Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

This planning guide is not meant to be a "one size fits all" approach to the new hymnal—not even "two sizes fit all" (Order of Service, conservative and ambitious). But it is a starting point that we hope worship planners will find useful. See “Additional hymn suggestions” below for resources to enable easy customization to better fit local circumstances. The sections titled “Optional New Hymns” and “Notes for Conservative and Ambitious” for each day are especially helpful in how they alert planners about hymns/songs that require some advance preparation. It's never best to pick a new hymn tune and hope for the best!

Series Theme

Christian Worship provides an updated three-year lectionary for the Christian calendar along with appointed prayers, psalms, and gospel acclamations. Thematic Sundays are a chief feature of the new lectionary. All the resources share a common focus. The Gospel sets the theme for the day and largely matches the Gospel selections in other three-year lectionaries. The First Reading features more Old Testament narratives that match the theme of the Gospel. The Second Reading no longer comes from sets of continual readings but is a selection from New Testament epistles that supports the Sunday’s Gospel. The Prayer of the Day, Psalm of the Day, Gospel Acclamation, and Hymn of the Day are appointed to match the Sunday theme. (From *CW: Commentary on the Propers*, Year C.)

Theme of the Day

The themes for each day reflect (or are identical to) those found in *CW: Commentary on the Propers*.

Explanation of the Theme of the Day

The explanations below usually quote material from *CW: Commentary on the Propers*. But the published Commentary provides much additional material, including (in part): 1) a more thorough description of the day’s theme, 2) far more analysis of each reading (also the appointed psalm), including occasional reference to the original languages, and 3) the Prayer of the Day (which cannot be included in the online planner due to copyrights).

Note a difference between the explanations below and the longer ones in the published Commentary: those found in this planner quickly and briefly show connections between readings and the theme of the day. The longer versions provide more depth for worship planners and preachers.

Order *CW: Commentary on the Propers*, Year C from NPH: https://online.nph.net/church-supplies/categories/hymnals-songbooks/christian-worship-suite.

Additional Hymn Suggestions

Additional hymn suggestions are available in *Christian Worship: Service Builder* and in *Christian Worship: Planning Guide*, available from NPH: https://online.nph.net/church-supplies/categories/hymnals-songbooks/christian-worship-suite

CW: Planning Guide includes several hymn indexes, including an exhaustive Scripture index for the hymns.

Supporting Musical Arrangements

Choral and keyboard music supporting new hymns may be found at NPH (online.nph.net) by searching on ‘cw21choral’ or ‘cw21keyboard.’

Notes: The reading marked with asterisks is the preaching text for that Sunday. The abbreviation “GA” stands for Gospel Acclamation.

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

11/28/2021 - First Sunday in Advent

SERIES THEME

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR

"Advent" is a Latin word that means "coming." The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to connect the two "comings" of Christ. The first time the Lord came into our world it was as a tiny, helpless baby, born in a manger in Bethlehem. However, when Jesus comes again, it will be in all his power and glory with his angelic army behind him. He will be coming as judge at the end of time. Let us use these four weeks to see how the events of Jesus' first coming remove all our fears about his second coming. We can hold our heads high when the Lord comes near.

THEME OF THE DAY

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR, HE HUMBLES HIMSELF

What would it be like to meet God? We know he is almighty and holy. He loathes sin. No wonder that when God appears to his Old Testament people, their first response is typically terror. But when Jesus Christ came into our world, he hid his glory and power. He humbled himself so that sinners would be drawn to him rather than driven away in fear.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16 - In response to their sin, the Lord allowed the nation of Israel to be conquered and humbled. Yet, he promised that from David's royal line, a Savior would come to restore God's people.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 - When the Lord comes near on Judgment Day, his followers will be found blameless and holy. Why? Because Christ sustains our faith using humble means—God's Word and sacraments.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 19:28-40 - Jesus enters Jerusalem humbly, riding a donkey to his death. By that death, the Lord of all becomes the Savior of all.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Ambitious:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
302 - Prepare the Royal Highway

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 24A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
301 - Savior of the Nations, Come

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
303 - O Bride of Christ, Rejoice

Closing Hymn:
313 - Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
Opening: 915 - Hosanna to the Living Lord

Notes for the conservative service:
Though very familiar from previous use, Setting 1 still has some new elements: a new Kyrie and Gospel Acclamation, as well as an updated Preface Dialog. GA can start this year through Advent/Christmas with the seasonal verse.

Notes for the ambitious service:
Some may wish to make use of the Proper Verse for the Gospel Acclamation rather than the seasonal verse printed in the hymnal.

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/5/2021 - Second Sunday in Advent

SERIES THEME

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR

"Advent" is a Latin word that means "coming." The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to connect the two "comings" of Christ. The first time the Lord came into our world it was as a tiny, helpless baby, born in a manger in Bethlehem. However, when Jesus comes again, it will be in all his power and glory with his angelic army behind him. He will be coming as judge at the end of time. Let us use these four weeks to see how the events of Jesus' first coming remove all our fears about his second coming. We can hold our heads high when the Lord comes near.

THEME OF THE DAY

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR, HE HUMBLES HIS PEOPLE

People tend to feel a lot of pressure this time of year. We want our houses to look good for out-of-town guests. We want to impress people with the thoughfulness of our gifts. What a welcome relief, therefore, to hear what is required to meet the Lord: only repentance. You see, Jesus is not someone we need to impress with our good works. Indeed, repentance is the opposite of work. Repentance is the humble admission of our sin combined with the joyful trust that everything needed to bring us close to God has already been done by him.

FIRST READING

Malachi 3:1-7b - Through God's Word and the messengers who proclaim it, the Lord humbles his people, purifying our hearts so that we might stand on the Last Day.

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:3-11 - Producing love and humility within us is God's work. He began his good work at our baptism and will carry that work to completion.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 3:1-6 - In grace, God sent his messenger, John the Baptist, to prepare people to meet the Lord.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Ambitious:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
308 - There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 66A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. And all people will see God's salvation. (Luke 3:4,6)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
316 - On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*312 - Comfort, Comfort All My People

Closing Hymn:
310:3,4 - Arise, O Christian People

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
311 - Dawning Light of Our Salvation

Closing: 326 - O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/12/2021 - Third Sunday in Advent

SERIES THEME

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR

"Advent" is a Latin word that means "coming." The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to connect the two "comings" of Christ. The first time the Lord came into our world it was as a tiny, helpless baby, born in a manger in Bethlehem. However, when Jesus comes again, it will be in all his power and glory with his angelic army behind him. He will be coming as judge at the end of time. Let us use these four weeks to see how the events of Jesus' first coming remove all our fears about his second coming. We can hold our heads high when the Lord comes near.

THEME OF THE DAY

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR, HE HUMBLES HIS ENEMIES

Last week we saw that the Lord sends mesengers to call us to repentance. This week we learn that those who refuse to heed that call to humble themselves will be humbled anyway. The Lord who once came near in flesh and now comes near in Word and sacrament will one day come near with consuming fire and judgment. The Lord will humble his enemies. This truth does two important things. First, it adds urgency to God's Advent call to repentance. Second, it gives us comfort when we, as God's people, experience opposition from the world. Those who oppress and harm God's people will face justice.

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-17 - The prophet Zephaniah urges us to rejoice. Not only has the Lord taken away our punishment, but he will defeat all the enemies of God's people.

SECOND READING

*** Philippians 4:4-7 - When the world opposes Christ and his Church, Christians do not respond with anxiety or anger, but gentleness. We bring all our concerns to God in prayer and rest in his peace of knowing the Lord will humble his enemies in due time.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18 - Who is Christ's enemy? Anyone who refuses the gifts of his grace, received humbly in repentant faith.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Ambitious:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
306 - Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates

Psalm of the Day:
Ps 130A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. (Matthew 11:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
324 - O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
524 - Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Closing Hymn:
929 - May the Peace of God

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
827 - Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/19/2021 - Fourth Sunday in Advent

SERIES THEME

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR

"Advent" is a Latin word that means "coming." The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to connect the two "comings" of Christ. The first time the Lord came into our world it was as a tiny, helpless baby, born in a manger in Bethlehem. However, when Jesus comes again, it will be in all his power and glory with his angelic army behind him. He will be coming as judge at the end of time. Let us use these four weeks to see how the events of Jesus' first coming remove all our fears about his second coming. We can hold our heads high when the Lord comes near.

THEME OF THE DAY

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR, HE LIFTS UP THE HUMBLED

By this time of the holiday season, people are often weighed down. They feel guilty about presents that are not perfect, or parties that did not go as planned, or year-end projects that did not get completed. To top it all off, now is when it dawns on people how little attention they have given to the spiritual preparation Advent invites. If that is how we feel, perhaps the frenzy of December has actually done us a favor. We have been stretched to our limits. We have been made aware of our shortcomings. We have been humbled. Perfect! For being made aware of our weaknesses does not disqualify us from God's care. It does the opposite. It is what prepares us for the work he does best. He is a God who lifts up the humbled.

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a - The humble, tiny town of Bethlehem would be exalted. For there a special son would be born who would bring spiritual peace to the ends of the earth.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10 - We cannot do enough good works or offer enough sacrifices to raise ourselves up to God. So the Son of God obeyed the law for us and by his sacrifice has made us holy.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 1:39-55 - In Spirit wrought humility, Mary knew she needed a Savior. God lifts her up, making her the mother of that Savior.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Ambitious:
Setting 1
(omit Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
955 - Tell Out My Soul

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 85A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel. (Matthew 1:23)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
327 - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*662 - Draw Near

Closing Hymn:
601 - All People That on Earth Do Dwell

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
955 - Tell Out, My Soul

956 - Holy Is Your Name

975 - My Soul Will Magnify the Lord

976 - My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord

option: opening - 327; pre-sermon - 955

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/24/2021 - Christmas Eve

SERIES THEME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A baby is born every twelve seconds. That's 140 million babies born each year. Yet, there is something that sets this child apart from all others. It is not simply his humble beginnings, with a cattle trough as his first cradle. It is not just the miraculous nature of his birth, his mother being a virgin. There is so much more. This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Chirstmas. With this child, you lack nothing. Without him, you have nothing. Let us use this season of Christmas to answer this most important question: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? **(series kick-off has same theme as series itself)**

This Christmas Eve, an angel answers that question. "A savior has been born to you." It is a stunning statement, for two reasons. First, this child looks nothing like what we would expect in a hero-savior. This child is weak, helpless, and mired in poverty. Second, he has come to bring salvation "to you." It is a salvation we all need desperately. It was God's gift to us, given on that first Christmas Eve.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7 - The prophet Isaiah foretold a child who would bring the light of God's grace to a world mired in darkness.

SECOND READING

1 John 4:9-14 - How do you know, for certain, that God loves you? He sent this child, his only Son, to be the sacrifice for your sins.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 2:1-20 - What child is this? The Savior who is born to you.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
local choice

Ambitious:
local choice

Opening Hymn:
344 - What Child Is This

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 96A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Festivals - Set 2

Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
329 - All My Heart Again Rejoices

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
353 - Joy to the World

350 - Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Closing Hymn:
337 - Silent Night, Holy Night

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
option: opening - 329; pre-sermon - 344

Notes for the conservative service:
Cantor or choir handle proper verse; may also introduce Alleluia refrain as desired.

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/25/2021 - Christmas Day

SERIES THEME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A baby is born every twelve seconds. That's 140 million babies born each year. Yet, there is something that sets this child apart from all others. It is not simply his humble beginnings, with a cattle trough as his first cradle. It is not just the miraculous nature of his birth, his mother being a virgin. There is so much more. This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Chirstmas. With this child, you lack nothing. Without him, you have nothing. Let us use this season of Christmas to answer this most important question: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? GOD IN THE FLESH

The Lord had told Moses, "No one may see me and live." If sinners cannot even bear to look upon the glory of God, then they certainly could not hope to live with God in the glory of heaven. So, on that first Christmas, God chose to hide his glory under flesh. What child is this? It is God and man in one person, exactly what the human race needed to deliver it from its enemies of sin, death, and Satan. Christmas Day serves up the deep stuff of Christmas: the miracle and mystery of the incarnation.

FIRST READING

Exodus 33:18-23; 34:5-7 - To reveal himself to us, God hid himself in human flesh. To reveal himself to Moses, God hid Moses within the cleft of a mountain.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:31-32 - If the Father was willing to give us his only Son, clearly there is no good thing he would withhold from us.

GOSPEL

*** John 1:1-18 - In Jesus the God whose glory is impossible to see is seen. The God who cannot be known is known.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
local choice

Ambitious:
local choice

Opening Hymn:
354 - O Come, All Ye Faithful

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 98A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law. (Galatians 4:4,5)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Festivals - Set 2

Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
358 - Of the Father's Love Begotten

366 - O Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*342 - O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is

Closing Hymn:
346 - Angels We Have Heard on High

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
348 - A Child Is Born in Bethlehem

352 - Joy Has Dawned

Notes for the conservative service:
Consider cantor during distribution, depending on local distribution customs.

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

12/26/2021 - First Sunday after Christmas

SERIES THEME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A baby is born every twelve seconds. That's 140 million babies born each year. Yet, there is something that sets this child apart from all others. It is not simply his humble beginnings, with a cattle trough as his first cradle. It is not just the miraculous nature of his birth, his mother being a virgin. There is so much more. This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Chirstmas. With this child, you lack nothing. Without him, you have nothing. Let us use this season of Christmas to answer this most important question: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? OUR SUBSTITUTE AND SACRIFICE

Already as a child, Jesus' saving work had begun. His entire life, he served as our subsitute, perfectly obeying God's Law. Just think of how we often neglect the study of God's Word. Then look at twelve-year-old Jesus, eager to be in the temple learning more about Scripture. However, he would need to do more than be our subsitute. Eventually he would lay that perfect life down as the sacrifice for our sin.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:4-9 - The servant of the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah. While we have not always trusted God, Jesus demonstrated perfect obedience and trust, even when his Father asked him to be the sacrifice for our sin.

SECOND READING

*** Hebrews 2:10-18 - Through his suffering and sacrifice, Jesus has made us holy. He now calls us his brothers and sisters.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:41-52 - Even as a boy, Jesus was acting as our substitute, demonstrating obedience to the heavenly Father and respect for God's holy Word.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles)
Setting 1 Gospel Acclamation

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles)
Setting 3 Gospel Acclamation

Opening Hymn:
356 - God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 84A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. (Luke 2:30,31)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1 or 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
355 - Let All Together Praise Our God

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
335 - To Shepherds as They Watched by Night

Closing Hymn:
349 - A Great and Mighty Wonder

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
979 - The Boyhood of Christ - this new tune is the same tune as the optional hymn #915 at Advent 1

515 - Christ Is the World's Light - new tune (choral adaptation)

Notes for the conservative service:
Metrical = HYFRYDOL (Gloria); MISSIONARY HYMN (Sanctus); HAMBURG (Agnus Dei)

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/2/2022 - Second Sunday after Christmas

SERIES THEME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A baby is born every twelve seconds. That's 140 million babies born each year. Yet, there is something that sets this child apart from all others. It is not simply his humble beginnings, with a cattle trough as his first cradle. It is not just the miraculous nature of his birth, his mother being a virgin. There is so much more. This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Chirstmas. With this child, you lack nothing. Without him, you have nothing. Let us use this season of Christmas to answer this most important question: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? HE TURNS SLAVES INTO SONS

The ability to appreciate Christmas is directly proportional to the understanding of whom Christmas is for. Christmas is only meant for those who are held captive by our enemies, sin and death. Christmas is for people who have no power of their own to free themselves from those enemies. Christmas is for people who patiently wait for God to set them free. God's Christmas gift is for slaves, but it does not leave them that way. Jesus takes those born in slavery and turns them into sons and daughters of God. He makes us heirs of a glorious, eternal inheritance. He sets us free from a forced servitude to our enemies and replaces it with joyful service to our loving Father.

