

The Second Sunday in Lent, Year C
February 21, 2016 *10:30 AM Worship*
The Holy Eucharist, Rite 2

Welcome to
St. Andrew's
Episcopal Church
STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA



An Affirming Church

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
516 W. Third Ave., Stillwater, OK 74074
(405) 372-3357
www.SaintAndrewsChurch.org

Worship in the Episcopal Church is liturgical in nature; that is, we used a fixed “script” to guide us through a worship experience in which all are participants. Although you may be new to a liturgical form of worship, much of the liturgy we use is ancient, some parts dating back to the first centuries following the life and ministry of Jesus; other parts, such as the Lord’s Prayer and parts of the Prayer of Consecration are original to Jesus himself.

This worship booklet contains everything you need to participate fully in this worship service, including suggestions for when it would be appropriate to stand, sit, or kneel; when it would be appropriate to “cross” oneself, etc. However, these are only suggestions and we don’t expect anyone to do anything they’re not comfortable doing or incapable of doing.

Additionally, the responses which the congregation makes are shown in **bold text**. And in case you were wondering, this symbol **✝** is placed in the worship booklet at places where it would be appropriate to make the sign of the Cross. Finally, this little bell icon  serves to remind the Acolyte when to ring the Sanctus

Bells, which are used during the Eucharistic Prayer to emphasize and call attention to particular moments in the liturgy; this practice dates from the 15th century.

If you have any questions about anything you see going on, please don't hesitate to ask anyone sitting near you. Or, you can call the church office at (405) 372-3357. You can also call or text Fr. Jim Cook at (405) 780-5316. Or, you can visit our website:
www.SaintAndrewsChurch.org

Childcare is provided from 9:15 AM through to the end of the 10:30 AM worship. You may ask an usher or greeter for directions to the nursery.

Bathrooms are available in both the Parish Hall and the Admin/Ed Building. You may ask an usher or greeter for directions.

Make no mistake, we're glad you've joined us for worship! While you're waiting for the service to begin, please take a moment to silence your cell phones and other electronic devices. Thanks!

Prelude

Prelude and Fugue in B-Flat Major – attr. J. S. Bach

The Congregation may stand, as they are able, or remain seated.

Hymn 448

O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
how passing thought and fantasy,
that God, the Son of God, should take
our mortal form for mortals' sake.

For us baptized, for us he bore
his holy fast and hungered sore;
for us temptations sharp he knew;
for us the tempter overthrew.

For us he prayed; for us he taught;
for us his daily works he wrought:
by words and signs and actions, thus
still seeking not himself, but us.

For us to wicked men betrayed,
scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,
he bore the shameful cross and death;
for us gave up his dying breath.

For us he rose from death again;
for us he went on high to reign;

for us he sent his Spirit here
to guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

All glory to our Lord and God
for love so deep, so high, so broad;
the Trinity whom we adore
for ever and for evermore.

Opening Acclimation *BCP 355*

✝ Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
His mercy endures for ever.

The Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all
desires known, and from you no secrets are
hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the
inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your
holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

“Lord, Have Marcy” *Hymnal S-96*

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy,
have mercy.**

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

The Congregation may kneel, as they are able, or remain seated.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Congregation may be seated.

Readings from Holy Scripture

GENESIS 15:1-12,17-18

A reading from The Book of Genesis.

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.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give

me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” But 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.” He 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.” And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He 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.” He 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. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

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

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On 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.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 27

Let us recite this portion of the psalter responsively by the whole verse.

1. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
2. **When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.**
3. Though an army should encamp against me, yet my heart shall not be afraid;
4. **And though war should rise up against me, yet will I put my trust in him.**
5. One thing have I asked of the Lord; one thing I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life;
6. **To behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.**
7. For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; he shall hide me in the

secrecy of his dwelling and set me high upon a rock.

8. Even now he lifts up my head above my enemies round about me.

9. Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation with sounds of great gladness; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

10. Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call; have mercy on me and answer me.

11. You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." Your face, Lord, will I seek.

12. Hide not your face from me, nor turn away your servant in displeasure.

13. You have been my helper; cast me not away; do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

14. Though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will sustain me.

15. Show me your way, O Lord; lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.

16. Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen up against me, and also those who speak malice.

17. What if I had not believed that I should see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!

18. O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure; be strong, and he shall comfort your heart; wait patiently for the Lord.

PHILIPPIANS 3:17–4:1

A reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Christians in Philippi.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He 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. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Congregation may stand, as they are able, or remain seated.

