

Not Ordinary Church

A Journey from Separation to Community, for the Love of Creation

Allyson Sawtell, 2022

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Generally, these resources may be placed wherever you see fit in your order of worship, except, perhaps, for the Opening Reading options.

Opening Readings, options

Read this early on in the service on the first Sunday of Lent, and you could end with the hymn “For the Beauty of the Earth”.

Call to the Journey

Leader 1: Lent is a step in a larger journey we do together, moving from separation to connectedness. Our very survival as a species and as a planet depends on this journey.

People: It’s a step we take together. Creation’s survival depends on this journey. Got it. But what does that mean?

Leader 2: It means we challenge institutions and systems, Business as Usual, status quo definitions of who we are.

Leader 1: It means we also challenge our own assumptions, biases, and fears. Lent is that journey. Isn’t this fun?!

Leader 2: The challenges are overwhelming! Sometimes the day to day is all we can handle. The “big picture” is too much. All we can do is just breathe and wait for nightfall and hope we can sleep.

People: So, then, what does this “Lent is a journey” stuff have to say to us?

Leader 1: It says that you don’t have to struggle alone. That your “day to day” is connected to mine. Your breath connected to mine – and to all Creation.

Leader 2: You are nestled in the arms of something larger than yourself: community, Creation, the love of God. You are enveloped by God’s good Creation, thin lines of life flowing out of you and into a vast community of life; thin lines of life flowing into you from that same vastness.

People: The Web of Life! God’s good Creation. We are not alone. We are connected to each other!

Leader 1: And now that vast ocean of life that is earth, air, sky, water, plant, animal, mineral – that is us – is crying out with wrenching sobs.

Leader 2: The thin lines of connection are frayed, the web is tattered. Some strands are beyond repair, but not all are lost.

People: Reconnection may yet happen! Creation may yet be tended and mended!

Leader 1: But not without you. As you do not struggle alone, neither are you left out of the hard work of repair and restoration.

People: We have become separated from ourselves, each other, all Creation. So we acknowledge, confess, and lament.

All: Yet still we celebrate that restoration and reconnection are possible, and hope is real. Because tattered though it is, the web of life still holds us. The community of all Earth is our home! Shall we get to work?

We Are Connected

Leader: Here we are. Again. Or for the first time.

People: Here we are!

Leader: But who are we, who are here again for the first time?

People: We are children of God. Of Creation. Of the Holy.
Of that grand love that flows from a universe that bends ever towards justice.

All: They say we contain within us the same matter as the stars. We are ancient and we are uniquely new. We are connected to all that is, was, and will be.

Leader: We are the embodiment of the vast love which called forth all life, all darkness, all starlight, all of adaptation, change, movement, death, new beginning. We have swum in that primal ocean which became our world. We have gasped the first breath of air on a dry land, learning what it means to live as a new creature.

People: We are ancient. We are new. And we are connected to all that is, was, and will be. This is who we are. This is what we have forgotten.

All: We have come together to remember. To re-member. To put together. To make again. We have gathered to explore, to take another gasp of breath and to become a new creation.

Rituals

You can use one or both during this first week in Lent. The Candle-lighting ritual continues throughout all of Lent. The Seed-planting/Alleluias ritual is for the first Sunday only, but can set the tone or theme for the following weeks.

Ritual of Planting Seeds and Singing Alleluias

Place a large bowl with good dirt in it, up front on your altar or Communion Table. Have a packet of seeds on hand – whatever small plants you’d like to try growing – flowers, or herbs. This ritual can be done even if you’re still on Zoom; you just need to hold up the bowl and seeds so that all can see.

[Worship Leaders read the following; you can divide up the reading between two leaders]

It is common practice in many churches to stop singing or saying “alleluia” during Lent, to cease that sort of celebrating. Some even enact rituals around “burying the alleluias,” written on paper and buried in the ground or closed up in a box, to be taken out at Easter (unless you forget where you put them, which has been known to happen!).

The Lenten journey, then, becomes one of serious confession and reflection, with somber words and songs. It fits in all too well with what we’re already experiencing in our world today.

With all the pain and devastation and injustice that permeates our experience, it is so easy to focus just on lament, grief, anger, and near-hopelessness. Somber grief can become our default mode, and we bury our alleluias. And sometimes forget where we put them.