FIRST READING

Genesis 17:1-7 - The Lord promised Abram that his descendants would become a great nation whom God Almighty would love as his own sons and daughters.

SECOND READING

Galatians 4:4-7 - Christ has freed us from slavery and made us God's children and heirs.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 1:68-79 - At the birth of John the Baptist, his father Zechariah sings a song praising the Lord. God's people, held captive by their enemies, would be redeemed and set free.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles)
Setting 1 Gospel Acclamation

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles)
Setting 3 Gospel Acclamation

Opening Hymn:
362 - Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 148A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (Psalm 98:3)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1 or 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
383 - The Only Son from Heaven

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*660 - Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face

Closing Hymn:
954 - Blessed Be the God of Israel

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
973 - Now Bless the God of Israel (lyrical Benedictus by Haugen) and 974 (chant Benedictus by Standford) fit the gospel but, if used, would not best serve as closing hymns. Perhaps cantor or small group offertory could be a way to introduce them, if desired.

Notes for the conservative service:
Metrical = HYFRYDOL (Gloria); MISSIONARY HYMN (Sanctus); HAMBURG (Agnus Dei)

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/6/2022 - Epiphany

SERIES THEME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A baby is born every twelve seconds. That's 140 million babies born each year. Yet, there is something that sets this child apart from all others. It is not simply his humble beginnings, with a cattle trough as his first cradle. It is not just the miraculous nature of his birth, his mother being a virgin. There is so much more. This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Chirstmas. With this child, you lack nothing. Without him, you have nothing. Let us use this season of Christmas to answer this most important question: WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? A LIGHT FOR ALL PEOPLE

The twelve days of Christmas are over. Likewise, our worship series—What Child Is This—comes to an end today with the Festival of the Epiphany, a celebration of the first time non-Jewish believers worshiped the newborn Savior. They were guided by a special light in the sky to a child who would be a light for all people. We live in a world where sin can divide people along so many lines: ethnicity and race, rich and poor, red states and blue states, etc. The only dividing line Jesus cares about is the one that separated sinful mankind from a holy God. By his death and resurrection, he removed that line and united all believers into one kingdom. For that, we offer him our finest gifts.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 10:1-9 - A queen from Africa visits King Solomon and comes to learn of the eternal love that the Lord has for all people.

SECOND READING

*** Acts 13:46-49 - Paul's mission was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. For God desires salvation to be brought to the ends of the earth.

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12 - In his grace, God used a special light to lead foreign priest-astronomers to the Light of the world. These new believers respond with worship and sacrifice.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Evening Prayer

Ambitious:
Evening Prayer

Opening Hymn:
n/a

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 72A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. (Matthew 2:2)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
n/a

Hymn of the Day:
370 - How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
n/a

Closing Hymn:
373 - Brightest and Best

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:
Gladdening Light would need to be introduced or aided by a mic'd cantor or presiding minister; Magnificat would need to be the second option; Brightest and Best is a new tune (O QUANTA QUALIA) that people might not remember from TLH.

Notes for the ambitious service:
New Magnificat with lyrical refrain and chanted verses

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/9/2022 - First Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

ANOINTING UNCOVERED: WHAT THE EYE SEES DIFFERS FROM WHAT GOD DECREES

Our sight tends to be the sense we trust most. We say we will believe something when we see it. That presents a problem when it comes to the work of God. So often what our eye sees differs from what God decrees. This is true of the life of Jesus. In the eyes of the world, he was nothing special. This is also true in the life of the Christian. To the world, the believer does not look more blessed than the unbeliever. In fact, the believer may appear to have more hardships as the devil and his allies attempt to destroy him. So, to assure his children, God connects his grace, power, and blessing to something we can see—a visible sign: the anointing of baptism.

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 16:1-13 - To the eyes of the average Israelite, the young boy David was not the best choice to be king. Yet he was God's choice, a man after God's heart. The Lord made his choice known through an anointing.

SECOND READING

Titus 3:4-7 - In the eyes of the world, baptism appears to be just a ceremonial washing. St. Paul tells us it is so much more. It is a second birth that bestows salvation and the Spirit.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 3:15-17,21-23 - In the eyes of the Israelites, John the Baptist looked like he could be the Messiah. He was a powerful preacher who lived a unique life. Jesus looked ordinary by comparision. Yet, he was God's Anointed One, a choice made clear in Jesus' baptism.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie and Gloria
Setting 4 GA, Sanctus, and Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
Setting 4 Sanctus and Agnus

Opening Hymn:
374:1,2,3,5 - The Star Proclaims the King Is Here

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 2A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. (Mark 1:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4 or 3

Seasonal Verse

Hymn of the Day:
377 - To Jordan's River Came Our Lord

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
679 - God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It

Closing Hymn:
685 - Through Simple Water, Drawn and Poured

685 has same tune as opening hymn 372; if undesirable, use 930:1

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
379 - Christ, Your Footprints through the Desert

385 - Christ Begins

682 - All Christians Who Have Been Baptized

Notes for the conservative service:
Choir or small group sings the Setting 3 Gloria; 379 - good text for the sermon reading but new tune would need introduction or cantors; this would be where Setting 4 GA is used for the first time (for anyone not yet using Service Builder, most of Setting 4 is available as CWS DS1. This GA, however, is new and is only in service builder, accomp music in Musician's Resource).

Notes for the ambitious service:
385 is also new and would definitely need cantors (it bookends the baptism and transfiguration in its first and last stanzas)

682 also has a new new chorale type tune

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/16/2022 - Second Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

DELIGHT UNCOVERED: GOD DELIVERS MORE THAN WE ASK, NOT LESS

Is the pursuit of God and the pursuit of pleasure two separate paths? Many make that assumption—that life with Jesus is a boring, sterile experience. They are dead wrong. Jesus came to undo everything that is wrong with our world as a result of sin's curse. He also came to multiply our joy and deliver delight beyond our wildest dreams. Note that when Jesus begins to reveal his glory, it isn't by going to a hospital to cure every ailment. Instead, he starts at a local wedding, one of the greatest sources of joy in this life. The truth uncovered for us this week is that life with Jesus is not a life with less delight, but infinitely more.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 62:1-5 - God wants you to know joy. There are few occasions in life more joyful than a wedding. So the prophet Isaiah pictures the Church's relationship with the Lord as an infinitely happy marriage.

SECOND READING

*** Ephesians 3:14-21 - St. Paul teaches us that God wants us to have a life that is fuller than we could possibly imagine.

GOSPEL

John 2:1-11 - Jesus increases the joy of those attending a wedding and saves the bridgroom from public shame. In this first of his miracles, he also begins to reveal himself as true God.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie and Gloria
Setting 4 GA, Sanctus, and Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
Setting 4 Sanctus and Agnus

Opening Hymn:
375 - Arise and Shine in Splendor

(HotD moved to Opening Hymn)

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 145A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4 or 3

Seasonal Verse

Hymn of the Day:
714:1,2,4 - Jesus, Your Boundless Love to Me

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*611 - Joyously I'll Praise My Savior

Closing Hymn:
584 - Jesus Loves Me

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
577 - Magnificent, Marvelous, Matchless Love

801 - Dear Jesus, on Your Pilgrim Way

539 - O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer

Notes for the conservative service:
714 and 801 could possibly work with just a stanza or two introduced by cantors

Notes for the ambitious service:
539 and 577 would call for some pre-work

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/23/2022 - Third Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

RECEPTION UNCOVERED: REJECTION IS NOT THE EXCEPTION BUT THE RULE

When one proclaims God's Word, typically the intentions are good. We want others to know the joy of salvation and the love of Chirst. Therefore, it can be surprising to us when God's Word is met with apathy or rejection by those who hear it. It's easy to conclude that when the Word of God offends human minds and hearts (including our own), something has gone wrong. The truth that is uncovered this week is that rejection of Jesus' words is not the exception but the rule. Jesus' words will always offend. However, we will see that God can use even the rejection of his Word for good.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-6 - Israel had rejected the Lord and his Word. So God allowed them to be conquered and carried off as captives. Yet he also promised to forgive their rejection and grant new freedom.

SECOND READING

Acts 4:23-31 - Just as the Jewish religious leaders had rejected Jesus, they rejected the work and words of the apostles. And so the apostles prayed for boldness to proclaim the gospel in the face of that opposition.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 4:16-30 - In one of Jesus' first sermons, delivered in his hometown, people took offense at his words and ultimately rejected him.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
Setting 4 Sanctus, and Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
Setting 4 Agnus

Opening Hymn:
387 - Arise, Your Light Is Come

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 146A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
384 - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
313 - Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

Closing Hymn:
520:1,3,4,6 - Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
387 - Arise, Your Light Is Come

868 - By Faith

Notes for the conservative service:
387 is new but the tune has been around and it's an easy chorale type melody;

313 obviously an Advent hymn but it covers the first reading and the gospel

Notes for the ambitious service:
868 - first uses would likely be better with piano type ensemble and cantors, though some congregations will have already used it

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

1/30/2022 - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

AGENDA UNCOVERED: WHAT MUST BE SAID, NOT WHAT OTHERS WANT TO HEAR

Last week we saw that there can be a temptation to alter the message we proclaim to avoid apparent failure and rejection. This week we see that there is also a temptation to alter the message we proclaim because of apparent success. If a church makes its central focus things like personal improvement, healing for the sick, or social justice, that church may draw a crowd. It just fails to carry out the agenda Christ has given his Church. The gospel of forgiveness is to be the center of all our preaching and teaching. The agenda for Christ's Church is set. It's the same agenda that was followed by the Church's Christ.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 1:4-10 - God chose to give Jeremiah a narrow agenda: to share God's Word with the people of Judah, regardless of what they wanted to hear.

SECOND READING

*** 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 - A temptation for the Lord's messengers is to say what ears want to hear. Paul gives young Pastor Timothy a different agenda, to preach the Word which makes us wise for salvation.

GOSPEL

Luke 4:38-44 - After preaching and doing miracles in the area around Capernaum, the people wanted Jesus to stay there permanently. But he had a different agenda, to proclaim the gospel to many others.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
Setting 4 Sanctus, and Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
Setting 4 Agnus

Opening Hymn:
759 - When Training Up a Child

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 71A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because that is why I was sent. (Luke 4:43)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
901 - O Christians Haste

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
895 - Preach You the Word

Closing Hymn:
908 - Go Forth and Preach the Gospel

or

762 - Lord, Bless Your Word to All The Young

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
741 - We have a Gospel to Proclaim

759 - When Training Up a Child

Notes for the conservative service:
741 is a pretty straightforward chorale type hymn; perhaps minimal intro required;

759 is a straight chorale type hymn that was sung in TLH so it should be ok

Notes for the ambitious service:

2/6/2022 - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

UNCOVERED MESSENGERS: THE LEAST QUALIFIED ARE THE FIRST SENT

It does not surprise us that from the beginning of his ministry Jesus demonstrated his commitment to proclaiming good news of the kingdom of God, regardless of whether people rejected his message or embraced it. That was Christ's agenda, and he was committed to it. What is surprising is that, also from the beginning, Jesus demonstrated his plan to carry out this proclamation by sending others to speak on his behalf. More surprising is whom he sends, not angels, but mere human beings. In many cases, it was individuals who seemed to lack the qualifications to speak on Christ's behalf. Yet, Christ equipped and prepared them. Do you feel unqualified to tell others the good news?

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 6:1-8 - Isaiah admitted he was unclean, guilty of every type of sin. In his grace, the Lord not only takes Isaiah's sin away but also sends Isaiah out as a messenger of grace.

SECOND READING

Romans 10:12-17 - God's plan is to send saved sinners to proclaim salvation to other sinners. God has no backup plan.

GOSPEL

Luke 5:1-11 - Jesus takes simple, self-admittedly sinful fishermen. He removes their fears, calls them to follow, and makes them fishers of men.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
Setting 4 Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
483 - Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 67E (public domain text to THAXTED)

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long. (Psalm 71:15)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
745 - Hark! The Voice of Jesus Crying

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*907 - “How Shall They Hear,” Who Have Not Heard

Closing Hymn:
932 - Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
734 - How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

Notes for the conservative service:
734 - REPTON tune known in England but likely not here; used several times in the new book, it would be good to introduce and teach this

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

2/13/2022 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

DEFINITIONS UNCOVERED: BLESSINGS ARE CURSED; CURSES ARE BLESSED

When someone is new to something, there is a period of orientiation. For example, when someone takes up a new game or sport, they need to first learn the rules. Likewise, when someone is a new disciple of Jesus, a period of orientation follows. It's necessary, because by nature we assume that Jesus' kingdom works the same way the world works. The truth that is uncovered this week is that the principles on which Jesus' kingdom runs are the exact opposite of the principles of the world. That which the world considers to be a blessing can often be a curse. And that which the world calls bad, God always uses for the good of those he loves.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 17:5-8 - A blessed life is not connected to outward circumstances like physical health or wealth. Rather, the one who is blessed is the one who has been given the gift of faith, whose trust is in the Lord.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 12:7b-10 - Paul had some infirmity he initially viewed as a weakness. He came to see it as a blessing as it forced him to rely on God's strength.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 6:17-26 - In one of his most famous sermons Jesus teaches that the good things we seek are found in places we would least expect.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
Setting 4 Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
867 - Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 1A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:8)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
803 - Day by Day

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
690 - Blest Are They

Closing Hymn:
800 - How Firm a Foundation

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
690 - Blest Are They

867 - Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near

Notes for the conservative service:
690 - though it was in the supplement, this could still be cantor for verses and cong for refrain till people learn it better; the melody has been standardized across all the verses

867 - new but very simple and easy to catch on; can also be verses cantored and congregation refrain, but cong need not wait long to sing the verses

Notes for the ambitious service:

2/20/2022 - Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

REACTIONS UNCOVERED: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES; OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

Last week we saw that the governing principles of Christ's kingdom initially seem upside down. This week we see that truth in how Christ would have us react to those who wrong us or oppose us. Jesus asks us to befriend our enemies, to love those who hate us, and to repay evil with good. Logic would say that is a recipe for being walked all over. Yet, have we not seen this tactic work? When we were Christ's enemies, he loved us to the point of death. He repays our daily evil with the daily goodness of his mercy. In doing so, he has won us for himself. Following the strategy Jesus lays out today is not a capitulation to evil. It is a means of conquering it.

