechless when we ought to sing.

Forgive us, O Lord.
Speak peace to our fearful hearts,
strengthen our weak hands,
and make firm our feeble knees
as we seek to follow in your holy way.

Amen.

Prayers of Confession on the Wilderness

Adapted from Isaiah 35:1–10

By [Kimberly Bracken Long](#)

Thursday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

God! My God! It's you—
I search for you!
My whole being thirsts for you!

My body desires you
in a dry and tired land,
no water anywhere.

Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary;
I've seen your power and glory.

My lips praise you
because your faithful love
is better than life itself!

So I will bless you as long as I'm alive;
I will lift up my hands in your name.

I'm fully satisfied—
as with a rich dinner.
My mouth speaks praise with joy on my lips—

whenever I ponder you on my bed,
whenever I meditate on you
in the middle of the night—

because you've been a help to me
and I shout for joy in the protection of your wings.

My whole being clings to you;
your strong hand upholds me.

Psalm 63: 1-8

A psalm of David, when he was in the Judean desert.

Friday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

Inhale:

Your grace is all I need;

Exhale:

Your power is made perfect in weakness.

Inhale:

When I am weak,

Exhale:

Then I am strong.

Oh God, our culture doesn't celebrate weakness. Strength, ability, and achievement are the goals of this world. Independence and self-sufficiency are the qualities of high praise. You know how those perceived to be weak are overlooked and undervalued. They are so often stepped over and pushed to the side.

But Your kingdom, Jesus, is upside down. The last will be first. The weak are strong. The poor inherit the earth. God, I long for my weakness to be an opportunity for Your strength to shine in my life. I name it before You now.

You have said that Your power works best when I am weak. If I had the strength to get through my suffering on my own, I wouldn't need You. My weakness is what drives me to dependence on You, which is where I find my true strength.

I turn to you now. I release the mistaken belief that I should be able to handle it all on my own, that I should be strong enough or brave enough to endure. My God, you are already strong, gracious, and good enough! You are all I really need. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Adapted from "Breath as Prayer" by Jennifer Tucker

Saturday | After the 2nd Sunday in Lent

You speak, Lord, but we are not always listening.
Sometimes other voices are louder or more persuasive.
You show us your way, lord, but we are not always looking.
Sometimes other ways seduce us with their ease or power.
You give us choices, now help us to learn your will.
Lead us, Lord, to walk your way on any road we travel.

You call us to leave our old ways behind,
but we like our comfortable lives.
You call us to go where you will show us
but we want the map and directions before we leave.
You call us to be a blessing to all
but often we want to keep the blessing for ourselves.
Help us to hear your voice and to let go of what holds us back.
Lead us, Lord, to walk your way on any road we travel.

God, sometimes you work too slowly for us.
We want something we can see,
something we can do now,
something quick and easy.
So we turn our eyes toward “the way it’s always been”
and we try to re-create the days when everything was simple and good.
But you call us to hear your promise of a future with hope,
a promise we can’t understand, or see—
a promise for which we must wait and look and work.
Forgive us our impatience with mystery and promises,
and turn our eyes toward your future.
Lead us, Lord, to walk your way on any road we travel.

God, we confess that we like to think we know you,
while what we really know is who we want you to be.
We often think we have the answers, that we know best,
even as you show us a still more excellent way.
Open our eyes and our ears to know you as you are,
and lead us, Lord, so we walk your way on any road we travel.

God, we confess that oftentimes our boxes are too small.
We know what, and who, belongs where.
But your circle is always growing,
erasing our lines in the sand.
Call out to us, O God.
Widen our vision.
Lead us, Lord, to walk your way on any road we travel.

Monday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.

Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you;

I cannot do this alone.

In me there is darkness, but with you there is light;

I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;

I am restless, but with you there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;

I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me....

Restore me to liberty, and enable me to live now that I may answer before you and before men.

Lord whatever this day may bring, Your name be praised.

Amen.

I Cannot Do This Alone by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Tuesday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

Lord, you set your face towards Jerusalem
and walked alongside those who suffer.
Be our vision that we too may walk the way of the cross
and extend a hand to those we meet.

