

This downloadable resource from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician, designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Lent in preparation for the Easter celebration. Concordia Publishing House also offers coordinated Daily Devotion booklets and standard size bulletin covers that may be used to enrich the worship of those congregations using this series. More information about coordinated products may be found at cph.org/lent. This preview document contains excerpted portions of the major components for Midweek of Lent 1.

RESOURCES FOR LENT—EASTER PREACHING AND WORSHIP

BE GRACIOUS TO ME

PSALM 41

No Old Testament saint attests to God’s grace quite like King David. Raised from the sheepfold to the throne of the house of Israel; raised again (and again, and again) from sin: pride, murder, adultery, and despising of God; lifted clear of the snare of the wicked (Psalm 119:110), of the pit (Psalm 30:3), of the very gates of death (Psalm 9:13); with no merit or worthiness in himself, David was continually raised up by God’s grace and favor.

God’s grace wells up in Psalm 41, where David exults in divine mercy amid his own weakness, powerful enemies, and treacherous friends. In this psalm, David tracks the flow of divine grace back to its source at the cross and, with prophetic vision, finds it springing forth in the lives of all baptized believers—including you.

How has God’s grace raised you? If you haven’t been set on a royal throne or made ruler over a great people, maybe you’ve seen improvements in your finances or employment. Or perhaps family strife has been quieted. Or maybe a compassionate helper or valuable ally has entered the picture at just the right moment. Have you shaken off a bad illness, a bad habit, or a bad influence? If so, rejoice and thank God for His grace and favor!

But if you feel like you’re sinking instead of rising, what then? Is there any comfort for the saint of God who looks around to find that “the waters have come up to my neck” (Psalm 69:1)? David knows that saint’s fortunes because they are his as well:

In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;
the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;
he is called blessed in the land;

You do not give him up to the will of his enemies. (Psalm 41:1–2)

You have a sure hope! Therefore, do not look for hope in your experiences or your emotions, which will portray for you the same bleak scene that David captures in Psalm 41:

* My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die, and his name perish?” (v. 5)

- * When one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while His heart gathers iniquity. (v. 6)
- * Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. (v. 9)

Faith offers a better vision: despite all that binds and bruises and bleeds you, God *will* raise you up. He has raised you already! In Holy Baptism, God has “raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). If you are *in Christ*, how can you sink? How can you fall?

Lent is the ideal time to meditate on David’s ordeals and your secure position in Christ. Psalm 41 provides the ideal guide to your meditation. If the laments of Psalm 41 call to mind your numerous difficulties and need for deliverance, they depict even more clearly the work by which your deliverance has been won.

David “prophesied about the grace that was to be yours” and “searched and inquired carefully” concerning your salvation (1 Peter 1:10). And that salvation is this: the Son of David, by grace, “might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9).

Are the scheming enemies of Psalm 41:5 not the foes of Christ, who is sustained on His sickbed (v. 3) but the one by whose wounds you are healed (Isaiah 53:5)? Even the close friend of our Lord has lifted his heel against Him (Psalm 41:9). God be praised, all these sufferings are yours too! Or “do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death” (Romans 6:3)?

Because you are in Christ, you share in all things with Him, even the prophetic Word. David’s vision in Psalm 41 has become your reality in Christ. In the day of trouble, the Lord delivers you; the Lord protects you and keeps you alive; you are called blessed in the land (see Psalm 41:1–2). Press on to know the Lord’s suffering, death, and Word. As surely as the Lenten journey ascends to the victory of Easter, you shall be raised up.

“Be Gracious to Me—Resources for Lent–Easter Preaching and Worship” downloadable resource contains the following:

Ash Wednesday

- Sermon: Mutual Consideration—Psalm 41:1–2
- Children’s Message: Mutual Consideration
- Bible Study: Mutual Consideration

Midweek of Lent 1

- Sermon: Sustained in Sickness—Psalm 41:3
- Children’s Message: Sustained in Sickness
- Bible Study: Sustained in Sickness

Midweek of Lent 2

- Sermon: I Have Sinned—Psalm 41:4

Children's Message: I Have Sinned
Bible Study: I Have Sinned

Midweek of Lent 3

Sermon: Soon and Never—Psalm 41:5
Children's Message: Soon and Never
Bible Study: Soon and Never

Midweek of Lent 4

Sermon: Empty Words—Psalm 41:6
Children's Message: Empty Words
Bible Study: Empty Words

Midweek of Lent 5

Sermon: Vindication—Psalm 41:7–8
Children's Message: Vindication
Bible Study: Vindication

Holy Week

Children's Message: Be Gracious To Me!

