

Exploring the Themes of Lent 2025 (Year C)

The Synod of the Covenant Preaching Workshop 1/8/25

Offered by Chip Hardwick

Common Themes of Lent

- Repentance
- Preparation for Easter
- Prayer
- Spiritual Disciplines

Non-Lectionary Possibilities for Lenten Sermon Series

- Theology
 - Doctrines for Lent (Atonement, Attributes of God, Christology, Resurrection, Sin, Theodicy, Trinity)
 - “The Old Rugged Cross” (Doctrines of Atonement)
 - The cross freeing sinners from the state of sin
 - Cross as heroic/costly action (moral exemplar)
 - Cross as God’s participation in humanity’s suffering
 - Cross as victory over sin, death, and Satan
 - Cross as victory over hell
 - Cross of Jesus as substitute for us
 - Nature of Salvation in Christ
 - Heidelberg Catechism
 - Ash Weds Psalm 51:1-7; Heidelberg Qns 3-5
 - 1 John 4:1-6; Heidelberg Qn 1
 - Eph 2:4-10; Heidelberg Qns 60-61
 - Exodus 20:1-16; Heidelberg Qns 94, 95
 - 1 Peter 2:5-10; Heidelberg Qn 86
 - Palm Sunday John 12:12-19; Heidelberg Qn31
 - Good Friday John 18:38b-19:7; Heidelberg Qns 27-39
 - Easter John 20:1-10; Heidelberg Qn 45
 - Catechesis: The Lord’s Prayer, The Apostle’s Creed ****new****
 - Illustrated Ministry (various)

Non-Lectionary Possibilities for Lenten Sermon Series (continued)

- Theology (continued)
 - God's Broad Love
 - *Imago Dei: Lenten Bible Study of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (UMC)
 - *Where We Meet* (Intersect Network)
 - *Lent of Liberation* (Cheri Mills)
- Scripture
 - Illustrated Ministry: Seven Last Words
 - *From Wilderness to Glory* (N.T. Wright) **new**
 - Psalms:
 - *Finding Jesus in the Psalms: A Lenten Journey* (Barb Roose)
 - *Psalms for Black Lives: Reflections for the Work of Liberation* (Gabby Cudjoe-Wilkes and Andrew Wilkes)
 - *Pause: Spending Lent with the Psalms* (Lib Caldwell)
 - *Meeting God in Paul* (Rowan Williams)
 - Women of the Scripture (e.g., Sarah, Jachobed, Ruth, Rahab, Esther, Mary/Martha, Mother Mary, Mary Magdalene)
 - Characters at the Cross (*Witness at the Cross* by Amy-Jill Levine)
 - The Exodus (*Hard and Holy Work* by Mary Alice Birdwhistell and T. Mayfield)
 - Luke's Holy Week Passages (*Crossbound* by Chip Hardwick)
- Spiritual Disciplines/Practices
 - *The Cup of Our Life* (Joyce Rupp)
 - *Disciplines of the Spirit* (Howard Thurman)
 - *Enjoy: Finding the Freedom to Delight Daily in God's Good Gifts* (Trillia J. Newbell)
 - *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a life of Imperfection* (Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie)
 - *A Just Passion: A Six-Week Lenten Journey* (Ruth Haley Barton et al)
 - *Lent* (Esau McCaulley)
 - *Lent in Plain Sight* (Jill Duffield) **new**
 - *The Life You've Always Wanted* (John Ortberg)
 - *The Noah Fast: Make Room for More* (Sheree Jones and Brandy Cochrane)
 - *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Ruth Haley Barton)
 - *Soul Care in African American Practice* (Barbara L. Peacock)
 - *SoulFeast* (Marjorie Thompson)

Non-Lectionary Possibilities for Lenten Sermon Series (continued)

- Spiritual Disciplines/Practices (Continued)
 - *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun)
 - *The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice: A Month of Meditations with Ignatius of Loyola* (Patrick Saint-Jean, S. J.)
 - *Stations of the Cross* (Illustrated Ministry)
 - *This Here Flesh* (Cole Arthur Riley)
 - *The Way of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision-Making* (Elizabeth Liebert)

Lectionary Possibilities for Lenten Sermon Series

- *Everything [in] Between: A Lenten Series in Luke's Gospel* (Sanctified Art) (Narrative Lectionary) **new**
- *Full to the Brim: Creative Resources for Lent-Easter, Year C* (Sanctified Art) (Revised Common Lectionary) **new**
- *Lent for Everyone: Luke, Year C* (N.T. Wright) **new**
- *Lenten Longings: Seeing with God's Eyes* (Catherine Nerney, SSJ) (Roman Catholic) **new**

Note: **new** indicates new to this worksheet from previous years that it has been provided in this workshop, rather than necessarily being published since last year.

Lent 2025 (Year C) Revised Common Lectionary Scriptures

Old Testament Texts

1. The person whose birthday was most recent is the moderator of the group.
2. Introduce yourselves BRIEFLY.
3. Skim the texts for major themes and possible sermon claims.
4. Brainstorm how the themes/claims might work together from Lent 1 to Lent 5.

The more ideas, the better!

Week 1: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

¹When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us."

⁴When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Week 2: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

Week 3: Isaiah 55:1-9

¹Ho, everyone who thirsts,
 come to the waters;
 and you that have no money,
 come, buy and eat!

Week 3: Isaiah 55:1-9 (continued)

Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.

²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

⁶Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;

⁷let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Week 4 Joshua 5:9-12

⁹The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Week 5: Isaiah 43:16-21

¹⁶Thus says the LORD,
 who makes a way in the sea,
 a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷who brings out chariot and horse,
 army and warrior;
 they lie down, they cannot rise,
 they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸Do not remember the former things,
 or consider the things of old.
¹⁹I am about to do a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
 I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
²⁰The wild animals will honor me,
 the jackals and the ostriches;
 for I give water in the wilderness,
 rivers in the desert,
 to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹the people whom I formed for myself
 so that they might declare my praise.

Lent 2025 (Year C) Revised Common Lectionary Scriptures

Epistle Texts

1. The person whose birthday was last is the moderator of the group.
2. Introduce yourselves BRIEFLY.
3. Skim the texts for major themes and possible sermon claims.
4. Brainstorm how the themes/claims might work together from Lent 1 to Lent 5. The more ideas, the better!

Week 1: Romans 10:8b-13

8b "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Week 2: Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Week 3: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." ⁸We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Week 4 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Week 5: Philippians 3:4b-14

4b If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Lent 2025 (Year C) Revised Common Lectionary Scriptures

Gospel Texts

1. The person whose birthday was last is the moderator of the group.
2. Introduce yourselves BRIEFLY
3. Skim the texts for major themes and possible sermon claims.
4. Brainstorm how the themes/claims might work together from Lent 1 to Lent 5. The more ideas, the better!

Week 1 Luke 4:1-13

¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' ¹¹and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹²Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Week 2 Luke 13:31-35

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³²He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' ³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Week 3: Luke 13:1-9

¹At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' ⁸He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Week 4 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³So he told them this parable:

Week 4 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (continued)

11b"There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe-the best one-and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Week 5: John 12:1-8

¹Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."