*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*

Lord, you stopped to heal the sick, cure the lame
and give sight to the blind.
Be our vision that we too may give time to others
and respond to their needs.

*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*

Lord, you said, "The first shall be last and the last first."
Be our vision that we too may work towards your kingdom
when the exalted will be brought low and the lowly exalted.

*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*

Lord, you ate with tax collectors and sinners and heard their stories.
Be our vision that we too may listen to the despised and rejected
and value their lives.

Lord, you took time to pray and time to be silent.
Be our vision that through our prayers, fasting and almsgiving
we too may draw closer to you and find your way.

*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*

Lord, you entered Jerusalem with peace in your heart.
Be our vision that we too may desire peace where others desire war,
and may work for justice where injustice reigns.

*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit
For you are our hope and our salvation.*

Amen.

Wednesday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

O Christ who made himself the servant of all,
I would set my heart
and my affection upon you –
and upon you alone – for I can only
serve others rightly when such service is undertaken
from first to last as an act of devotion offered to you.

In serving you, I am freed from my need for the praise of others.
So that even if my kindnesses are shed from
scarred hearts as rain from a sloped tin roof,
my joy will not be dimmed, for I will know that you have received,
and remembered each act of sacrifice,
and reckoned it as a loved rendered to you.

So let my love be sincere,
And let my service be fearless, O Lord...

I cannot know the end of another person's story.
Our lives so often only briefly intersect.
So let me be content to minister regardless of visible outcomes,
trusting that the small mercies I extend will be woven
into the larger theme of redemption at work in the lives of others
as you woo them to yourself, drawing their hearts
by graces offered, and shaping my own heart too
in this process of learning to serve well, and by learning
to serve well, learning to love well.

Amen.

"A Liturgy for Service" Every Moment Holy, Vol 1
by Douglas Kaine McKelvey

Thursday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

May the guiding hands of God be on my shoulders,
May the presence of the Holy Spirit be on my head,
May the sign of Christ be on my forehead,
May the voice of the Holy Spirit be in my ears,
May the smell of the Holy Spirit be in my nose,
May the sight of the company of heaven be in my eyes,
May the speech of the company of heaven be in my mouth,
May the work of the church of God be in my hands,
May the serving of God and my neighbor be in my feet,
May God make my heart his home,
And may I belong to God, my Father, completely.

Amen.

Source: Lorica of St. Fursa (Fursey), 7th Century.
Prayers from the Ancient Celtic Church,

Friday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

I once heard of a monk who prayed while he washed dishes. I like that, so I pray to Jesus while making soup and call it my “reconciliation soup”.

PREPARE CHICKEN: Just like I take care to avoid the dangers of raw chicken, Jesus, help me handle reconciliation with care. It’s full of possibilities to hurt. Like the salmonella that coats this very chicken, scary, dangerous and off-putting. I want to avoid handling it, but I can’t. It’s as vital to this soup as racial justice is to your Kingdom. It’s essential to our formation into people who want to look like you...Help me know how to respond to the raw word of fear and pride with care. Then let me thoroughly wash every interaction in grace.

DICE ONIONS: Jesus, help me to embrace the tears. Tears are not my enemy – they are indications of prayers needing to be prayed, maybe even with childlike faith. Help me pray the deep prayers of unity as I dice and measure.

SLICE CARROTS: Some say eating carrots gives you good eyesight. If so, Jesus, I want to see people as Beloveds. White and Black. Police officers and politicians. Story breakers and stay-at-home moms. They are all valuable to you, so they will be valuable to me.

CHOP CELERY: I don’t understand celery, Lord. Its punchy, sharp, bitter, taste seems too much for this soup. Too bold. Overpowering. But simmered with the other ingredients, it helps create a healing broth. Lord, my anger feels like celery. I don’t understand it; it’s too much. I ask you to take it, turn it into something useful. Let it simmer mixed in with your love and it creates something life-giving. Every recipe for chicken noodle soup calls for celery, so I’ll use it. Every act of reconciliation calls for a safe space for sharp words and hard truths, so I’ll use them and trust they will transform relationships like the celery transforms the soup...

ADD NOODLES: Lord, let us remember that we are intertwined. Let us not shy away from bumping into each other in the broth of reconciliation. Let us wrap-around each other and soften our wills to yours.

