

lift up your voice

LYRICS AND LINKS

Check out our Spotify playlist (QR code below) that includes many of these songs, plus a few more for the season.



SPOTIFY
PLAYLIST

If this lyrics document is a hard copy, use the QR code below to link to a digital copy, so you can utilize the links to performances.



DIGITAL
LYRICS AND
LINKS DOC

PASS IT ON

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;
that's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it:
you spread God's love to everyone; you want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is spring,
when all the trees are budding;
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
that's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it:
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring; you want to pass it on.

I wish for you my friend, this happiness that I've found;
on God you can depend, it matters not where you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know:
The Lord of love has come to me; I want to pass it on.

☀️ Click on the SONG TITLE to learn or be reminded of that song's tune.

ash wednesday

BE THOU MY VISION

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word,
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord,
thou my redeemer, my love thou hast won,
thou in me dwelling and I with thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart
Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, your victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all!

I WANT JESUS TO WALK WITH ME

I want Jesus to walk with me (x2)
All along my pilgrim journey,
O, I want Jesus to walk with me.

In my trials, O walk with me (x2)
When my heart is almost breaking,
O, I want Jesus to walk with me.

When I'm troubled, O walk with me (x2)
When my head is bowed in sorrow,
O, I want Jesus to walk with me.

first sunday of lent

JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE

I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

REFRAIN:

*Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee. [Refrain]

When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore. [Refrain]

SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

MY LIFE FLOWS ON

My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.

REFRAIN:

*No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Love is lord of heav'n and earth,
how can I keep from singing?*

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? *[Refrain]*

What though my joys and comforts die,
I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. *[Refrain]*

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? *[Refrain]*

GO DOWN, MOSES *(Louis Armstrong)*

GO DOWN, MOSES *(piano only)*

When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go,
oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

REFRAIN:

*Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.*

The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my people go,
to lead the Hebrew children through,
Let my people go. *[Refrain]*

As Israel stood by the waterside,
Let my people go,
at God's command it did divide,
Let my people go. *[Refrain]*

When they had reached the other shore,
Let my people go,
they let the song of triumph soar,
Let my people go. *[Refrain]*

Lord, help us all from bondage flee,
Let my people go,
and let us all in Christ be free,
Let my people go. *[Refrain]*

GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient Church's story,
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU?

(may be sung in a round)

What does the Lord require of you?
What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness,
walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice, and love kindness,
and walk humbly with your God.

second sunday of lent

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
they are weak but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me; yes, Jesus loves me;
yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

MY SHEPHERD, YOU SUPPLY MY NEED

(see also: "My Shepherd Is the Living God")

My Shepherd, you supply my need,
most holy is your name;
in pastures fresh you make me feed,
beside the living stream.
You bring my wand'ring spirit back.
when I forsake your ways;
you lead me, for your mercy's sake,
in paths of truth and grace.

When through the shades of death I walk,
your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand in sight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
my cup with Blessings overflows,
your oil anoints my head.

Your sure provisions gracious God
attend me all my days;
oh, may your house be my abode,
and all my work be praise.
Here would I find a settled rest,
while others go and come;
no more a stranger, nor a guest,
but like a child at home.

PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND

(Rev. Robert Jones)

PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND

(Aretha Franklin)

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light:

REFRAIN:

*Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall: *[Refrain]*

When the darkness appears
And the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand,
Guide my feet, hold my hand: *[Refrain]*

SOFTLY AND TENDERLY

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
see, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

REFRAIN:

*Come home, come home;
you who are weary come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!*

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? *[Refrain]*

O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. *[Refrain]*

THUMA MINA

(Thuma mina)
Thuma mina,
thuma mina,
thuma mina,
Somandla.

(Send me, Lord)
Send me, Jesus,
send me, Jesus,
send me, Jesus,
send me, Lord.

(Lead me, Lord)
Lead me, Jesus,
lead me, Jesus,
lead me, Jesus,
lead me, Lord.

(Fill me, Lord)
Fill me, Jesus,
fill me, Jesus,
fill me, Jesus,
fill me, Lord.

third sunday of lent

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

Tw'as grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

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 first begun!

THERE'S A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
we should rest upon God's word,
and our lives would be illumined
by the presence of our Lord.

COME THOU FONT OF EVERY BLESSING

Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.

LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to Earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver;
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy host above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

178 AFRICA

(the page # and tune name; a shape-note song from The Sacred Harp)

Now shall my inward joys arise,
And burst into a song;
Almighty love inspires my heart,
And pleasure tunes my tongue.

Why do we then indulge our fears,
Suspensions and complaints?
Is He a God, and shall His grace
Grow weary of His saints?

FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH

For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,

REFRAIN:

*Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light, [Refrain]

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, [Refrain]

fourth sunday of lent

JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before You,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You,
Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Praising You eternally!

Always giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Father, Christ our Brother,
Let Your light upon us shine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
Joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

HE CAME DOWN *(John Bell album)*

HE CAME DOWN *(church choir)*

(Why did he come?)

He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hallelujah forevermore.

...may have joy;
...may have peace;
...may have hope;
...may have life;

I'VE GOT PEACE LIKE A RIVER

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in my soul.

THIS IS THE DAY

This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice,
we will rejoice and be glad in it,
and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day,
this is the day that the Lord has made.

JOY TO THE WORLD (piano only)

JOY TO THE WORLD (Sufjan Stevens)

Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns;
Our mortal songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

fifth sunday of lent

THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD

(Sweet Honey in the Rock)

THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD

(Paul Robeson)

REFRAIN:

*There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

Sometimes I feel discouraged
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. [Refrain]

If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus
and say, "He died for all." [Refrain]

O SACRED HEAD, NOW WOUNDED

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown;
how pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish
which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, O Christ, hast suffered
was all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve thy place;
look on me with thy favor,
and keep me in thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest Friend,
for this, thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
O, let me never, never
outlive my love for thee.

AH, HOLY JESUS, HOW HAST THOU OFFENDED

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended,
that mortal judgment hath on thee descended?
By foes derided, by the world rejected,
O most afflicted!