Hymn 652, vv 1-3

Stanzas 1-3 before the Gospel; stanzas 4-5 afterwards.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word,
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity
interpreted by love!

LUKE 13:31-35

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

✝ Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus,
“Get away from here, for Herod wants to
kill you.” He 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. Yet 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.' Jerusalem, 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! See, 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.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Hymn 652, vv 4-5

Stanzas 1-3 before the Gospel; stanzas 4-5 afterwards.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

The Sermon

When the Minister has entered the pulpit and invoked the Holy Trinity, the Congregation may be seated.

Following the sermon, a few moments of silence are observed. Then the Congregation may stand, as they are able, or remain seated.

The Nicene Creed

BCP 358

Let us reaffirm our faith.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come

again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection + of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Congregation may kneel, as they are able, or remain seated.

The Prayers of the People *BCP 388*

Intercessor The Prayers of the People are taken from Form 4, which is found on page 388 of the Book of Common Prayer.

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

The Congregation may kneel, as they are able, or remain seated.

**Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.
Lord, in your mercy**

Hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We commend to your mercy all who have **+** died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with Blessed

Andrew and all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others:

We pray for those in need of healing, especially [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

We pray for those with other cares and concerns, especially [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

We pray for those who have ✝ died, especially [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

We pray for those serving in the Armed Forces, especially [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

We pray for those who travel, especially [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

In the St. Andrew's Cycle of Prayer, we pray for: our Lay Eucharistic Ministers, led by Joan McKeever; our Lay Eucharistic Visitors, led by Ellen Ross; our Nursery attendants;

and our Outreach Committee, led by Jim McCollom.

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for: St. David's Church in Oklahoma City, and St. Augustine of Canterbury in Montevideo, Uruguay.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for: Pray for the Church of England, The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

And we give thanks for the many blessings of this life:

We join in thanksgiving with [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

And in thanksgiving for [*Names*], and any others we might name in our hearts or aloud.

We pray for those celebrating a birthday or wedding anniversary this week and invite them to come forward for a special prayer.

The birthday tradition at St. Andrew's is that when you come forward for your prayer, if you wish, you may place in the birthday cross an amount of money in coins equal to your age. The funds contributed are added to the clergy discretionary funds which are used to provide assistance to those in need.

The Celebrant concludes with the following collect.

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession & Absolution *BCP 360*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. **Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, ✚ forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Congregation may stand, as they are able, or remain seated.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The members of the Congregation now greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Afterwards, they are seated.

Greetings & Announcements

The Offertory

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name;
bring offerings and come into his courts.

Organ Voluntary

Prelude on “Dear Lord and Father of
Mankind”

– George Lachenauer

The Congregation may stand, as they are able, or remain seated.

The Presentation of our Alms

**Praise God, from whom all blessings
flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The Holy Communion *BCP 367* *Eucharistic Prayer B*

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always
and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father
Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Proper Preface for Lent Through Jesus Christ our Lord;
who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did
not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over
every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves
alone, but for him who died for us and rose
again.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

“Holy, holy, holy Lord”

Hymnal S-130

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full,
full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he

who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Congregation may kneel, as they are able, or remain seated.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made

us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. 🏴

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” 🏴 🏴 🏴

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.” 🏴



Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the

Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being ✚ sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Blessed Andrew and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. 🏰

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen!**

The Lord's Prayer

BCP 364

And now,
as our Savior Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom
come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And Forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil. For thine is the

**kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Note: the “Alleluia” that normally precedes and follows the following statements are omitted during the season of Lent.

Cantor Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:
People **Therefore let us keep the feast.**

“Jesus, Lamb of God”

Hymnal S-164

**Jesus, Lamb of God:
Have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins:
Have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer,
redeemer of the world:
Give us your peace.
Give us your peace.**

The Invitation to Communion

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Communion of the People

- ✦ *All persons who seek God are invited to receive Holy Communion.*
- ✦ *To receive the Bread, extend your palms, one crossed over the other, upwards towards the Minister, and a wafer will be placed into your hands. **Gluten-free wafers are available**; make your request known to the Minister administering the Bread.*
- ✦ *To receive the Wine, please assist in guiding the cup to your lips. Alternately, you may dip the wafer in the wine and place it in your mouth.*
- ✦ *If you wish to receive only a Blessing, cross your arms over your chest while kneeling or standing at the altar rail.*
- ✦ *If mobility-issues prevent you from coming to the Altar, Communion can be brought to you. Please alert the Greeter to your situation.*
- ✦ *Finally, it would be helpful if you blotted your lips of any lip balm or lipstick, as it leaves an oily and/or waxy residue on the linens that is difficult to remove.*

Hymn 337

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
that bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
and having with us him that pleads above,
we here present, we here spread forth to thee,
that only offering perfect in thine eyes,
the one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.