BRING TO BOIL: Because the ingredients are only changed under pressure when the heat seems unbearable, and the broth permeates the noodles’ hardness. Jesus, refine us in your fire. Let us submit to the heat of your call to unity because it brings the warmth of wholeness, the warmth of the Kingdom of God here on earth as it is in heaven. Simmer until the aroma of peace fills your kitchen and serve.

By Osheta Moore

Saturday | After the 3rd Sunday in Lent

In truth, I have nothing but you, O Christ,
nothing that I might call my own.
So let that good confession now compel a better stewardship.
First teach me to treasure you, Jesus, above all things.
Then increasingly devotion be increasingly demonstrated in a joyful
generosity – for to give is to live out the declaration
that you alone are my provision and supply.

I need not fear what comes tomorrow.
When I give to meet the needs of others,
when I give to the work of those who serve the poor, the sick, the oppressed,
when I give to the service of your Kingdom,
I give not what is mine, but only what is already yours.
With every charitable act I am simply practicing the fact
That nothing which passes through my hands has ever belonged to me...

Let me give precisely because I have believed your promises are true –
and let my giving be the proof. If you are my shepherd,
than I am freed to live generously, knowing I will never want for any
needful thing – knowing that any seeming deprivation is but the work
of your Spirit weaning me from a world of things
and winning me to greater dependence upon Christ my King...
Let me plant these mortal seeds in expectation of immortal harvests.
Amen.

“A Liturgy for Giving” Every Moment Holy, Vol 1
By Douglas Kaine McKelvey

Monday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

God of Compassion,

Luke 7:11-15

As you did in Nain, enter *our* city gates. Enter into the somber roads down which our hearses drive and the glad streets down which our children run. Enter the parks where the junkies shoot up and the yuppies listen to jazz. Walk uninvited into starter mansions and cheap motel rooms that charge by the hour. Stroll into the cool-air freezer section where the pregnant women escape the heat, and the bus stop benches where the weary wait. Enter every law office and adult bookstore. Step into the spaces we say we feel your awesomeness *and* the places where we clam your forsakenness. Enter our city gates, God of Compassion, as you did the city of Nain. And bless.

Bless the things we mistakenly think were already dead. Bless that which we have already begun to carry out of town to bury. Bless our rocky marriages and our college-age kids who smoke too much pot. Bless the person at work whom we love to hate. Bless the chronically sick. Bless the one who has no one. Bless what we call insignificant and which you call magnificent. Bless it all and love what only you can love: the ugly, abandoned, and unsanitary in the wash of humanity upon which you have nothing but a gleaming compassion –when we have none.

God of Compassion who saw the widow of Nain, we thank you for seeing us. For seeing our loneliness and our bravery. For seeing the times we can't say what we need to. For seeing the ones who have never felt like they are enough, but whom you know already are and always have been. For seeing the moments when we are more than we thought we could be. For seeing what no one else can or will. Thank you for seeing as beautiful what we call ugly. In your compassion, teach us to see each other.

Reach out and raise us, God of Compassion. Touch us as you did the wood on which the widow's son lay and speak those same words to us: *Young man, arise. Little girl, get up.* To we who think we are not worthy to be loved and medicate ourselves with food and booze and shopping, say "rise up." To we who have been hurt by those who say they follow you, say "rise up." To the ones who care for the least of these and who feel too burnt-out to keep going, say "rise up." To we who are holding on to resentments like a security blanket, say "rise up." To those who hide their failings behind their good works, say "rise up." To the unloved child who has no idea that one day they will change the world, say "rise up."

And when again, God of Compassion, you have raised the dead – when again you have made whole that which is broken, when again you have reached into the graves we dig ourselves and loved us back to life – don't stop there. Like the young man of Nain, help us to sit up and speak. Give us words that are not empty affirmation, but give us strong words, as real as the very soil from which you raised us.

Give us the words, Lord, but also give us the pause before the words. Please.

And then, as you did the son to his mother, give us one to another. Make us one in this fractured world. And help us to know that when we do not have enough compassion for the road ahead, that you do, and that is enough.

Amen.