So how about instead of burying alleluias, we plant seeds instead, and sing alleluias? We plant seeds and remember the words of gay Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos (sidelined for his orientation): “They tried to bury us, but forgot we were seeds.” We plant seeds in defiance of death and of despair, even as the cries of Creation ring in our ears and tear our hearts apart. Let’s plant seeds in celebration of life and of hope. Not in denial of all the pain, but in the sure and certain hope that we can build a new world, we can tend to healing, and accountability, and justice, and community.

We plant these seeds in affirmation of the Love that calls us into being, and that guides our steps, even to the cross and beyond. We plant seeds. Together. And sing our alleluias.

[Plant a few seeds, water them. If on Zoom, hold up the bowl so all can see.]

Song: For All of Life (Tune – From All That Dwell Below The Skies)

For all of life that’s yet to be,

For all we hope and yearn to see: Alleluia! Alleluia!

For all we dream and dare to strive.

For all that keeps our hope alive: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The work is hard, despair so near.

God, often we give into fear. Alleluia?? Alleluia??

But even so, we’ll dare to sing!

Together, let our voices ring! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Still, God, it feels so strange to sing

These alleluias that we bring. Alleluia! Alleluia!

But we will sing them anyway.

And work and love, rejoice and pray! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Ritual of Candle Lighting

[This can be done each week in Lent, with lighting different candles each week and adding them to the collection surrounding the pillar candle. If you used the Ash Wednesday service from this collection, use the pillar candle from that service. Otherwise, use a good-sized pillar candle, any color other than white.]

Lent is a journey from separation to connection. We light this candle in defiance of all that would separate us from one another and from Creation. We light this candle of hope as we strive to build a better world, the Beloved Community for all Creation.

[Light the pillar candle. Have on hand a few votive candles in glass holders, of any color]

Each week we will light these smaller candles from our candle of hope. They will represent our dreams, our commitments, our lament and pain, our celebrations, our tears and our alleluias.

This week we begin with lighting candles for peace, for justice, and for environmental healing. *[Pastor or worship leader lights three votive candles, and places them around the pillar candle].*

RESOURCES TO USE THROUGHOUT LENT

PRAYERS AND READINGS

Opening Prayers

Here We Are

Leader: O God, here we are, in this space made sacred by the power of love and community.
Here we are.

People: We are not so sure about the “we” part. Who are we who stand on holy ground?

Leader: Are we Consumers? Controllers? Helpless, fearful, disempowered?
Are we lovers, hope-bearers, seekers? Ordinary folks of spirit, energy, and beauty?

People: We repeat: who *are* we who stand on holy ground??

Leader: We are children of God, called to redefine ourselves as one within the community of all life, sharing sacred space with all your beloved children of all species and types.

People: Don't let us forget that, O God. In our work and worship, in our lives outside the doors of your Church, don't let us forget that we are all connected. That we are, in truth, one Body.

All: Here we are, O God. In this space made sacred by the power of love and community.
Put us to work!

A Prayer of Praise and of Opening

Leader: God of earth and sky, of seas, forests, mountains and meadows –

People: We give thanks for your good Creation, and we celebrate your family of life!

Leader: God of stars and planets, of bugs and birds and all creatures great and small –

People: We give thanks for your good Creation, and we celebrate your family of life!

Leader: Open us, God to the wonder of your good Creation, its beauty and grace.

People: And even for those parts we have a hard time with, like wasps, or foxes eating baby rabbits, we still give thanks for cycles of life and everyone's part in it.

All: Open us, God, to gratitude and celebration.

Leader: Open us, also, O God, to the pain of your good Creation, to the cries of all your children.

People: Give us courage to feel the grief and outrage, and to work towards justice and healing of all your children.

All: Open us, God, to wonder, grief, courage, and gratitude. We give thanks, O God, and we celebrate with you and your whole community of life!

We Gather in Worship and Celebration

Leader: God, even as we gather in worship and celebration, we know there is still much that separates us from ourselves, each other, you, and all Creation.

People: As we gather together today, we know there is much to do to bring healing and peace to your world.