FIRST READING

Genesis 45:3-15 - The account of Joseph forgiving the brothers that had sold him into slavery demonstrates that God overcomes evil with good.

SECOND READING

*** Romans 12:14-21 - Paul lived in a Roman empire that operated on the principles of force and aggression. Yet he encourages believers to operate on the principles of grace, forgiveness, and humility.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-38 - In our interactions with others Jesus calls us to disregard what people deserve. Instead we are to show the same grace that God has shown to us.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
726 - Love in Christ is Strong and Living

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 103A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:44,45)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
729 - Son of God, Eternal Savior

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
732 - In Unity and Peace

Closing Hymn:
731 - Oh, How Good It Is

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
731 - Oh, How Good It Is

Notes for the conservative service:
731 is new but it will be popular and it shouldn't be too hard to introduce; of course it can be introduced with cantors on verses and cong on refrain

731 and 732 are natively performed on piano

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

2/27/2022 - Last Sunday after Epiphany / Transfiguration

SERIES THEME

UNCOVERED

We are in the season of the Church called Epiphany, a Greek word that means "to appear." Salvation has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. In Epiphany, the Church explores everything that Christ makes apparent about God. You see, we need God to appear to us and make himself known to us. For not only is God beyond our understanding, his works and his ways are contrary to mankind's natural assumptions about him. In other words, the truth about God cannot possibly be discovered by us. Rather, it needs to be uncovered for us. That's what the Spirit is doing for us during this season of Epiphany. Week after week, surprising truths about Jesus our King and life in his kingdom will be uncovered.

THEME OF THE DAY

GLORY UNCOVERED: WHEN IT IS MOST HIDDEN, IT IS MOST ON DISPLAY

Throughout Epiphany, we have seen that God must uncover for us the truths that could not be discovered by us. As this season ends, we are presented with a twist. For God's glory to be revealed, it actually must be covered. God's glory needed to be hidden in Christ. It is hidden in the gospel. This is how God enables sinful human beings to see his glory and, rather than turning away in fear, stare at it in wonder for as long as they want. The truth God uncovers for us today: when his glory is hidden, it is most on display.

FIRST READING

Exodus 34:29-35 - The glory of God was reflected in the two-sided covenant of the law which God established through Moses. It made people afraid. Though Christ God would establish a new and greater covenant which would remove all our fears.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 - Paul declares that the glory of the New Covenant of grace far surpasses the glory of the Old Covenant of law. The glory of the New Covenant is hidden in the work of Christ and revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 9:28-36 - The glory of God, hidden in Christ, shines through on the Mount of Transfiguration.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3
organ w optional brass, or
piano w optional instruments

Opening Hymn:
543 - O Jesus, King Most Wonderful

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 2D (KGM)

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
A cloud covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” (Mark 9:7)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Seasonal or Proper Verse

Hymn of the Day:
388 - Down from the Mount of Glory

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
389 - How Good, Lord, to Be Here

or

528:1,6 - Christ, the Word of God Incarnate

Closing Hymn:
522 - Beautiful Savior

or

977 - Alleluia, Song of Triumph

(522 optional opening hymn if using farewell to Alleluia)

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
392 - This Brightness, Lord! What Shall I Say

385 - Christ Begins

Notes for the conservative service:
392 - PROSPECT is an old American tune but new to WELS; I would carefully introduce this if using it since its only hymnal use is on this one Sunday of the year, perhaps choir sings most and congregation joins as able for 4-6; tune is also in Psalter

Notes for the ambitious service:
385 - recall that this has stanzas that bookend Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration, but the music calls for careful introduction

3/2/2022 - Ash Wednesday

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS IS CRUSHED BY REPENTANCE

When mankind fell into sin, God cursed. "Dust you are, and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). Sin brings death, and together they wreck everything. Sin is the source of all pain. Death robs us of everything and everyone we hold dear. Sinful people's response is to try and minimize their sin. Our natural reaction is to try to balance the scales: "I might sin, but look at how much good I do!" Or compare ourselves to others: "At least I'm not as sinful as my neighbor." Such self-righteous thoughts lead to eternal death. We need the Spirit to give us repentant hearts. As we begin the season of Lent, we remember that death will one day reduce us to ashes—and our hearts need to be reduced to ashes in repentance now.

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 12:1-13 - So that he might appear righteous to Israel, King David hid his sin of adultery by committing another sin, murder. The Lord calls King David to repentance through the prophet Nathan.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 - There is urgency in God's call to repent. The time is now.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 18:9-14 - Jesus tells a parable about what makes us righteous in God's eyes, not trust in one's own goodness, but trust in God's great mercy.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with evening canticles

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with evening canticles

Opening Hymn:
393 - Savior, When in Dust to You

or

651 - In Hopelessness and Near Despair

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 51A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. (Joel 2:13)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

Hymn of the Day:
650 - From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*668 - Jesus Comes Today with Healing

Closing Hymn:
982 - With Broken Heart and Contrite Sigh

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
651 - In Hopelessness and Near Despair

652 - Lord, Have Mercy

658 - With All My Heart I Praise You, Lord

Notes for the conservative service:
650 - note that the alternate hymn of the day (654) is being reserved for Lent 4C just below;

651 - retuned from CWS with a tune that was in TLH;

658 has two confession/absolution stanzas and a third for pre-communion, with a familiar tune

Notes for the ambitious service:
652 - This will become a staple so some congregations may wish to prep it for this service

3/6/2022 - First Sunday in Lent

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

OUR TEMPTATION IS CRUSHED BY CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE

It was a custom known as "battle by champion." Two opposing armies would each send out their best warrior to fight each other. That is what we see this week. The demons send their champion: Satan. Humanity's best warrior, Jesus Christ, steps forward to meet him. In this fight he does not use his divine power. He uses the same weapon we have, God's Word. Because Christ fought the battle against Satan as one of us, he won that battle for all of us. Jesus is our perfect substitute. Even as the devil still seethes in rage against us, we can face him and his temptations unafraid, confident that our champion has already won the victory.

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 17:4-11,32-40,45-49 - Against a powerful enemy an unlikely champion emerged. David's victory over Goliath is as much a spiritual victory as a military one, for it teaches us the battle is the Lord's.

SECOND READING

*** Hebrews 4:14-16 - Jesus understands how hard life is because he faced every temptation we have faced, and more.

GOSPEL

Luke 4:1-13 - Weak and in the wilderness, Jesus faces Satan's temptations. He overcomes them, winning the victory for us.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie

Ambitious:
Setting 2 Kyrie, GA
Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Opening Hymn:
546 - Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 91A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

or

Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
863/864 - A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*677 - The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord

Closing Hymn:
842 - Jesus, Still Lead On

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
546 - Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus

561 - Before the Throne of God Above

538 - Jesus, My Great High Priest

802 - All Is Well

Notes for the conservative service:
546 - chorale AAB type tune; should be easily picked up;

561 - should be introduced if used

538 - would benefit from introduction

Notes for the ambitious service:
802 - has themes of the second lesson; needs intro; cong. can sing refrain at first

Make plans throughout Sundays in Lent to rehearse (choir) and audition (pre-service?) Setting 2 Gloria, anticipating use on Easter Sunday

3/13/2022 - Second Sunday in Lent

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

SHORTCUTS ARE CRUSHED BY DETERMINATION

Last week we talked about temptation. This week we see what is at the center of every temption: a promise of a shortcut to glory. Even in a world as sharply divided as ours, there is near universal agreement that the preferred path to glory is the shortest and easiest. To walk the path our Savior puts us on, one on which the cross comes before the crown, puts us out of step with the world. Thankfully, the determination required to walk this path starts with our Savior and not with us. Because of his determination, we are offered a glory far superior to anything the world can offer.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 26:8-15 - Jeremiah was concerned for the salvation of God's people. Therefore, even in the face of death, he was determined to preach the call to repentance.

SECOND READING

Philippians 3:17-4:1 - Being a follower of Jesus means that our path in life will resemble his. The path to heaven inevitably includes crosses. Paul encourages us to follow his example of determination.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 13:31-35 - The Pharisees offer Jesus a shortcut to safety. But Jesus was determined to continue down the path he was on for us and our salvation.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie

Ambitious:
Setting 2 Kyrie, GA
Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Opening Hymn:
395 - What Grace Is This

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 42A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:8)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

or

Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
817 - Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
513 - In You Is Gladness

Closing Hymn:
853 - I'm But a Stranger Here

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
707 - Cling Tightly to the Word of God

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:
707 - not a difficult tune but should be introduced or cantored the first time

3/20/2022 - Third Sunday in Lent

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

FALSE SECURITY IS CRUSHED BY FAITHFUL PRESENCE

Where is God? This is one of human beings' most frequently-asked and incorrectly-answered questions. We are tempted to believe that evidence of God's presence is found in outward circumstances. We equate good fortune with God's favor and bad fortune with his judgment. So, as long as nothing terrible is happening, God must not be too angry with us, right? We are free to go on sinning. Such foolish assumptions must be crushed. Therefore, God must constantly remind us where he intends to be found—in the gospel. He makes himself present in Word and sacraments. Because he is always present, we realize the urgent need to turn away from the sin he despises. Because his presence is graciously hidden, we are drawn to him for forgiveness rather than driven away from him in fear.

FIRST READING

Exodus 3:1-15 - The Lord reveals his presence to Moses as flames within a bush, fire that warms and gives light, yet does not consume.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 - God revealed his presence among the nation of Israel. Instead of his presence leading to repentant faith, the people of Israel, with a sense of false security, set their hearts on evil.

GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9 - A life with no problems can lead to false security. We are tempted to think those experiencing hardship are the ones who need to repent. Jesus reminds us that we all need to repent, regardless of life's circumstances.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie

Ambitious:
Setting 2 Kyrie, GA, Sanctus
Setting 1 Agnus

Opening Hymn:
712 - Delay Not! Delay Not (hymn of the Day moved to opening hymn)

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 85A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

or

Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
867 - Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
404 - Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing

Closing Hymn:
923 - Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
867 - Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near

532 - As the Deer Runs to the River

833 - I Run to Christ

Notes for the conservative service:
867 - simple tune; congregation can start with refrain, then sing latter verses; cantors would be good;

833 - comments similar to 867

Notes for the ambitious service:
532 - melody should be cantored for introduction, cong can start with refrain but that also should be introduced

3/27/2022 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

OUR CONDEMNATION IS CRUSHED BY GOD'S GRACE

We assume people get what they deserve. We assume what goes around comes around. We assume God helps those who helps themselves. And all those assumptions must be crushed. Got does not operate on the principle of merit but of grace. Like gravity, grace is a constant force at work in how God deals with us and how he wants us to deal with others. No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. God never turns it off. When the weight of our sin makes us fearful of God's condemnation, he reveals his grace yet again.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 12:1-6 - God's grace turns the gloom of our condemnation into the joy of our salvation.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:1-10 - In Christ Jesus God has already condemed all sin. For us there is only grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 15:11-32 - How does God respond to those who object to or are angered by his grace? He responds with more grace.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie, GA, Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 2 Kyrie, GA, Sanctus
Setting 1 Agnus

Opening Hymn:
916 - Today Your Mercy Calls Us

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 32A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

or

Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
576 - Amazing Grace

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
657 - Baptismal Waters Cover Me

Closing Hymn:
654:1,3,7 - Jesus Sinners Does Receive

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
523 - How Deep the Father's Love for Us

579 - His Mercy Is More

810 - The First Song of Isaiah

Notes for the conservative service:
523 - Fairly straightforward melody; maybe easier for congregation with the melody-only version that builder will have

Notes for the ambitious service:
579 - obviously this song has the English equivalent of Alleluia, so during Lent it can be a judgment call, but the text obviously fits; should be introduced

810 - this is a bit of a production but its use (refrain only or cong sings verses) depends on congregational familiarity and choir/cantor availability; stripped down version of piano only can also work just fine (no choral harmonizing)

4/3/2022 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

SERIES THEME

CRUSHED

When someone is devastated or defeated or despondent we speak of him being "crushed." It could be due to some agonizing loss or unrealized dreams. It could be due to carrying a crushingly heavy load of guilt over some past mistake. In a broken world, it is simply a matter of time before we feel crushed. This is why we need Lent. The word Lent comes from an Old English word for Spring: "lengten," when the days grow longer. For 1400 years the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. Believers humbly acknowledge that sin is the ultimate source of all the crushing moments in life. Our sin even crushed Christ. Yet, on Easter Sunday, Jesus took up his life again. Our Savior crushed both death and the serpent's head. Yes, Lent is a solemn season. But it is also a season of great hope. With the psalmist we say, "The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit."

THEME OF THE DAY

HUMAN REJECTION IS CRUSHED BY DIVINE EXALTATION

People often look to the judgment of experts. The opinion of experts can greatly influence the general population. That poses a problem when it comes to Christ. The world's experts and culturally elite generally see little value in Christ and his Word. Thankfully, Christ tells us to expect this. He also reminds us that when it comes to judgments about him and his kingdom, only one opinion matters. God the Father would render the final verdict about Christ and his work when he raised his Son from the dead. This week, we learn to evaluate the world's experts properly. They might see heaven's greatest treasure as trash. Fine. That treasure remains ours for the taking!

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 43:16-21 - Twice the nation of Israel was rejected by other nations and turned into slaves: first in Egypt, then in Babylon. Both times the Lord provided Israel with deliverance and exaltation.

SECOND READING

Philippians 3:4b-14 - What the world considered valuable, Paul no longer valued. What Paul valued was Christ, whom God had exalted in the resurrection. Through Christ God exalts us as well, regardless of what the world thinks of us.

GOSPEL

Luke 20:9-19 - God the Father sent his Son into the world knowing that the world would reject the Son. The cornerstone of the Church would be the One the religious experts rejected.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie, GA, Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 2 (w/o Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
914 - Christ Is Our Cornerstone

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 73A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
571 - O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
861 - Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head

Closing Hymn:
517 - Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
532 - As the Deer Runs to the River

571 - O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth

Notes for the conservative service:
571 - needs introductory work as the Hymn of the Day for years to come

Notes for the ambitious service:
532 - melody should be cantored for introduction, cong can start with refrain but that also should be introduced

4/10/2022 - Palm Sunday/Final in Lent

SERIES THEME

A HOLY WEEK

"Holiday" is simply short for "holy day." Throught the course of a year, there are certain days we set apart as special: to commemorate extraordinary events, to celebrate influential individuals. While there are many holy days, there is but one holy week. The final week of Lent marks the most pivotal week in human history. In the four gospels—biographies of Jesus Christ's thirty-three-year life—this single week consumes nearly a third of the ink. The Holy Spirit considered the events of this week that important.

On a holy day, the relentless march of time slows down. We set aside our usual routines to call attention to whatever or whoever makes that day special. Likewise, believers slow down this entire week to ponder all that Christ did for them, from his humble entrance into Jerusalem... to his sacrifical death on the cross... to the victory of Easter morning.

