

## Immigration Worship Resources: Lent and Holy Week

As we enter the season of Lent, the Office of Immigration Issues offers this brief study guide for the Sunday lectionary, with additional prayers for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. For each Sunday, we have prepared brief contextual notes for a few of the lectionary readings, including where possible and appropriate their context in the Bible, in history, and in interpretation. We also offer some questions and thoughts to ponder as you prepare for worship.

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## Hymn Suggestions for Lent

In the *Glory to God Hymnal*:

- “Justice and Reconciliation” section, hymns 749–774
- “Lament and Longing for Healing” section, hymns 775–800
- Hymn 70—“What Does the Lord Require of You?”
- Hymn 154—“Jesus Entered Egypt”
- Hymns 317/318—“In Christ There Is No East or West”
- Hymn 339—“Lift Every Voice and Sing”
- Hymn 343—“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”
- Hymn 344—“Where Armies Scourge the Countryside”
- Hymn 345—“In an Age of Twisted Values”
- Hymn 351—“All Who Love and Serve Your City”
- Hymn 435—“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

Many of the above hymns can also be found in the blue *Presbyterian Hymnal*.

Contemporary hymn writers are also a good resource.

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette has a number of hymns on the topic of immigration and refugees, as well as more general Lenten hymns. Her website is <http://www.carolynshymns.com/index.html>. Some titles include

- “Abraham Journeyed to a New Country”
- “A Little Bit of Salt”
- “God, How Can We Comprehend?”
- “If I Saw My Toddler”
- “Lord, When Were You a Stranger?”
- “O God You Give Welcome”
- “The Children Come”
- “There Is Room in God’s Great Welcome”

[Hymn Use Permission: *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship* by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Geneva Press, 2000) includes a permission note for those who own this book to use this hymn (along with the 44 other new hymns in the book) in their local church's worship services. People who do not own *Gifts of Love* are asked to contact Carolyn ([bcgillette@comcast.net](mailto:bcgillette@comcast.net)) for permission to use the hymn and to get a copy of the hymn formatted for worship bulletin use.]

Litany for Ash Wednesday

God, you sojourned through the desert with our ancestors in the faith, with Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam, Hagar and Ishmael.

**Now you sojourn through deserts here and around the world with all your children who search for safe harbor.**

You wept with Rachel in Ramah when her children were slaughtered.

**Now you weep with parents and guardians around the world who cannot keep their children safe.**

You offered courage to Ruth, entering a new land with little.

**Now you offer courage to all immigrants and refugees, who, no matter how much material wealth they have, cross borders with hope and dreams.**

Inbreaking God, you came to us in Jesus, a border-crossing child, whose parents sought safety.

**Now you sit with DREAMERS, waiting in limbo to find out their legal status in a nation that alternately demonizes and canonizes them, with little care for the full human picture of each DREAMer.**

We have heard your words through the prophets, instructing us on what is right and good, and neglected to follow them. The prophet Isaiah taught us the fast you find acceptable. We confess:

**We have not loosed the bonds of injustice,**

Or undone the thongs of the yoke.

**We have not freed the oppressed or broken every yoke.**

We have hoarded our daily bread.

**We have left the homeless home-less.**

Forgive us, merciful God. Help us keep the fast acceptable to you:

**Removing the yoke from among us, and the speaking of evil.**

As we receive the gift of our daily bread,

**help us share it with the hungry, that no one hungers any longer.**

We offer thanks for shelter and stability,

**And commit ourselves to creating shelter and stability for all peoples.**

Comforter God, we know that you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Let your ways be our ways as we journey into darkness, trusting in your word to guide us.

**Amen.**

1st Sunday in Lent

**Lectionary Texts:** Genesis 9:8–17, Psalm 25:1–10, 1 Peter 3:18–22, Mark 1:9–15

Prayer of Confession using the following Call to Confession and Litany of Confession:

Call to Confession:

Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, and we are joined by our baptisms into one community, led by Christ. As part of the baptized community, we come together to confess our sin because sin is not only an individual offense, but a communal one. Together, let us confess our sin before God and one another, trusting in God's forgiveness:

Litany of Confession:

Compassionate God, we have not done what is right.