"God of Compassion" by Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber

Tuesday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

Jesus! Jesus, how did you do it? How did you manage with war, rumors with wars, sickness, and pain all about you, with oppression, rejection by family, friends, and foes alike? How did you manage with the knowledge you would suffer in such an excruciating way?

Me? I cannot save the world. I can barely get myself together. My sins are many. I have little power, little sway. Little money. What can be done? What can any of us really do?

In all this, you bid me come, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

Jesus, I come to you.

Could your yoke, or teaching, have something to do with me offering my five loaves and two fish, like the little boy? Offering the little I have and in some way being part of the answers to many prayers? Is it in trusting you, Triune God, to multiply my offering and the offerings of others wherever they find themselves?

Oh, I see.

You *do* see.

You don't expect me to save the world. I literally cannot. But you do expect me to do and love to the best of my ability in my given moment, right? To cry for them like you did Lazarus. And maybe if I do that, see them and do my part with what I have, it'll be enough. It is all you ask: no more, no less. And all that I can do. I can relax knowing you and others pick up where I leave off.

... I know I can trust you. You are good... With all my heart I believe this.

Amen.

“Finding Rest” By Marlena Graves

Wednesday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

God

Creator, Hoverer

You speak and we form.

You breathe life and we awake.

You said, "it is good" and we believe.

God

The Red Sea before us, shouting impossibility.

They say we can't, we shouldn't, and we wouldn't.

Words seeded from our youth, the limits, and the lies

There must be truer truths in us to confound, resist, defy.

Created from nothing, said something, made everything.

This God

The Lord will fight for us, so we need only to be still.

Still our soul, stand out loud, trusting that God is

El Roi, God who sees, bears witness to a name.

At her sound, _____ leaps, demands possibility.

Immanuel, God with us, for us, within us.

God

You said, "it is good" and we believe.

You breathe life and we awake.

You speak and we form.

Creator, Hoverer

God

By Rev. Gail Song Bantum

Thursday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

God of word and silence,
you desire our attention and faithfulness,
yet we are distracted.

We lend our ears to voices that speak about prestige and success, pleasure and power. We are stunned at how easily we are lured by temptations.

We find ourselves living your wilderness experience all over again.

You desire our obedience, yet we crowd you out with calendars jammed with meetings, minds filled with lists and trivia and hearts filled with worry and care.

God of word and silence,
lead us this Lent into the deeper stillness,
where priorities become clear, vision becomes focused,
and your Word heard and obeyed.
Give us the strength and courage to live this season
with open eyes and ready hearts.
Amen.

Prayer of Confession - Lent
Homileticsonline.com

Friday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness;
Therefore you are feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in his word I put my hope.

There is a transformation that takes place
within the warmth of your embrace,
That certain knowledge that you are
refuge, shelter, fortress and stronghold
against which no army can succeed.
That you are Brother, Sister, Mother, Father
the love that knows no bounds.
That you are God,
And I am lost outside of your arms.

Create in me a pure heart, O God
And renew a faithful spirit within me
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
And a willing spirit to sustain me.

O Lord, open our lips
And our mouths will forever declare your praise.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come again and with us ever dwell.

...I arise today
Through the strength of heaven;
Light of the sun,
Splendor of fire,
Swiftmess of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's hand to guard me.
Afar or anear,
Alone or in a multitude.

Christ, shield me today
Against wounding;
Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in me.

I arise today
Through the mighty strength
Of the Lord of Creation

(attr. St. Patrick) "A Celtic Celebration"

Saturday | After the 4th Sunday in Lent

God,

When I read your word, sometimes you give me challenging pictures of yourself.

The Mighty One, God, the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to where it sets. (*Psalms 50:1*)

The voice of the Lord twists the oaks
and strips the forests bare.
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!" (*Psalms 29:9*)

The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength. (*Psalms 93:1*)

These pictures the Psalmist paints of you as King of Kings are powerful but feel distant and unapproachable to me. How do I share my thoughts with the One who shakes the earth with His voice and strips the forests bare? As I struggle with these words and pictures, I come before you. Oh God, give me a kingly picture of yourself that I can grasp. Then you open my eyes to Psalm 113, which starts with your splendor and ends with a picture of tenderness.