THEME OF THE DAY

PALM SUNDAY: HIS HUMILITY, OUR HOPE **Note also in the new lectionary options for Passion Sunday.**

The events of Palm Sunday might not seem pivotal to our salvation. Christ sheds no blood on this day. However, Palm Sunday sets the tone for all of Holy Week. It perfectly illustrates that Jesus came to be kind of king this world will never understand: one who conquers his enemies by surrenduring to them, one who crushes his opposition by himself being crushed, one whose path to kingly exaltation begins with humiliation. This is the kind of King we have marching into battle as one of us and for all of us this week. As a result, we are drawn to him in faith rather than driven away in fear. This humble King is our only hope.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 42:1-4 - Isaiah foretold the coming Servant of the Lord whose ministry would be one of great power and also great humility.

SECOND READING

*** Philppians 2:5-11 - Paul describes the humility of Jesus and encourages us to emulate it.

GOSPEL

Luke 19:28-40 - Through the humility exhibited by his choice to enter Jerusalem on a donkey Jesus would accomplish great things.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [German]
with Setting 2 Kyrie, GA, Agnus

Ambitious:
Setting 2 (w/o Gloria)

Opening Hymn:
412 - All Glory, Laud and Honor

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 24A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:
411 - Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
414 - No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet

Closing Hymn:
413 - Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
415 - Exult Today, Jerusalem

915 - Hosanna to the Living Lord

Notes for the conservative service:
415 - a new addition to a section that has had the same hymns for a long time; would need to be introduced/taught;

412 - note that the refrain now begins and ends the hymn

Notes for the ambitious service:
915 - This text is back to its original form as a beginning of service kind of text; the tune ST. CHAD needs introduction

4/14/2022 - Maundy Thursday

SERIES THEME

A HOLY WEEK

"Holiday" is simply short for "holy day." Throught the course of a year, there are certain days we set apart as special: to commemorate extraordinary events, to celebrate influential individuals. While there are many holy days, there is but one holy week. The final week of Lent marks the most pivotal week in human history. In the four gospels—biographies of Jesus Christ's thirty-three-year life—this single week consumes nearly a third of the ink. The Holy Spirit considered the events of this week that important.

On a holy day, the relentless march of time slows down. We set aside our usual routines to call attention to whatever or whoever makes that day special. Likewise, believers slow down this entire week to ponder all that Christ did for them, from his humble entrance into Jerusalem... to his sacrifical death on the cross... to the victory of Easter morning.

THEME OF THE DAY

HOLY THURSDAY: HIS FOOD, OUR FILL

As the sun set on Holy Thursday, the day marked the end of something old and the start of something new. The Old Covenant, which God had established through Moses, was two-sided. God's people would follow God's commands; God would bless his people. However, rather than providing God's people the opportunity to live up to God's demands, the Old Covenant only exposed their flaws. When God established his New Covenant, it was not a two-sided contract. It was more like a will, listing all the blessings God promised graciously to give his people. No matter who you are or what you have done, the blessing of the New Covenant are "for you." Eat the food Christ offers, and all your spiritual and eternal needs are satisfied.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The Old Covenant could only modify behavior. The New Covenant transforms people's hearts and minds.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:15-25 - Since the New Covenant perfectly satisfies our spiritual hunger, it enables us to confidently draw near to God.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 22:7-20 - Jesus institutes the meal of the New Covenant. In this sacrament his body and blood are the food and drink that satisfy our every spiritual need.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with evening canticles or Triduum as in Service Builder

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with evening canticles or Triduum as in Service Builder

Opening Hymn:
416 - When You Woke that Thursday Morning

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 116

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

Hymn of the Day:
659 - Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
677 - The Death of Jesus Christ, our Lord

Closing Hymn:
673 - O Lord, We Praise You

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
417 - It Was a Dark and Dismal Night

Notes for the conservative service:
417 - retuned, could be an optional opening hymn to replace 416

Notes for the ambitious service:

4/15/2022 - Good Friday

SERIES THEME

A HOLY WEEK

"Holiday" is simply short for "holy day." Throught the course of a year, there are certain days we set apart as special: to commemorate extraordinary events, to celebrate influential individuals. While there are many holy days, there is but one holy week. The final week of Lent marks the most pivotal week in human history. In the four gospels—biographies of Jesus Christ's thirty-three-year life—this single week consumes nearly a third of the ink. The Holy Spirit considered the events of this week that important.

On a holy day, the relentless march of time slows down. We set aside our usual routines to call attention to whatever or whoever makes that day special. Likewise, believers slow down this entire week to ponder all that Christ did for them, from his humble entrance into Jerusalem... to his sacrifical death on the cross... to the victory of Easter morning.

THEME OF THE DAY

GOOD FRIDAY: HIS PUNISHMENT, OUR PEACE

Good Friday is very different than a funeral. At a funeral, we celebrate the blessings of someone's earthly life. But we also we mourn the fact of their death. Their death is something we wish we could forget. In the case of Jesus, his death is the very thing we gather to celebrate and remember. In fact, we prolong the remembrance. We dwell on the details. We even call this day "good." For we know why Jesus willingly endured the agony of the cross. It wasn't a tragic miscarriage of justice. Jesus suffered this punishment vicariously. He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Because he did, we are now right with our holy God. Jesus' punishment is our peace.

FIRST READING

*** Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - Christ took the punishment that our sins deserved. We are now at peace with God.

SECOND READING

Galatians 3:10-13 - We are saved not by obeying God's Law but through faith in the One who redeemed us from the Law's curse.

GOSPEL

John 19:17-30 - The crucifixion and death of Jesus.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Service Builder Seasonal Service

Ambitious:
Service Builder Seasonal Service

Opening Hymn:
430 - Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 22

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings Lent Set 2 - Year C by S Janco

Hymn of the Day:
422 - A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
428,429 - O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Closing Hymn:
523 - How Deep the Father's Love for Us

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
568 - His Robes for Mine

523 - How Deep the Father's Love for Us

562 - Jesus Paid It All

Notes for the conservative service:
523 - near perfect fit for this day and the Isaiah text; introduce as necessary; consider cantoring the first stanza and then let congregation repeat it so they can sing all three, since this may well become a favorite

562 - probably no introduction needed

Notes for the ambitious service:
568 - If sung on Good Friday, would recommend that choir introduce stanzas, bring congregation in for refrain; recommend use in church on prior days

4/16/2022 - Easter Vigil

SERIES THEME

A HOLY WEEK

"Holiday" is simply short for "holy day." Throught the course of a year, there are certain days we set apart as special: to commemorate extraordinary events, to celebrate influential individuals. While there are many holy days, there is but one holy week. The final week of Lent marks the most pivotal week in human history. In the four gospels—biographies of Jesus Christ's thirty-three-year life—this single week consumes nearly a third of the ink. The Holy Spirit considered the events of this week that important.

On a holy day, the relentless march of time slows down. We set aside our usual routines to call attention to whatever or whoever makes that day special. Likewise, believers slow down this entire week to ponder all that Christ did for them, from his humble entrance into Jerusalem... to his sacrifical death on the cross... to the victory of Easter morning.

THEME OF THE DAY

[Note to planners: The Easter Vigil does not have a preaching theme in the manner of other Easter services.] The Easter Vigil has four parts: (I) the Service of Light with its focus on the Paschal candle, the representation of the unconquered life of Christ; (II) the Service of Lessons with its focus on Old Testament readings that speak of God's rescue of his people and so foreshadow the great deliverance Christ accomplished; (III) the Service of Holy Baptism with its emphasis on our baptismal connection with Christ; and (IV) the Holy Communion with its proclamation of the risen Lord and our reconciliation with God through Christ.

FIRST READING

The Easter Vigil service is available in CW: Service Builder.

SECOND READING

See also *CW: Foundations*, chapter 5.

GOSPEL

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Service Builder Seasonal Service

Ambitious:
Service Builder Seasonal Service

Opening Hymn:

Psalm of the Day:
selected

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Hymn of the Day:
selected, esp. 957, 966 (Builder only). Not strictly HoD.

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

Closing Hymn:

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
958.

963 and 964 (Builder only)

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

4/17/2022 - Easter Dawn

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

IDENTITY IN CHRIST MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER ALL FLAWED IDENTITIES

It is natural for the human beings God has made to pursue a healthy sense of self. We want to know who we are. We want to be confident of the basis of our value. Unfortunately, our fallen nature and the fallen world point us in the wrong direction in that pursuit. Lent's call to self-denial and repentance has prepared us for Easter. Christ’s empty tomb is proof that an identity buried with Jesus far surpasses any identity we could hope to discover within ourselves.

FIRST READING

Exodus 15:1-11 - After the Lord's smashing victory in behalf of his people at the Red Sea, Moses and Miriam lead God's people in song.

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:1-4 - Joined to Christ's death and resurrection through baptism, we have been raised with Christ. Our real life is all wrapped up in him. Our minds also focus on the things of God rather than earthly things, and we await the glorious day when we will see him who is our life and share in his splendor.

GOSPEL

*** John 20:1-18 - Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John find the tomb empty. Jesus appears to Mary and brings her out of dejected gloom into the living hope and joy of knowing that our Savior is alive, our salvation accomplished, and our daily and eternal needs are all met—in Jesus Christ the Righteous One.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
local choice

Ambitious:
local choice

Opening Hymn:
466 - Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 118A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:22)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Fintan O'Carroll

Hymn of the Day:
443 - Awake, My Heart, with Gladness

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
445 - He's Risen, He's Risen

or

*957 - Rejoice, Angelic Choirs, Rejoice

Closing Hymn:
450 - The Day of Resurrection

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
453 - The Tomb Is Empty

451 - See, What a Morning

Notes for the conservative service:
*957 - optional use and a good fit if the congregation has a paschal candle (st. 3) and if the congregation has not made use of this Exsultet at an Easter Vigil the previous evening

Notes for the ambitious service:
453 - as a new hymn, this would likely require choral introduction; the hymnal pew layout is tune only, but if the congregation sings only the refrain at first, they would have to come in on a pickup note

451 - new but not a huge challenge; choir or cantors should help as it is introduced to congregation as a new tune

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

4/17/2022 - Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

LIFE MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER DEATH

Death hung like a suffocating shroud over us all. It was a constant source of sorrow and shame. Death doesn't just bring life to an end. The impending threat of death spoils every moment of life that leads up to it. The moment Christ emerged from the tomb, however, nothing would be the same. Life was unleashed on humanity and it will reign until death and its effects are no more. The salvation Christ brings is not just a rescue from a world gone bad but a resurrection to a world that will once again be good. Christ's victory restores life to us even now. Even as we continue to wipe the tears that death causes, we can defiantly taunt this fallen tyrant: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

FIRST READING

Isaiah 25:6-9 - The Lord has taken away our disgrace, torn up the shroud of death, and promised us an eternal feast.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 - Death has been swallowed up in victory.

GOSPEL

Luke 24:1-12 - The account of Christ's Easter victory.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3
organ and brass
or piano and instruments

Ambitious:
Setting 2
organ and brass
or piano and instruments

Opening Hymn:
441 - I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 16A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 CSB)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Fintan O'Carroll

Hymn of the Day:
439/440 - Christ Jesus Lay In Death's Strong Bands

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
471 - Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds

Closing Hymn:
438 - Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
460 - Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

Notes for the conservative service:
460 - New to CW21 but been around for a long time and tune is very familiar

Notes for the ambitious service:

4/24/2022 - Second Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

WITNESS MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER RESTRAINT

The good news of the risen Christ is bigger than a single day. The Easter gospel will continue to march across centuries and continents. However, there will always be forces that try to slow that march. Those forces could be self-inflected fears and doubts (Gospel). They could be various types of persecutions (First and Second Reading). Whatever the case, the good news of Easter will not be restrained. For it is not some myth or fable, not a hoax or conspiracy. The reality of Easter rests on the testimony of eyewitnesses. Therefore, the gospel cannot be boxed in any more than Christ could be put back in a tomb. Many may try and restrain the good news of Christ. But the march of the Church's witness will never slow down.

FIRST READING

Acts 5:12,17-32 - The disciples served as witnesses of Christ's resurrection, but some wanted to restrain the spread of the gospel.

SECOND READING

Revelation 1:4-18 - The risen Savior promises to be with his churches as they share the light of the gospel in the midst of a persecution.

GOSPEL

*** John 20:19-31 - The Easter gospel is based on the written testimony of eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. As we read that testimony, the Spirit enables us who are not eyewitnesses to also believe.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
510 - In Christ Alone

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 150A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. (John 20:29b)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Fintan O'Carroll

Hymn of the Day:
456/457 - O Sons and Daughters of the King

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
442 - Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia

Closing Hymn:
448 - Now Let the Heavens Be Joyful

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
Psalm 150A should be introduced

447 - Christ Is Risen, He Is Risen Indeed

448 - Now Let the Heavens Be Joyful

468 - These Things Did Thomas Count as Real

Notes for the conservative service:
448 - was in LAPPY, probably new tune for most but pretty straightforward

Notes for the ambitious service:
447 - new tune

468 - new tune

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022

5/1/2022 - Third Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

SIGHT MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER BLINDNESS

A recent survey asked Americans which of the five senses they would least like to lose. 77% chose sight. Navigating life blind poses a plethora of challenges that the sighted do not face. This is why Scripture often uses the concept of blindness as a metaphor for how hard it is to navigate life without a correct understanding of Christ. Spiritual blindness can take many different forms. In some cases, it is hostile opposition to the message of Jesus. In others, spiritual blindness might be demonstrated in confusion about Jesus' true identity. No matter the specific form spiritual blindness takes, Easter has the power to replace it with sight. Easter allows us to see where we sinners stand with a holy God. It enables us to see the path though life that is worth pursuing (as opposed to those that lead to a dead end). Spiritual sight gives us the ability to see who holds our future in his hands and who is worth our eternal worship.

FIRST READING

Acts 9:1-22 - To get his attention, Jesus struck Saul blind. Then he not only restored Saul's physical sight but also gave Saul spiritual sight. Saul was given faith in the One who had risen from the dead.

SECOND READING

*** Revelation 5:11-14 - While in exile on the island of Patmos, St. John was given special sight, the ability to see the sacrifical Lamb who is worthy of our worship and praise.