Maundy (Holy) Thursday

Sermon: My Close Friend—Psalm 41:9

Good Friday

Sermon: Be Gracious To Me!—Psalm 41:10

Easter Vigil

Sermon: Contradiction—Psalm 41:11

Easter Sunday

Sermon: Because of My Integrity—Psalm 41:12–13
Children's Message: Because of My Integrity
Bible Study: Because of My Integrity

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Be Gracious to Me: Resources for Lent and Easter Preaching and Worship follows no particular lectionary; instead, readings have been appointed to support the thematic emphasis of the chosen verses from Psalm 41.

Worship services for Ash Wednesday, five midweek services, Maundy (Holy) Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter are provided in both creative and traditional formats. Traditional services use service settings as found in *Lutheran Service Book*, while the creative services provide

more liturgical variety. Those planning the worship services may choose between the resources offered in both services to fit local customs and needs.

A new series psalm setting titled “Be Gracious to Me” is included. This setting is flexible in length and voicing. A refrain is sung by the congregation with a soloist, duet, or choir singing the psalm verses. The psalm may be sung in its entirety, with just the appointed verses for the day, or from the beginning up to the appointed verses for the service. A sample recording of the refrain is included.

The services are also available to use through Lutheran Service Builder. The links for the services may be found on the “Digital Content” page.

For congregations looking for Holy Saturday worship options instead of, or in addition to, the Easter Vigil worship option, be sure to access the “Additional Resources” folder. This folder includes three options for worship services on Holy Saturday. It also includes propers for use during the weekdays (Monday through Wednesday) of Holy Week and announcements for the church newsletter, blog, and bulletin to promote the series in your congregation.

[Full introduction available with purchase.]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1: CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS

TEXT: PSALM 41:3

VISUAL: A BANDAGE, A MEDICINE BOTTLE, AN OINTMENT

SUMMARY: JESUS HAS THE POWER TO HEAL. BECAUSE HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WILL RISE TO ETERNAL LIFE, NEVER TO BE SICK AGAIN.

(Hold up the bandage.) Why would someone wear one of these? Yes, if we get a cut or a scrape, a bandage can help us heal by keeping everything clean. Have you ever had a scrape or a cut? *(Hold up the medicine bottle.)* Why would someone use this? Yes, if we get sick, a doctor will tell our parents or grandparents to give us some medicine to help us feel better. *(Hold up the ointment.)* What about this one? Sometimes, when people have a rash or problem with their skin, this can help heal the skin.

Our Bible verse from Psalm 41 today talks about God healing us: “The LORD sustains him on [Full message available with purchase.]”

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1: SERMON

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS—PSALM 41:3

PSALM 41 (IN ITS ENTIRETY)

OLD TESTAMENT: PSALM 103:1–14

EPISTLE: JAMES 5:7–18

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:14–17

Though He never suffered illness in His sinless body, our Lord fulfilled the words of Psalm 41:3 by taking all our infirmities upon Himself at the cross, His sickbed. His Father sustained Him there in His suffering and restored Him to full health in His resurrection. Through Baptism into Christ, believers can therefore have certainty that the Father will likewise sustain them through sickness and restore them to full health in the resurrection on the Last Day.

1. All of God’s psalms speak about Jesus and His work of salvation.
2. By your Baptism into Jesus, they likewise speak of you. Your baptismal connection to Jesus makes sense of the words of Psalm 41:3: “The Lord sustains him on his sickbed.”
3. Though the Gospels record no illness suffered by our Lord, He took on Himself all our sins and their bodily effects on the cross.
4. God the Father sustained Jesus on His sickbed—the cross—and restored Him “to full health” (Psalm 41:3) in His resurrection.
5. God sustains the baptized of Christ in all circumstances:
 - a. He gives the strong their health.

- b. He strengthens His children in their illness.
- c. He has defeated death, so those who depart this life in the faith are not dead but asleep.

EXEGETICAL NOTES AND APPLICATIONS OF PSALM 41

Verse 3 (Midweek of Lent 1)—“The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.”

