



**2007 At-Home Lent Resource
Lent 2007, Lectionary Cycle C**

**By Elsie Rempel
Illustrations by Lynette Wiebe**



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

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Notes:

Jot down insights or moments that made your At-Home Lent Worship memorable:

Blessed Hunger...Holy Feast

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Alleluia

One: When we are honest with ourselves and others, the world becomes a safer and brighter place. *(Relight candle #5)*

All: Jesus said, "I am the truth." He will help us be truthful, too.

One: When we are loving, unselfish, trusting, content and honest, Jesus lives in our lives and the world becomes a brighter place.

(Relight candle #6)

All: Because Jesus lives and wants to live in our hearts, God's light and love shine through us and brighten up the world. We thank God for the wonderful gifts of forgiveness and love which we can enjoy and share because Jesus died for us.

(You may want to add your own spontaneous prayers here.)

Sing or play a favourite Easter carol before you disperse.

Easter Sunday Prayer of Thanks **Easter, April 8, 2007**

Dear God and Father of our living Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for the power of your forgiving, life-giving love.

We thank you for raising Jesus from the dead.

We thank you for the wonderful gifts of forgiveness and salvation that we can enjoy because of Jesus.

We thank you for the Bible, which has helped us see how God's love became a feast for the lives of Jesus' first followers.

We thank you for inviting us to your feast, too, and for the way your love transforms our own lives and communities.

We love you and want to follow Jesus.

We see your love at work in..... (Add own observations)

Thank you for continuing to live in and around us.

Thank you that your love leads through suffering to joy.

Thank-you that your love is stronger than death.

Amen.

Song: *Can't Keep Quiet*, Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com)

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Introduction

By Elsie Rempel

During the season of Lent, God's children reflect on the life and death of Christ in ways that set us apart from a society that celebrates Easter with chocolate bunnies and chicks. We prepare in ways that remind us that God's people find their most basic needs met in God's abundance. At the same time, we are reminded of our human emptiness, and how it contrasts the satisfaction and fulfillment God longs to provide for us.

This year, our Lent materials hope to help us rediscover and reclaim confession. This is more than just telling God how we've messed up; it includes the confessing of our faith with God, whose love stays with us and pursues us through the outstretched arms of Jesus. As we become aware of the intensity of this love, we respond with newfound love and thankfulness to Jesus for stretching out his arms to save us.

This resource for the home is adapted from the congregational resource for Lent, which is available in the Mennonite Church resource: **Leader – Equipping the Missional Congregation**, prepared for us by Mennonite Church Manitoba. Phil Campbell Enns, a member of that team has written the theme song, *Fill us with your feast*, which can be accessed using the following link: www.mennochurch.mb.ca/resources/worship/phlce/ Use the resource whenever and however it fits into your home's routines and life stage realities.

If your family has younger children, feel free to simplify, shorten and paraphrase the prayers and pondering thoughts. To use this booklet for daily worship times, repeat the litany for each day of the week, and read the daily scripture recommendations. The lectionary readings have been divided into seven short readings. Both the pondering questions and the activities correspond loosely to the scripture selections listed there.

One: When we are jealous of others, and are angry because they have things we want for ourselves, the world becomes a darker place. (*Snuff out candle #4*)

All: Jesus taught us to be content with what we have and to look out for the good of others.

One: When we are deceitful and don't tell the truth, the world becomes a darker place. (*Snuff out candle #5*)

All: Jesus said, "Let your yes be yes and your no be no." He expects us to be honest.

One: Because of people's hatred, greed, selfishness, jealousy and dishonesty, Jesus died on the cross. (*Snuff out candle #6*)

All: To Jesus' friends the world seemed like a very dark place.

One: Before he died, Jesus said, "Forgive them Father, for they don't know what they are doing."

Sing: "Were you there" while you burn up your confessions, lighting them with the still-burning Christ candle.

Option: stop here on Thursday or Friday and continue on Easter morning.

One: Jesus did not stay dead. God's love is stronger than all our sins, and on that first Easter, God raised Jesus from the dead. Because Jesus loved people enough to suffer and die and still forgive, we, too, can be forgiven. Jesus' death can free us from the bad things we have done. It can also give us the strength to forgive others when they hurt us. Christ's love can be reflected in and shine through us. (pause) When we are kind and loving to each other, the world becomes a brighter place. (*Relight candle #1*)

All: Jesus' love shines through our loving deeds and words.