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee!
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee;
I crucified thee.

For me, kind Jesus, was thy incarnation,
thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion,
for my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee,
I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee,
think on thy pity and thy love unswerving,
not my deserving.

JESUS WALKED THIS LONESOME VALLEY

*(slightly different words, but Mississippi
John Hurt is the best!)*

Jesus walked this lonesome valley;
He had to walk it by himself.
Oh, nobody else could walk it for him;
He had to walk it by himself.

We must walk this lonesome valley;
We have to walk it by ourselves.
Oh, nobody else can walk it for us;
We have to walk it by ourselves.

You must go and stand your trial;
You have to stand it by yourself.
Oh, nobody else can stand it for you;
You have to stand it by yourself.

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
still all my song shall be,
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

When like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
yet in my dreams I'd be
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

There let the way appear, steps unto heaven;
all that thou sendest me, in mercy given;
angels to beckon me
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts bright with thy praise,
out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
so by my woes to be
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

Or if, on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I fly,
still all my song shall be,
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

palm sunday

ALL GLORY, LAUD, AND HONOR

All glory, laud, and honor to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!
You are a child of Israel and David's royal Son,
you ride in lowly triumph, Messiah, blessed one!

The company of angels is praising you on high;
and we with all creation in chorus make reply.
The people of the Hebrews with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present.

To you before your passion they sang their hymns of praise;
to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.
As you received their praises, now hear us as we pray.
Since you delight in goodness, Rule in our hearts today!

PREPARE YE

PREPARE YE *(including "Long live God" descant)*

Prepare ye the way of the Lord!
Prepare ye the way of the Lord!

Long live God! Long live God!
Long live God! Long live God!

ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia, alleluia!
O burning sun with golden beam,
O silver moon with softer gleam,

REFRAIN:
O praise God, O praise God,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

O rushing winds with voice so strong,
You clouds that sail in Heav'n along,
O praise God, alleluia!
O rising morn, in praise rejoice,
you lights of evening, find a voice. *[Refrain]*

O flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your God to hear,
alleluia, alleluia!
O blazing fire who lights the night,
providing warmth, enhancing sight, *[Refrain]*

And all ye saints of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
sing praises, alleluia!
You who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God, who knows your ev'ry care: *[Refrain]*

LET THE WHOLE CREATION CRY

Let the whole creation cry, "Alleluia!"
"Glory be to God on high! Alleluia!"
sun and moon, lift up your voice, "Alleluia!"
night and stars, in God rejoice! "Alleluia!"

All who strive to serve the Lord, "Alleluia!"
Prophets burning with God's Word, "Alleluia!"
Those to whom the arts belong, "Alleluia!"
Add your voices to the song, "Alleluia!"

Men and women, young and old, "Alleluia!"
Raise the anthem manifold, "Alleluia!"
Join with children's songs of praise, "Alleluia!"
Worship God through all your days, "Alleluia!"

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine;
this little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine;
this little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Ev'rywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine;
ev'rywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine;
ev'ry where I go,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Jesus gave it to me,
I'm gonna let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me,
I'm gonna let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Hide it under a bushel? (No!)
I'm gonna let it shine;
Hide it under a bushel? (No!)
I'm gonna let it shine;
Hide it under a bushel? (No!)
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

maundy thursday

ABIDE WITH ME

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens, God, with me abide;
when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and strength can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O God, abide with me.

LEAD ME, GUIDE ME

Lead me, guide me along the way;
For if You lead me, I cannot stray;
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

STAY WITH ME

Stay with me,
remain here with me;
watch and pray,
watch and pray.

good friday

WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down;
when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing!
To God and to the Lamb who is the great "I AM,"
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing!

WERE YOU THERE?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

JESUS, REMEMBER ME

Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

WHEN JESUS WEPT

(may be sung in a round)

When Jesus wept, the falling tear
in mercy flowed beyond all bound;
when Jesus groaned, a trembling fear
seized all the guilty world around.

SENZENI NA

("What Have We Done [to Deserve This Anguish]?")

(Senzeni na)
Senzeni na, senzeni na (Senzeni na)
Senzeni na, senzeni na (Senzeni na)
Senzeni na, senzeni na (Senzeni na)
Senzeni na, senzeni na

(What have we done?)
What have we done? What have we done?
(What have we done?)
What have we done? What have we done?
(What have we done?)
What have we done? What have we done?
(What have we done?)
What have we done? What have we done?

easter sunday

CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
All creation, join to say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, O heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Jesus died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed.

REFRAIN:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; [Refrain]

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
he bled and died to take away my sin; [Refrain]

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim: "My God, how great thou art!" [Refrain]

SIYAHAMBA

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos
Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba, hamba,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos!

We are marching in the light of God
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching, marching, we are marching, marching,
We are marching in the light of God!

Caminando en la luz de Dios
Caminando en la luz de Dios
Caminando, vamos, caminando, vamos,
Caminando en la luz de Dios!

THE STRIFE IS O'ER

The strife is o'er, the battle done,
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,
but Christ their legions has dispersed;
let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

The three sad days are quickly sped;
Christ rises glorious from the dead;
all glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

Lord, by your wounds on Calvary
from death's dread sting your servants free,
that we may live and sing to thee. Alleluia!

IN THE GARDEN

I come to the garden alone,
while the dew is still on the roses;
and the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
the Son of God discloses.

REFRAIN:

*And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own,
and the joy we share as we tarry there,
none other has ever known.*

He speaks, and the sound of his voice
is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
and the melody that he gave to me
within my heart is ringing. [Refrain]

I'd stay in the garden with Him
Though the night around me be falling;
but he bids me go; through the voice of woe,
his voice to me is calling. [Refrain]

NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISES

(piano only)

NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISES

(Steve Winwood)

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

In the grave they laid the love who had been slain,
Thinking that Jesus would not awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,
who that for three days in the grave had lain;
raised from the dead the risen Christ is seen:
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat arising green.



lift up your voice
SINGING THROUGH LENT AND EASTER



"All of creation," wrote the twelfth-century German abbess and composer, St. Hildegard of Bingen, "is a song of praise to God," a swirling symphony all around us.