The mutual consideration afforded by verse 1 allows us to continue the dual application in verse 3. Jesus is the blessed man whom the Lord, the God of hosts, sustained on the sickbed of suffering for us and for our salvation. The reference to our Lord’s sickness does *not* indicate any denial of the flawless and perfect incarnation; nor does it suggest that His sinless body would have contracted COVID or suffered from lung cancer. Our Lord’s sickness consists of the full scope of sin and its effects, which He assumed upon Himself for our sake. For a good illustration, search online for the Isenheim Altarpiece (Matthias Grünewald), which famously depicts the crucified Christ as suffering the plague. In the resurrection of Christ, God His Father “restore[d] Him to full health.”

The sermon title for Midweek 1 is “Sustained in Sickness.” By mutual consideration, we also may rightly view ourselves—together with David—as sustained in sickness by the hand of the Lord. No Christian who suffers any sort of debilitating disease truly succumbs to that disease. “Though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25–26). This view, that we are those whom the Lord sustains upon the sickbed, illustrates the very powerful, consoling effect of God’s Psalms.

SERMON FOR MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS

PSALM 41:3

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen. King David said in the opening words of Psalm 41,

Blessed is the one who considers the poor!

In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him;

the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;

he is called blessed in the land;

You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

Those words were the stuff of last week’s Ash Wednesday preaching. In that sermon, I emphasized two things for you:

First, all of God’s Psalms—including Psalm 41—speak about our Lord and His work of our salvation (Luke 24:44). That is why God included the Psalms in His Scriptures: they “bear witness,” said Jesus, “about Me” (John 5:39).

Second, because the Psalms are about Jesus, they are also about you. You are the baptized of Christ. When you were baptized, you entered into Christ’s holy body (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30) just as surely as He entered yours (John 14:20; Galatians 2:20). You and your Christ are now joined together by God. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

Tonight, as we move forward in Psalm 41, I would like you to bear that very thing in mind: that the Psalms speak about you because they speak first about Jesus. Your baptismal connection to Jesus can help with these words from Psalm 41: “The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.”

1. First and foremost, Jesus is the one whom God the Father sustained on a sickbed. To be sure, the Gospel writers never recorded anything about Jesus suffering cancer, feeling the effects of lung disease, catching a cold, or even striking His “foot against a stone” (Matthew 4:6). As far as the Gospels are concerned, our Lord was a picture of health, right up to the moment of His arrest, always healing and never needing to be healed. The human body of Jesus was unblemished (1 Peter 1:19) and uncorrupted by disease because Jesus had no sin of His own (Hebrews 4:15). Disease came into the world as a result of sin, and Jesus is personally sinless. Nonetheless, just because Jesus had no sin of His own, we should NOT therefore think that He carried no sin at all in His body.

* He is the Lamb of God, who took upon Himself “the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Sinless Jesus was made to be the sinner for our sake. God the Father laid onto His perfect Son every corrupt thing about us (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus held Himself personally responsible for our guilt; He made Himself to be the guilty one so that we could be “blameless and [Full sermon available with purchase.]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1: BIBLE STUDY—LEADER

Sustained in Sickness

PSALM 41:3

The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.

OPENING

Prayer: O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,

who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (Collect for the First Sunday in Lent, *LSB Altar Book*, p. 580)

INTRODUCTION

Last week we learned that the blessed “one who considers the poor” (Psalm 41:1) can refer to Jesus—who considers (pays careful attention to, looks upon with favor) us poor, miserable sinners by showering down His grace upon us—and to each of us who considers (pays careful attention to, worships) Jesus as the Suffering Servant who became poor, weak, despised, and rejected for our sake. Psalm 41:3 refers back to “the one who considers the poor” and says that he is sustained by the Lord on his sickbed and restored to full health. King David must have experienced God’s gracious healing firsthand at one or more points in his life; this verse also can be applied to Jesus and to us.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

INTRODUCTORY TRANSITION: Although there are no specific mentions of Jesus being sick in the Gospel books, we know that He must have experienced illness since “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted [or “tested”] as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Yet Jesus has experienced a trial more intense than any illness you or I have gone through!

