

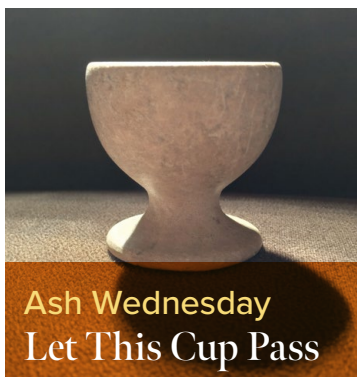
# Prayers *of the* Passion

SERVICES FOR LENT

ARDEN  
MEAD

# Prayers *of the* Passion

SERVICES FOR LENT



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SERVICES FOR LENT

## INDEX

Notes/Ordering Information .....	5
Newsletter/Bulletin Notices .....	6-11
Ash Wednesday (Let This Cup Pass) .....	12-29
Week 1 (Why Have You Forsaken Me?) .....	30-46
Week 2 (Father, Forgive Them).....	47-64
Week 3 (Jesus, Remember Me) .....	65-80
Week 4 (Into Your Hands) .....	81-97
Week 5 (Simon, I Have Prayed for You) .....	98-115
Music Guide .....	116-188

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# Prayers *of the* Passion

SERVICES FOR LENT

## ABOUT THE SERIES

In this worship series for Lent, services focus on prayers spoken during the Passion of Christ. The prayers for each of the six weeks include “Let this cup pass,” “Why have you forsaken?” “Father, forgive them,” “Jesus, remember me,” “Into your hands I commend my spirit” and “Simon, I have prayed for you.”

These six complete worship services include everything you need with the text of the sermons (in both monologue or dialogue format) and orders of service in .rtf (rich text format), newsletter/bulletin notices, hymns, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of all the services, with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

# Prayers *of the* Passion

SERVICES FOR LENT

## ASH WEDNESDAY: “LET THIS CUP PASS”

### COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/silhouette-jesus-christ-nazareth-kneeling-praying-245216500](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/silhouette-jesus-christ-nazareth-kneeling-praying-245216500)

- **A Lenten Gathering** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation and sung by the congregation to the tune O Store Gud 11 10 1 10 and refrain:

For us, O Lord, you prayed once in the garden.  
For us your sweat, like blood, fell to the ground.  
For us, O Lord, you asked forgiving pardon.  
With you, O Lord, blest Paradise is found.  
Teach us to pray; O Lord, our pleading hear;  
Unite our hearts with yours as one.  
Teach us to pray, and know your presence near;  
Teach us to say, “Thy will be done!”

**P** Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage. Yea, wait for the Lord.

**C** “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”

**P** Wait for the Lord.

**C** Remember, O Lord, your lovingkindness and your constant love, which you have shown from long ago.

**P** Wait for the Lord.

**C** “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”

**P** Let us observe a moment of silent prayer, considering what our Lord Jesus had before him ... and what we contemplate these forty days.

*(Silent Prayer)*

**P** I look to the Lord for help at all times, and he rescues me from danger.

**C** Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly, for you are the God in whom I take refuge.

**P** “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”

**C** Into your hands I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

**P** Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage. Yea, wait for the Lord.

Teach us to pray; O Father, hear our pleading  
Today, and all this holy season long.  
Teach us to pray, and by Christ’s interceding  
Help us to wait; and let our hearts be strong.  
Teach us to pray; O Lord, our pleading hear;  
Unite our hearts with yours as one.  
Teach us to pray, and know your presence near;  
Teach us to say, “Thy will be done!”

- The **Imposition of Ashes** takes place, according to local custom.
- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

**P** Lord Jesus, you prayed in anguish that the cup of suffering might pass from you. Yet, you obeyed the will of your Father to bear the pain of the cross that we might be saved forever from the sting of death. Help us to follow the will of our Father, even when it is difficult, and give us the strength to endure hardship as we move forward in faith and grow closer to you. Amen.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Joel 2:12-19, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ “Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, “Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.”

- A **Responsory** (from the words of Jesus) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

Ⓟ When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Ⓒ **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Ⓟ I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word.

Ⓒ **Your will be done.**

- The **Epistle Reading**, Hebrews 5:7-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Peter CM:

Lord, teach us how to pray aright  
 With rev'rence and with fear.  
 Though dust and ashes in your sight,  
 We may, we must draw near.

Let us not from our duty shrink  
 But help us, in our strife,  
 To see the cup you willed to drink  
 That we might taste of life.