Who could possibly compare to the Lord our God?

God rules from on high;

⁶ he has to come down to even see heaven and earth!

⁷ God lifts up the poor from the dirt

and raises up the needy from the garbage pile

⁸ to seat them with leaders—

with the leaders of his own people!

⁹ God nests the once barren woman at home—

now a joyful mother with children!

THIS is the King I can cry out to and be heard! Not only do you hold heaven and earth, but you SEE the outcasts and COME for the purpose of lifting-up those who need you most. You give them a place of prominence. Oh, God, you answer my prayers by revealing more of yourself to me. I imagine sitting at your beautiful feet with your robe curled around me, and your hand resting on my head. There I tell my King about the needs of the battered women and children at the Penny's Place safehouse and the struggles of the foster youth who are searching for places to belong. I bring before You the growing number of homeless tents I see, and those that have lost so much during this prolonged time of isolation. I lay the many things that break my heart there at your feet and feel comforted by your power and presence. You are not far off, but God with us - the One who raises up. You are my majestic King, and I praise You for the assurance You bring when I fix my eyes on You.

Rev. Camille Pook

Monday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

BREATH PRAYER

Breath prayer is an ancient form of prayer easily adaptable for anyone. Simply choose one or two lines to meditate, and inhale and then exhale through them. One common form of breath prayer is known as the Jesus Prayer:

(From Matthew 11:28-30)

Inhale: Humble and gentle One,
Exhale: You are rest for my soul.

(From John 15)

Inhale: True Vine and Gardner,
Exhale: I abide in You.

(From Romans 8:38-39)

Inhale: Nothing can separate me,
Exhale: from the love of God.

(From Psalm 46:10)

Inhale: Be still
Exhale: and know You are God.

(From Matthew 6:10)

Inhale: On earth
Exhale: as it is in heaven.

(From 2Cor 12:9)

Inhale: Your grace
Exhale: is enough for me.

(From 1John)

Inhale: There is no fear
Exhale: in your Love.

(From Psalm 23)

Inhale: I will not be afraid
Exhale: for You are with me.

(From Psalm 46:1)

Inhale: You are our refuge
Exhale: and our strength.

(From Psalm 74:16)

Inhale: Both day and night
Exhale: belong to You.

(From Psalm 91:1)

Inhale: I find rest
Exhale: in Your shelter.

(From Psalm 103:4-5)

Inhale: You surround me with love
Exhale: and tender mercies.
Inhale: You fill my life
Exhale: with good things.

(From Philippians 4:7)

Inhale: Peace of Christ,
Exhale: guard my heart and mind.

Start with ten good breaths in and out, with the words that are most meaningful or steady to your soul.

By Sarah Bessey

Tuesday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

Praying the Lord's Prayer by John Wesley

"Our Father" – Who art good and gracious to all, our Creator, our preserver; the Father of our Lord and of us in Him, Your children by adoption and grace. Not *my* Father only, but the Father of the universe, of angels and human beings.

"Who art in heaven" – Filling heaven and earth and beholding all things in heaven and earth; knowing every creature and all their works, and every possible event from everlasting to everlasting...

"Hallowed be thy name" – ...May you be duly honored, loved, feared, by all in heaven and in earth, by all angels and all men!

"Thy kingdom come" – ...May all people receive You, O Christ, for their King and truly believe in Your name. My they be filled with righteousness, peace, joy, holiness, and happiness till they are removed into Your kingdom of glory to reign with You forever.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" – May all inhabitants of the earth do Your will as willingly as the holy angels!...O Spirit of grace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do Your will, and work in them all that is well pleasing in Your sight!

"Give us" – O Father (for we claim nothing of right; only of Your free mercy) *"today"* (for we take no thought for tomorrow) *"our daily bread"* – all things needful for our souls and bodies, not only the meat that perishes, but the sacramental bread, and Your grace, the food which endures to everlasting life.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" – Give us, O Lord, redemption in your blood, the forgiveness of sins. As You enable us freely and fully to forgive us all our trespasses.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" – Whenever we are tempted, O Lord who helps our infirmities, do not allow us to be overcome or suffer loss by it, but make a way for us to escape so that we may be more than conquerors, through Your love, over all sin and the consequences of it.