GOSPEL

John 21:1-14 - Many of the disciples first met Jesus while fishing near the Sea of Galilee. At the time they were spiritually blind, not fully realizing who Jesus was. The resurrected Jesus now appears again to these disciples while they are fishing, and this time they see him clearly through eyes of faith.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
512 - All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 30A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Christ Jesus has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Fintan O'Carroll

Hymn of the Day:
459 - Christ the Lord is Risen Again

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*675 - At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Closing Hymn:
885 - There Is a Higher Throne

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
454 - Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

Notes for the conservative service:
454 - CW93 tune but may not be well known; imagery fits the sermon text

Notes for the ambitious service:

5/8/2022 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

FULFILLED WORKS MARCH VICTORIOUS OVER EMPTY WORDS

The world is full of talkers. There are plenty of people who say they care about you. But we are aware of what many of those people will do when it comes time to put those words into action. Jesus tells you in his Word that he cares for you dearly… that he would do anything for you. How do you know you can trust him? Jesus followed up his words with works. Jesus said he would suffer and die for you, so that you might enter Paradise. He fulfilled that promise. Jesus words are followed by works. He once illustrated that point in a striking metaphor, that of the Good Shepherd. All shepherds use words, calling to the sheep hoping they will follow. What sets the Good Shepherd apart is the fact that his words are followed by his works, including his willingness to lay down his life. Every word our Good Shepherd speaks to us is trustworthy!

FIRST READING

Acts 13:15-16a, 26-39 - St. Paul points out that Jesus' death and resurrection both fulfilled the Scripture. They prove not only that we are forgiven, but also that every promise God makes to us shall ultimately be fulfilled.

SECOND READING

Revelation 7:9-17 - God's promise to rescue all believers from the tribulation of this world is not just empty words. St. John sees that promise fulfilled through the work of the Lamb.

GOSPEL

*** John 10:22-30 - Both Jesus words and his works are identical to that of the Father, for he and the Father are one. Therefore, the protecting hand of the Good Shepherd is almighty.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
888 - Here from All Nations

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 23A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. (John 10:14)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Fintan O'Carroll

Hymn of the Day:
552 - The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
551 - Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep

Closing Hymn:
889 - Jerusalem the Golden

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
554 - The Lord's My Shepherd

Notes for the conservative service:
554 - Townend's hymn on Ps 23 has a simple melody and likely will become a favorite

888 - Tune is in the new hymnal four times and was in TLH so it should be ok without choral introduction

Notes for the ambitious service:

5/15/2022 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

SELFLESS LOVE MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER SELF-GLORIFICATION

The disciples argued among themselves about who was "greatest" (Luke 22:24). We are not immune from such hubris. Sinful man is entirely self-focused. We often try and prove our goodness by comparing ourselves to others. You see this sense of superiority in the way we prioritize life, typically putting our wants ahead of others. Easter ends this focus on self. Right now, we know we have value, not because of the greatness of our actions, but because of the great things Christ did to save. We also know a resurrection to glory is in our future. Easter helps us avoid the trap of self-glorification and opens our eyes to a more excellent way: selfless love. Christ did not glorify himself, but selflessly did everything for the benefit of others. This week, he promises to be our inexhaustible power supply that we might also put selfless love into practice.

FIRST READING

Acts 11:1-18 - God overcomes Peter's self-glorification by teaching Peter that God does not show favoritism but rather selfless love to both Jew and Gentile.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 - If anything is the defining mark of Christians, it is not the spiritiual gifts that they possess. It is the love at work as they put those gifts into practice.

GOSPEL

John 13:31-35 - The Father has glorified the Son. Christ shares that glory with us and commands us to show others the same selfless love he has shown us.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
730 - Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 145A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4:16)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Howard Hughes

Hymn of the Day:
469 - Welcome, Happy Morning

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*667 - Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared

Closing Hymn:
731 - Oh, How Good It Is

or

726 - Love in Christ Is Strong and Living

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
727 - Where Charity and Love Prevail

Notes for the conservative service:
Setting 4 Kyrie and GA are new at this point

Notes for the ambitious service:

5/22/2022 - Sixth Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

JOY MARCHES VICTORIOUS OVER CIRCUMSTANCE

Conventional wisdom says that joy is a direct result of circumstance. Our disposition is nothing more than a product of the events, conditions, and relationships of which our life consists. Therefore, it would seem that for our disposition to change, our circumstances need to change. But Jesus offers us a joy that is superior. It is not a product of circumstance; it's a product of Easter. Easter proves that God can take what normally causes people to weep and turn it into what causes people to rejoice. Sin, death, and shame went into Jesus' tomb. Forgiveness, life, and glory came out. Our risen Savior gives us a joy that remains constant in the highest of life's highs and the lowest of life's lows. It is a joy that can never be taken from us.

FIRST READING

Acts 14:8-22 - As a witness of Christ's resurrection, Paul's joy and his ministry were unaffected by circumstance.

SECOND READING

*** Revelation 21:21-27 - The great joy we have now will soon be made perfect and complete.

GOSPEL

John 16:16-24 - Jesus promises that all our grief will be turned to perfect joy.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
887 - Oh, What Their Joy

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 65A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

Additional Settings

Easter - Set 1 - Year C

by Howard Hughes

Hymn of the Day:
557 - Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
713 - I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Closing Hymn:
840:6,7 - All Men Living Are But Mortal

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
829 - Take Heart

837 - When Will I Walk

Notes for the conservative service:
837 - new tune with a refrain

887 - reinforcing O QUANTA QUALIA, the opening hymn tune two weeks earlier

Notes for the ambitious service:
829 - new tune in 5/4 time

5/26/2022 - Ascension Thursday

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

POWER FROM HEAVEN MARCHES VICTORIOUS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

When the Church gathers, it regularly remembers Christ's ascension. The words "He ascended into heaven" are found in all three ecumenical creeds which we use to confess our faith. In addition, the Church sets aside a day each year on which this event takes center stage. This is for good reason. Jesus' ascenion marked the fact that his work was complete. Never again will a sacrifice for sin need to be made. However, Jesus' ascension also marks that his work is just beginning. Through the Church Jesus now proclaims forgiveness throughout the world. The Church consists of people like us who are often weak and timid witnesses for Christ. So Jesus promised to send us his Spirit to give us power from heaven, that we might take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

FIRST READING

*** Acts 1:1-11 - Jesus ascends to rule over all things as his Church serves as his witnesses.

SECOND READING

Revelation 19:11-16 - St. John sees the ascended Lord as a warrior riding on a white horse fighting against all those who oppose Christ's gospel and his Church.

GOSPEL

Luke 24:44-53 - Before he ascends, Jesus promises to send the disciples power from heaven to carry out his mission.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Evening Prayer or
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with Evening Canticles

Ambitious:
Evening Prayer or
The Service (hymn tune canticles) with Evening Canticles

Opening Hymn:
474 - Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 47A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20b)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings Easter - Set 1 - Year C by Howard Hughes

Hymn of the Day:
472 - A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
747 - Christ High-Ascended

Closing Hymn:
476 - On Christ's Ascension I Now Build

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
473 - Look, Ye Saints, the Sight Is Glorious

Notes for the conservative service:
473 - new tune

Notes for the ambitious service:
474 - The Accompaniment for Hymns has a setting of this hymn in 3/4 at #465

5/29/2022 - Seventh/Final Sunday of Easter

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

UNITY MARCHES VICTORIOUS IN DIVERSITY

When Jesus' followers gathered together, they comprised a group that was not very diverse. They all belonged to the same ethnic group, grew up in the same culture, and spoke the same langauge. That would change drastically on Pentecost, when the gospel would be proclaimed in many languages to people from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 1:5). This diversity has always been part of Christ's plan. Rather than eliminating differences among the Church's members, the Church's unity is built on truths that transcends those differences. The Church truly is a communion of saints. Differences in our world often lead to division. Therefore, when the world sees the unity in diversity that characterizes Christ's Church, it will recognize something unique and special about Christians.

FIRST READING

Acts 16:6-10 - The ascended Lord directs Paul to leave Asia and preach the gopsel for the first time in a territory that today we call Europe.

SECOND READING

Revelation 22:12-17,20 - St. John sees individuals of every nation, tribe, language, and people in heaven. They are perfectly united in the fact that all are wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness.

GOSPEL

*** John 17:20-26 - Jesus prays that all his followers might be one, just as he and the Father are one.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
697 - May We Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 133A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:18)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

Set 1 - Year C by Howard Hughes

Hymn of the Day:
446 - Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*861 - Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's Head

Closing Hymn:
884 - Lord, When Your Glory I Shall See

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

6/5/2022 - Day of Pentecost

SERIES THEME

VICTORIOUS

To the world he seemed like a defeated man: opposed and killed by his enemies, his followers scattered in fear. Yet three days after Jesus' death he rose victorious from the dead. Nothing would ever be the same. The rest of eternity is now a victory march for the risen Christ. During Easter, we should not think of ourselves as passive observers in Christ's victory. We are more than fans cheering for our favorite athlete! Rather, we are active participants in Christ's tirumph. Just as his death was our death, so also his life is our life. Buried with Christ in baptism, our life is now hidden with him on high. The victory is ours, now and forever.

Easter is more than a day. It is an entire joyful season. The six solemn weeks of Lent are eclipsed by seven weeks of unbridled joy. These seven weeks correspond to the period of fifty days on the Jewish calendar between Passover and Pentecost. The Church reserves its highest praise for the Easter season. We do not merely watch from the sidelines as Christ marches in victory over sin, death, Satan, and hell. We join in the festal procession!

THEME OF THE DAY

THE SPIRIT MARCHES VICTORIOUS THROUGH THE WORD

Jesus ascended into heaven. That does not mean the gospel has ceased to march victorious around the world! Jesus promised to send another advocate to represent God to the world: the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the constant companion of believers in these Last Days. This raises an important question. If God now reveals himself by his Spirit, where is the Holy Spirit found? God has not left the answer to that question in doubt. When Jesus promised to send the Spirit, he indicated that his work would be connected to words, specifically God's Word. As a result, we need never wonder where we can find the Spirit. He marches victorious through the Word.

FIRST READING

Genesis 11:1-9 - At Babel sin led to God confusing people's language. Grace would lead God to share the gospel in many languages on Pentecost.

SECOND READING

Acts 2:1-21 - On Pentecost the disciples proclaimed the gospel. Through their words the Holy Spirit unleashed his power.

GOSPEL

*** John 14:23-27 - Though his Word Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit and gives us peace.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3
organ and brass
or piano and instruments

Opening Hymn:
477 - O Day Full of Grace

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 104A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love. (Antiphon for Pentecost)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Festival of Pentecost by Liam Lawton

Hymn of the Day:
585 - Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
479 - God's Holy Spirit Came

Closing Hymn:
931 - Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
Gospel Acclamation - opening refrain and verse by cantors; cong has closing refrain

478 - When God the Spirit Came

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:
478 - VINEYARD HAVEN is a tune worth learning but it will take some work

6/12/2022 - Holy Trinity

SERIES THEME

GOD'S WORDS POSSESS GOD'S POWER

"Let there be light," God said (Genesis 1:3). God was not speaking a wistful wish into the darkness. He was declaring what would now be. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." God speaks and reality results.

When we speak words, they are often meaningless. Sometimes, one's words are meaningless because they are spoken without true knowledge. Other times, one's words are meaningless because they were spoken insincerely. Still other times, one might make a sincere promise, but he lacks the ability to do what he said, making his promise meaningless. Words are often meaningless. But everything God says is meaningful. God speaks with absolute knowledge. God never lies. And God's words possess God's awesome power. Thus, it is God's words that determine our reality. It is God's words that establish our faith, transform our hearts and minds, and direct our lives along meaningful paths.

During the first half of the Church Year, we focused on the life of Christ. As we begin the second half of the Church Year, we turn our attention to the teachings of Christ… to the Son of God's words. We gather each week to let the Holy Spirit do the work Jesus promised he would do in the way Jesus promised he would do it—through his Word.

THEME OF THE DAY

THROUGH THE WORD, THE TRIUNE GOD BLESSES US

The Scriptures never use the words "Trinity" or "Triune." They never even summarize in any single place the entirety of this doctrine. Instead, as we read God's Word from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, he gives us hints and glimpses of his Triune nature. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity can seem very academic, even abstract. It may seem to have little relevance to the Christian's daily life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, as God provides those hints and glimpses, his primary focus is on the way in which his Triune nature is a blessing to us. God shows us how we benefit from the fact he exists as Trinity. God dwells in a "majesty and mystery" (Prayer of the Day) that far exceeds our understanding. But here is what we can understand. Every time we gather in the name of the Lord, our Triune God, we receive indescribable blessings.

FIRST READING

*** Numbers 6:22-27 - The LORD charges his priests to speak a threefold blessing upon the people. We close our services confident that our Triune God will give us the very things these words pronounce.

SECOND READING

Romans 5:1-5 – The Holy Spirit has given us faith in the Son so that we might know where we stand with our Heavenly Father.

GOSPEL

John 16:12-15 – The Father gives all that he has to the Son who then gives what he has to the Spirit so the Spirit can in turn give what he has to us.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles)

Ambitious:
Setting 4

Opening Hymn:
483 - Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 8A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Festivals Set 3

Holy Trinity (Vulpius)

Hymn of the Day:
586 - Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
715 - Let Me Be Yours Forever

Closing Hymn:
927 - Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
715 - new rhythm to an old familiar melody

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:
Setting 4 Kyrie and GA are new at this point

6/19/2022 - Proper 7

SERIES THEME

GOD'S WORDS POSSESS GOD'S POWER

"Let there be light," God said (Genesis 1:3). God was not speaking a wistful wish into the darkness. He was declaring what would now be. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." God speaks and reality results.

When we speak words, they are often meaningless. Sometimes, one's words are meaningless because they are spoken without true knowledge. Other times, one's words are meaningless because they were spoken insincerely. Still other times, one might make a sincere promise, but he lacks the ability to do what he said, making his promise meaningless. Words are often meaningless. But everything God says is meaningful. God speaks with absolute knowledge. God never lies. And God's words possess God's awesome power. Thus, it is God's words that determine our reality. It is God's words that establish our faith, transform our hearts and minds, and direct our lives along meaningful paths.

During the first half of the Church Year, we focused on the life of Christ. As we begin the second half of the Church Year, we turn our attention to the teachings of Christ… to the Son of God's words. We gather each week to let the Holy Spirit do the work Jesus promised he would do in the way Jesus promised he would do it—through his Word.

THEME OF THE DAY

THROUGH THE WORD, THE LORD CRUSHES EVIL

God's words are so powerful! With only his words, Jesus cured illness and raised the dead. With his words, Jesus created the faith that receives his forgiveness. So we should not be surprised this week when we see that Jesus' words also have the power to push back the spiritual forces of evil that are in the world. Jesus' words expose idols as worthless and following idols as self-destructive evil. Jesus' words are so compelling, even demons must obey them. It is not surprising that God's words crush evil. It is a surprise, however, to see that Jesus' words have Jesus' power even when they are not coming from Jesus' mouth. Jesus puts his words on our lips. He makes us his witnesses. And as we carry out that awesome role, Jesus continues to drive back Satan and his allies, just as he did when he walked the earth. When the gospel comes out of the mouths of sinners like us, Jesus "sends the power of evil reeling" (Hymn of the Day).

FIRST READING

Isaiah 43:8-13 – The LORD calls us to be his witnesses to the truth that there is no God except for him. He alone can save us from every evil.