Look Father, look on his anointed face,
and only look on us as found in him;
look not on our misusings of thy grace,
our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim:
for lo! between our sins and their reward,
we set the passion of thy Son our Lord.

And then for those, our dearest and our best,
by this prevailing presence we appeal;
O fold them closer to thy mercy's breast!
O do thine utmost for their soul's true weal!
From tainting mischief keep them pure and
clear,
and crown thy gifts with strength to
persevere.

And so we come; O draw us to thy feet,
most patient Savior, who canst love us still!
And by this food, so awesome and so sweet,
deliver us from every touch of ill:
in thine own service make us glad and free,
and grant us nevermore to part from thee.

Sending Out Our Lay Eucharistic Visitors

In the Name of God, we send you forth
bearing these holy gifts, that those to
whom you go may share with us in the
communion of Christ's Body and Blood;
for though we are many, we share one
Bread and one Cup. Amen.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

BCP 365

Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, ✚ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn 637

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say
than to you he hath said,

to you that for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed!
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee,
and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters
I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When through fiery trials
thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

“The soul that to Jesus hath fled for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell
shall endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”

The Dismissal

Grant, O Lord God, that what we have heard
with our ears, and said and sung with our
lips, we may believe in our hearts, and practice
in our lives; for Jesus Christ’s sake. **Amen.**

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Prelude on “How Firm a Foundation”
— David Cherwien

Introduction to the Readings

Genesis 15:1-12,17-18.

Our Hebrew scripture lesson tells of the promise of many descendants and of a covenant guaranteeing a homeland which God made with Abraham (who at that time was known as Abram). Abram had no children and was planning that one of the slaves born in his house would be his heir. Now he puts his faith in God and is accepted into a right relationship with the Lord. A covenant is then established by means of an ancient custom. Animals are divided in half and, in the form of smoking and flaming symbols, God passes between them.

Psalms 27.

The psalmist expresses great trust and confidence in the Lord and asks always to be in God's presence.

Philippians 3:17–4:1.

In this reading Paul warns of enemies of the cross of Christ and urges the disciples in Philippi to stand firm in the hope of the glory to come. Previously Paul has told how he had learned to count all privileges of birth and background as of no value in comparison with faith in Jesus. He asks the Philippians to imitate him, and to be wary of those who glory in material appetites and values, whether religious or otherwise. Christians are to see themselves already as citizens of heaven, expecting Christ to come and to transfigure their present bodies into the form of their Lord's own resplendent existence.

Luke 13:31-35.

In our gospel Jesus is disdainful of King Herod's threat and expresses his determination to fulfill his prophetic destiny in Jerusalem. Jesus' words emphasize his struggle against the forces of evil and illness and his expectation concerning what will soon happen to him in Jerusalem. He laments over the city, once chosen for God's temple, which has killed so many prophets before him.

About the Season of Lent

Lent begins in ashes. On Ash Wednesday we are reminded of our immortality and sin. It is not a time for groveling; rather, is it a time for reality,

for genuine humility, for repentance and forgiveness and renewed commitment to following the ways of Jesus. Lent is a season of preparation, and we are already looking forward to Jesus' passion and death for us and then to Easter.

One of the oldest names for Lent is "the forty days," meaning the days from Ash Wednesday to Easter less the Sundays that can be observed as anticipations of Easter, days of rest from fasting or other disciplines in order to strengthen ourselves. "Forty" is a kind of generic number in scripture and calls quickly to mind significant biblical stories: the forty days of Noah's flood (Genesis 7:12); Moses' forty days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18 and elsewhere); and the forty days that Nineveh was given to repent (Jonah 3:4). We particularly think of the forty years that Israel was in the wilderness (Exodus 16:35) and the forty days Jesus was out in the wilderness, tempted by Satan (Mark 1:13).

During the forty days of Lent God's people are invited again into a wilderness experience, not without temptation, to fast in one way or another, to pray and to seek in hope and trust to follow and serve their Lord. With the people of God in ages past, we are on a pilgrimage through a wilderness of renewal and faith to the promised land and of following Jesus on the

way to agony, passion, and death— and then
new life.

Lord, who throughout these forty days
for us didst fast and pray,
teach us with thee to mourn our sins
and close by thee to stay.

— *The Hymnal 1982*, Hymn 142