**We have turned away from those in need of shelter:**

We do not offer support to the homeless.

**We do not offer sanctuary to immigrants and refugees.**

We let our fears rule us, planted by those who seek to divide us:

**We exclude those who look different, who sound different, who once called another place home.**

We forget that what we do to others, we do to you.

**We forget that what we do not do for others, we do not do for you.**

Forgive us. Our guilt is overwhelming, and we do not know what to do.

**Cleanse us of our sin, and teach us to turn our guilt into action;**

Renew in us your love, that we might love the world as you do;

**Open our hearts to the voices of others, that we might hear you in them.**

Through your Beloved, our Savior and Teacher Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

Declaration of Forgiveness:

God's forgiveness and love are given to us freely and joyfully. As God declared when Jesus came up from the water, and as was promised us at our baptisms, we are God's beloved, when we fall short of being the beloved community, and when God's love shines forth from our community.

I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are a forgiven people.

Thanks be to God.

## 2nd Sunday in Lent

**Lectionary Texts:** Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16; Psalm 22:23–31; Romans 4:13–25; Mark 8:31–38 OR Mark 9:2–9

### Prayer of the People:

Creator God, all of humankind was created in your image, and you called us good. In your lovingkindness, you made covenants with us throughout history, beginning with your promises to Abraham and Sarah. The whole of creation belongs to you; hear us as we pray for one another and creation, trusting in your faithfulness.

God of justice and mercy, we pray for all our leaders, in our congregations and our church, and in our local, state, and national political offices. May they hear your call to do justice and to love kindness. May they learn to see you in all those whom they serve.

Bountiful God, we thank you for the beauty and ecological diversity of your creation. We confess that we have not cared for it as your good gift to us. We hoard resources, creating shortages and living in a mindset of scarcity. Help us learn to share water and land with each other and with your creation. We extract more resources than the earth can support, causing environmental degradation that effects the most vulnerable around the world, from people fleeing floods and droughts to animals living in ever shrinking habitats. May we strive to restore the earth, safeguarding it for future generations.

God of compassion, hear the cries of the oppressed throughout the world, from those languishing in jail without a trial in our own cities to those fleeing destruction abroad. We pray especially for immigrants and refugees within our borders, who have escaped violence and lack of opportunity, only to face discrimination and fear here where they hoped to be safe. May we remember that these are also children of God, our siblings.

Listening God, you hear the names of those in our community who are in special need of your care. *(Insert any particular congregational prayer concerns here)*. We remember with thanksgiving those who have gone before, and joined the great cloud of witnesses. We ask your blessings on those who mourn, bringing them your peace and comfort in times of darkness.

Hear our prayers, God of grace, and help us to fulfill them, working according to your purpose, in peace, justice, and mercy, in all we do; through Jesus Christ the Lord. *(The Lord's Prayer may be inserted here, saying "who taught us to pray, Our Father ...")* Amen.

3rd Sunday in Lent

**Lectionary Texts:** Exodus 20:1–17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25; John 2:13–22

Affirmation of Faith/Litany of Old Testament Reading

(To be read in unison, by alternating voices, or as a responsive litany)

You are the Lord our God, who brought us out of slavery in Egypt.

We are the people who followed a pillar of flame through the desert into freedom.

We confess that we are also people who leave the yoke of oppression on others.

We shall have no other gods before you.

We confess that we also worship many other things: the material world, ideologies that destroy, and false doctrines.

We commit ourselves: We will worship the one triune God, Earth-Maker, Pain-Bearer, Life-Giver.

In six days, you created heaven and earth, the sea and the land, and all that dwells in them. On the seventh day, you rested, and blessed that day, consecrating it as a day of holy rest.

Yet we abuse your creation, and do not set aside days for rest. Parents do not receive time to care for their children, and employers take advantage of vulnerable workers.