Q1. Read Acts 2:29–32. How is Jesus’ “sickbed” described here? How did God restore Him to full health (Psalm 41:3)? According to Romans 6:9, what is Jesus’ permanent state of health now?

A1. On Pentecost, after quoting the messianic prophecy from Psalm 16—another psalm of David! (Acts 2:25–28)—Peter says that God fulfilled David’s prophecy by raising Jesus from the “sickbed” of His tomb on Easter morn. Being holy, His flesh was not even subject to the corruption that ours is. Risen, ascended, and glorified, Christ’s body is no longer subject to sickness or death (Romans 6:9)!

QUESTIONS 1–2 TRANSITION: It seems paradoxical, but the suffering and death of Jesus bring us health and life.

Q2. 1 Peter 2:24 tells us, “By His wounds you have been healed.” This is a reference to Isaiah 53:5. What does that passage teach us about the nature of healing that has taken place for us by His wounds? How can we receive such healing each day?

A2. Isaiah 53:5 teaches that the healing brought about by Christ’s wounds is the forgiveness of our sins, as we also see in the first half of 1 Peter 2:24. In the Holy Christian Church, we receive this gift, as Luther explains in the Small Catechism: “In this Christian church He [the Holy Spirit] daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers” (Apostles’ Creed, Third Article). The Spirit takes Christ’s merits and applies them to us, healing us of our sin-sickness.

QUESTIONS 2–3 TRANSITION: Jesus did this work not just for us Christians but also for the whole world.

[Full answers and Bible study available with purchase.]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1 (TRADITIONAL SERVICE)

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS

Since the fall into sin, no part of our human nature has escaped the ravages of original sin. Not only has sin separated us from God to our spiritual detriment, but our bodies, created for perfect health, endure sickness and injury. King David announces God's answer to this catastrophe in Psalm 41:3: "The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health." This is a beautiful promise, but what does it mean for you and your infirmities? As all the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus, the gifts contained in these words are only revealed by your Baptism into Him by whose wounds we are healed.

OPENING SENTENCES

LSB, p. 229

- P** O Lord, open my lips,
C and my mouth will declare Your praise.
- P** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
C make haste to help me, O Lord.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.

+ PSALMODY +

PSALM

Psalm 30:1–5

- P** I will extol You, O LORD, for You have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me.
C O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You have healed me.
P O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.
C Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His holy name.
P For His anger is but for a moment, and His favor is for a lifetime.
C Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

PSALM

Psalm 41

- P** Blessed is the one who considers the poor!
C In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;
P the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;
C You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.
P The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.
C As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!"
P My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die and his name perish?"

- C** And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad.
- P** All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.
- C** They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”
- P** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
- C** But You, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!
- P** By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
- C** But You have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in Your presence forever.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

[OR]

SERIES PSALM

“Be Gracious to Me” (Psalm 41:3–5)

- A** May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us.
- C** **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us.**

- A** The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health. As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!” My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”

- C** **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us.**

HYMN

“Come to Calvary’s Holy Mountain” (*LSB* 435)

+ READINGS +

[Full customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1 (CREATIVE SERVICE)

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS

AS WE GATHER

Since the fall into sin, no part of our human nature has escaped the ravages of original sin. Not only has sin separated us from God to our spiritual detriment, but our bodies, created for perfect health, endure sickness and injury. King David announces God's answer to this catastrophe in Psalm 41:3: "The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health." This is a beautiful promise, but what does it mean for you and your infirmities? As all the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus, the gifts contained in these words are only revealed by your Baptism into Him by whose wounds we are healed.

HYMN

"Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain" (*LSB* 435)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 30:1–5

P I will extol You, O LORD, for You have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

C O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You have healed me.

P O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

C Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His holy name.

P For His anger is but for a moment, and His favor is for a lifetime.

C Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

CALL TO CONFESSION

P Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness.

HYMN

"Lord, to You I Make Confession" (*LSB* 608)

ABSOLUTION

P The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

C Amen.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Let Your blessing be upon us, heavenly Father, as we pass through these holy days in which we remember the sufferings and death of our dear Lord. Grant that His holy example being ever before us, we follow Him in willing obedience, learn His gracious humility, and being filled with His love and spirit of self-sacrifice, learn the lessons of a life pleasing to You and helpful to all people; through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

HYMN

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” (*LSB* 450:1–3)

[Full customizable creative service available with purchase.]