- The **Gospel**, Matthew 26:36-46, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Peter CM:

Let us, O Lord, your Passion view  
 And find redemption there,  
 That daily we may learn of you  
 To persevere in prayer.



- The **Sermon** can be delivered as a monologue by the pastor or as a dialogue by three voices:
- *If using the monologue sermon, the pastor delivers the following:*

Ⓟ “Do I hafta?” a child asks. You are familiar with the question, I’m sure, and probably with the circumstances as well. “Do I hafta?” a child asks. Is that question a serious challenge to authority, an attempt to determine who is really in charge here? Or is it simply human selfishness expressing itself once again?

You may notice that the question is almost never asked about pleasant things. “Do I hafta eat that ice cream bar? Do I hafta go to the amusement park? Do I hafta get birthday presents?”

But the question arises when unpleasantness may be in the offing, inconvenience at best, discomfort at worst. “Do I hafta do my homework now? Do I hafta clean my room? Do I hafta go to the dentist?”

Do I hafta go through LENT? ... again! With all that it might entail: praying ... going to church ... doing devotions ... giving things up ... giving to charity. Do I hafta wear those ashes on my forehead? Do I hafta think about being only human, about dying? Or, in a form you might recognize: “Do I hafta drink this cup?”

The honest answer to that question is NO! You don’t “hafta.” The message of Lent is precisely that: that Jesus—who once asked the same kinds of questions we do—answered, “YES ... I do hafta.” Not because he deserved to, like Adam, like us ... but because he chose to, because it was God’s will.

WHAT was God’s will? That we be saved, the Bible says, redeemed from sin ... that we might be able eventually to take the cup of salvation and drink of the rivers of life forevermore.

So what’s the hang-up? Why do we find ourselves asking, “Do I hafta?” Is it just because we are selfish and lazy, and no more than that? The beginning of Lent might be a good time to note that, as insignificant as we may regard them, selfish and lazy are both on the traditional list of the Seven Deadly Sins. DEADLY sins ... because they betray the fact that there is probably a deeper rebellion going on here, and more serious. By asking, “Do I hafta?” are we taking sides with Adam and Eve, opposing the Lord God? Like the child who asks, “Do I hafta?”, are we challenging authority? God’s authority?

If that is the case, then YES, maybe we do “hafta.” Maybe our eternal welfare hangs on what we observe again this Lent. And maybe it’s important—eternally important—that we do observe it.

For “we are dust, and to dust we shall return.”

Dust. That's a dry prospect, you may have noticed. In Jesus' parable, the self-centered man who ended up in hell besought a drop of water to quench his thirst. Would he have asked, "Must I drink this cup?" THAT cup he would have welcomed ... but it was too late.

Again this Lent we are being offered a cup to drink, the cup of salvation—NOT the cup Jesus drank, but a cup of blessing, a cup that runneth over, offered to us as a gracious gift ... because Jesus drank the one he had to.

Do we hafta go through all this to appreciate that? Maybe not. Then again, we might want to analyze the question and the motive behind it. "Do I hafta eat that ice cream bar? Do I hafta go to the amusement park? Do I hafta get birthday presents?" Do I hafta know my sins are forgiven, my future assured, my debt paid, my resurrection promised and guaranteed?

The message of Lent is: When Jesus faced such questions, he answered YES.

OR

- *If using the dialogue sermon, consult following:*

*This dialogue homily is written for three voices. The PASTOR, speaking from the pulpit, delivers the lines in plain type. A WOMAN, perhaps a young mother, speaking either from the front of the congregation or simply as a voice from the balcony, delivers the indented lines in **bold italics**. The Biblical character ADAM may also speak from the front or the back of the church, delivering the more indented lines in **boldface type**. Note that the two characters are not speaking to the Pastor, although the Pastor does acknowledge their presence. We are merely overhearing their thoughts.*

"Do I hafta?" a child asks. You are familiar with the question, I'm sure, and probably with the circumstances as well. "Do I hafta?" a child asks. Is that question a serious challenge to authority, an attempt to determine who is really in charge here? Or is it simply human selfishness expressing itself once again?

You may notice that the question is almost never asked about pleasant things. "Do I hafta eat that ice cream bar? Do I hafta go to the amusement park? Do I hafta get birthday presents?"

But the question arises when unpleasantness may be in the offing, inconvenience at best, discomfort at worst. "Do I hafta do my homework now? Do I hafta clean my room? Do I hafta go to the dentist?"