We commit ourselves: We will nurture and care for the world you created. We will respect our own days of rest, and ensure that all persons have sabbath days.

We have been told: You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal.

We understand in a limited fashion that individually, we will not murder, commit adultery, or steal.

As a community, we participate in systems that steal lands from people, and strips people of their rights. We send immigrants and refugees back into places of danger and absolve ourselves when they are killed. We do not respect the bodily autonomy of people, especially women and children, and ignore problems of human trafficking, especially sex trafficking.

We commit ourselves: We will respect all people, protecting their lives, rights, safety, and lands. We will not turn a blind eye to those who abuse power in our midst.

We have been told: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

We live in a world where telling the difference between fact and fiction is increasingly difficult.

We commit ourselves: We will follow you as you lead us on paths of truth and righteousness.

We have been told: You shall not covet that which belongs to another.

In an age of social media and massive consumption, our lives are constructed around wanting our lives to look like those of others.

We commit ourselves: We will mold our lives on your son's life, loving our neighbors and helping the world around us.

With your help, and with the support of the Spirit and the grace of your beloved child, we commit ourselves once again to renouncing sin, and to honoring you.

4th Sunday in Lent

**Lectionary Texts:** Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22; Ephesians 2:1–10; John 3:14–21

Call to Worship

God so loved the world, God gave the Beloved

**That we who believe in the Beloved might have eternal life.**

God sent the Beloved into the world to save it

**The light came into the world, but we loved the darkness.**

Jesus the Beloved welcomes all who turn from darkness

**Jesus the Beloved welcomes us.**

Let us worship God.

Prayer for the Day

God, you have walked among us. You lived as a refugee in a foreign land, and you lived under an oppressive, occupying regime in the land you called home. Forgive us when we forget the reality of who you once were. Help us to see your face shining in all people, no matter the human differences that may divide us. May we learn compassion for all through the lovingkindness shown to us by your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



5th Sunday in Lent

**Lectionary Texts:** Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 51:1–12 OR Psalm 119:9–16; Hebrews 5:5–10; John 12:20–33

Prayer of Confession

“No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.” We come together to confess our sin because sin is not only an individual offense, but a communal one. Together, let us confess our sin before God and one another, trusting in God’s forgiveness:

**Merciful God, you wrote your law on our hearts, but we broke it anyway. When refugees knocked on our doors, we turned them away. We heard the chants and anger of those protesting unjust systems that perpetuate white supremacy and inequality, and we ignored them or asked them to be more polite. When immigration officials followed a child into a hospital or arrested parents in front of their children’s schools, we struggled to find compassion. Forgive us. By your grace and mercy, fill us with the courage of Ruth and Joseph, who both left home in despair, finding peace in new lands. Help us to once again uphold the law written on our hearts, through the loving kindness of your son our Lord. Amen.**

“I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” From age to age, God has promised to forgive us and make us new. God’s love and forgiveness are given to us freely, though we don’t deserve them. I declare to you: God’s law is in our hearts. We are God’s people, and through the grace of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

Palm Sunday

**Lectionary Texts—Palms:** Mark 11:1–11 OR John 12:12–26; Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29

**Lectionary Texts—Passion:** Isaiah 50:4–9a; Psalm 31:9–16; Philippians 2:5–11; Mark 14:1–15:47 OR Mark 15:1–39 (40–47)

Call to Worship:

Give thanks to God—God is good.

**God’s steadfast love endures forever!**

The gate of God is opened for the righteous.

**The stone the builders rejected is the chief cornerstone.**

This is God’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

**We shout “Blessed” and “Hosanna” to the one who comes in God’s name.**

This is the day God has made; God has entered the city.

**Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!**

Prayer:

God we cried Hosanna, welcoming you into our midst. Yet too often we do not welcome people with a way strewn with palms and joyful shouts of welcome. Is it any surprise that our shouts of Hosanna quickly turned to “Crucify him”? Forgive us our refusal to be hospitable. Help us to welcome everyone as though they too might be God-in-our-midst. Amen.