Leader: Help us to believe, and act on, the fact that all of us and each of us have something to offer to your work of healing and restoration. That all of us and each of us have something to offer to this community and to each other, to help heal, restore, and feed souls, hearts, bodies, and minds.

People: God, you move with us as we try to reach out to each other. You move with us as we try to reach out to your world. And you show us that we are not alone.

Leader: God, you move with us as we try to reach across all that might separate us. You move with us through our fears and hesitancy. And you show us we are braver than we thought.

People: For all this, O God we give you thanks! For amazing miracles of courage and persistence that somehow we manage to accomplish – we give you thanks!

All: So, God, even as we know there is so much that separates us from ourselves, each other, you, and all Creation, we still gather in worship and celebration!

We Have a Few Questions

Leader: We stand here, together, on holy ground...

People: ...and, God, we have a few questions.

Leader: This journey of Lent, with so much separation laid before us, is like a sprawling, eternal abyss. We gather at the edge, looking out across the expanse and wonder...

People: ...how in your holy name will we get to the other side?

Leader: How can we do this hard work to bring your new world into being? How can we continue to live with lament and with hope and celebration, too?

People: Help us confront the abyss of our separation from ourselves, from each other, and from all Creation. Help us get down in the depths and together find a way across.

Leader: O God, with you all things are possible. And within this community of faith, a lot of things are possible!

All: Together, we will find a way. Help us live like we believe it! Grant us courage, grant us wisdom. For the love of your Creation. Amen!

The Arms of Love

Leader: Lent is a journey we go through together. Sometimes we're making it up as we go along, sometimes we lean heavily on our traditions and history, sometimes we create new ways out of the old.

People: But how do we do this work? How can we as individuals, and even as a church, make any difference?

Leader: Begin by remembering that you are held in the arms of Love always.
And then you become the arms of love for another, who becomes the arms of love for yet another, and another.

And on it goes.

In your work, your prayers, your tears and your laughter, on it goes.

In your everyday lives, on it goes.

As you open your heart to Creation's devastation and work to restore our world, you become the arms of love for earth, air, sky, water, plant, animal, mineral.

And on it goes.

People: This is who we are – arms of love embracing a devastated world.

Leader: We may have forgotten. We may be too overwhelmed to even think about this.

People: But this is who we are! Not isolated, but a community of life trying its best to restore and repair, to bring together, to hold accountable, to heal, and to transform.

All: This is who we are and what we are called to do. God help us, and push us, and hold us for the sake of your Creation, O Holy One. Amen!

Prayers of Confession and Lament

Confession of Separation

Leader: O God of love and unity, we lament the many ways we find ourselves separated from others, from ourselves, and from you.

People: We've allowed our beliefs, our politics, our biases, and our fears to rip into our relationships, into our nation, into our families, and into all of Creation.

Leader: We confess the many ways we have perpetrated so much of this separation.

People: We confess the times we've closed our doors or closed our minds to others. We confess the times our fear has taken control of us and caused harm to others or ourselves.

We confess
 our hasty words
 our calculated silence
 our unthinking waste
 our unquestioning consumption of material goods

Leader: God, you know there's so much more we could confess! We know the point is not to feel miserable or to wallow in guilt. The point is to change, to make reparations, to restore relationships.

People: O God of love and unity, overcome our separation and grant us peace.

Leader: And in the sure and certain hope that we might be changed, that we might begin to bring healing and repair to what we have damaged, that we might live anew in ways that overcome separation, we dare to pray and give thanks.

All: O God of love and unity, overcome our separation and grant us peace. Amen.

We Have Forgotten Who We Are

Leader: We have forgotten who we are. What we are. Or we never really knew.

People: We are mammals of the animal kingdom. Creatures beloved of God.
 We are mammals decked out in finery, with opposable thumbs.
 Creative creatures, we are. With language. With tool-making ability.
 With muscles in our faces, which allow us to smile.

Leader: It is said our DNA shares much with that of the banana; something worth remembering when we get too cocky.

People: But first, and foremost, and always, we are all beloved children of God.

Leader: And as such, we are connected inextricably with God's other children, with all that comprises God's good Creation.

People: We are many and we are one. We are Earth Community, the Web of Life.

Leader: But we have forgotten that, or denied it, or never really knew it.