SECOND READING

2 Timothy 1:3-10 – Our vocations are different: apostle, pastor, parent, grandparent. Yet, God uses all these unique vocations to put us in positions to testify to the life-giving gospel, which delivers us from evil.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 8:26-39 - Using only his words, Jesus demonstrates his authority over the evil one.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1

Ambitious:
Setting 4

Opening Hymn:
871 - Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 66A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. (1 John 4:14)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Setting 4

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 3-9

Hymn of the Day:
744 - Rise, Shine, You People

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*575 - By Grace I'm Saved

Closing Hymn:
640 - God's Word Is Our Great Heritage

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
875 - What Threat of Harm Can Hinder Me

Notes for the conservative service:
875 - new tune that should be introduced if chosen

Notes for the ambitious service:

6/26/2022 - Proper 8

SERIES THEME

GOD'S WORDS POSSESS GOD'S POWER

"Let there be light," God said (Genesis 1:3). God was not speaking a wistful wish into the darkness. He was declaring what would now be. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." God speaks and reality results.

When we speak words, they are often meaningless. Sometimes, one's words are meaningless because they are spoken without true knowledge. Other times, one's words are meaningless because they were spoken insincerely. Still other times, one might make a sincere promise, but he lacks the ability to do what he said, making his promise meaningless. Words are often meaningless. But everything God says is meaningful. God speaks with absolute knowledge. God never lies. And God's words possess God's awesome power. Thus, it is God's words that determine our reality. It is God's words that establish our faith, transform our hearts and minds, and direct our lives along meaningful paths.

During the first half of the Church Year, we focused on the life of Christ. As we begin the second half of the Church Year, we turn our attention to the teachings of Christ… to the Son of God's words. We gather each week to let the Holy Spirit do the work Jesus promised he would do in the way Jesus promised he would do it—through his Word.

THEME OF THE DAY

THROUGH THE WORD, CHRIST CREATES COMMITTED FOLLOWERS

There's the type of fan who follows his team if they make the playoffs. Then there's the type of fan who, regardless of his team's record, watches every game and knows the stats for every player. There are different types of followers: the half-hearted versus the committed. Jesus is uninterested in half-hearted followers who shoehorn him into their lives only when their other pursuits provide time for the Christ. Jesus wants followers who are all-in… who love him above all things… who would be willing to leave everything else behind if that were what it would take to be with him. We simply do not have it in us to produce that level of commitment. But Jesus' words have Jesus' power. In his gospel Jesus explains how he went all in for our salvation. He tells us he left the comforts of heaven behind to come rescue us. And through those words Christ creates within us the very commitment that he seeks.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:19-21 – Elisha commits himself completely to the work to which the LORD had called him, leaving family and wealth behind.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 11:21b-30 – Christ had shown grace to Paul. That grace moved Paul to be committed to Christ.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 9:51-62 – Jesus teaches that following him means leaving this world behind.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 1

Ambitious:
Setting 4

Opening Hymn:
711 - Jesus Calls Us o'er the Tumult

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 62A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (Mark 8:34)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Setting 4

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 3-9

Hymn of the Day:
695/696 - Take My Life and Let It Be

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
736 - Lord, You Call Us as Your People

Closing Hymn:
737 - Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
The HENDON setting at 696 may already be familiar to some, but if used for a first time, it would be good to introduce it. Beyond that, it is not a difficult sing.

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

7/3/2022 - Proper 9

SERIES THEME

GOD'S WORDS POSSESS GOD'S POWER

"Let there be light," God said (Genesis 1:3). God was not speaking a wistful wish into the darkness. He was declaring what would now be. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." God speaks and reality results.

When we speak words, they are often meaningless. Sometimes, one's words are meaningless because they are spoken without true knowledge. Other times, one's words are meaningless because they were spoken insincerely. Still other times, one might make a sincere promise, but he lacks the ability to do what he said, making his promise meaningless. Words are often meaningless. But everything God says is meaningful. God speaks with absolute knowledge. God never lies. And God's words possess God's awesome power. Thus, it is God's words that determine our reality. It is God's words that establish our faith, transform our hearts and minds, and direct our lives along meaningful paths.

During the first half of the Church Year, we focused on the life of Christ. As we begin the second half of the Church Year, we turn our attention to the teachings of Christ… to the Son of God's words. We gather each week to let the Holy Spirit do the work Jesus promised he would do in the way Jesus promised he would do it—through his Word.

THEME OF THE DAY

CHRIST PROVIDES MINISTERS TO PROCLAIM HIS WORD

Christ has not only given us his powerful Word. In his grace, he gives us ministers who proclaim that Word to us in whatever ways we need at the time: words of comfort, words of instruction, or even words of rebuke. Those who are entrusted with the care of Jesus' flock are expected to shepherd that flock just as Jesus would. They humbly assume that privilege, not to proclaim their own ideas or opinions, but to speak Jesus' own words. They share Christ's words, not just when it is welcomed gladly by those who hear it, but also when it is not. Ministers carry out their calling, not because of what they might gain from the flock, but because of what the flock might gain from Jesus through them. God's words possess God's power. Therefore, God provides us with ministers to proclaim God's Word, so that God's kingdom might come powerfully among us.

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 2:9-3:11 – Ezekiel was called to proclaim the word of the LORD to his fellow exiles, regardless of whether they listened or failed to listen.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Peter 5:1-4 – Ministers are to shepherd God's flock exactly as Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, would himself.

GOSPEL

Luke 10:1-12,16-20 – Jesus sends out messengers of his Word who were to serve the people they met exactly as Jesus would have if he had been there himself.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:
900 - Lift High the Cross

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 67A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. (Isaiah 52:7)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 1

Setting 4

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 3-9

Hymn of the Day:
901 - O Christians, Haste

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*670 - I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

Closing Hymn:
551 - Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep

or

774 - God Bless Our Native Land

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
772 - O God Most High, Your Saints Below

and

773 - O Lord of Nations

are both new tunes for hymns in the Nation category. Perhaps not the best choice for a closing hymn on a July 4th weekend but perhaps could be introduced by choir or small group during offertory or pre-service

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

7/10/2022 - Proper 10

SERIES THEME

FOCUSED

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior… as we focus carefully on his words… something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

THEME OF THE DAY

FOCUSED LOVE FINDS A NEIGHBOR RATHER THAN AVOIDING ONE

We tend to think of distraction and focus as opposites. If someone is focused, they are not easily distracted by random events and encounters. If someone is focused, every decision about how to spend time and resources is calculated. Apart from Christ that type of focus spells disaster for our neighbor. We may dismiss the needs of our neighbor, thinking, "If I spend time helping him, that will distract me from other things I should be focused on." Today, Jesus teaches us that he has set us free to live a life of such distractions. No matter the neighbor and no matter his need, we are free to act in ways that seem senseless. We are free to actively seek out a neighbor in need. We are free to bear any cost and go any distance to serve them as Christ would serve them.

FIRST READING

Ruth 1:1-19a – The LORD moves a Moabite woman named Ruth to care for her widowed mother-in-law, even though it meant leaving her people, her country, and her way of life behind.

SECOND READING

Galatians 5:1,13-25 – Christ has freed us for a life of humble service and love.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 10:25-37 – In a well-known parable, Jesus teaches us how one loves their neighbor.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 2

Opening Hymn:
599 - Come, Christians, Join to Sing

or

652 - Lord, Have Mercy

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 25A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
768 - Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
727 - Where Charity and Love Prevail

Closing Hymn:
506 - For the Fruits of His Creation

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
727 - Where Charity and Love Prevail is a new tune, fairly straightforward chorale type setting

652 - Lord, Have Mercy was an option for Ash Wednesday; its text fits well with the gospel; if chosen, consider either the first option as the opening hymn, or not having an opening hymn, but either way, consider working 652 into the Confession section of the service

Notes for the conservative service:
652 can be introduced with congregation singing refrain only

Notes for the ambitious service:

7/17/2022 - Proper 11

SERIES THEME

FOCUSED

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior… as we focus carefully on his words… something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

THEME OF THE DAY

FOCUSED WORSHIP SEEKS SERVICE FROM JESUS MORE THAN SERVICE FOR JESUS

We call worship a "service." Which raises the question: who is serving whom? In answering that question, it is easy to focus on what we do in worship. "I set aside time in my week to come to church. I am singing praise to God. I brought him an offering. Clearly, I am serving him." True enough. However, as God speaks this week, he clarifies our focus, letting us see that worship is primarily about him serving us. Through Word and sacrament, he delivers every spiritual gift he wants us to receive. Our service to God is good. His service for us is perfect. Our service to God is important. His service for us is essential. God loves our service to him. But we desperately need his service for us. Receiving his service is actually the highest form of worship. "God wants to be worshipped through faith so that we receive from him those things he promises and offers" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV).

FIRST READING

Genesis 18:1-14 – With his gracious visit and his gracious words, the Lord serves Sarah with exactly what she needs—a strengthened faith.

SECOND READING

Colossians 1:1-14 – Paul prays that God would serve the Colossians through the gospel, rescuing them from the dominion of darkness and empowering them to produce the fruit of good works.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 10:38-42 – One sister served Jesus, which was lovely. The other sister wanted to be served by Jesus, which is the one thing needed.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 2

Opening Hymn:
919 - Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

or

913 - Come Away from Rush and Hurry

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 119:33-40

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
645 - One Thing's Needful

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
633 - Speak, O Lord

or

*630 - Thy Strong Word

Closing Hymn:
925 - On What Has Now Been Sown

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
913 - Come Away from Rush and Hurry requires introduction

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

7/24/2022 - Proper 12

SERIES THEME

FOCUSED

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior… as we focus carefully on his words… something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

THEME OF THE DAY

FOCUSED PRAYER CLAIMS WHAT GOD WANTS FOR US, NOT WHAT WE WANT FROM HIM

In a sense, prayer comes naturally to us. We want so we ask. We hurt so we cry out. We are frustrated so we vent. We are blessed so we give thanks. So we sometimes define prayer as "speaking to God from the heart." Seems so easy. What does not come naturally, however, is the focused prayer God wants for us. We need focus when it comes to the basis of our prayers. Our prayers are based entirely on the unique and unearned relationship with have with God, our Father. We also need focus when it comes to the content of our prayers. Yes, we can speak from the heart and ask for anything we want. But our Father invites us to pray specifically for the things he wants to give us. Prayer is the opportunity to bring our will into conformity with God's will, not the other way around. We have much to learn about prayer. So, along with Jesus' disciples, we say, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

FIRST READING

*** Genesis 18:20-32 – Abraham prays on the basis of what he knows about the LORD: that the LORD is a just judge, that the LORD shows mercy, and that the LORD invites us to be bold in our prayers.

SECOND READING

1 Timothy 2:1-7 – Paul teaches us that the ultimate purpose for everything we ask is that God's will would be done.

GOSPEL

Luke 11:1-13 – Jesus teaches us how to pray and how our Father will answer.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 2

Opening Hymn:
776 - With the Lord Begin Your Task

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 138A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Luke 11:9)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
720 - Our Father, Throned in Heaven Above

725 - Hear Us, Father, When We Pray

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
722 - In Holy Conversation

Closing Hymn:
721 - What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
725 - Hear Us, Father, When We Pray is a TLH tune that was not in CW; should be okay without introduction

722 - In Holy Conversation may need introduction in some but not all congregations

Notes for the conservative service:
Alternate settings of 721 (available in Accomp for Hymns) may be appreciated by the assembly

Notes for the ambitious service:
Alternate settings of 721 (available in Accomp for Hymns) may be appreciated by the assembly

7/31/2022 - Proper 13

SERIES THEME

FOCUSED

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior… as we focus carefully on his words… something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

THEME OF THE DAY

FOCUSED LIVING PROPERLY VALUES EARTHLY WEALTH

Jesus wants focused followers. However, one of the things that can most easily get in the way of our focus is our earthly possessions. It is no surprise, therefore, that Jesus' words so frequently focus his followers on wealth. Jesus' followers don't reject earthly wealth or despise it. They can be grateful for every good gift that comes from the hand of God. However, Jesus' followers value earthly wealth correctly. They understand what earthly wealth can and cannot do. They don't give earthly wealth a role in their lives it will never be able to fill. This week we focus on the fact that the identity and security earthly wealth can never provide is found fully and freely in Christ.

FIRST READING

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2,12-14; 2:18-26 – King Solomon, possibly the wealthiest man who ever lived, learned by experience the limited value of earthly possessions.

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:1-11 – If life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions, then of what does life consist? Paul tells us—the fact that in baptism we died and were raised with Christ.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 12:13-21 – Greed's folly is felt in life and will be exposed in death. Through a parable, Jesus gives us a strong warning against greed.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 2

Opening Hymn:
753 - My Worth Is Not in What I Own

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 90A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:20,21)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
820 - O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*663 - Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Closing Hymn:
818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone (Psalm 62)

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
753 - My Worth Is Not in What I Own - assembly begins with refrain only, joins as able starting at v. 3

818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone (Psalm 62) - assembly begins with refrain only, joins as able starting at v. 2 or 3

Notes for the conservative service:
Both opening and closing hymns would likely be new for most congregations; consider introducing only one of them and replacing the other

Notes for the ambitious service:
Be careful to introduce both opening and closing hymns if not used previously

8/7/2022 - Proper 14

SERIES THEME

FOCUSED

A unique feature of Luke's Gospel is the section in the middle often called "the travel narrative." This lengthy section began in chapter 9 when Luke told us that Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" (v51). While there are many events and side trips that occur during this travel narrative, Luke regularly stresses that nothing is going to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem where he will fulfill his life's mission. Jesus was very focused.

Jesus' mission and the purpose of this journey was not to gain an earthly crown. Throughout this travel narrative, Jesus makes clear that this world was not his real home. He teaches that this world is not our real home either. Jesus is focused on heaven. His mission is to get us there by going to Jerusalem and making the ultimate sacrifice to pay for our sin. Nothing would stop him. "He set his face like flint," Isaiah tells us (50:7). Jesus was focused.

As we watch the focused actions of our Savior… as we focus carefully on his words… something wonderful happens. Jesus gives focus to our lives. We finally see things clearly: how to love our neighbor, the true purpose of worship, the blessing of prayer, what is treasure (and what is not). In this series, as Christ speaks to us through his Word, may he make us properly focused.

THEME OF THE DAY

FOCUSED LIVING PROPERLY VALUES HEAVENLY TREASURE

Last week Jesus warned us against overvaluing earthly wealth. This week Jesus warns against undervaluing heavenly treasure. Last week, Jesus exposed the folly of greed. This week, Jesus exposes the folly of worry, even when faced with the prospect of having a shortage of earthly wealth. This week might be the bigger challenge! When it seems we lack providence or protection for our daily lives, it can be hard to avoid worry. But Jesus focuses us. He points to creatures that do not labor or toil, yet are daily fed and clothed. Even more Jesus points to our Father who promises to give us the heavenly treasures of his kingdom. Jesus assures us that Father will throw in needed earthly possessions as well. We can pursue heavenly treasure wholeheartedly, confident that our Father knows all we need.

FIRST READING

Genesis 15:1-6 – In faith, Abram treasured all the LORD's gracious promises.