"For Thine is the kingdom" – The sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created.

"The power" – The executive power, whereby You govern all things in Your everlasting kingdom.

"And the glory" – The praise due from every creature for Your power, all Your wondrous works, and the mightiness of Your kingdom, which endures through all ages, even *"forever. Amen"*

Wednesday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

God,

We're so tired.

We want to do justice, but the work feels endless, and the results look so small in our exhausted hands.

We want to love mercy, but our enemies are relentless and it feels like foolishness to prioritize gentleness in this unbelievably cruel world.

We want to walk humbly, but self-promotion is seductive, and we are afraid that if we don't look after ourselves, no one else will.

We want to be kind, but our anger feels insatiable.

Jesus, in this never-ending wilderness, come to us and grant us grace.

Grant us the courage to keep showing up to impossible battles, trusting that it is our commitment to faithfulness, and not our obsession with results, that will bring in your shalom.

Grant us the vulnerability to risk loving our difficult and complicated neighbor, rejecting the lie that some people are made more in the image of God than others.

Grant us the humility of a decentered but Beloved self.

As we continue to take the single step that is in front of us, Jesus, keep us from becoming what we are called to transform. Protect us from using the empire's violence in our words, in our theology, in our activism, and in our politics – for your kingdom of peace.

Keep our anger from becoming meanness.

Keep our sorrow from collapsing into self-pity.

Keep our hearts soft enough to keep breaking.

Keep our outrage turned towards justice, not cruelty.

Remind us that all of this, every bit of it, is for love.

Keep us fiercely kind.

Amen.

"A Prayer for the Tired, Angry Ones" by Laura Jean Truman

Thursday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

God of herons and heartbreak,
Teach us to love the world again.
Teach us to love extravagantly
Knowing it may
(it will) break our hearts
And teach us that it is worth it.

God of pandemics and suffering ones,
Teach us to love the world again.

God of loneliness and longing,
Of bushfires and wilderness,
Of soup kitchens and border towns,
Of snowfall and children,
Teach us to love the world again.

Amen.

“A Prayer to Learn to Love the World Again” by Sarah Bessey

Friday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

Show us your glory.

Lord, you've heard these words offered countless times, in songs of worship or the pleadings of prayer.

Show us your face, Lord. We want to see you. We want to witness your glory on display.

And yet we come with hearts of repentance, as we acknowledge the ways we have too often denied your glory displayed before us in disabled bodies. Together we confess our sin. We lament the sin of ableism.

Jesus, you who have victoriously conquered death, remind us of the wounds you still bear in your resurrection. Teach us like you did Thomas, saying, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!" (John 20:27)

We worship you, our wounded king...

Thank you for the beauty of your diverse creation. We see your image more clearly displayed through our differences. Convict us, Lord, of the ways we have harmed those who are disabled with our belief, whether spoken or unspoken, that they may be experiencing punishment for sin. Teach us like you did your disciples, saying, "Neither they nor their parents have sinned. This happened so that God's mighty works might be displayed in them." (John 9:3)...

Search our hearts and expose our pride. Dismantle our idols of self-reliance and the illusion of meritocracy. Show us the ways we ignore our privilege and claim credit for your heavenly mercies as personal accomplishment. Give us the wisdom of Solomon, saying, "The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. But time and chance happens to them all." (Ecc 9:11)

We confess the sin of our pride and renounce the lie of meritocracy. Teach us to follow the example of Paul, by refusing to boast of anything except our own weakness, in which your power is all the more fully displayed. (2Cor 11:30, 12:9)

God of love, show us the ways we have excluded disabled bodies from our tables, from our pews, and from our pulpits. Reveal the ways we have belittled or discounted the giftings of disabled people. Teach us how to make a place where they are not only welcome to receive, but where they are empowered to serve, teach, and lead us as well. Remind us of the blueprint scripture offers for a thriving and unified body of believers, saying, "The parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary, which is why God designed the body to give greater honor to those parts, so that there won't be division in the body." (1Cor 12:22, 24-25)

Show us how to wholly welcome disabled bodies in our churches, homes, and communities. Teach us to better honor them for their vital role in your Kingdom...

