

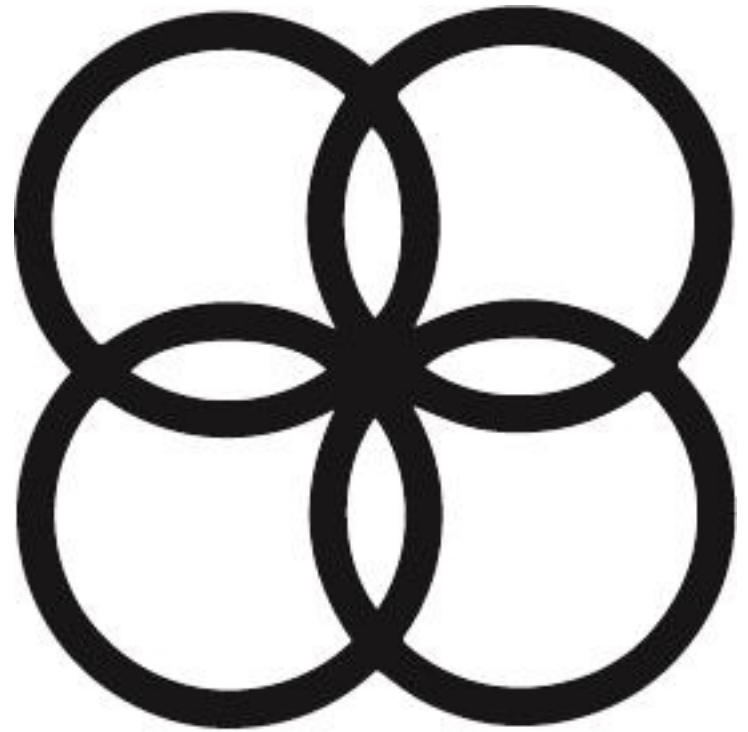
The season of Lent is the 40-day period from Ash Wednesday (February 18) to Easter, not counting Sundays. The length of Lent is associated with the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai, Israel's 40 years wandering in the wilderness, and Jesus' 40 day fast in the desert. The assigned Lent readings from the Revised Common Lectionary (Year B) include recalling God's covenant with Israel and how that covenant is fulfilled in Jesus and continued in our lives today.

Some of the words in these Lenten stories and texts might cause discomfort: sin, sacrifice, repentance, confession, suffering, and crucifixion. Hopefully we will also hear words and phrases that cause us to ponder anew the encircling love of God: steadfast love, everlasting covenant, hosanna, eternal life, rich in mercy, and resurrection.

While the cross has often been a prominent symbol of Lent and Easter, we are using circles this year to remind us of this encircling love.

We invite you to reflect on the following questions during Lent:

- What does God's encircling love mean to you? How do you experience it?
- What/Who is inside the circle? What fills the "negative" space (shaded)?
- How would you rearrange the circles on the chancel piece if you were to try and visualize the encircling love of God?
- What helped you worship today?
- Are there words, questions, or phrases from Scripture or music that you will take with you into the week?



The encircling love of God
has no beginning or end
no start or finish
It is as deep as the need