People: And we feel so alone in the dark, while Earth is teeming with life and the call to connection.

Leader: And so, we consume, plunder and destroy. We set ourselves apart from and over and above the rest of God's children, sometimes without even realizing it.

People: And we sit alone in the dark, while Earth is teeming with life and the call to connection.

ALL: We sit alone in the dark of our own making.
 God have mercy. Christ have mercy. God have mercy.

[Silence]

Words of Some Assurance *[To be read by Pastor/worship leader]*

Spoiler alert! This this isn't the end of the story. Easter is coming!

We are not left behind, in the tomb.

We may have forgotten who we are, but God has not forgotten.

We can find our way and we will reconnect with the rest of our family of Creation.

We can do this.

Will we?

Church, will we do this?

For the love of God, and *in* the love of God, let us do this hard work!

Prayer for Transformation of Helpless Grief

Leader: O God of all life, we grieve the many ways we are separated, against our will, from ourselves and from others. When we can do something about it, help us do so. When justice is demanded, may it happen! When there is nothing we can do, transform our helplessness in ways that allow us still to live abundantly.

People: God, hear our cries, transform our helplessness, that we might truly live.

Leader: God, sometimes we feel separated from our own bodies, as disease ravages through us, in spite of our best efforts to be careful and healthy.

People: God, hear our cries, transform our helplessness, that we might truly live.

Leader: God, we grieve the times we have been separated from, or shut out of, our communities, our friendships, our families.

People: God, hear our cries, transform our helplessness, that we might truly live.

Leader: God, we grieve hurts done to us that are so hard to let go of, and we grieve hurts that demand justice and reparations yet to happen.

People: God, hear our cries, transform our helplessness, that we might truly live.

O Beautiful and Wounded Creation

Leader: O beautiful and wounded Creation, we confess we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have done and left undone.

People: We have imagined ourselves a species apart. We forget or deny that we are all connected. We push away from each other out of fear or greed or ignorance.

Leader: O beautiful and wounded Creation, you are Christ hanging on the cross of wildfire-burned lands, parched with the thirst of drought, life's blood draining away with the riverbeds gone dry, and dying with each species gone extinct.

People: Your cry, O Christ, is the silence of extinction, the weeping of dispossessed peoples.

Leader: O beautiful and wounded Creation:

You land, water, air, seas;

You who are torn by war, racism, deforestation, power, disease

You souls who cry out in hopelessness and fear, and you who have no voice,

We have sinned against you by what we have done and what we have left undone.

ALL: We confess, dear God! We confess.

Turn us around, dear God, for it is not too late to mend and tend your beautiful and wounded Creation.

Prayer Responses

If your congregation's tradition is to sing a response to responsive or unison prayers, you can use one of these to follow the prayers offered here.

When We Survey God's Creation, Our Earth *(Tune: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)*

As we survey Your creation, our earth,
And see its suffering, its grief, its tears,
Help us to bring Your new world to birth
Strengthen, us, God, and dispel our fears.

For All Of Life *(Tune: From All That Dwell Below the Skies)*

For all of life that's yet to be,
For all we hope and yearn to see: Alleluia! Alleluia!
For all we dream and dare to strive.
For all that keeps our hope alive: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Our God Calls to Us *(Tune: When Jesus Wept)*

Our God calls to us, what will we reply, to
God's call for justice, God's call for peace?
Together, with courage, let us say "yes!"
And live with hope that will never cease.

When We Survey God's Creation, Our Earth *(Tune: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)*

Dream of the beauty that's been and will be,
Dream of the grace of earth and of sky,
Dream of God's children as they become free
Strengthen us, God, so our dreams will fly

Candle-Lighting Ritual during Lent

In preparation, have a pillar candle on your altar/Communion table (a purple candle is preferred, but you could use any color except white). Have also a collection of votive candles (in glass votive holders), of any color. And matches, of course! And a taper or candle-lighter to light from the Hope candle.

This ritual is a continuation of the candle-lighting ritual from the first Sunday in Lent. You can do this ritual each week until Palm Sunday. Include in your candle lighting each week thoughts both on lament and alleluias, grief and gratitude, what separates you, and what might be celebrated.