"To sing is to pray twice," St. Augustine, the fourth-century North African bishop, is said to have once remarked – that is, first praying through the song's words, and second through its music.

And for Martin Luther, next to theology, music is the greatest art: "For if you want to revive the sad, startle the jovial, encourage the despairing, humble the conceited, pacify the raving, mollify the hate-filled...what can you find that is more effective than music?"

This Lenten season, why not take the Christian musical treasury as your guide, this sacred art, thousands of years old, in which big ideas and beautiful melodies come together?

In this devotional, each week, biblical texts and beloved songs inspire practices you can try yourself, with your family or friends, or with your congregation. As the days lengthen, the birds will sing – and so will we, strengthening our spirits, praying twice, and joining in with creation's symphony of sorrow and joy, anguish and comfort, death and new life.

Lift up your voice, and sing!



A NOTE ON SONGS & SINGING

First, many people have been told a lie along the way: that they “can’t sing,” or “can’t carry a tune,” or should only sing in the car or the shower. But the writer of the Psalms – that songbook in the middle of the Bible – has it right: we’re called to “make a joyful noise,” not a perfect pitch (Psalm 100:1). So if that noise is, well, more noisy than melodious – so be it! When it comes to joyful noise-making, loud is better than proud!

And second, music is a form of culture, and there are lots of different styles and repertoires to choose from across Christian history. The songs and hymns included here are widely-known “classics” from a range of styles; consider these pages a diverse jumping-off point, not a complete list. Part of the pleasure is to get to know songs that have stood the test of time, and so to “sing with our ancestors” from different eras and cultural traditions.

So if a given song is familiar to you – great! Lean in and sing out! And if it’s unfamiliar, take it as an invitation to experience one of the gems in the Christian treasury. As we go along, feel free to add your own gems, favorites, and “classics” from your local repertoire, too, lifting our voices and joining in when our neighbors lift theirs, each of us in one corner or another of creation’s magnificent choir.

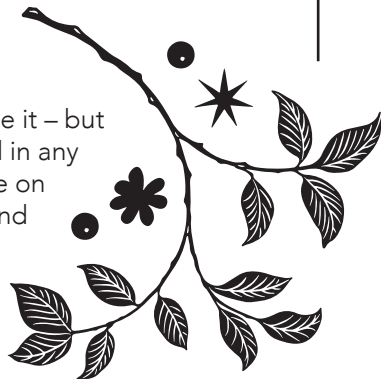


HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Each week includes a simple candlelight service, including three songs from different musical traditions (see the “Lyrics and Links” doc for words and performances). Pick one song each week, or sing them all, or let them inspire you to sing other songs – and as you sing, try using different singing practices, such as:

- Sing a capella (this is often best!).
- If you’re a musician (or know one), sing with simple accompaniment.
- Sing along via the link (see the “Lyrics and Links” doc).
- Sing with a partner, alternating lines or verses, or in harmony.
- Sing or hum while walking.
- Sing in solidarity, even from afar: for example, sing a sad song “with” or on behalf of those who are sorrowful, a joyful song “with” those who are jubilant, and so on.
- Sing in a space with excellent acoustics (showers count!).
- Sing each song multiple times each week, so it starts to seep into your heart.
- Sing to begin or end each day, or as grace before meals.
- Try committing a verse or two to memory. Notice how memorizing helps you see and feel things in the song you didn’t before. It’s like magic!

If you have a hymnal handy, feel free to use it – but the “Lyrics and Links” doc works, too, and in any case, try to free yourself from dependence on books, paper, devices, accompaniment, and so on. Live with these songs for a week, and they’ll stay with you throughout Lent – and beyond!



ash wednesday

light

Light eight candles (tea lights, for example)

read

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

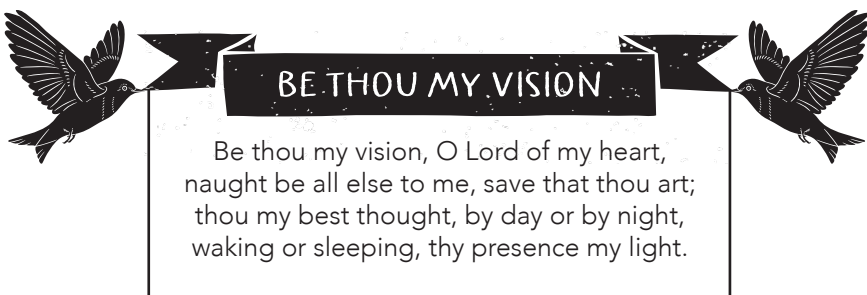
Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. + Matthew 6:19-21

sing

"Be Thou My Vision"

"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

"Pass It On"



reflect

For Jesus, it's not only our actions that count (our giving, our praying, our practicing) – it's also our disposition, the spirit of what we do and why we're doing it. This creates a dilemma: doing a good thing (say, being generous) creates a temptation to boast ("Look how generous I am!"); and yet even humble, quiet generosity can lead to its own kind of pride ("Wow, I'm so humble!"). What to do?

One strategy is to ask God's Spirit to dwell and act in us, with us, and through us, so that pride in our actions is replaced by gratitude to God – and that's exactly what "Be Thou My Vision" is all about. It's an Irish song traditionally dated to the sixth century (though scholars put it a couple of centuries later – but it's still one of the oldest songs we'll ever sing!). The lyrics ask God to be our vision, wisdom, word, heart, and so on, a kind of head-to-toe communion in which we turn away from "vain empty praise" and toward God as our true "treasure."



pray

Extinguish one of the eight candles.