*I don't know how it snuck up on me ... how it always seems to sneak up on me. I should know by now that it's coming. Lent, I mean. It's not as though it doesn't come every year.*

*And maybe that's exactly the problem. EVERY YEAR! Just when winter seems to be in its final death throes ... when the slightest hint of spring is in the air ... when the days are just beginning to stretch out and the long nights are toying with the idea of receding ... when my husband and I are starting to look toward Spring Break for the kids ... and then to summer vacation plans ....*

*Then BAM, out of nowhere it seems to come every year! Lent ... with its dusty, embarrassing ashes ... and its deep purple color ... with its extra church services ... and its extra requirements—devotions ... charity ... the annual scramble to think of what to “give up for Lent.” That's a tough one, too. It can't be something absolutely essential. I mean, I can't function without COFFEE, for goodness sake. But it can't be something so inconsequential as to be laughable ... like eating caviar or wearing cashmere.*

*Oh, I can't believe I've got to start THIS all over again!*

Did that voice sound familiar? Or the sentiments, at least—perhaps questions you've asked yourself? Comments you've made under your breath?

Do I hafta go through LENT? ... again! With all that it might entail: praying ... going to church ... doing devotions ... giving things up ... giving to charity. Do I hafta wear those ashes on my forehead?

*Don't get me wrong. I'm a Christian. I know what God has done for me. I appreciate Jesus' suffering and death.*

*But really! Six and a half weeks every year ... every SPRING ... to think about such dark things ... to think about DEATH?*

She's onto something, isn't she? Because the “haftas” of this season run really much deeper than simply wearing ashes, attending extra services, or “giving something up.”

Do I hafta think about being only human, about dying?

### **What have I done?**

Here's someone who understands the topic. It's Adam, the first man, who was molded by God's own hand, who bore in his lungs the very breath of God, who tasted forbidden fruit and fell from grace ... fell into sin:

**It's a question that haunts me. What have I done? I recognize the results. The sweat that drips from my brow. The thorns and thistles that choke out my crops. My wife's midnight moans of heavy labor and childbirth.**

**I walk up the hill to the stone that marks Abel's grave. I sit up there ... and I think about the Garden. I think that things were never meant to be THIS way. I think that DEATH was never in HIS plans for us.**

**And the question haunts me. What have I done?**

**I have rebelled against the most high God! In my insolence I have exchanged paradise for death!**

**What have I done? The question haunts me.**

**And with it, other questions arise. Can I uneat the fruit? Can I unkill my son? Can I undo my sin?**

**What have I done? What can I do to make it right?**

Do I hafta think about being only human ... about dying?

Isn't that the question echoed in today's Gospel—"Do I hafta drink this cup?"

The honest answer to that question is NO! You don't "hafta." The message of Lent is precisely that: that Jesus—who once asked the same kinds of questions we do—answered, "YES ... I do hafta." Not because he deserved to—as Adam deserved to, as we deserve to ... but because he CHOSE to, because it was God's will.

WHAT was God's will? That we be saved, the Bible says, redeemed from sin ... that we might be able eventually to take the cup of salvation and drink of the river of life forevermore.

So what's the hang-up? Why do we find ourselves asking, "Do I hafta?" Is it just because we are selfish and lazy, and no more than that? The beginning of Lent might be a good time to note that, as insignificant as we may regard them, selfish and lazy are both on the traditional list of the Seven Deadly Sins. DEADLY sins ... because they betray the fact that there is probably a deeper rebellion going on here, and more serious. By asking, "Do I hafta?" are we taking sides with Adam and Eve, opposing the Lord God? Like the child who asks, "Do I hafta?", are we challenging authority? God's authority?

**What have I done?**

**I have rebelled against the most high God! In my insolence I have exchanged paradise for death!**

If that is the case, then YES, maybe we do “hafta.” Maybe our eternal welfare hangs on what we observe again this Lent. And maybe it’s important—eternally important—that we do observe it.

For “we are dust, and to dust we shall return.”

Dust. That’s a *dry* prospect, you may have noticed. In Jesus’ parable, the self-centered man who ended up in hell besought a drop of water to quench his thirst. Would he have asked, “Must I drink this cup?” THAT cup—the cup with just a drop of water to quench his thirst—he would have welcomed ... but it was too late.

Again this Lent we are being offered a cup to drink.

But it is not the cup you might think. It is certainly not the cup that Jesus drank—the one Jesus HAD to drink.