One: When we share and find joy in sharing with those who have less, the world becomes a brighter place. (*Relight candle #2*)

One: When we trust in God's care for us and are freed from fear, the world becomes a brighter place. (*Relight candle #3*)

All: Jesus wants us to trust him with our fears and worries so we can live freely.

One: When we are content with what we have, and are happy for others when they get something special, the world becomes a brighter place. (*Relight candle #4*)

All: Jesus wants us to trust him to supply us with what we need.

Maundy Thursday or Good Friday

April 5 or 6, 2007

(Maundy comes from the Latin, “*dies mandatum*” which means “the day of the new commandment”. This Friday is considered “good” because not even death can overwhelm God’s love and grace.)

1. Make a copy of the litany page for each reading participant.
2. Prepare for this service with some quiet worship music and silence.
3. Light all the Lent candles and the Christ candle.
4. Add a metal bowl in which you can burn up your confession slips.
5. Write personal confessions on slips of paper before beginning the litany. (Keep them for the middle of the litany).
6. Have family or household members take turns snuffing out the candles.
7. Have family or household members take turns reading the “One” parts.

Maundy Thursday or Good Friday Litany

One: When we hate or are unkind to each other, the world becomes a darker place. (*Snuff out candle #1*)

All: Jesus taught us to love each other.

One: When we are grabby and want everything for ourselves, the world becomes a darker place.

(*Snuff out candle #2*)

All: Jesus taught us to share with others.

One: When we are afraid, the world seems dark and frightening.

(*Snuff out candle #3*)

All: Jesus’ love is stronger than our fears. He is the light of the world.

Pondering Questions:

The pondering questions are designed to help each household member hear God speak in a personal way. Enjoy a short time of silence after each question and feel free to share or ponder these thoughts in your heart. The collection of recommended worship items listed below can help you make a holy space in your home and your hearts for God during the season of Lent. Adapt them to suit your home.

Worship items:

1. **Cloth:** A festive cloth to cover a worship area. A purple table cloth would reflect both the royalty of Christ, our Lord, and the attitude of repentance, which dominates the season.
2. **Poster:** Create a poster featuring scattered rocks and an empty bowl (week one activity) or add some of your favourite rocks and a small bowl to your table.
3. **Candles:** Set one larger white Christ candle in the centre and place six candles in transparent candleholders around it. Use simple tea lights or purple candles, representing repentance, to reinforce the theme.
4. **Family Lent Journal:** in which you can write responses to reflective activities.
5. **A Bible and this booklet.** For families with younger children, you may want to read from the International Children’s Bible, the New International Reader’s Version, The Adventure Bible, or the NIV Beginners Bible.
6. **Music Resources** such as *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (HWB); *Sing the Journey* (SJ); downloadable theme song, *Fill us with your feast*; and the CD *Can’t Keep Quiet*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman, www.smalltallmusic.com. For families that sing.

Getting Ready for Lent

February 20, 2007

Shrove Tuesday

Shrove comes from the old word, shrive, which means to hear a person confess their sins and receive forgiveness. On Shrove Tuesday, it was traditional to make pancakes to use up the eggs, fat and sugar that were in the house, because people used to give up eating these foods for Lent.

- Invite another family from your church for a pancake supper, unless your congregation already hosts such an event.
- Decorate your dining area together, using balloons and cloth or paper banners to give it a Mardi Gras look.
- Write words of praise such as, Alleluia, New Life, Love Wins, and Holy Feast onto the banners.
- Promise to encourage each other on your Lent journey this year.
- Send half of the banners home with the invited family.