In this world so full of ashes, God of new life, dwell in us this Lenten season, walk with us, put our hearts in the right place as we give, pray, and serve. Fill us with so much gratitude there's no room left for boasting. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- After singing each song, reflect and discuss: What thoughts and emotions does this song provoke for you? What other songs does it bring to mind? (Sing them!) Start a list – or a playlist! – of songs for this Lenten season.
- For example, the African American spiritual, "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me," with its themes of sorrow, struggle, accompaniment, and hope, is perfect for the 40-day pilgrimage of Lent. "Pass It On" is a classic campfire song; try singing it near a fire or by candlelight (channeling the the spirit of the late 1960s, when it was written!), and let its second verse evoke Lent's deep connections with spring.
- Take a "music walk," singing (or humming) one of this week's songs, and notice how it changes both the song and the walk. What do you see as you ask God to "be your vision"? What do you feel as you ask Jesus to "walk with me," or witness "what a wondrous time is spring"?
- Conversation Starter: What changes do you hope for this Lent as you give, pray, and practice? In what ways would you like to be more generous, more humble, more gracious, more kind?

first sunday of lent

light

Light seven of the eight candles

read

LUKE 4:1-13

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" + Luke 4:4

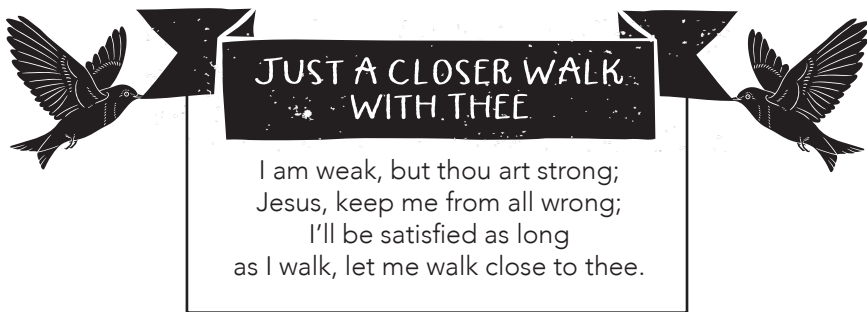


sing

"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

"Spirit of the Living God"

"My Life Flows On"



reflect

In this story from Luke, Jesus is given three tests, each tempting him to turn away from trusting God and toward trusting himself alone. Jesus refuses by repeatedly quoting the story of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, fed by God with daily provisions of manna – quotes that underscore his humble commitment to relying on God for nourishment, strength, and security, just as the Israelites were called to do (see Deuteronomy 8:3). As the Child of Humanity, Jesus humbly trusts God, as if singing, "as I walk, let me walk, close to thee."

An African American gospel song, “Just a Closer Walk with Thee” also became a jazz standard, and in particular, a classic within the New Orleans jazz tradition. Its roots may go back to the nineteenth century, but it wasn’t published until 1940, and since then, hundreds of artists have recorded it. It’s become an iconic musical expression of intimate trust and companionship with God, even and especially in a world full of “toil and snares.”



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world of toil and snares, God of wisdom, deepen our trust in you. Help us to walk with you through the tumult and the strife. Teach us, nurture us, mold us into the people you created us to be, walking closely and humbly with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- Continue to build your Lenten list of songs. “Spirit of the Living God” – written in 1926 by a Presbyterian pastor, Daniel Iverson – is a simple, memorable exploration of the idea with which Luke begins this famous story: “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit...” Likewise, “My Life Flows On” – with lyrics from an 1868 poem by “Pauline T.” – provides a sense of what it’s like to remain poised “through all the tumult and the strife.”
- If you’ve chosen to fast from something during Lent, sing one of this week’s songs whenever you feel tempted to break the fast.
- Conversation Starter: When does your trust in God feel most “tested”? When do you feel most anxious, or most tempted to trust in your own efforts alone? Jesus responded to these feelings by remembering the story of the Israelites’ 40 years in the wilderness, reframing his experience as an opportunity to learn how to more deeply, humbly trust in God. Might our 40 days of Lent serve a similar purpose?
- Take a “closer walk” this week, through your neighborhood or along a favorite trail, meditating on God’s nearness and companionship. Sing, hum, or contemplate this week’s songs as you go.

- Communing with God sometimes takes the form of showing up and serving where God has promised to be: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the prisoner (Matthew 25). This week, volunteer some time, talent, and/or treasure with a local organization walking closely with God in one or more of these ways.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try "Go Down, Moses" for a connection to the ancient story of the Israelites' journey out of slavery into the wilderness; "God of Grace and God of Glory" for a stirring prayer for the wisdom and courage we need when we're tested; and "What Does the Lord Require of You?" for a reminder of our call to kindness, justice, and humbly walking with God.

second sunday of lent

light

Light six of the eight candles

read

LUKE 13:31-35

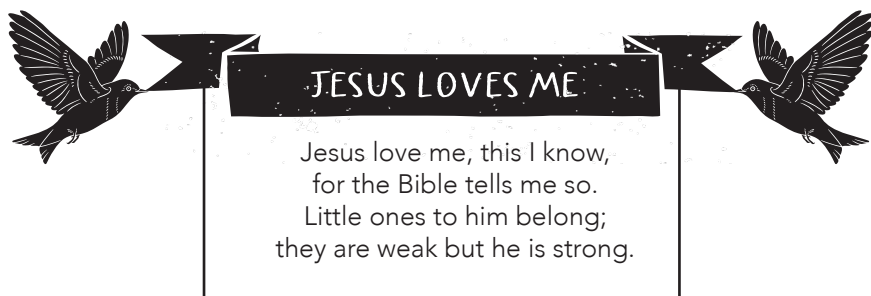
"How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" + Luke 13:34

sing

"Jesus Loves Me"

"My Shepherd, You Supply My Need" (or "My Shepherd Is the Living God")

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"



reflect

In this story from Luke, Jesus compares himself to a mother hen, gathering her chicks under her wings, nurturing and protecting them. And yet, in Jerusalem – and everywhere else, too – we often reject prophets (think of Martin Luther King, Jr., for example), or ignore them, or romanticize them, and thereby dismiss them. In the same way, Jesus is rejected in the story of the cross – but even so, God's desire to love and care for all of us remains.