In the first Sunday of Lent ritual, the pillar candle became the candle of Hope. It is from this candle that you light the votive candles each week.

Light one of the votive candles (in glass holders) for each response. Then place the smaller candles around the purple pillar candle.

You will want to get a list each week of 3-4 responses to some or all of these questions: What separates you from yourself, others, God; what are you celebrating on this journey; what are you thankful for; what do you lament?

To get a list each week of thoughts or responses to the questions above, the pastor/worship leader can talk with staff or congregants during the week to come up with the list of 3-4 thoughts, phrases, or words. You then read the list during the candle-lighting time.

The ritual itself is very simple. Just have the worship leader light read a question/response, light a votive, read the next question/response, light another votive, and so on. The votive candles get placed around the pillar candle. They remain lit throughout the rest of the service.

Benedictions

[Read by pastor/worship leader]

Remember!

Beloveds, remember!

As we seek to find our way through the abyss of our many separations, remember there is a way across and there is a community of life that may yet be rebuilt.

Remember!

Creation may indeed yet flourish.

Remember!

We are God's hands and feet and heart. And we do this work together.

Remember!

And be of good courage!

People of Hope

Hope is that sure and certain knowledge that we may not know always what's coming next, but we know what we are pulled towards: the Beloved Community of justice and accountability, of the mending and tending of Creation, of connectedness and joy.

Be that hope! Live that hope! Together.

And may the love of God, the power of this community of faith, and the embrace of the whole community of Creation, permeate your very beings, now and always.

Amen!

Readings for Personal Reflection

These readings are too long to be read aloud in a service, but can be used as readings for personal reflection at home for you and members of the congregation.

Lent is a Journey

[Sit quietly in silence, perhaps have some quiet background music playing, and put yourself into this short vignette. Put yourself on the path with the others.]

As we look around us – in our own lives; certainly in our beloved world, with its injustice and devastation – it’s so easy to become overwhelmed with grief for our planet and all its life. And so often – most of the time? – we can’t begin to imagine anything better.

Grief is exhaustion, a heavy exhaustion. At times we cannot summon the will to dream, to imagine.

At times imagination cannot be found. It’s hiding under a rock, afraid of the sun. It’s tender and wounded and filled with rage. How do we see? How do we open each other’s eyes? How can we touch hearts, instill courage?

Lent is a journey, and we start off already weary; it feels like we’re climbing a mountain. Lent is a journey, and we’re milling around on the path, unsure, and bumping into each other, waiting for someone to organize this mess.

Stop. Breathe. Look around.

Take a step and hold out a hand. Figure it out as you go along. There are people ahead of you, doing this work; there always have been. Join them. Perhaps you have been one of those leaders; take a rest as you need it, then continue the journey.

Breathe.

What do you see or experience that you feel grateful for? What do you see of beauty? Where do you hear alleluias, even faint ones?

[Silence]

Breathe. Start up again.

And with luck, you will bump into someone, and another, and another, and realize you’re not alone. So you walk together and discover each other’s beauty.

And, of course, it’s also the case that people will get in your way and you’ll be grumpy, and you won’t like some of them. And some of them are smelly by now. You probably are too. With exertion and fear.

Eventually you’ll find you’re not all milling around quite so much. You’re generally facing the same direction. There are people helping others to move forward. There are people sharing water and snacks (pretend we’re not in a pandemic). And off to the side there are one or two folks singing softly, and others are smiling.

Breathe. Start up again.

Lent is a journey, and we start off already weary. But that doesn’t define the journey. Connection and community define the journey. That is what will bring us to the empty tomb.

O Holy Snit

The old story from the Christian Gospels tells of Jesus in Jerusalem during what we call “Holy Week”: he enters the temple, and is enraged as he watches the money changers and those who sell the animals for sacrifice. He is enraged and chases them all out, and overturns their tables. He calls out their greed and dishonesty in one heck of a holy snit (well, actually, it was more than a snit). I imagine folks were talking about it for days to come, as they set their tables back up and went on with business as usual. Jesus called them out and threw them out, disrupting the system for a brief time.

Did it make any difference? Did anyone change? Who knows? But Jesus called them out because he knew you don’t sit back from calling out injustice just because you think it won’t make a difference.