No. But it is precisely BECAUSE Jesus drank that cup—the cup of suffering ... the cup of death—that we are allowed to drink the cup which we are offered. We are offered the cup of SALVATION!

Do we hafta go through all this to appreciate that? Maybe not. Then again, we might want to analyze the question and the motive behind it. “Do I hafta eat that ice cream bar? Do I hafta go to the amusement park? Do I hafta get birthday presents?”

Do I hafta know my sins are forgiven, my future assured, my debt paid, my resurrection promised and guaranteed?

The message of Lent is: When Jesus faced such questions, he answered YES.

- The **Hymn of Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Was Gott Tut 87 87 44 77:

What God ordains is always good; his will is just and holy.  
As he directs my life for me, I follow meek and lowly.  
My God indeed in ev’ry need  
Knows well how he will shield me; To him, then, I will yield me.

What God ordains is always good; he never will deceive me.  
He leads me in his righteous way, and never will he leave me.  
I take, content, what he has sent;  
His hand that sends me sadness will turn my tears to gladness.

What God ordains is always good; his loving thought attends me;  
No poison can be in the cup that my Physician sends me.  
My God is true; each morning new  
I trust his grace unending, my life to him commending.

What God ordains is always good; he is my Friend and Father.  
He suffers naught to do me harm though many storms may gather.  
Now I may know both joy and woe;  
Some day I shall see clearly that he has loved me dearly.

What God ordains is always good; though I the cup am drinking  
which savors now of bitterness, I take it without shrinking.  
For after grief God gives relief,  
my heart with comfort filling and all my sorrow stilling.

What God ordains is always good; this truth remains unshaken.  
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine, I shall not be forsaken.  
I fear no harm, for with his arm  
He shall embrace and shield me; so to my God I yield me.

- The **Offering** is collected at this time. If desired, this **Mini Movie** (purchased by you from Worship House Media: [worshiphousemedia.com](http://worshiphousemedia.com)) is presented on a screen at this time for reflection on the theme of the service:

[worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/57012/our-mess-gods-masterpiece](http://worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/57012/our-mess-gods-masterpiece)

- The **Prayers** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** Although we are but dust and ashes in the sight of God, yet our heavenly Father still regards us as beloved children. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, saying:  
Lord, hear our prayer.

**C** **Thy will be done.**

**P** Throughout these forty days, O God, lead us to seek your face, to behold your Son's great love for us and so to follow on the way of repentance and faith. Lord, hear our prayer.

**C** **Thy will be done.**

**P** Let your ears be attentive to the pleading of those entrapped by sin and overcome with guilt, that they may know the joy of your redeeming love in Jesus Christ. Lord, hear our prayer.

**C** **Thy will be done.**

**P** Let your ears be attentive to the pleading of those who are enduring any kind of need or pain, the hungry and homeless, the downcast and outcast, the sick and the injured. On behalf of all of these, Lord, hear our prayer.

**C Thy will be done.**

**P** Let your ears be attentive to the pleading of those who seek to serve you, both in the family of the church and out in the world where they are sent to bear your name, to bear their cross. Lord, hear our prayer.

**C Thy will be done.**

**P** Let your ears be attentive to the pleading of those for whom the way is difficult, the choices hard, the temptations fierce, the pressures great. That they may have the strength to endure, Lord, hear our prayer.

**C Thy will be done.**

**P** Grant your people patience for the journey and a clear vision of its blessed conclusion, when the time of ashes will be done and the time of everlasting joy will dawn on all Christ's faithful people. As we look forward thus in faith, Lord, hear our prayer.

**C Thy will be done.**

**P** Our pleading in your presence is possible only through the merits of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

• The **Lord's Prayer** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Anne CM:

Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne,  
Most holy be your name.  
Your kingdom come. Your will be done  
On earth, in heav'n the same.

Give us this day the food we need;  
Forgiven may we be;  
Into temptation do not lead;  
From evil set us free.

All rule and might and glory be  
To you while ages run  
And even to eternity.  
Amen! So be it done!

- The **Sending** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:
  - Ⓟ Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage. Yea, wait for the Lord.
  - Ⓒ “**My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.**”
  - Ⓟ Wait for the Lord.
  - Ⓒ **Amen.**
- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Converse 87 87 D:

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.  
What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge—take it to the Lord in prayer.



# Prayers *of the* Passion

SERVICES FOR LENT

## WEEK 1: “WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

### INDEX

Order of Service.....	31-34
Complete Script for Leaders.....	35-46