Let the change begin with us. Rid us of the sin of ableism, and lead us in the way of your justice – on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

"A Liturgy for Disability" by Stephanie Tait

Saturday | After the 5th Sunday in Lent

'There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.' (John 1:6-9)

In the lonely places
The wilderness
Where we stand forlorn
Windswept and alone
Your voice calls out
Prepare a way for the Lord

In the dark places
The shadows
Where we hide our fears
Embrace our tears
Your voice calls out
Prepare a way for the Lord

For the desert places in which we walk
The streets we roam
The paths we cross
Guide our feet
Take us to places
Where you would go
Give us words that you would use
That in this season
Of promise and preparation
We might point the way with John the Baptist
To the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

O come, Thou Day-spring, from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Lord, thou hast given us thy Word for a light to shine upon our path;
grant us so to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching,
that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“A Celtic Celebration” (Jerome, c 342 - 420)

Monday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

“And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us. We will not fear, for God has 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.” – Martin Luther

Our Father, we thank you for that one little word today: *Jesus*. We thank you that one little word will fell him – *Jesus*. We just want to keep speaking the name of Jesus.

Jesus, the name that charms our fears that bids our sorrows cease. ‘Tis music to the sinner’s ears, ‘tis life and health and peace. Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him. How I’ve proved him over and over. Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, O for grace to trust him more.

Holy Spirit, lead us to the mountaintops and through the valleys, training us to become strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. We know this will mean letting go of the strength of our own making. Give us the grace to let it go before having it wrested from our hands.

...Prepare us even now for the wilderness season ahead with Jesus as we [observe] the days of Lent.

Praying in Jesus’s name, amen.

J.D. Walt

Tuesday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

God of prayers for parking spots and prisons,
Of hospitals and holidays,
Of anger and angels,
Of traveling mercies and tired ones,
Of decolonization and deconstruction,
Of wilderness and wander,
Of feasts and ferocity,
Of goodness and grief,
We come to you today
With our whole selves.

God of our honest prayers and
More honest silences,
Open our eyes to see and
Our ears to hear and
Our hearts to understand
How you are already here with us.

Mother God, gather us as
A hen gathers her chicks
And let us catch our breath for
One hot second and remember
How you hold the whole world
In your kind, capable, wise hands,
Including us.

Spirit, when we cannot part the weeds
Of our own traditions and old languages,
When the old pathways of prayer feel choked
With briars and thorns,
Would you make a path in the wilderness
For us to find you in new ways, new words,
New practices, new permissions?
Would you meet us in the wilderness and
Set out a feast?
We are hungry and thirsty.

We are grateful for (mostly) every moment
That brought us here to you.
Help us to sink down into your Love
To push our roots down into that marvelous Love.
And be planted within your power and grace
As we practice loving this world as you have
Loved this world.

May we laugh harder
Because we have learned
To let ourselves weep with you.

May we see and know and name Beauty
Because we have learned
To bring the ugliness to you.

Surprise us and startle us.
We're open to all the weird ways you want to
Speak – in us and to us and through us.

May we be Peacemakers,
Joy-bringers, Truth-tellers, Status-Quo-Disrupters,
Wanderers, Wonderers, and Misfits to our Time
(because of Resolute contentment),
Who never settle for the sit-down-and-shut-up life
But rise up in your
She [He]-who-the-Son-sets-free-is-free-indeed
Birthright of freedom.

May we be the ones who come close to you
Because of our vulnerability and not
Because of our false certainties;
Teach us to lay down our masks and pretenses.
You tore down the veil between us and the Holy of
Holies,
Keep our hands from rehangng that curtain...

May we learn to sit with you,
In silence,
And know it is enough to know you
And be known by you
And know ourselves.

Teach us to pray, God, as you have always
Welcomed us to pray:
Fully human, fully yours, fully held,
And fully loved.

We will tell you the truth of our lives
And of this world.
And we will listen to the truth you speak back to us
The truth of our belovedness,
Of your justice,
Of your faithfulness,
Of love.
And say
Let it be so,
Let it be in me.
Amen.