"Jesus Loves Me" is powerful for at least three reasons: first, its accessibility to all ages in virtually all places, now translated into hundreds of languages; second, for many, its emotional connection to childhood (and thus to being "children of God" at any age); and third, its distillation of the Gospel. One of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century, Karl Barth, was once asked what he learned in all of his theological studies, and he replied by quoting this song's first two lines. Those lines were written in 1860 by Anna B. Warner and her sister, Susan; in one of the novels they wrote together, the song comforts a sick child – sheltering the child, we might say, beneath God's wings.



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world so full of vulnerability, God of love, help us to care for each other. Forgive us when we turn away, ignore, or romanticize your prophets; help us to hear them instead, and change our lives. Comfort the lonely, and let us be instruments of that comfort. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chickens have a rich repertoire of sounds, a hymnal of sorts: clucking soft lullabies to their chicks, rumbling lament for a lost companion, crowing in triumph, calling out in times of danger. In their world and ours, sound and singing give voice to emotion and experience through the ages. All God's creatures have a place in the choir!



activities

- Continue to build your Lenten list. Thomas Dorsey (who played piano for the blues singer, Ma Rainey) wrote “Precious Lord” in 1932, after the deaths of his wife, Nettie, and their newborn child; it’s a lovely, plaintive cry, and singing it can help us carry each other’s burdens. And in 1791, Isaac Watts wrote a paraphrase of Psalm 23 (itself a song, of course!) that serves as the basis of “My Shepherd, You Supply My Need” (see also “My Shepherd Is the Living God” for slightly different lyrics), later collected in the 1835 shape-note hymnal, *The Southern Harmony*. Just as a mother hen cares for all her chicks, and a shepherd for the whole flock, God loves each and every one of us, bar none.
- Place a small feather in a spot you’ll see often this week, a soft reminder of God’s protective care, like a mother hen gathering her chicks.
- Conversation Starter: Where in your life, or where in creation, do you most strongly sense the “wings” of God’s care? And what prophetic challenges – to be kind, just, humble, peaceful, or caring toward creation, to name a few – would you like to manifest in your life this week, this Lent, and beyond?
- Try “singing in solidarity” this week: sing “Precious Lord” with those who are mourning, “My Shepherd” with those who are feeling grateful, and “Jesus Loves Me” with those who are sick (see the Reflect section above).
- Singing can be a kind of prayer, and also a kind of gift. This week, reach out to someone you love who is sad, or sick, or longs for a sense of God’s love – and let them know you’re thinking of them, and that you’ve sung “Precious Lord,” “My Shepherd,” or “Jesus Loves Me” (or all three!) in their honor.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try “Softly and Tenderly” for a sense of Jesus’ tender care; and “Thuma Mina” for a South African song of intimacy with God.



third sunday of lent

light

Light five of the eight candles

read

LUKE 13:1-9

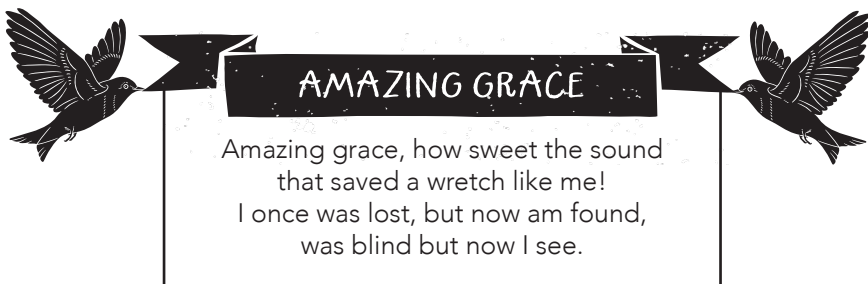
"He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'" + Luke 13:8-9

sing

"Amazing Grace"

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

"Come Thou Font of Every Blessing"



reflect

In this parable from Luke, Jesus suggests that each person, and each community, is like a tree made to "bear fruit" of kindness and justice. Jesus compares the situation to a farmer preparing to cut a tree down when it fails to bear fruit. The gardener intervenes, and requests one more year; with some tender loving care, the tree may yet bear fruit. It's not too late! God is faithful and merciful – and no matter what we have done in the past, God calls us toward a more kind, just future.

Amidst so much “eye for an eye” retribution, God’s mercy is simply astonishing – and music can help enliven our amazement. God doesn’t embrace us because of our excellence, but rather despite our failings. In short, God “saved a wretch like me,” as the famous hymn puts it, written in 1779 by John Newton, a former slave trader, and fifty years later set to an Appalachian folk tune. And if God embraces us despite our failings, then surely God loves all of us – our enemies no less than our friends – with the same sweet, amazing grace.



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world so full of severity, God of mercy, thank you for always giving us another year. Inspire and enliven us to be who we are. Free those trapped by shame, or paralyzed by doubt – and make us instruments of your encouragement and care. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- Continue building your Lenten list. “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy,” written in 1854, compares divine mercy to “the wideness of the sea” – a scope we can scarcely comprehend. And in “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (like “Amazing Grace,” set to an old American folk tune), we sing of God’s “streams of mercy, never ceasing.”
- End each day by singing one of this week’s songs as a prayerful little lullaby before bed.
- Conversation Starter: Are you as forgiving of yourself and others as God is with you? How would you like to become more merciful, more graceful, more free?
- “Amazing Grace” is an amazing song: try playing it on a piano, using only the black keys (hint: start with C#); the entire song can be played with those five black notes! And try singing it in a round, with the second singer(s) starting immediately after the first sings, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound”...

