

Season of Lent

Crafting the Liturgy — Seasonal Planning Page

Lent is a season well spent examining our connection to Christ and how our own need for him is a critical aspect of our lives. Times of solitude and meditation are encouraged during this season as we reflect on our own broken nature and what Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. The discipleship practices of prayer, generosity, worship, study, fasting, and service all can help us to focus on Jesus' sacrificial love.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SEASON

The following are some ideas for helping to make the season distinct and memorable. Congregations are free to adapt these suggestions, or follow the local customs of the congregation.

Preparing the Worship Space

Having a stark, sparsely decorated worship space can lend to the solemnity of the season of Lent. Modest plants, banners, and adornments prevent distracting the worshipping community from focusing on extraneous things rather than the cross. Consider using grapevine wreaths or strands to add texture to the otherwise clean, smooth lines of linens and paraments. During Holy Week, a set of "stations of the cross" may be added where other banners had once hung.

Add elements to the space that can be used in conversation during the season. Use this as a means for spiritual formation for the community of saints who might not understand the meaning of Lenten symbols. Such elements might include nails, a linen robe, a crown of thorns, etc.

Liturgical Color

The liturgical color for Lent is purple, a color of royalty. During Holy Week a wine color is appropriate, too, as it represents the shedding of Jesus' blood. On Good Friday, the color is black (if paraments are used at all).

The Gathering

Use the Kyrie in Lent because it is a time for us to cry out to God for mercy. For something different than the traditional Kyrie, consider using the very solemn, "Lord Have Mercy," by Steve Merkel (CCLI# 2989578). A cantor might sing the verses with the congregation joining in on the chorus.

The Creed

Use the Apostles' Creed during Lent as the church reflects on the power and promises of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The Offering

Consider singing "Change My Heart, O God" (CCLI# 1565) as the Offering Hymn for Lent. It reflects the penitential nature of the season and can be sung as the gifts are brought forward to the altar.

The Lord's Supper

Lent is a perfect time to focus on instruction about the Sacrament of the Altar. In the early church, the catechuminate was excused during Holy Communion and admitted to the table only at their baptism at the Vigil of Easter. Use this time to bolster the community of faith in their knowledge of our Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist. On Maundy Thursday, have first communicants partake of the Lord's Supper on the night when Jesus instituted the Sacrament. Instruct people who have never been a part of the distribution of the Sacrament to serve in that role during Lent.

REMINDERS FOR THE SEASON

- ✦ Check out Sola's Lent midweek programs for worship.
- ✦ If you need ashes for Ash Wednesday, there is a palm-burning liturgy that can be used with a small group — students, perhaps — to help you prepare them. This liturgy can be found on SOWeR's Lent Season page.
- ✦ Consider sending daily emails with the upcoming Sunday's lessons. Use the text study sheets and/or the weekly worship planning sheets as material to begin your reflections.
- ✦ Remember to "hide the alleluia" either on Transfiguration Sunday or the First Sunday in Lent. This is a great way to get children involved in the worship service and explain a tradition of the church. There are some pre-made "alleluias" on the Lent Season page of SOWeR.
- ✦ As you celebrate Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, consider making your own bread. When something small is changed, like having real unleavened bread rather than wafers, it can connect to the senses and spark thought in a believer's mind.
- ✦ Instruct altar workers on the process of stripping the altar for Maundy Thursday. Conduct a practice session if they aren't confident with the flow of removing each piece from the altar and chancel space.
- ✦ Get readers their lessons ahead of time if you plan on doing a chorale reading for any of the worship services during Holy Week. There are downloadable resources on SOWeR.

LESSER FESTIVALS

March 19: St. Joseph

The Church remembers St. Joseph for his faithfulness in fathering Jesus. Obedient to the angel's instruction that he should marry his fiancé Mary as planned and raise the Son of God as his own, Joseph was a pillar of goodness and faith.

Bible Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4-16; Psalm 37:1-7; Romans 4:13-18; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

COMMEMORATIONS

Feb. 18: Martin Luther (November 10, 1843 – February 18, 1546), Doctor and Confessor

Mar. 17: Patrick (4th century AD – c. March 17, 460 AD), Missionary to Ireland

Mar. 31: Joseph (c. 1600 BC – c. 1490 BC), Patriarch