SECOND READING

*** Hebrews 11:1-3,8-16 – The gift of faith allows us to see that treasure that is found in the city whose architect and builder is God.

GOSPEL

Luke 12:22-34 – Jesus assures us we have a Father in heaven who knows what we need better than we do.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 2

Opening Hymn:
828 - Where Your Treasure Is

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 121A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
800 - How Firm a Foundation

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
868 - By Faith

Closing Hymn:
835 - Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
828 - Where Your Treasure Is was in CWS and should be familiar for many

868 - By Faith should be introduced in congregations that have not used it previously

Notes for the conservative service:
Hymn of the Day has nice alternate settings for both organ and piano in Accomp for Hymns

Notes for the ambitious service:
Hymn of the Day has nice alternate settings for both organ and piano in Accomp for Hymns

8/14/2022 - Proper 15

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

WE WANT PEACE, BUT GOD'S WORD DIVIDES

We often divide humanity into groupings that are not really significant: this ethnic group versus that one, men versus women, wealthy versus the poor. Yet, every ethnic group is under God's law. That law convicts both men and women of sin. Because of sin, the wealthy and the poor will both die. Only through faith in Christ is sin forgiven and the sting of death removed. God's Word creates that saving faith, but not in everyone who hears it. Fallen man retains the awful power to resist the working of the Spirit inside him… to reject the gift of faith. Therefore, God's Word produces the only people grouping that ultimately matters: believers and unbelievers. We want to overcome division and live in peace with other people. Here is a hard truth: total peace is impossible for the believer to achieve. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility and opposition. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises us our perseverance will be rewarded.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23:23-29 – The Word of the LORD divides what is true from what is false.

SECOND READING

*** Hebrews 12:1-13 – The Hebrews who converted to Christianity faced great opposition. They were often divided from their friends, separated from their livelihood. How would they persevere? By fixing their eyes on Jesus.

GOSPEL

Luke 12:49-53 – Jesus was fully aware that his work would cause division that would often cut close to home.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
870 - O Church, Arise

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 4A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
590 - O Holy Spirit, Enter In

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*838 - The Will of God Is Always Best

Closing Hymn:
876 - Fight the Good Fight

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
option: opening - 590; pre-sermon - 870 if preaching on Second Reading

870 - O Church, Arise may be new for some; consider introducing first stanza as necessary

815 - I Look Not Back - final stanza fits second reading on fixing eyes on Jesus; new tune should be introduced

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

8/21/2022 - Proper 16

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

THE FIRST WILL BE LAST; THE LAST WILL BE FIRST

When it comes to the difficult and uncomfortable topic of who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, it is natural to want to avoid the issue. One way we do that is to direct our attention to theoretical questions. "What is heaven like?" "How old will we be there?" Today, someone asks Jesus, "Lord, are only a few going to be saved?" Jesus brushes these questions aside. Instead, he answers the question we should be asking. Rather than talking about how many will be saved, Jesus explains how to be among the saved. What he teaches today through his Word is a hard truth. The doorway into heaven is narrow. Scripture consistently teaches that those individuals who are certain they will be first through that door are more likely to be last, if they make it through at all. Instead, the one who believes he is the last one God should let into his kingdom and that his only chance of getting in is through the grace of Christ will enter first.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 66:18-24 – The LORD teaches that not only will those who seemed far from his kingdom be among the first to enter eternal glory, but some of those who seemed to be part of his kingdom will be shut out.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 12:18-24 – Being first in God's eyes has nothing to do with keeping the Law God gave to Moses and everything to do with the gracious work of the mediator of the new covenant.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 13:22-30 – Jesus teaches that the last will be first and the first will be last.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
621 - Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 103A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:
698 - Seek Where You May to Find a Way

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
798 - I Lay My Sins on Jesus

Closing Hymn:
607 - Ten Thousand Reasons

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
607 - Ten Thousand Reasons should be introduced, depending on local familiarity

Notes for the conservative service:
Cantor could sing verses of closing hymn as congregation learns this song

Notes for the ambitious service:

8/28/2022 - Proper 17

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

THE HUMBLE WILL BE EXALTED; THE EXALTED WILL BE HUMBLED

Everyone knows that humility is a positive trait and pride is a negative one. So, why bother talking about what we already know? Because in spite of that knowledge, we still helplessly fall into the trap of pride. We cannot help but think that our ascent to the exalted status we desire is our responsibility. We even take our exaltation into our own hands, either by treating poorly those we believe we can stand on top of or by showing favoritism to those we believe can provide us with upward mobility. Rather than minimizing pride as a sin that is common or harmless, Jesus' words today confront us with this hard truth. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled by God. But Jesus also gives us the promise we need to be freed from pride's trap. Our exaltation doesn't need to be our responsibility because Jesus has already made it his. Those who humble themselves, Christ will exalt.

FIRST READING

*** Proverbs 25:6-7a – Solomon provides common sense about humility and pride.

SECOND READING

James 2:1-13 – James teaches that showing favoritism treats others with judgment rather than mercy, putting us at risk of receiving the same from God.

GOSPEL

Luke 14:1,7-14 – Jesus teaches some ways to demonstrate humility and promises that those who humble themselves will be exalted.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 3

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
616 - Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 112A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 14:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
729 - Son of God, Eternal Savior

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
732 - In Unity and Peace

Closing Hymn:
928 - May the Grace of Christ Our Savior

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
616 - Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator; probably best to introduce at least the first stanza

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

9/4/2022 - Proper 18

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

PUT DOWN WHAT YOU LOVE; PICK UP WHAT YOU LOATHE

It is an unavoidable hard truth. Our relationship with Jesus will put us in situations where we must decide where love for him ranks compared to love for other people and things. And Jesus is not content to be one of many important things in our life; he wants to be first. He wants us to follow his Word unwaveringly, even when he asks us to do difficult things. As a result, following Jesus will force us to let go of things we love and embrace things we would naturally loath. Jesus is loving and honest. He doesn't hide this hard truth! Instead, he tells us up front that we must count the cost of following him. That means calculating what we might have to give up as his followers. He wants us to do that now, ahead of time, rather than waiting until we are in the heat of the moment and emotions are running high. However, our calculations should not only consider what we might give up for Jesus. They also entail calculating what we get through him! When we perceive the infinite blessings we find in Christ, the decisions we must make, while difficult, will be clear. Whatever is lost as we follow Jesus pales in comparison to what we gain.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – Through Moses, the LORD sets two paths before Israel: one leading to life, the other to death. Life was found in listening to God's voice.

SECOND READING

Philemon 1,7-21 – The case of the escaped slave, Onesimus, returning to his owner, Philemon, is a perfect example of the cost involved in following Jesus. Paul encourages Philemon to free Onesimus and embrace him as a brother.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 14:25-35 – Jesus teaches us that truly following him will come at a cost: the need to carry a cross, the need to give up everything. Count the cost.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Ambitious:
Setting 3

Opening Hymn:
703 - I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 1A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

or

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:
694 - Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*831 - Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me

Closing Hymn:
617 - Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
707 - Cling Tightly to the Word of God includes 'take up your cross' language and is not a difficult sing; with six stanzas it would work well to introduce one or two

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

9/11/2022 - Proper 19

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

THE FOUND ARE LEFT; THE LOST ARE FOUND

"He's lost." We use that term not only to refer to someone who is bewildered about where they are but also to refer to someone who is in a helpless, hopeless state. Mankind's natural state is one of complete spiritual helplessness, a profound lostness. It manifests itself in countless ways. The one who simply wants God to leave him alone: lost. The one who feels she can handle life on her own: lost. The one who thinks he has the right to repent of his sins on his own timetable and on his own terms: lost. The one who thinks God owes them in some way: lost. Wandering around physically lost can lead to winding up in bad places. But the hard truth is that wandering around spiritually lost puts you in the worst place of all. Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us alone in our lostness. He relentlessly seeks us. He involves the rest of the Christian community in seeking the lost and rejoicing over the found.

FIRST READING

Hosea 3:1-5 – The LORD called Hosea to seek his adulterous wife and love her again. This served as an object lesson, showing our God is a God who seeks and redeems those who are lost.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 – A member of the church at Corinth had been lost in sin, but through loving church discipline, had been moved to repent. Paul encourages the members to lovingly welcome him back.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 15:1-10 – Through two parables, Jesus rebukes those who consider themselves already found and not in need of repentance.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
with Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:
612 - How Great Thou Art

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 51A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
654 - Jesus Sinners Does Receive

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
833 - I Run to Christ

Closing Hymn:
606 - Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
833 - I Run to Christ - straightforward melody but new and may need introduction in some congregations

Notes for the conservative service:
Using three new items from Setting 2 assumes that they have been practiced (and possibly auditioned) in previous weeks

Notes for the ambitious service:

9/18/2022 - Proper 20

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

SERVE GOD WITH MONEY; YOU CAN'T SERVE GOD AND MONEY

There are more than 2300 Bible passages that speak about money. Why? Money is a master Satan frequently tempts us to serve. And that evil foe knows how successful his efforts with money can be. Money provides us with a false comfort and a sense of security. It serves as a source of pride. It serves as a wonderful tool for a favorite pastime: justifying ourselves in our own eyes and the eyes of others. Jesus knows that serving money makes it impossible to serve God. The human heart is not big enough for both. As a result, Jesus does all he can to expose the futility of serving money. He also helps us see that the only one truly worth serving is our gracious, loving God. When we serve God, money is put in its proper place. Instead of money being a lord to serve, it becomes a resource for serving the Lord. This is the hard truth. There is no way for us to serve both God and money. But we can serve God with our money.

FIRST READING

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20 – King Solomon knew from experience that if you serve money, you will end up disappointed.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19 – Saint Paul teaches in straightforward language that serving money will lead to spiritual destruction. But serving God with our money leads to a fulfilling life.

GOSPEL

Luke 16:1-13 – All money actually belongs to God; he loans it to us to manage for his glory. Through a parable, Jesus teaches us to be shrewd in the way we use money to serve him.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
with Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:
708 - Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 128

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
807 - All Depends on Our Possessing

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*819 If God Himself Be for Me

Closing Hymn:
678 - Once in the Blest Baptismal Waters

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
753 - My Worth Is Not in What I Own - If this hymn was not sung at Proper 13, it would be a good fit here

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

9/25/2022 - Proper 21

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT SEEMS TO HELP IN LIFE FAILS IN DEATH; WHAT SEEMS TO FAIL IN LIFE HELPS IN DEATH

Last week we learned the hard truth that while money can help make life easier in some ways, it cannot bring true happiness and fulfillment. This week we see that as much as money lets us down in life, its ultimate failure to deliver on its promises happens in death. Those who live with hearts filled with love for money and void of love for God will receive the only eternity that money can buy: one void of God and filled with pain. Though we might be fooled into thinking money helps in life, it will certainly fail us in death. Conversely, that which seems to offer little help in life will never fail us in death. The best example of this is the gospel. Those who hear and heed the Scriptures often appear to receive little benefit in life. Living by God's Word doesn't make life easier. In fact, faithfully following Christ often means a more challenging life, one filled with crosses and self-denial. Great wealth gains you the admiration and respect of the world. Being true to Scripture is more likely to gain you scorn and ridicule. Yet those who find the help they need in God rather than in money will never be disappointed. In death they will receive a reward that dwarfs even the best things money can buy.

FIRST READING

Amos 6:1-7 – At the time of Amos, the Israelites enjoyed peace and prosperity, but spiritually they were drifting away from the LORD. The prophet warns not to let prosperity provide a false sense of security.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 13:1-6 – Because the Lord is our helper in both life and death, in all aspects of life we strive to live for him.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 16:19-31 – Jesus tells us a parable about two men, one whose confidence was in his wealth, another whose confidence was in his God.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
with Setting 1 Agnus

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:
631 - Speak, O Savior, I Am Listening

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 146A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
817 - Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
813 - He Will Hold Me Fast

Closing Hymn:
718 - Though Thoughtless Thousands Choose the Road

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
813 - He Will Hold Me Fast - the chorale setting in Accomp for Hymns would make this a straightforward sing; if using the piano setting, cantors could help the congregation navigate through the setting

818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone (Psalm 62) - If this hymn was not sung at Proper 13, it would be a good fit here

Notes for the conservative service:
For many congregations, either 813 or 818 would be a good choice, but perhaps not both this first year

Notes for the ambitious service:

10/2/2022 - Proper 22

SERIES THEME

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

We sometimes use the word faith very casually. “You got to have faith.” “Keep the faith.” “Make a leap of faith.” As Jesus' journey to Jerusalem nears its conclusion, he begins to talk about faith in ways that are anything but casual. He says profound things about the power of faith: “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you” (Luke 17:6). Or “Your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19). In thinking about his second coming, Christ wistfully wonders, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Jesus’ words are serious and compelling. They force us to consider what true, saving faith is. They make us ask if we have such faith. But most of all, Jesus’ words move us to run to our God and beg him for more of it. Lord, increase our faith!

THEME OF THE DAY

FAITH THAT DELIGHTS IN DUTY

Look up “duty” in the dictionary. It's defined as “something that one is expected or required to do.” Look up “duty” in a thesaurus. Some of its synonyms: chore, burden, obligation, work. “Duty” can carry some strong negative connotations. Now, consider this. In the world, as you rise through the ranks, you are able to leave many duties behind. For example, if you are high-up on the corporate ladder, you can delegate things you don’t want to do to someone else. In Christ’s kingdom it works just the opposite. An increase in faith does not lessen duties at all. It increases opportunities to serve God and others. Increased faith means increased obligations and work. But here’s the good news. The same faith that increases our duties leads us to delight in them. For through faith we know that we serve the one who first came to serve us. We consider it a privilege to imitate Christ in our service to others. Just as his service to us brought him great joy, so does our service to others.

FIRST READING

*** 1 Chronicles 29:1-2,10-18 – In faith, King David knew everything we have is given to us from the LORD. Therefore, David found it a duty and delight to plan the construction of the LORD’s temple.

SECOND READING

2 Thessalonians 1:1-5,11-12 – Saint Paul thanks God that the growing faith of the Thessalonians enabled them not only to grow in love for one another, but also to face persecution.

GOSPEL

Luke 17:1-10 – Jesus teaches about the connection between increased faith and an increased sense of duty to God.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
with Setting 1 Agnus

Ambitious:
The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:
735 - Before You I Kneel

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 62A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? (1 Chronicles 29:14)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
748 - Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*671 - Your Body Given for Me, O Savior

Closing Hymn:
749:1 - God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
735 - Before You I Kneel - introduce at least the first stanza

669 - In This Holy, Blest Communion - small group performance during distribution may be a good way to introduce this new tune

Notes for the conservative service:
671 is a retuned communion hymn; the tune should be familiar from TLH and CW93

Notes for the ambitious service:

10/9/2022 - Proper 23

SERIES THEME

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

We sometimes use the word faith very casually. “You got to have faith.” “Keep the faith.” “Make a leap of faith.” As Jesus' journey to Jerusalem nears its conclusion, he begins to talk about faith in ways that are anything but casual. He says profound things about the power of faith: “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you” (Luke 17:6). Or “Your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19). In thinking about his second coming, Christ wistfully wonders, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Jesus’ words are serious and compelling. They force us to consider what true, saving faith is. They make us ask if we have such faith. But most of all, Jesus’ words move us to run to our God and beg him for more of it. Lord, increase our faith!