“A Benediction” by Sarah Bessey

Wednesday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

Dear God,

In this season of Lent, we're reminded of our own difficulties and struggles. Sometimes the way has seemed too dark. Sometimes we feel like our lives have been marked by such grief and pain, we don't see how our circumstances can ever change. But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong on our behalf.

Lord, rise up within us, let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've walked through. Allow your power to be manifest through our own weakness, so that others will recognize it is You who is at work on our behalf.

We ask that you would trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your Presence. Trade our mourning and grief for the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit. Trade our despair for hope and praise. We choose to give you thanks today and believe that this season of darkness will fade away.

Thank you that you are with us in whatever we face and that you are greater than this trial. We know and recognize that you are Sovereign, we thank you for the victory that is ours because of Christ Jesus, and we are confident that you have good in store for our future. We thank you that you are at work right now, trading our ashes for greater beauty. We praise you, for you make all things new.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

by Debbie McDaniel.

Thursday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

[Breathe in] The holy is here,
[Breathe out.] present with me.

Spirit of Jesus –
Come with fire that refines,
Water that refreshes,
Wind that topples,
Breath that fills.

Kindle a global revival of empathy, justice, and active peacemaking.
Birth a witness of Love that is bigger and better than we inherited.
Liberate us from privilege and oppression.
Unshackle the gospel from nationalism, colonialism, white supremacy, and every other lens that shrouds the Good News.
Give us an abundance of grace for others and ourselves.
Grant us compassion for those who suffer. Free us from the influence of money power, and acclaim.

Restore our reputation for caring for the poor, loving our neighbors, being ambassadors of peace, and stewards of the earth.
Unlock the immense resources hoarded in the Western Church and release them for your name's sake. Encourage us, so we do not grow cynical, isolated, and burnt-out.
Fan our hopes, our joys, and our connections.
Allow us rest when we need rest.
Enable us to see you in each person we encounter.
Show us mercy, in our humanity.

Let us love more fully than we thought possible.
Let us not be quick on the draw, ready to retaliate, escalate, assassinate.
Let our collective fervor for justice eclipse institutional concerns.
Let us trust and follow the wisdom of those who have been marginalized.
Let us persevere in creating safe places of worship to eat bread and drink wine together.

Let us stand for Love and with Love, following the way of your Son as best we're able.
Let us know fear an experiential spirituality.
Let us listen to the wondrous bodies you gave us.
Let us hear your voice and voice and tangibly feel you with us.
Let us discern your guidance.
Let us abide in and with you.

Show us what you're doing, so we can work together.
Move where you will, when you will, in whatever way you will.
Come, Holy Spirit, and restore your Church. Amen.

Friday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

O Love Divine, what hast thou done!
Th'incarnate God hath died for me!
The Father's coeternal Son
The Son of God for me hath died:
My Lord, my Love is crucified:

Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels near to God;
Believe, believe the record true,
Pardon for all flows from his side:
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Behold him, all ye that pass by,
The bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, sinners, see your Savior die,
And say, was ever grief like his?
Come, feel with me his blood applied:
My Lord, my Love, is crucified. Amen.

"O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done" By Charles Wesley

Saturday | After the 6th Sunday in Lent

For all that was left undone because we obeyed the Spirit's leading, we recognize Your handiwork and give You thanks.

Now, the Sabbath lies before us and we are ready to cross the threshold. (some light a candle)

Lord, Jesus, You are the Light of the world.

You created and crafted this day of Sabbath Rest.

You bless it.

You crown it with glory.

You call it holy.

Through it, You call us out of darkness into Your love and light.

It is to be a day of refreshment and celebration.

You alone release us from bondage of duty and demand.

Enter our homes and hearths today.

Almighty God, grant us and all our loved ones true rest on this Sabbath Day.

May Your Presence drive out from among us anger and fear, worry and regret.

Send your blessing upon us, that we may be people of the Word.

Heavenly Father,

We rejoice in the beauty of Your world,

The power of Your Word,

The presence of Your Holy Spirit...

It is from You we receive every good and perfect gift.

Open our eyes to see.

Giver of Life and Love,

Grant us Your peace this day and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

"A Sabbath Prayer" www.RunHardRestWell.com