

"Look for the Resister"
Lent Week One

WE GATHER

Prelude

Welcome

[follow your usual format for welcome, delaying "announcements" to the "Nurturing Love" section toward the end of the service; as the musical underscoring of the theme song begins, invite the people to a deep breath or other centering gesture as we turn our attention to the entrance of the Light of Christ, True Love, among us]

Threshold Moment

[Threshold Moment arrangement of "Show Us How to Love" is in your downloads; a soloist begins to sing as the light is processed and your chancel candle(s) are lit]

Hearts open, minds awake,
change us now for heaven's sake.
Leave us not alone in hatred's wake.
Show us how to love.
Show us how to love.
Show us how, show us how to love.

[musical underscoring continues as the leader speaks]

Leader: Lent is a wonderfully reflective time to reassess where we are searching for meaning and purpose. A question for us this year is "don't we often look for wholeness and happiness in places that offer only temporary 'good feelings' and satisfaction?" We will discover that the stories of Jesus show us how to truly love. This week we hear how Jesus resists evil in the desert. We see the futility of looking for love in empty highs, in tempting fate, and in mindless adoration. Rather, as Jesus demonstrates, it is in our resistance to evil that we find true communion with God. Resistance to evil starts with our own confession of complicit acts that move us further from love. Our groaning can turn to "glad cries of deliverance" as we choose good over evil time after time — even and especially if it isn't the "popular" thing to do.

[choir sings]
Eyes open, shocked awake,
much to learn from our mistakes.
Draw us closer in our heartache.
Show us how to love.
Show us how to love.
Show us how, show us how to love.

Confession and Assurance

[if you are celebrating Holy Communion and your tradition places the confession nearer to the Great Thanksgiving after the Word Proclaimed, move this liturgy to that position]

Leader: Let us join together in opening our hearts to the love of God. Before we even utter a word, we can be assured God will offer us grace and a way forward. For this reason, we can be honest with what pains us most about our own thoughts and actions. Let us pray:

Holy and Merciful One,
in this season of discernment we come bringing our deepest longings,
and our failed attempts at satisfying them.
We have often looked for love, for acceptance and security,
in the trappings of notoriety, popularity, and power
that diminish others in order to gain for ourselves.

People: **We yearn for lives that matter,**
we desire relationships that thrive,
we want less regret.

Leader: At times we fail to see that you have already given us what really matters:
your love and acceptance.
You provide opportunities all around us
to make a difference in the lives of others.
You give us a fresh start each day,
inviting us to do better.

In this silence, we bring to you our pleas for openness
to a different way of living.

Silence

My friends, be assured by the Psalmist who says,
"I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you."
Let us respond together:

All: **We open our hearts, our minds, our souls, our vision**
to the ways of love
created by God,
embodied in Jesus,
and already moving in us by the Spirit.
We are forgiven, loved, and freed!
Amen!

Peace

Leader: The love and peace of Christ be with you!
People: **And also with you!**

Leader: I invite you to pass this love and peace to one another by *[demonstrate this]* crossing your arms across your chest, indicating love, and then opening them with the common two-finger sign for peace, [remembering to send some of that love and peace to those worshiping remotely].

[the musical introduction to the opening hymn/song begins to help people center again]

Opening Hymn/Song

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"
Chalice 180, GTG 166, NCH 211, UMH 269, W&R 252
or
"Desert Song" CCLI #5060793

WE PROCLAIM

Children's Time

[see scripts in the Children's Time document; as the children leave, sing verse 1 of the Song of Proclamation as the scripture reader comes forward]

Song of Preparation for the Word

"Love Us Into Fullness" MV 81
[get the music in your downloads; see music document for permission notes]

[sung]
Love us into fullness,
touch us with your grace;
Jesus, in your mercy,
draw us to your face.

First Reading

Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah*

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Video Testimony

[We have created a beginning and ending for a testimonial video and you are encouraged to video someone talking briefly about something they do that has created more love in their lives. Each testimony could begin: "I have found an expression of love in _____"]

[sing vs. 2 as a response as the next scripture reader comes forward]

Love us into fullness,
hold us in your care,
cheer us with your presence,
here and everywhere.