Alleluia

God keeps on

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Psalm 118: 1-9, 10-18, 19-29; Isaiah 50: 4b-6, 7-9; Philippians 2: 5-11.
2. Add a picture of a palm branch to the upper left border of your Lent poster as the symbol for this week.
3. Think of people in your family or congregation who have been steadfast in their loyalty. Add pictures of them to your Lent scrapbook alongside of pictures of the people you meet in this week's Bible texts.
4. Record the questions and feelings that arise as you reflect on Jesus' passion in your Family Lent Journal.
5. Water and quietly watch the barley or sprouts you planted last week grow. Invite Jesus' spirit to watch with you and be quiet.
6. On Maundy Thursday, or on Good Friday, use your Lent candles and the litany on the following pages to help you understand why Jesus had to die and why God raised him back to life.
7. When you decorate your Easter eggs, think about the new life that God gave Jesus and offers us.

loving

Lent 6, Passion Week, April 1, 2007

God's steadfast love endures forever

Family focus statement:

Even when Jesus is rejected and suffers,
God keeps on loving.

Call to worship:

One: O God, you are our God. We thank you for being our salvation.

All: We bless you as we bind the festal procession with branches.

One: Thank you, God, for loving us always, on days that are happy and on days that are sad. As we light this sixth candle of Lent, we confess Jesus as Lord and bring ourselves to God. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Luke 19: 28-40.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder what it was like to be in that first Palm Sunday parade.
2. I wonder what Jesus was feeling and praying about this week.
3. I wonder just how big God's love is.

Songs for the week:

HWB 161, *We give thanks unto you; Fill us with your feast* by Phil Campbell Enns; *You're not alone* by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't Keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com).

Closing prayer:

One: Living God, give us the courage to confess your son Jesus as our Lord in the morning and the evening, even when others turn against him.

All: May God's steadfast love bless us, save us, and strengthen us even after we blow out this sixth Lent candle. Amen.

Ash Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Blessed Hunger... Holy Feast

Take down the celebration banners from your Shrove Tuesday supper. Fold them up carefully and bury them, or store them in a dark place until Easter morning.

Discuss how Lent helps us look at ourselves and choose activities that renew, or strengthen, our faith in God. Lent helps us notice our hunger for God. Lent helps us walk with Jesus and remember his journey to the cross and the resurrection.

- Pick some food or activity from your normal family routine that you would like to replace with faith-building activities during Lent.
- Read God's Word: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21.
- Make and record your *Family Lent Plan* for the next 40 days. How will you help each other notice your hunger for God? What will you do in secret? How will you prepare to celebrate a Holy Feast at Easter? Your plan could be something like taking the time for daily devotions with this booklet during the time of a TV show you enjoy watching, or before supper, when you are hungry for food. Perhaps there are foods you will give up eating so you can donate the saved money to a mission project. If you give up desserts, you can use the time you would use making them.
- Brainstorm freely and respect the ideas of your children. If children are too young to understand metaphors, substitute the language of being hungry for God with being lonely for God and thank God's Spirit for being near each time we breathe in. Sign your *Family Lent Plan* with your names or fingerprints. (A bit of washable marker on a thumb makes a great fingerprint.)
- Burn up the *Family Lent Plan*, in a safe manner, as a way of sending it to God. Watch the smoke rise and disperse.
- Call the family you shared Shrove Tuesday with and tell them about your plan.
- Set up your Lent Worship Centre, using the suggestions in this booklet.

Lent 1, February 25, 2007
God's hand delivers us

Family focus statement:
When we are tempted,
God helps us.

God helps us us hope

Call to worship:

One: O God, you are our God and we long for you.

All: We trust our God who loves us and sends his angels to guard us.

One: Help us notice your loving ways, God. As we light this first candle of Lent, we call you and tell you about the things that tempt us. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder what angels have protected us from today.
2. I wonder what things distracted us from noticing God today.
3. I wonder how we could show that God is our Lord when we are tempted.

Songs for the week:

Sing the Journey (SJ) 86, *Taste and see*; or *Fill us with your feast* by Phil Campbell Enns; or *Groove with God*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-Can't Keep Quiet, www.smalltallmusic.com). Consider singing or listening to one of these songs to open your devotional time. Good music has a way of preparing our hearts to worship.

Closing prayer:

One: Saving God, we call upon you, for you alone can save us by helping us with our temptations and satisfying the hunger of our hearts with your great love.

All: May God's love bless us and shine through us even after we blow out this first Lent candle. Amen.