There is a place in our faith and our transformational work for rage, for “calling B.S.”, for calling out those who deceive, devalue, and devastate other people, creatures and eco-systems.

There is a place for rage – not violence, not hate, not self-righteousness – but rage.

And why not? Take a look at our nation’s history around the use of fossil fuels. Industries and governments have known for decades that fossil fuels contribute hugely to climate change and its ensuing devastation. They *knew*. They lied. This has been well-documented.

Climate grief is real. So, too, is climate anger. So, yes, there is a place for outrage, for calling out lies, injustice, and devastation. There is a place for disruption and for upsetting the tables. There is a time to reject the status quo and Business as Usual.

There is a place for our rage that comes from deep grief, or from deep love. Or more likely, from both. Our rage comes from knowing it doesn’t have to be this way, that innocents are being slaughtered through pollution and greed, and that there *can* be a better world, and we *can* be better people.

Sometimes our rage can be focused and channeled into constructive, fair, and just change – that is the goal. But sometimes our rage is so pain-filled that we need others to help us find safe spaces for it, and others who do the work of change for us for a time. Which brings us back to community: “We are a gentle angry people, and we are singing for our lives,” sings Holly Near. Amen! Yes. We sing *together*, as a people. We rage *together* as a people. We work *together*, as a people. For our lives. For Creation.

We’re uncomfortable with rage. We want to move through it quickly and “get to the other side,” to what we think is peace. “Why can’t we be civil? Let’s just come together.” But at whose expense? What accountability and repair are we leaving out when we seek to be all nice and polite, or to stop dealing with uncomfortable situations?

There’s a place in our work for rage. For discomfort. For a good, holy snit. We’re in good company.

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References providing some background for this essay:

“They Knew: The US Federal Government’s Fifty-Year Role in Causing the Climate Crisis”, James Gustave Speth, 2021.

“Singing for our Lives” by Holly Near, 1978.

Valarie Kaur, “Revolutionary Love” – see <https://valariekaur.com/revolutionary-love-project/>

Songs

When We Survey God's Creation, Our Earth

(Tune: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)

When we survey this glorious place:
God's good creation, the life that it brings,
Full of such brilliance and whimsy and grace,
How can we not give thanks and sing?

As we survey this creation of God:
Planet, its people, the seas, earth and sky,
Don't you just think that it seems very odd
That we allow so much of it to die?

As we survey Your creation, our earth,
And see its suffering, its grief, its tears,
Help us to bring Your new world to birth
Strengthen, us, God, and dispel our fears.

Dream of the beauty that's been and will be,
Dream of the grace of earth and of sky,
Dream of God's children as they become free
Strengthen us, God, so our dreams will fly

For All Of Life

(Tune: Lasst Uns Erfreuen 1623; "From All That Dwell Below The Skies")

For all of life that's yet to be,
 For all we hope and yearn to see: Alleluia! Alleluia!
 For all we dream and dare to strive.
 For all that keeps our hope alive: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The work is hard, despair so near.
 God, often we give into fear. Alleluia?? Alleluia??
 But even so, we'll dare to sing!
 Together, let our voices ring! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Still, God, it feels so strange to sing
 These alleluias that we bring. Alleluia! Alleluia!
 But we will sing them anyway.
 And work and love, rejoice and pray! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Use this song for the first time on the first Sunday of Lent, after the Ritual of Planting the Seeds and Singing Alleluias; otherwise, it may not make sense to the congregation.

Our God Calls to Us

(Tune – “When Jesus Wept” by William Billings)

Our God calls to us: “Remember now
Who you were and may yet still be:
Connected within the Web of Life,
This, the Beloved Community.”

Our God calls to us, what will we reply, to
God’s call for justice, God’s call for peace?
Together, with courage, let us say “yes!”
And live with hope that will never cease.

This can be sung as a hymn by the congregation, although the tune is not a familiar one to many. It may also be sung as an ensemble/small group song, in a two-or more-part round. If it’s sung as a round by an ensemble, print the words in the bulletin, because it’s often hard to understand the words in a round.

Whether sung by the congregation or a small group, don’t sing it too slowly. It’s a mournful tune (or at least the original song was really mournful! And singing it too slowly will make it a dirge).



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