- Songs of mercy call for works of mercy: sing a song by phone or online (or leave a voicemail) to someone far away who could use a pick-me-up; or form a small group of singers to offer some music in a hospital, nursing home, or shelter.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" for a celebration of God's mercy; "178 Africa" for William Billings' shape-note tune from 1770, with words by Isaac Watts from 1709; and "For the Beauty of the Earth" for a song of gratitude to God for so mercifully providing a world of blessings – including mercy itself, "all gentle thoughts and mild."

fourth sunday of lent

light

Light four of the eight candles

read

LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

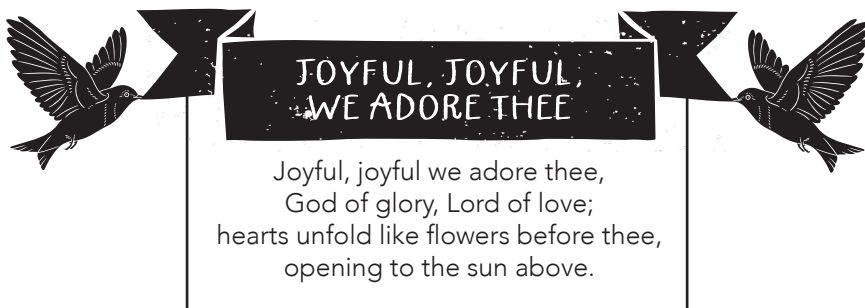
"But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; was lost and has been found." + Luke 15:32

sing

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

"He Came Down"

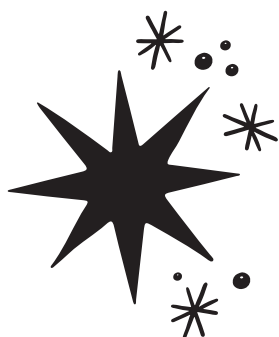
"I've Got Peace Like a River"



reflect

In this story from Luke, Jesus tells a parable of two brothers and their gracious, generous father. When the younger brother comes home after wasting his inheritance in dissolute living, the father welcomes him with open arms, and holds a lavish party to celebrate his return. The older brother, who's stayed home, is envious and angry: Why should this scoundrel – and not me – get a party? The father responds by urging the older brother to join the celebration. Jesus told this parable to religious leaders who, like the story's older brother, were angry that Jesus seemed to be welcoming disreputable people into the circle of God's love.

At its heart, this parable is about how certain kinds of moralism – keeping accounts of who's deserving and who's undeserving – can become hindrances to experiencing joy. A quintessential hymn to joy (and at its best, a taste of jubilation itself) is "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," with lyrics from 1907 set to Beethoven's music from 1824, itself inspired by a German poem about joy. Indeed, joy's ecstasy transcends moralism, focusing instead on the beloved's presence, like a parent rejoicing in a child's return with a great party, great food – and great music!



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world so full of sorrow, God of joy, help us to celebrate each other's dignity, and forgive each other's failings. Gladden the hearts of the angry and envious, the downtrodden and brokenhearted – and let us be agents of joy in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- For your Lenten list: "He Came Down," a traditional song from Cameroon, celebrates that Jesus came – and the Spirit comes – so that "we may have joy." And "I've Got Peace Like a River," an intergenerational, interactive gem, casts joy as a kind of "fountain in my soul."
- Try singing one of your list's songs as a sung prayer before every meal this week.

- Conversation Starter: Which character in the parable do you most identify with? The younger sibling? The older one? Do you have enough joy and celebration in your life? What obstacles do you notice?
- Create a "Joy Playlist," a list of songs that put an undeniable spring in your step, and listen to it every day this week. Compare notes with a friend or family member: what songs give your loved ones joy, and why?
- Throw a party this week for no reason other than each other's presence. Choose particular means of joy – cupcakes? a favorite dish? a favorite song? – tailor-made for each person.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try "This Is the Day," a reminder that every day is a work of art and a gift from the artist; and "Joy to the World" (yep, that one!) for a song that Isaac Watts wrote not only for Christmas, but also for the many other ways Christ comes, and will yet come, to be with us.

fifth sunday of lent

light

Light three of the eight candles

read

JOHN 12:1-8

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial." + John 12:7

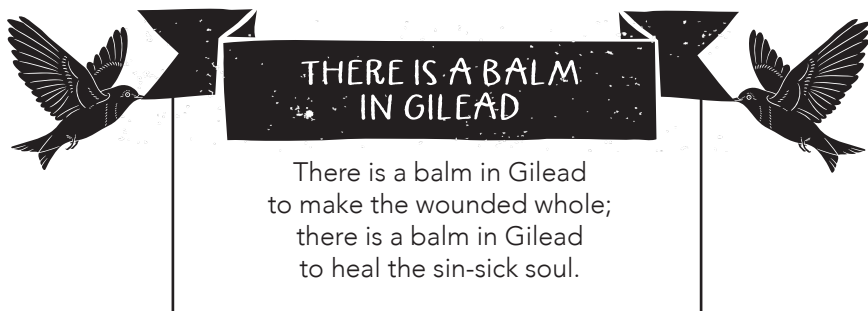
sing

"There Is a Balm in Gilead"

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

"Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended"





reflect

We're approaching Jesus' death – but only Lazarus' sister, Mary, seems to realize it. She softly anoints Jesus' feet with perfume, as if preparing his body for burial. Judas scolds her for not selling the perfume and donating the money to the poor, but Jesus defends her: she has understood what everyone else has missed. Jesus is about to be tortured and killed, and so his body should be treated with tenderness and honor. And perhaps Mary glimpsed even more: not just the coming death, but the coming resurrection, too, the rising into new life.

In any case, she anticipates his ordeal with a fine, beautiful balm. In the African American spiritual, "There Is a Balm in Gilead," the anonymous author answers the prophet Jeremiah's lament, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (Jeremiah 8:22). We may well ask the same today: "Is there no balm? No tenderness and honor? No healing? No hope?" And the song answers: *Yes, there is – take heart. Even on the eve of the journey to the cross, there is a balm in Gilead...*