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Psalm 126: 1-3, 4-6; John 12: 1-8, Philippians 3: 4b-8a, 8b-11, 12-14.
2. Add a picture of a bowl, towel and pitcher of water to the upper right border of the Lent poster.
3. Add to your Lent scrapbook pictures of exciting things that have happened to you. If the Bible texts you read this week bring images of exciting, hope filled things to your mind, draw pictures of those things as well.
4. Notice signs of the new things God is doing in your family and your congregation and record them in your Family Lent Journal.
5. Plant some barley for Easter, or start some sprouts to show you how new life and joy springs forth from seeds.
6. Interview an older person from your congregation, or a grandparent, about when they followed God's leading and how God gave them hope.
7. Give new hope to someone who is discouraged by doing something loving for or with them.

Lent 5, March 25, 2007

God makes a way through mighty waters

Family focus statement:
When we are exhausted,
God gives us hope.

God gives

Call to worship:

One: O God, we are encouraged that you want to do a new thing among us and through us, even when we are ready to give up.

All: We shout and jump for joy because the Lord restores our lives.

One: O God, you are our God. We thank you for giving us bodies that are energized to move, and sing, and shout for joy. Accept our thanks as we light this fifth candle of Lent. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Isaiah 43:16-21.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder how animals honour God.
2. I wonder what keeps God from getting tired.
3. I wonder how we can be re-energized by God.

Songs for the week:

HWB 427 *You shall go out with joy*; SJ 12, *O sing to the Lord*; *Fill us with your feast* by Phil Campbell Enns; *Can't keep quiet*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't Keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com).

Closing prayer:

One: God of hope, give us eyes to see the new work you are doing among us. In the morning and the evening we will look to see the new work of God.

All: May God's hope bless us and flow through us even after we blow out this fifth Lent candle. Amen.

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Deuteronomy 26: 1-3, 4-11, Romans 10: 8b-13, Luke 4: 1-4, 5-8, 9-13.
2. Make a poster of a barren and rocky landscape. Leave space for a border which will be filled with symbols of our hunger for God and the holy feast God invites us to. A picture of a violet coloured, empty bowl would be an appropriate symbol for this week.
3. Start a Lent scrapbook with images of God's presence in your family's experiences (you might want to ask your grandparents) and the Bible texts you will read this Lent.
4. Notice signs of God's love showing through among family and friends, and record them in your Family Lent Journal.
5. Look for signs of God's creation being hungry for new life. Think up and respond in some God pleasing ways.
6. Create your own play or puppet play about being hungry and being invited to God's feast.
7. Find and enjoy a picture book about hunger and feasts. One possibility is *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan © 1991, Morrow Junior Books, New York. www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/2/2596.

Lent 2, March 4, 2007

God gathers us together in a safe shelter

Family focus statement:
When we are frightened,
God keeps us safe.

Call to worship:

One: O God, you are our God. You are our light and our salvation.

All: We shall not be afraid; we shall wait and see God's goodness.

One: Help us see your goodness, God. As we light this second candle of Lent, we call you and tell you about the things that frighten us. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Psalm 27: 1-6.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder what dangers frightened us today.
2. I wonder how the brightness of God's face helps us have courage.
3. I wonder whom we could imitate because they live as courageous friends of Jesus.

Songs for the week:

Hymnal: A Worship Book (HWB) 161, We give thanks unto you; Fill us with your feast by Phil Campbell Enns; or *Groove with God*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't Keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com). Consider singing or listening to one of these songs to open your devotional time. Good music has a way of preparing our hearts to worship.

Closing prayer:

One: Sheltering God, we seek you, for your bright face helps us overcome our fears. In the morning and in the evening, we will seek your face.

All: May God's face shine on us and through us even after we blow out this second Lent candle. Amen.

God welcomes us

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32: 1-5, 6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:16-17, 18-19, 20-21.
2. Add a picture of two people hugging to the lower right side of your poster board as a symbol for this week.
3. Continue your Lent scrapbook by adding current pictures of forgiveness and celebration to it. Add images that remind you of the celebration and forgiveness in this week's Bible texts.
4. Practice forgiving each other this week and then plan a forgiveness celebration party. Write your thoughts about this combination of forgiving and celebrating in your family Lent journal.
5. Look for signs of stories about who are usually enemies, but who get to be friends. Think up and respond in some God-pleasing ways.
6. Spend some quiet time pretending you are the prodigal son returning home and enjoying your father's loving hug.
7. Enjoy the picture book, *Enemy Pie*, by Derek Munson © 2000, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, about how celebrating can lead to forgiving and becoming friends with your enemies. www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/2/6971.

back

Lent 4, March 18, 2007

God reaches out with open arms

Family focus statement: When we run away from God, God welcomes us back for a party.