Second Reading

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall

down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only God.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

[sing vs. 3 as a response;
if the choir/ensemble need to get into place, they do so during this verse]
Love us into fullness,
and we will be strong;
Jesus, walk beside us,
fill our hearts with song.

The Word in Music (Anthem)

"Show Us How to Love"
Listen HERE
[this first week is a chance for the congregation to hear the theme song in its fully arranged form - this song lends itself as an anthem as well as an ensemble piece, so using it in both classic and contemporary settings would work]

Sermon

[see Sermon Fodder notes in downloads and participate in our Sermon discussions in the Worship Design Studio website]

WE REPOND

Prayers of the People

"Kyrie Eleison" (Guarani)
GTG 578, MV 68, VT 620, W&R 377
or other Kyrie

Leader [could be the choir director/music director]: In this season of Lent, we will come together in prayer using an ancient form in the church. The Greek words, "Kyrie Eleison" mean "God, have mercy on us." The church has been chanting this during prayer since the early centuries of its existence. We will be led in various intercessions–prayers in

categories–followed by singing this simple chant as a response to each one.The repetition of this beautiful “Kyrie” is itself a prayer. God’s mercy is a gift of love, given freely to us. Listen first, and then join us to learn it:

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
[repeat with congregation]

Prayers for the World
Pastor/Leader: Loving Creator, we come to you asking for strength to resist injustice in this world. You have created a world in which we are a global community, connected and interdependent. Show us how to love so that when one part of the human family is affected by hate, war, hunger, or disaster, we will move to right any wrongs and alleviate suffering for the sake of all. You have created a planet full of such wonder and diversity. Show us how to love this planet home as our precious dwelling, assuring the flourishing of all living things. We pray this day for *[continue with global concerns of the moment]…* God have mercy. In this singing we lift up this world to you with our love:

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Prayers for Our Community
Loving Sovereign, we come to you asking for strength to make a difference in our communities. You created us for beloved community, bringing what we can offer and honoring others for their contributions. You invite us to love our neighbors. Show us how to love more widely, more deeply, especially when others are hurting. We pray this day for *[continue with community/church concerns]…* God have mercy. In this singing we lift up this community to you with our love:

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Prayers for Our Relationships
Loving Parent, we come to you asking for strength to make our homes and relationships places of love. You showed us what love looks like in the companionship of Jesus who invited all to his table, touched the untouchables with healing, spoke with, and drew close, those shunned by others. Open us more completely than we can imagine so that our love may break through the most difficult of situations. We pause in silence as we each lift up in our hearts the relationships that need your love *[pause for a few moments]…* God have mercy. In this singing we lift up each other to you with our love:

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Prayers for Our Selves
Lover of Our Souls, we come to you asking for strength to love ourselves. In the beginning you created us in your own image, giving us life and breath and the ability to love. And yet we find it difficult sometimes to love what you have created–to believe that you called us "good." Help us know the lure of your love for us, so that we may be your love in this world, in our communities, and in the lives with whom we intersect each day. God have mercy. In this singing we open ourselves to your love:

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

[if you are celebrating Holy Communion, you may want to move the Lord's Prayer out of this conclusion to the Prayers of the People]

And so, as your people following in the ways of your Son, Jesus, who set the pattern of love as resistance to the temptations of fleeting fame and fortune, we pray with confidence the prayer that he taught us:

The Prayer of Jesus

Offering

[use your common, current practices]

Communion

[for the weeks you celebrate communion, see the Communion Script in your downloads]

WE GO FORTH

Nurturing Love

[this is the time for "announcements" using language that invites people to see how engaging in activities this week is a way of nurturing practices of love]

Closing Hymn/Song

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
Chalice 517, GTG 366, LW 286, NCH 43, UMH 384, VU 333, W&R 358
or
"One Thing Remains (Your Love Never Fails)" CCLI #5508444

Benediction

Leader: Go forth into the world, looking for love in all the right places!
People: **We will look for signs of The Resister,**
working against injustice wherever we find it!

[finish the Benediction with your usual verbiage]

Postlude