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this broken world, God of tenderness, help us to care for each other, and for creation. Give us the balm we need, along with the gentleness and compassion to apply it. Comfort the afflicted, heal the wounded, and make us instruments of your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- For your Lenten list: Following Mary's lead, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" lets us anticipate Jesus' imminent ordeal. The lyrics derive from a Latin poem attributed to the twelfth-century Benedictine abbot and mystic, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the tune is from 1601, picked up later by J.S. Bach in his St. Matthew's Passion (fun fact: Paul Simon based his song, "American Tune," in part on this melody). And likewise, the lyrics from "Ah, Holy Jesus" go all the way back to the eleventh century. Think of these lovely, aching, tender songs, echoing down through the generations, both anticipating sorrow and offering a balm.
- Take a familiar tune from your list (like "Amazing Grace") and write new lyrics that reflect your Lenten journey thus far.
- Conversation Starter: How do you want your body to be treated when you die? Have you ever experienced someone close to you dying? What was it like? Does it make a difference to you that Jesus, too, experienced suffering and death?
- Wear a touch of perfume or cologne this week, to help you remember Mary's act of gentleness and honor – and also to anticipate that Holy Week is next week.
- Jesus' passion isn't only about looking at his suffering and death; it's also about looking *through* them as lenses for more clearly seeing the suffering and death in the world. Looking ahead to Holy Week, volunteer some time, talent, and/or treasure to an organization devoted to alleviating suffering or comforting those approaching death.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" to anticipate his walk along the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows; and "Nearer, My God, To Thee" for a meditation on God's companionship, even and especially in times of suffering and death.



palm sunday

light

Light all eight candles

read

LUKE 19:28-40

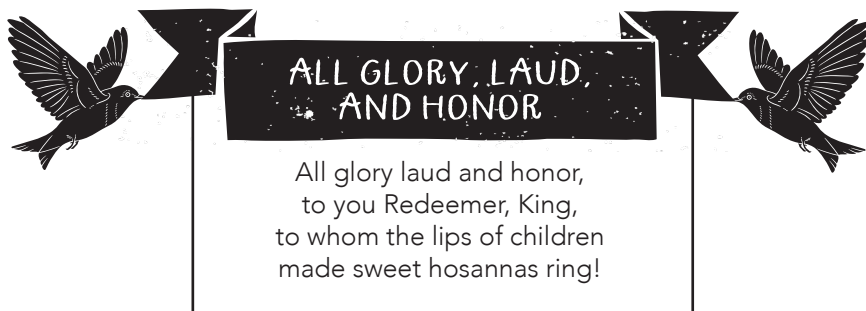
"Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'" + Luke 19:40

sing

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor"

"Prepare Ye"

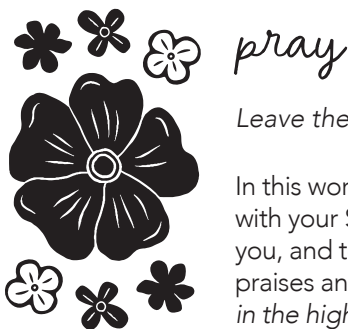
"All Creatures of Our God and King"



reflect

In this story from Luke, Palm Sunday is a day of hopeful joy. On the streets of Jerusalem, Jesus brings to life an ancient prophecy: a triumphant, peaceful king, "humble and riding on a donkey," arrives in the holy city (Zechariah 9:9). Large crowds join in, waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna!" (which means, "Save us!") – it's almost as though creation's choir itself is quickening. As Jesus puts it, if the crowds were to fall silent, "the stones would shout out!"

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor" can help us step into this spirit of praise and anticipation. The words go back to a ninth-century French bishop, imprisoned by the king – but released, the story goes, when the king heard him singing this hymn in his cell. The song links our hosannas with those that day in Jerusalem, collapsing time and space, and by the same token, implicating us in the events soon to follow, as Holy Week unfolds.



Leave the eight candles lit.

In this world of too much despair, God of hope, fill us with your Spirit. Help us to sing hosannas, to trust in you, and to hear creation's choir, even now, singing your praises and believing your promises. *Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!* In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- For your Lenten list: "Prepare Ye" is a simple, lively anthem (from *Godspell*), perfect for waving branches while raising our voices; and "All Creatures of Our God and King," with words by St. Francis of Assisi in 1225, resonates with Jesus' idea that even "the stones would shout out." Some churches refrain from singing "Alleluia" during Lent, but Palm Sunday (and "All Creatures" in particular) can be a great way to anticipate the Easter alleluias to come.
- Conversation Starter: If Palm Sunday is a day of hopeful, anticipatory joy, what are you most hopeful about these days? What do you long for? What signs of change would bring you out into the streets to sing?
- Palm Sunday gets its name from an ancient tradition of waving branches as a sign of celebration – an ancient link, it turns out, to the liberation of the exodus story, when the Israelites flee from Egyptian bondage into the wilderness, where they live under makeshift tents made with branches. So get outside under the branches, and begin a weeklong meditation on what bonds you need liberation from this year.
- **More Singing, Please:** Try "Let the Whole Creation Cry" for another nod to the cosmic choir all around us, and "This Little Light of Mine" to remember your shining place within it.

maundy thursday

light

Light two of the eight candles

read

JOHN 13:1-35

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. + John 13:5

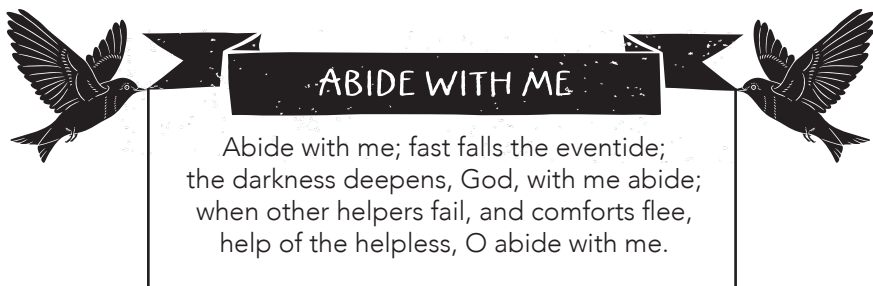


sing

"Abide with Me"

"Lead Me, Guide Me"