God keeps us safe

Call to worship:

One: O God, you are our God even when we stray and get lost.

All: We will tell you about the way we get lost through our poor choices and are so glad that you forgive us and invite us back.

One: Help us return to your love and truth, God. As we light this fourth candle of Lent, we think of your love in the warm hugs we can share. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder why it can be so hard to say "I'm sorry" for the bad choices we make.
2. I wonder how we can remember God's inviting love when we need forgiving.
3. I wonder how we could celebrate someone's return to God's love.

Songs for the week:

HWB 459, *I come with joy to meet my Lord*; *Fill us with your feast* by Phil Campbell Enns; *Beloved Child*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't Keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com).

Closing prayer:

One: Forgiving God, we trust in your care for us. When we see that we need a new way of living, we experience your love, truth and forgiveness. We celebrate that we can bask in the warmth of your love.

All: May God's forgiveness bless us and help us forgive others and celebrate even after we blow out this fourth Lent candle. Amen.

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Psalm 27: 7-14; Philippians 3:17 – 4:1; Genesis 15: 1-6, 7-12, 17-18; Luke 13: 31-35.
2. Add a picture of a shining, courageous face to the top border of your Lent poster.
3. Review and renew your household's emergency response or fire safety plans. Draw your escape plans in your scrapbook.
4. Continue your own family Lent journal with stories of how God has helped you not be afraid. Search the Bible texts to find out who God helped not be afraid in them.
5. Go on a hike or bike ride on a designated path. Use a flashlight to look for ways this path protects its users.
6. Many animals are frightened and no longer safe because their habitat is being endangered and destroyed. Choose and follow one way of protecting animal habitat this week.
7. If you have a pet or care for animals on a farm, do something to protect them from danger.

Lent 3, March 11, 2007

God pours out life-giving drink

Family focus statement:

When nothing satisfies,
God does.

Call to worship:

One: O God, you are our God and we thirst for you.

All: We will praise you and bless you as long as we live.

One: Satisfy our deep needs with joy in you, God. As we light this third candle of Lent, we call you and thank you for satisfying us with your love. Amen.

Listening to God's Word: Read Psalm 63: 1-8.

Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. I wonder what it is like to be thirsty in a land without water.
2. I wonder how praising God blesses us as well as God.
3. I wonder how God will satisfy our deep needs today.

Songs for the week:

HWB 515, *Jesus, Rock of ages; Fill us with your feast* by Phil Campbell Enns; or *Groove with God*, by Bryan Moyer Suderman (CD-*Can't Keep Quiet*, www.smalltallmusic.com).

Closing prayer:

One: Thirst quenching God, when our souls hunger for your shelter, we seek your face. In the morning and the evening, we will seek the face of our God, and be blessed.

All: May God's face shine through us and make us a blessing even after we blow out this third Lent candle. Amen.

Activities to choose from:

1. Read Isaiah 55: 1-4, 5-9; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-5, 6-13; Luke 13: 1-5, 6-9.
2. Add a picture of a refreshing drink being poured out to the lower left side border of your Lent poster.
3. Make a collage of advertisements of foods and drinks that promise to satisfy us on one side and how following and loving God satisfies us on the other side. Add it to your scrapbook.
4. Continue your own family Lent journal with stories of how seeking God has helped you to be satisfied and content. Search the Bible texts to find out whom God helped to not be afraid.
5. People who share the rich satisfaction of living as children of God are filled with gratitude for God's good gifts in creation. Find a way of showing your gratitude and refreshing the world we live in.
6. Plan a refreshing and satisfying meal and invite someone who needs that refreshment and welcome to join you for it.
7. Plan an evening where everyone in the family plays the music they find most satisfying. Enjoy experiencing each other's favourite music.

God satisfies us