Maundy Thursday

**Lectionary texts**—Ex. 12:1–4 (5–10), 11–14; Ps. 116:1–2, 12–19; 1 Cor. 11:23–26; John 13:1–17, 31b–35

***Kyrie eleison***  
**(Señor ten-nos-piedad)**

**Prayer written by the Reverend Dan González Ortega, Rector, Comunidad Teológica de México**

Jesús de Nazareth:  
Hermano del alma,  
Compañero de camino.  
¡Suplicamos tu piedad pues hemos pecado!  
No hemos sabido cómo ser personas humildes como Tú,  
Valientes como Tú,  
Proféticas como Tú,  
Solidarias como Tú.  
Por eso te pedimos ...

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

Dios nuestro,  
Padre amoroso,  
Madre compasiva.  
¡Ten misericordia pues constantemente intentamos alejarnos de tu presencia!  
Pretendemos vivir un mundo donde no estés presente,  
Olvidamos verte,  
No queremos tu control,  
No anhelamos tu presencia.  
Por eso te pedimos:

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

Espíritu de Santidad,  
Sabiduría eterna,  
Brisa apacible.  
¡Acompaña nuestro arrepentimiento sincero!  
Pues no nos hemos dejado consolar por Ti,  
Defendernos por Ti,  
Habitarnos por Ti,  
Acontecer en otras personas por Ti.  
Por eso te pedimos,

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

Jesús, hijo de María,  
Lavador de pies,  
Amigo traicionado.  
¡Cristo ten piedad de nuestras personas!

Queremos ser como Tú,  
Servir como Tú,  
Amar como Tú,  
Entregarnos al mundo como lo hiciste Tú.  
Por eso te pedimos:

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

Universo Divino,  
Luz de luz, en medio de la oscuridad,  
Verdad y Amor eterno.  
¡Señor atiende a nuestras suplicas!  
Enséñanos a pastorear como Tú,  
Ver como Tú,  
Escuchar como Tú,  
Sentir como Tú,  
Amar al mundo y a las personas como amas Tú.  
Por eso te pedimos:

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

*Ruaj*<sup>1</sup> creadora,  
*Pneuma*<sup>2</sup> instructora,  
Promesa cumplida.  
¡Tormenta huracanada consuela a tu iglesia!  
Queremos ser templo para Ti,  
Ofrenda para Ti,  
Testimonio de Ti,  
Influencia de Ti,  
Esperanza para el mundo desde Ti.  
Por eso te pedimos:

*¡Ten-nos piedad!*

Y porque en tu Gracia hay perdón,  
En tu mesa comunión,  
Y poder en la oración...  
Tu iglesia en Jueves Santo canta:

¡GLORIA A DIOS!

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<sup>1</sup> Término hebreo (Espíritu) usado en la creación narrada en Génesis 1:1—“En el principio el ‘Espíritu’ de Dios se movía sobre las aguas.”

<sup>2</sup> Término griego (Espíritu) usado en el *Pentecostés* narrado en Hechos 2:4—“Y fueron todos llenos del ‘Espíritu’ Santo, y comenzaron a hablar en otras lenguas, según el ‘Espíritu’ les daba que hablasen.”

Good Friday

**Lectionary texts**—Isa. 52:13–53:12; Ps. 22; Heb. 10:16–25 or Heb. 4:14–16; 5:7–9; John 18:1–19:42

Call to Worship:

You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

**In you our ancestors trusted;**

They trusted, and you delivered them.

**To you they cried, and were saved;**

In you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

**Let us worship in the name of the one who dies for us.**

Prayer:

Loving God,

You sent Jesus Christ to save us.

We have betrayed him.

We have denied him.

We have abandoned, mocked, and crucified him.

Have mercy, O God,

Have mercy on us;

Through Jesus Christ, our only hope. Amen.

Prayer written by David Gambrell, Associate for Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Easter Sunday

**Lectionary Texts:** Acts 10:34–43 OR Isaiah 25:6–9; Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24; 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 OR Acts 10:34–43; John 20:1–18 OR Mark 16:1–8