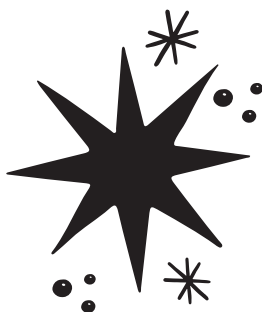
"Stay with Me"



reflect

Lazarus' sister, Mary, has just anointed Jesus' feet with perfume – and now Jesus turns to his disciples. By washing their feet, he shows them what he means by "love one another, as I have loved you" (that's why we call this Thursday "Maundy," from an old word for "mandate" or command). The act is an icon of a new world: children of God, created in the image of God, serving one another with gentleness and grace. Distraught, the disciples don't want Jesus to leave, and he responds, in effect: *Don't worry – I will be with you, in and through acts of love.*

And this love, of course, is the opposite of what the next day will bring: betrayal, mockery, and suffering. Later that very night, Jesus struggles in the Garden of Gethsemane, asking his disciples, and then asking God, to abide with him. "Abide with Me" can help us feel and imagine each of these dimensions: the disciples' pleading with Jesus to stay, Jesus asking the disciples to stay, Jesus asking God to guide him – and each of us, too, asking God to "abide with me."



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world so full of struggle, God of gentleness, help us to care for each other in simple, clear, gentle ways, loving others as you have loved us. Abide with all who suffer – and grant us the grace to abide with each other. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- For your Lenten list: "Lead Me, Guide Me" – written in 1953 by the African American Roman Catholic hymn writer, Doris Akers – can triple as a song we sing today, a song we imagine the disciples singing to Jesus, and a song we imagine Jesus singing in Gethsemane. Likewise, the Taizé song "Stay with Me" can help us imagine Jesus' struggle in the garden, asking his disciples to stay awake and keep him company.
- Write a favorite lyric (or a word from a lyric) on the palm of your hand, as a quiet reminder throughout the day. Before you go to bed, wash it off with warm water.
- Conversation Starter: With Jesus' call to "love one another, as I have loved you" in mind, what tangible, gentle forms of love would you like to embody in the coming days, months, and beyond? Personally? Locally? Globally?



good friday



light

Light one of the eight candles

read

JOHN 18:1 – 19:42

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. + John 19:30

sing

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

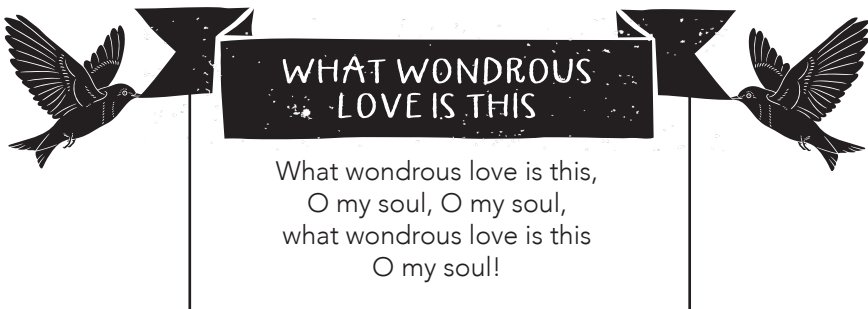
"Were You There?"

"Jesus, Remember Me"

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

"When Jesus Wept"

"Senzeni Na"



reflect

Jesus' passion and death represent one of the great mysteries of Christian faith, and our ancestors have seen fit to affirm multiple avenues of interpretation and levels of meaning. One way to explore these avenues and levels is to sing a range of songs that circle around the mystery, letting the words and tunes open up different doors for reflection.

For example, the old Appalachian folk hymn, "What Wondrous Love is This," creates a haunting, mournful sense of awe. The African American spiritual, "Were You There?", immerses us in the action, as does the Taizé song, "Jesus, Remember Me," quoting the thief on the cross beside Jesus. Isaac Watts' 1770 lyrics to "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" offer yet another kind of poetry, as does William Billings' "When Jesus Wept" from the same year, a song that can be sung as a round. "Senzeni Na" is a stirring South African cry of lament: the title translates to "What have we done [to deserve this anguish]?" Taken together, these songs – and many more – help illuminate and enliven the great mystery, each one complementing the others.



pray

Extinguish another candle.

In this world so full of suffering, God of love, help us to comfort each other. Give us the courage to feel our sorrow, face our complicity, change our lives, and move toward reconciliation and repair. In Jesus' name, Amen.

activities

- Music holds memories. Share a favorite hymn and a memory that, for you, is associated with it. Invite others to do the same, and sing a verse together after each memory.
- Find a time and place today and tomorrow for silent prayer.
- Share a favorite Lenten song with a friend and ask them to share one with you. Sing each other's songs this weekend, letting it become a prayer for your friend and for the world.



easter sunday

light

Light eight candles, along with a few more candles, some flowers, artwork, favorite treats – anything that helps us welcome the good news of Easter with hope and joy!

read

LUKE 24:1-12

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." + Luke 24:5

sing

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

"How Great Thou Art"

"Siyahamba"

"The Strife is O'er"

"In the Garden"

"Now the Green Blade Rises"



reflect

Jesus is risen – alleluia! The 40 days of Lent draw to a close – and the season of Eastertide begins, a 50-day Sabbath, a festival of resurrection, of new life, of beginning again.

Charles Wesley's "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," from 1739, rings out from one direction; "How Great Thou Art," based on a Swedish folk melody in 1953, rings out from another. "We Are Walking/Siyahamba/Caminando" lets us sing in English, Zulu, and Spanish, while "The Strife is O'er" comes from a seventeenth-century Latin poem. "I Come to the Garden Alone," from 1912, is sung from the perspective of Mary Magdalene, and "Now the Green Blade Rises," from 1928, is an Easter lyric set to the tune of an ancient French Christmas carol, a lovely, evocative connection between Christianity's two great feasts.

Stirring and reflective, epic and jubilant, these songs – and so many more!
– help us feel, understand, and celebrate the good news of the Gospel:

♪ Lift up your voice! ♪



notes



Check out our Spotify playlist (QR code below) that includes many of these songs, plus a few more for the season.



SPOTIFY
PLAYLIST

Check out our "Lyrics and Links" doc (QR code below) for song lyrics and links to performances



LYRICS AND
LINKS DOC

events