THEME OF THE DAY

FAITH THAT OVERFLOWS WITH GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the appreciation and thankfulness we feel when someone does something kind to us or for us. There are two key factors that influence the intensity of gratitude. First, there is the deservedness factor. Say you do a favor for your neighbor, picking up his mail when he is out of town. A month later he does a favor for you, giving you a ride to the airport. You are grateful for his help, but not overwhelmingly so. You feel by doing a favor for him, you deserved his help to some degree. Second, there is the generosity factor. Say you do that favor for your neighbor, picking up his mail when he is out of town. When he gets back, he gives you a hundred-dollar bill. You’re stunned. “I can’t accept. This is too generous.” Apply this to God. Consider the deservedness factor. What does God owe us? How deserving are we of his blessing? Consider the generosity factor. What has he done for us? What blessings has he given us now? What blessings has he promised us in eternity? As Jesus increases our faith, so that we accurately answer all those questions, we become more than grateful. We overflow with gratitude.

FIRST READING

*** Genesis 8:15-22 – In faith, Noah expressed his gratitude for God’s undeserved generosity in preserving the lives of him and his family.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 9:10-15 – Our gratitude for God’s generosity to us will naturally include a willingness to be generous with others.

GOSPEL

Luke 17:11-19 – Ten men had faith that Jesus could save them from their leprosy. One man had the bold faith to throw himself at Jesus’ feet in gratitude.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2

Ambitious:
Setting 2 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
597/598 - Now Thank We All Our God

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 111A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. (Psalm 105:1)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:
624 - Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
626 - My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness

Closing Hymn:
507 - Let All Things Now Living

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
615 - Jesus, Thank You - requires introduction and cantor on verses

626 - My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness - There's a quick eighth note in each of the first three lines of this setting; it would be good to model it correctly by teaching the rhythm

577 - Magnificent, Marvelous, Matchless Love - requires introduction; have congregation join gradually

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:
New GA starting here and to the end of the church year means a setting from the additional settings instead of those that are part of settings 1-4

10/16/2022 - Proper 24

SERIES THEME

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

We sometimes use the word faith very casually. “You got to have faith.” “Keep the faith.” “Make a leap of faith.” As Jesus' journey to Jerusalem nears its conclusion, he begins to talk about faith in ways that are anything but casual. He says profound things about the power of faith: “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you” (Luke 17:6). Or “Your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19). In thinking about his second coming, Christ wistfully wonders, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Jesus’ words are serious and compelling. They force us to consider what true, saving faith is. They make us ask if we have such faith. But most of all, Jesus’ words move us to run to our God and beg him for more of it. Lord, increase our faith!

THEME OF THE DAY

FAITH DEMONSTRATED THROUGH PERSISTENT PRAYER

Disciples of Jesus need to learn how to pray. We need Jesus to teach us to ask for those things which our Father in heaven promises us. We need to learn to claim in prayer what he wants for us more than what we want from him. However, learning to pray is not like many of the other things we learn to do in our lives. Once we know how to write our name, tie our shoes, or ride a bike, the learning is done. There is virtually no danger we will forget how to do those things. Not so with prayer. Prayer is not something we learn to do once and then know how to do correctly for the rest of our lives. Learning to pray consists of a lifetime of persistence and struggle. But when we struggle with God in prayer, it is not an indication that something is wrong but that everything is right. Struggle is part of the very nature of prayer and at the heart of the blessings it brings in our lives of faith.

FIRST READING

Genesis 32:22-30 – In praying for blessing, Jacob literally wrestles with God.

SECOND READING

*** 1 John 5:13-15 – When we ask God for something that is according to his will, we can be absolutely confident we will receive it.

GOSPEL

Luke 18:1-8 – Jesus teaches us to be bold and persistent in our prayers.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2

Ambitious:
Setting 2 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
803 - Day by Day

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 121A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
723 - When in the Hour of Utmost Need

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*873 - Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray

Closing Hymn:
724 - Be Still, My Soul, before the Lord

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

10/23/2022 - Proper 25

SERIES THEME

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

We sometimes use the word faith very casually. “You got to have faith.” “Keep the faith.” “Make a leap of faith.” As Jesus' journey to Jerusalem nears its conclusion, he begins to talk about faith in ways that are anything but casual. He says profound things about the power of faith: “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you” (Luke 17:6). Or “Your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19). In thinking about his second coming, Christ wistfully wonders, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Jesus’ words are serious and compelling. They force us to consider what true, saving faith is. They make us ask if we have such faith. But most of all, Jesus’ words move us to run to our God and beg him for more of it. Lord, increase our faith!

THEME OF THE DAY

FAITH DEMONSTRATED THROUGH TOTAL DEPENDENCE

Last week we heard Jesus ask, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). As we consider Jesus’ question, it might be easy to assume that any decrease in faith we observe in the world corresponds with an increase in secularism and disdain for God’s Word. That type of unbelief certainly can be observed in our world. However, today we see there is another type of unbelief, a type that looks upright and moral. The absence of the faith Jesus seeks isn’t always complete and total rejection of God or the Bible or even Jesus. It is possible for someone to have respect for Scripture and Christ, yet ultimately trust in his own goodness when it comes to his relationship with God. It is natural for us to want to believe that our relationship with God revolves around our obedience to his commands. We desperately desire to believe that, if we just apply the right spiritual advice and effort, we can earn God’s approval and eternal inheritance. This, too, is unbelief, just as much as paganism or secularism. This week Jesus uses God’s law for its chief purpose: to expose sin and crush our natural pride. In Christ’s hands God’s law is a powerful tool used to shape in us the faith he seeks—one totally dependent on God to do what only he can do.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 10:12-22 – In his farewell address, Moses reminds the Israelites that they always have been and forever will be totally dependent on God’s grace.

SECOND READING

1 John 2:15-17 – St. John encourages us to love and depend on our heavenly Father, not the world.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 18:18-30 – What is impossible with man is possible with God. That is why we are totally dependent on him.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2

Ambitious:
Setting 2 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
816 - I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 90A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
717 - What Is the World to Me

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
510 - In Christ Alone

Closing Hymn:
926 - Lead Me, Lord

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
926 - Lead Me, Lord - Cantor or small group can sing the entire stanza first, congregation then repeats

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

10/30/2022 - Reformation

SERIES THEME

standalone week

THEME OF THE DAY

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE (The Festival of the Reformation)

We value freedom and strive to protect freedoms. But do we truly understand freedom? Freedom for many means doing what you want without control or coercion. Jesus helps us to understand true freedom: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Gospel). Jesus says that you will never be free by living however you want. Take that attitude towards life and you'll be a slave. You'll only be free—spiritually, emotionally, eternally—“If you hold to my teaching” and therefore “know the truth.”

A key principle Martin Luther established through the Reformation is sola scriptura, Scripture alone. Luther thought it was the answer to all of life’s fundamental questions. On what basis is a belief or practice justified of rejected? Scripture alone. Who or what is the final arbiter of truth? Scripture alone. Heirs of the Reformation still bind themselves to Scripture. Does restricting ourselves in this manner curtail freedom? Just the opposite is true. God’s divinely inspired truth brings freedom. It frees us from slavery to sinful delusions, the burden of guilt, and any earthly power. This week we see that when we willingly bind ourselves to truth, Jesus keeps his promise. The truth sets us free.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – The old covenant of law could tell people how to act. It could not create the desire to freely do so. The new covenant of grace transforms people’s hearts, so they freely and joyfully follow God’s will.

SECOND READING

Galatians 5:1-6 – St. Paul encourages us to stand firm in the freedom that we have in Christ.

GOSPEL

*** John 8:31-36 – The truth of the gospel sets us free.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 2
organ and brass
or piano and instruments

Ambitious:
Setting 2 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
865 - O Lord, Take Pity Once You've Seen

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 46A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31,32)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
863/864 - A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
707 - Cling Tightly to the Word of God

Closing Hymn:
855 - The Church's One Foundation

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
707 - Cling Tightly to the Word of God - since st. 1 repeats the sermon text and service theme, consider introducing it and having the congregation repeat it

877 - Reformation Song - requires introduction; congregation can learn refrain quickly

568 - His Robes for Mine - Refrain picked up early by congregation; verses 3,4 for congregation as able

879 - Though All Our Life Is Like a Scroll

Notes for the conservative service:
877, 878, 879 are all based on the Solas

Notes for the ambitious service:

11/6/2022 - All Saints Day

SERIES THEME

standalone week

THEME OF THE DAY

WE FEEBLY STRUGGLE; THEY IN GLORY SHINE (All Saints' Day)

We believe in "the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints" (Apostles' Creed). All with saving faith in Jesus as their Savior are holy. (Saint comes from the Latin word sanctus which means holy.) God grants the status of saint to all believers. Since sainthood is achieved through faith in Christ, we refer to believers as the invisible Church. Members are unknown to us since only God can see the heart. Furthermore, even if we knew the identity of each saint on earth, they would not look all that different from the rest of mankind. Believers still struggle with trials, temptations, and sin. Nor does membership in the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints make life easier. In some ways it makes life more difficult as we struggle against a world that is hostile towards Christ. However, some members of the communion of saints no longer struggle with trial and sin. They are not oppressed by an anti-Christian world. These are all the saints who, through their Christian death, have triumphed over all these things. The blessedness of being God's saint is no longer invisible for them. They live in the glory of Christ's light. This week, we thank God for those members of the communion of saints who have gone before us and now enjoy everlasting life. We feebly struggle, just as they once did. But now, thanks to Christ, they in glory shine. Their example encourages us as we patiently wait to join them.

FIRST READING

*** Revelation 21:1-6 – St. John is allowed to see the home of the saints triumphant.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 11:32-40 – For countless saints, their Christian faith was the cause of pain and even death. They faced persecution and death with courage because they knew God had planned something better.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:20-23 – Jesus teaches that the blessedness of being God's saint is currently hidden from sight. Yet, one day, that blessedness will be revealed.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
886 - Blessed Are They

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 149A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. (Revelation 7:15)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
889/890 - Jerusalem the Golden

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*880 - For All the Saints

Closing Hymn:
881 - Sing with All the Saints in Glory

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
837 - When Will I Walk - not a difficult melody but best to introduce

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

11/13/2022 - Proper 28

SERIES THEME

THE LAST DAY

Certain days mean different things to different people. Next June 10th might mean nothing to you… or… it might be the day you get married. Mother's Day can be a day of great joy to the woman with three children, all of whom profess their love and appreciation on that day. That same day can be extremely painful for the woman who has never been able to have children. Certain days mean different things to different people.

That will be most true on the Last Day. On his calendar, God has written in ink the day when Jesus will return to "judge the living and the dead" (Apostles' Creed). In the final weeks of the church year it is natural for us to think about that Last Day and what it means. The Last Day will mean very different things to different people.

THEME OF THE DAY

A DAY OF TERROR FOR ALL THOSE WHO TROUBLED GOD'S PEOPLE

Our world is full of victims of abuse, violence, and oppression. In many cases, this evil goes unnoticed or unpunished. Injustice can drive victims in two possible directions. They can be filled with despair over the unfairness of the situation. Or they can be filled with hatred and a desire for revenge. While Christians wait for Christ's return on the Last Day, they are by no means the only ones who suffer at the hands of others. They are, however, often included among them. Believers have always faced opposition from a world who rejects the one we believe in. When we suffer, what are our options? Do we throw up our hands in despair? Do we take matters into our own hands and seek vengeance? The certainty of that Last Day gives us a better option. We can leave justice up to the Judge. We can be confident that on the Last Day every wrong will be righted. We can look forward to the Last Day—also known as Judgment Day—because we are confident of where we stand with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

FIRST READING

Malachi 4:1-6 – On the Last Day, those who opposed God will be laid low, but all God's people will be healed.

SECOND READING

*** 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 – God promises that on the Last Day all those who troubled his holy people will themselves be eternally troubled.

GOSPEL

Luke 21:5-19 – Jesus tells us what the world will be like for believers before the Last Day.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
495 - The King Shall Come

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 98A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. (Revelation 2:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
488 - The Day Is Surely Drawing Near

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
809 - Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

Closing Hymn:
924 - Abide, O Dearest Jesus

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:
802 - All Is Well - requires introduction; congregation can pick up on refrain pretty quickly

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

11/20/2022 - Last Sunday of Church Year

SERIES THEME

THE LAST DAY

Certain days mean different things to different people. Next June 10th might mean nothing to you… or… it might be the day you get married. Mother's Day can be a day of great joy to the woman with three children, all of whom profess their love and appreciation on that day. That same day can be extremely painful for the woman who has never been able to have children. Certain days mean different things to different people.

That will be most true on the Last Day. On his calendar, God has written in ink the day when Jesus will return to "judge the living and the dead" (Apostles' Creed). In the final weeks of the church year it is natural for us to think about that Last Day and what it means. The Last Day will mean very different things to different people.

THEME OF THE DAY

A DAY OF DELIVERANCE WHICH GOD'S PEOPLE EAGERLY AWAIT

Jesus promised, "I am coming soon" (Second Reading). But what does soon mean to the one who is the Alpha and Omega, the eternal God? We do not know. We want Christ to return quickly, because we know the Last Day will be a day of great deliverance for God's people. But how long will we have to wait? Will it be in a few months or a few millennia? We cannot know.

As we await Christ's return, we want to avoid two extremes: impatience and indifference. Let us not despair if the deliverance of the Last Day does not come as quickly as we would like. But let us never doubt that that deliverance will indeed come. How do we avoid those extremes? How does Christ's church remain ready and watchful? In this last week of the Church Year, our Savior does what he has done all year—point us to his Scriptures. The Scriptures record countless promises that have already been fulfilled in Christ. That assures us that the as-of-yet unfulfilled promises are as good as done. There is no doubting that the Last Day will come. There is no doubting it will be a day of blessed deliverance for God's people.

FIRST READING

Habakkuk 1:1-3;2:1-4 – Like we are, Habakkuk was waiting for the LORD to act. God promised that he would act, and he had his prophet put that promise in writing.

SECOND READING

Revelation 22:6-13 – Jesus will return soon. When he does, the reward he won for mankind will be in his hand.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 12:35-40 – Jesus urges us to remain ready for his return at all times.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:
Setting 4

Ambitious:
Setting 3 with new GA and proper verse

Opening Hymn:
486 - Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

Psalm of the Day:
Psalm 130A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:
Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (Matthew 24:42)

Gospel Acclamation setting:
Setting 4

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 24-29

Hymn of the Day:
487 - Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:
*559 - If Your Beloved Son, O God

Closing Hymn:
850 - It Is Well with My Soul

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service: