

All Church Worship
Brainstorming Summary for Lent and Easter
March/April 2019 – Season of Lent and Easter

Series: **“Shadow Savior - Not Just the Savior You Want, but the Savior You Need”**

2019 theme: Love God and love your neighbor

Monday, February 11, 2019

Members present: Pastor Mary Ivanov, Jill Warren, Karen Post, Marie Kordecki, Vicki Zuker, Ron Zuker, Carole Koch, Barb Gripton, Pastor Jerry Hagans (francis1491@aol.com), Pastor Susan Hagans (susanj1491@aol.com), Betty Kinney, Bonnie Jorgenson, Jim Post, David Booth, Karen Booth

Sometimes we're not very brave when it comes to faith. We don't want to ask the questions that keep coming up for us. We don't want to seem like we don't believe or that we struggle. And yet, sometimes “because the Bible says so” or “well, Jesus said it” isn't enough. We need to be honest about our wonderings and questions. What do we find difficult about Jesus? During his life and ministry and then into the week of his crucifixion, Jesus' closest followers and many who surrounded him struggled to understand and accept all that he said and did, and we might, too. But when we share our confusion, anger, fear, frustration, and surprise, we'll find even more reason to follow the One who comes to save.

Ideas for the series:

- Create a devotional for each week based on the topic.
- Send out a survey to our congregation via E-mail and Facebook with the questions:
What's the most difficult or challenging thing that Jesus says or does?
What do you find most difficult about being a follower of Jesus?
- Encourage the use of prayer journals.

Resources:

- Devotional materials from Pastor Mary's colleagues
- LUMO videos are available for the gospel readings, apparently at no cost. They are long, but can be edited as needed. <https://www.bible.com/videos>

Music: 1) The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts suggests singing a cappella for at least one Sunday during Lent. We might try it for at least one song. 2) “Savior's Shadow” by Blake Shelton. Could we use this every week as a thread running through the series, either as a reflection or for congregational singing? 3) Karen Booth: What if we change the lyrics to, “I'm walking with my Shadow Savior, he is watching over me”?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbu8YnegTF4> (official music video)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11O03Js1NOg> (lyric video)

I'm standing in my Savior's shadow
He is watching over me
I feel the rain, I hear the thunder
As he cries for me

I'm standing in my Savior's shadow
Grace will lead to where I'm free

I take his hand, we walk together
And his light shines on me

Though the devil try to break me
My sweet Jesus won't forsake me
When I'm in my Savior's shadow
Where I'm supposed to be

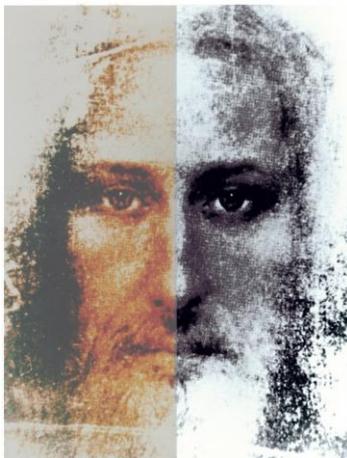
I'm standing in my Savior's shadow
Following his footsteps there
Every mountain, every ocean
He hears my every prayer

Though the devil try to break me
My sweet Jesus won't forsake me

When I'm in my Savior's shadow
Where I'm supposed to be

Though the devil try to break me
My sweet Jesus won't forsake me
When I'm in my Savior's shadow
Where I'm supposed to be
When I'm in my Savior's shadow
I'm who I'm supposed to be

Songwriters: Blake Shelton / Jessi Alexander
/ Jon Randall
Savior's Shadow lyrics © Sony/ATV Music
Publishing LLC



Visuals: Left to right – 1) Shroud of Turin, used by Orchard UMC in Farmington Hills. 2) Shadow of a candle burning. 3) “Dove” light that appeared in the sanctuary as a reflection off the altar. 4) The contrast between the Dark Woods and Easter in 2018 was very effective.

Publicity: “See You on Sunday!” and March Harbor Light

General discussion points: 1) This series grew out of Pastor Mary’s family/clergy camp, which has been meeting every summer since 2008. 2) Helen Jones via email: Growing up Catholic, they did not sing or say Alleluia during Lent (like we do in singing the Doxology), but saved that for Easter. 3) The series has a dark feel, much like our 2018 series, “Gifts of the Dark Woods.” Pastor Mary encourages us to dive deep, struggling with the things that Jesus said that we don’t particularly like. Shadows are places we don’t want to look, but there is grace there. 4) Key words: HOPE, CURIOSITY, HONESTY. 5) This series is about a re-introduction of hope when we live in the shadows of confusion, anger, disappointment, fear, intimate relationships, unwelcome surprises, instructions you would rather not hear, and the call to keep going. It is also a re-education of who Jesus really is, not who we want him to be. 6) Consider using The VOICE translation to bring the scripture to life.

March 6, 2019: Ash Wednesday

Worship at 7:00 p.m. at Muskegon: Central UMC
Rev. Jennie Browne preaching

Scripture: Romans 8:31-39 (The Message)

³¹So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose?

³²If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? ³³And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? ³⁴Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. ³⁵Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

³⁶They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

³⁷None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. ³⁸I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, ³⁹high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

Sermon: "Death and Renovation"

Music: Community Choir - practice at 6:00 p.m.

March 10, 2019: "When Jesus Confuses You"

Scouting Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 22: 15-22 (NIV) "Paying Taxes to Caesar"

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words.

¹⁶They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹"Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²²When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Synopsis: We want living our faith to be easy, but following Jesus isn't easy, especially as we encounter competing allegiances.

Felt need: To recognize that the answers to living our faith don't always come easily.

Visuals: Coins (<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-taxes-caesar/>).

Media possibility: "Matthew 22: 1-22." Length: 3:14 (begin at 2:00). Cost: Free. Visual liturgy from Lumo Project. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3157-matthew-12-1-21-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

Related info:

- Responsive reading <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/a-response-to-the-reading-of-matthew-2215-22>
- Poem based on Matthew 22:15-22 <http://coslgrace.blogspot.com/2014/10/poem-based-on-matthew-2215-22.html>

Music: He Is Exalted (FWS 2070), Lord of the Dance (UMH 261), Lord, Be Glorified (FWS 2150), Take My Life (UMH 399), More Precious than Silver (FWS 2165)

Discussion points: 1) This passage is about competing allegiances. Where do we pledge our ultimate loyalty? 2) Big questions: What does “allegiance” mean? What does it mean for us to say that Jesus is Lord and Savior? What does it mean to follow Christ and to love our country? Have we mushed together allegiances that really should be separated? 3) Lent has traditionally been a time for honest evaluation and intentional study/reflection. 4) Betty finds it easier to be mad at God and not at Jesus, who she pictures as kind. 5) Jill remembers someone telling her that she can’t be a real Christian since she has never been mad at God – a remark that has stuck with her for a long time. 6) Karen Post finds it difficult to be mad at God too, even though the Psalms are filled with people who have been very mad at him (Susan).

March 17, 2019: “When Jesus Angers You”

Scripture: Matthew 21: 12-17 (The Message) “Jesus at the Temple”

¹²Jesus went straight to the Temple and threw out everyone who had set up shop, buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of loan sharks and the stalls of dove merchants.

¹³He quoted this text:

My house was designated a house of prayer;

You have made it a hangout for thieves.

¹⁴Now there was room for the blind and crippled to get in. They came to Jesus and he healed them.

¹⁵When the religious leaders saw the outrageous things he was doing, and heard all the children running and shouting through the Temple, “Hosanna to David’s Son!” they were up in arms and took him to task. ¹⁶“Do you hear what these children are saying?”

Jesus said, “Yes, I hear them. And haven’t you read in God’s Word, ‘From the mouths of children and babies I’ll furnish a place of praise?’”

¹⁷Fed up, Jesus turned on his heel and left the city for Bethany, where he spent the night.

Synopsis: Jesus wasn’t a “quiet” presence among the people. He disrupted the status quo when it didn’t honor God and people and consider our motives when it comes to worship and faith.

Felt need: To understand our need for true worship of God

Visuals: Bag of coins. <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/cleansing-temple/>. Whip. This story has been a popular subject with artists over many centuries.

Media possibilities:

- “40 Days: The Temple Cleansing.” Length: 3:44. Cost: \$16.99. Widowed and just wanting to worship, a woman describes the scene at the temple when Jesus drove out the money changers and the kind of rescue that meant for her. <https://skitguys.com/videos/the-temple-cleansing>. **Comments:** Great way to end a sermon. Note worthy quotes: That day was about hope; it felt like being rescued.
- “Matthew 21: 1-17.” Length: 3:34 (begin at 1: 36. Cost: Free. Visual liturgy by Lumo Project. Begins with the triumphal entry. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3137-matthew-21-1-17-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

- Clip from “The Gospel of John.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6FYLZouuMY>

Related info:

Activity: Noisy offering

Music: God the Sculptor of the Mountains (FWS 2060); The Heart of Worship; When Christ Went to the Temple by Carol Winfrey Gillette - LLANGLOFFAN 7.6.7.6 D (“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”)

When Christ went to the Temple to worship God one day,
He entered through the courtyard where anyone could pray.
That court was for the nations--and all could enter in.
But Jesus found a market, a shameful robbers’ den.

There, cattle, sheep and pigeons were sold for sacrifice,
And moneychangers shouted of quality and price.
Outsiders could not enter the inner courts for prayer.
Their only place to worship was in the courtyard there.

When prayer gave way to profit, and pride closed many doors,
The Lord cried out in anger and made a whip of cords.
He shooed the sheep and cattle and scattered pigeons, too.
God's house was for all people-- not for a chosen few.

O God, you love the nations and call us all to pray.
Forgive us when our worship turns other folk away.
As Christ, in loving protest, fought prejudice and pride,
May we who follow Jesus now welcome all inside.

Discussion points: 1) Jesus is not throwing a hissy fit in the temple, but showing righteous indignation. There are healthy ways of dealing with anger. Think about Mister Roger’s song, “What do I do with the mad that I feel...” Pastor Mary’s kids asked her if she need a lump of clay to deal with what she was feeling one day. 2) This passage is about hospitality and affordability, not about the temple being a marketplace. People could not take part in the sacrifices because the vendors have taken advantage of the situation. 3) Jesus disrupts the status quo. 4) What is real worship? 5) Francis Chan retort: Don’t whine about not getting fed. We weren’t worshipping you. 6) Jerry: Jesus’ outrage is over the treatment of the least of these by the church. Jesus is the alternative to what the church had become. 7) Sunday morning brunch discussion: Jesus’ call to love our enemies is hard to hear, but seeing Jesus angry when people are abused, misuse power and authority, etc. shows that it isn’t okay to just let people off the hook.

March 24, 2019: “When Jesus Disappoints You”

FYI: Family Promises guests are here this week.

Scripture: Matthew 26: 14-16 (CEV) “Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus” **Note:** We might use more than just these four verses in order to illustrate why Judas was disappointed.

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples. He went to the chief priests¹⁵ and asked, “How much will you give me if I help you arrest Jesus?” They paid Judas thirty silver coins,¹⁶ and from then on he started looking for a good chance to betray Jesus.

Synopsis: Not everyone liked Jesus or thought he was doing what the promised Messiah should do. Judas and others expected a mighty warrior who would show power against the Romans, not someone who would suffer and die at their hand. Perhaps we still struggle to accept Jesus as he is - not as we want him to be.

Felt need: To confess our misplaced expectations of Jesus.

Visuals: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/judas-betrays-jesus/>

Media possibility: “Matthew 26: 1-35.” Length: 5:41 (1:42-2:05 or a bit more). Cost: Free.

Visual liturgy by Lumo Project. A woman anoints Jesus’ head with perfume, Judas makes a deal to betray Jesus, and at the Last Supper, Jesus predicts that Peter will deny Him. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3156-matthew-26-1-35-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

Music: #2129 “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Discussion points: 1) Judas’ expectations of Jesus were misplaced. How often are ours as well?

Do we expect that we will be rescued from suffering if we follow Jesus? How does that answer align with believing that he answers prayers? Judas was looking for a sword-wielding Messiah. Isn’t that something we might want now too? 2) Susan: Think of all the times we have betrayed Jesus by not following him. 3) We know that Judas’ betrayal fulfills a prophesy, but is there more to it? Note from Karen B: I had written down eyewitness, but could not remember the related details. 4) Jerry: The Gospel of Mark is written for an audience for an audience who did not know Jesus. Mark paints a picture of Jesus (good) versus the Temple (bad/scoundrels). 5) Was this a horrible miscalculation on Judas’ part? Was he thinking that Jesus would fight once they try to arrest him? 6) What is the significance of 30 pieces of silver? Answer from <https://www.gotquestions.org/thirty-pieces-of-silver.html>: *In Hebrew culture, thirty pieces of silver was not a lot of money. In fact, it was the exact price paid to the master of a slave if and when his slave was gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32).* 7) Judas’ disappointment builds up over time. He wanted victory – a Messiah who would smite his enemies.

March 31, 2019: “When Jesus Scares You”

Rev. Susan Hagans preaching

Scripture: Matthew 27: 46-49 (CEV) “The Death of Jesus”

⁴⁶ Then about that time Jesus shouted, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?”

⁴⁷ Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, “He’s calling for Elijah.”⁴⁸ One of them at once ran and grabbed a sponge. He soaked it in wine, then put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus.

⁴⁹ Others said, “Wait! Let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.”

Scripture: Psalm 22: 1-7, 23-24 (CEV)

¹ My God, my God, why have you deserted me? Why are you so far away? Won’t you listen to my groans and come to my rescue? ² I cry out day and night, but you don’t answer, and I can never rest.

³Yet you are the holy God, ruling from your throne and praised by Israel. ⁴Our ancestors trusted you, and you rescued them. ⁵When they cried out for help, you saved them, and you did not let them down when they depended on you.

⁶But I am merely a worm, far less than human, and I am hated and rejected by people everywhere. ⁷Everyone who sees me makes fun and sneers. They shake their heads...

²³All who worship the Lord, now praise him! You belong to Jacob's family and to the people of Israel, so fear and honor the Lord! ²⁴The Lord doesn't hate or despise the helpless in all of their troubles. When I cried out, he listened and did not turn away.

Synopsis: The humanity of Jesus can scare us. Jesus, God Incarnate, experienced separation from God.

Notes from Pastor Susan:

The words were spoken in Aramaic, but with some Hebrew characteristics, one of the languages commonly spoken in Palestine in Jesus' day. They reveal how deeply Jesus felt his abandonment by God as he bore the sins of mankind. The bystanders mistook the first words of Jesus' cry of "Eli, Eli," to be a cry for Elijah. It was commonly believed that Elijah would come in times of critical need to protect the innocent and rescue the righteous.

Instead, he was saying, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The humanity of Jesus can scare us. Jesus, God incarnate, experienced separation from God. The Father didn't fix it. Jesus had to go through it and endure the suffering and the separation.

We want the Rhinestone Jesus. (I bought the pin in Nashville) We want the Crown without the Cross. We want the pageantry and accolades and successes and answered prayers without paying the price which goes with the victory. We want the Resurrection without the Crucifixion. As Carlyle Fielding Stewart says, we want to be card-carrying members of the Christian faith but we don't want to pay the dues.

Standing up for what's right is dangerous. It can often mean pain of rejection, persecution, developing a willingness to suffer to bring about redemption. And justice. Physical suffering means unanswered prayers? No. It means life is suffering. Ask for courage and faith.

Being a Christian means you come around to believing that suffering will play a part in your own life, and you have come to terms with that, just as you have come to terms with Christ's suffering. Think about Palm Sunday. A parade. Balloons. Cotton Candy. Not really. Festive atmosphere. Hallelujahs. A great time. Followed by betrayals. Scourging with whips. Horrendous physical suffering. We can't even imagine as this very human Jesus, back bleeding from the many lashes he endured, carried his own heavy cross through crowds of spitting, jeering mocking people, the cross on which he is now hanging, slowly suffocating to death in the hot sun, his side pierced by a sword, his hands and feet nailed through to that cross...

Each of you knows I imagine how tough life can be. You pray and your prayers are not answered. Suffering continues, and goes on and on. Can you understand that feeling the absence of God is part of the human experience that Jesus also had? That to truly be God's Son, incarnate, in the flesh, he had to experience exactly the suffering and the sense of separation from God that we feel?

Being with someone who is dying: going on to their perfect healing. Christ gives us a staying power. Carol McLeod as an example.

The weeping Christ. God is with us. Within us.

Are you willing to sacrifice your life and the time you have to make your life and those around you better? Stay the course. God will see you through. Until that great and glorious day when you will soar with the angels and finally be set free!

Felt need: To claim that suffering isn't a sign of God's absence, but that God is near.

Visuals: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-crucified/>

Media possibilities:

- “Forsaken.” Length: 2:30 or 3:30. Cost: Free with our membership. We all experience moments in life when we feel God has forsaken us. From divorce, a medical emergency, or abuse, those moments can cause us to feel very alone. Featuring music by The Brilliance. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/forsaken/> **Comments:** Mixed reviews. It is very powerful, in large part because we the people are just like us or someone we know. The dark feelings (like a gut punch) would need very hopeful message and follow-up resources to be effective, especially for people who are in the midst of one of those dark experiences now, i.e. divorce, abuse, illness, loved one dying, bullying, etc., as the visual triggers are so strong. It might be better to use it in a small group situation. That is not to say that we cannot or should not address hard topics in worship. Temple UMC just did one service on suicide.
- “If (Have You Done Enough to Receive Salvation).” Length: 5:35. Cost: \$19.98. We all ask the question, "Have I done enough to receive salvation?" We ask it in the form of an “If I” statement. “If I just do such and such I will be okay.” However, asking "if I" will only lead to feelings of condemnation. Asking "if Christ" however, will lead to you being convinced that God has done everything for you to save you. With rich typography and a timeless message, this video will move your listeners away from trusting on their own merits to trusting on the merits of Christ. <https://skitguys.com/videos/if-have-you-done-enough-to-recieve-salvation> **Comments:** Would fit better with a sermon on Romans 8. Some found the typography distracting, confusing, and too fast paced; others liked that part.
- “Matthew 25: 32-55.” Length: 4:45 (we only need part of it). Cost: Free. Visual liturgy by Lumo Project. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3162-matthew-27-32-55-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

Music: #158 “Come, Christians, Join to Sing” or #2074 “Shout to the Lord” (first hymn); #2113 “Lamb of God” (second); #2130 “The Summons” (closing song)

Other music possibilities: #474 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”; “He Knows My Name, My Every Thought”; #2129 “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”; #2112 “Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley”

Call to Worship (posted in *Life in Liturgy* <https://lifeinliturgy.wordpress.com/>):

We gather in the name of the living Christ to worship God.

Surely, God is in this place and calls us to worship in spirit and truth.

God's love is for you and for all people everywhere.

That we may share God's love and life, may we be renewed in the refreshing Spirit of the living Christ.

The living Christ is with us.

Praise the Lord!

Discussion points: 1) A Rhinestone Jesus would preach a prosperity gospel. That is not the real Jesus. 2) Susan: Former choir director and Mona Shores teacher, Larry Rueger lost his daughter Tara in an auto accident. He lost all his faith too. How did his understanding (or misunderstanding) of prayer, faith, God, and suffering affect this change? What happens when we pray for healing and it doesn't happen? 3) "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is found in Matthew and Mark, but not Luke or John. Jesus would only have uttered these words if he felt totally abandoned by God. God had the last word – victory. 4) Carol McLeod is an example of someone who faced cancer with unspeakable joy. <http://www.lifechurchbuffalo.com/blog/wheredidthatcomefrom> 5) What do we pray for? Peace that comes from a spirit of understanding. Answers to our questions. 6) Everyone has to deal with scary situations at some point.

April 7, 2019: "When Jesus Knows You (He's No Fool)"

Rev. Jerry Hagans preaching

Scripture: Matthew 26: 31-35 (NIV) "Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial"

³¹Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

"I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

³²But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

³³Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

³⁴"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

³⁵But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

Synopsis: Jesus knows our humanity well and knows the reality of betrayal. He knows the depths of our hearts and our propensity for self-preservation. How do we open our hearts to God and seek forgiveness for turning away from Jesus in our midst?

Felt need: To examine ourselves and seek to remain faithful to Jesus

Visuals: Sheep, <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/peter-denies-jesus/>

Media possibilities:

- "40 Days: Peter's Denial." Length: 4:55. Cost: \$16.99. Watch as Peter painfully recounts the events leading up to his darkest hour. <https://skitguys.com/videos/peters-denial>.

Comments: Great! It brings Peter to life. Use it.

- "Matthew 26: 1-35." Length: 5:41 (begin at 4:50). Cost: Free? Visual liturgy by Lumo Project. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3156-matthew-26-1-35-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

Activity: Holy Communion #2257abcd (Jerry sings the leader part)

Music: #2216 "When We Are Called to Sing Your Praise"; #2218 "You Are Mine"; #2197 "Lord of All Hopefulness"; #2126 "All Who Hunger"; #2108 "O How He Loves You and Me"

Call to Worship:

We worship a perverse God who humbles the proud and might,
Who life up the disdained and ignored.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

We worship a loving God who feeds the hungry and soothes the victim's pain.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

We worship a peaceful God, who calls us to end the violence. War, abuse, crime, hatred, bigotry and greed destroys and lies waste what God has created and called “good.”

“Blesses are the peacemakers, for they will be call Children of God.”

Let us offer our praise, our gifts and our time to the God who loves and claims us as His own.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Opening Prayer:

God of love, we are grateful for the love you have shown us in Christ; for patience with our failings, for kindness in our weak moments, for praise when we’ve done our best, for forgiveness when we have failed, for those who walk with us when life is rough, for those who trust us even after we’ve betrayed them. For all the gifts of love, we thank you, especially for you love that is stronger than death. Amen.

Discussion points: 1) Jerry: Grace and salvation are available through Jesus even though he knows us well. Jesus loved that Peter said he would never fail him, even though he knew otherwise. Wouldn’t we do the same thing? 2) Jerry will lead from the message into Communion. 3) Jesus never wavers. It is a miracle that when he came back to life that he wasn’t mad. 4) The “Tale of Two Friends” drama with Peter and Judas could be used this week or next. It would make a good start to this week’s service if we didn’t use the Skit Guys video. 5) Dave: Can we ever use dark videos or does it make us too uncomfortable? Do large “successful” churches use them? Jerry: Yes, there are times to use them, but it takes wisdom to know when. People need a safe space to deal with heavy issues. Others: Make a time for sermon feedback/Q&A session, small group experiences. 6) Related mega-church story: Jerry and Susan attended a large church (1,500 in one service), where the pastor introduced a series of hard questions then went on to outline how members would have a chance to learn more in worship, small groups, etc. They did not skirt tough issues, but made sure they addressed them appropriately. 7) Being a Christian is determined by how you live, not where you say you belong.

April 14, 2019: Palm Sunday - “When Jesus Surprises You”

Scripture: Matthew 21: 1-11 (CEB) “The Triumphal Entry”

When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave two disciples a task. ² He said to them, “Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter, you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anybody says anything to you, say that the Lord needs it.” He sent them off right away. ⁴ Now this happened to fulfill what the prophet said, ⁵ *Say to Daughter Zion, “Look, your king is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt the donkey’s offspring.”* ⁶ The disciples went and did just as Jesus had ordered them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and laid their clothes on them. Then he sat on them.

⁸ Now a large crowd spread their clothes on the road. Others cut palm branches off the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds in front of him and behind him shouted, “*Hosanna* to the Son of David! *Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna* in the highest!”

¹⁰ And when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. “Who is this?” they asked.

¹¹ The crowds answered, “It’s the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Synopsis: Jesus' triumphal entry wasn't very "triumphant" at all, except for the fact that he was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah. Coming into Jerusalem on a donkey rather than a horse was a sign of who he was and how he would rule as King. Jesus continues to surprise us as "the man who would be king" coming in humility and peace.

Felt need: To be surprised by Jesus - the servant King - and follow him

Visuals: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/triumphant-entry/>

Media possibility: "Matthew 21: 1-17." Length: 3:34 (end at 1:34). Cost: Free? Visual liturgy by Lumo Project. <https://www.bible.com/videos/3137-matthew-21-1-17-from-lumoproject-dot-com>

Related info: Intriguing question: *Do you want a Savior who kicks a** or rides on the back of one?* What's the difference for us? Isn't this the question that Judas asked?

Activity: Palms. "A Tale of Two Friends" – Drama with Peter and Judas (<http://www.discoverworship.com/files/uploads/a-tale-of-two-friends-2Psample.pdf> last used in 2015)

Music: Hosanna, Loud Hosanna (UMH 278), All Glory, Laud, and Honor (UMH 280), Holy, Holy, Holy! (UMH 64)

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary: Every week's message in this series so far is actually based on events that happened after Palm Sunday. We begin the series with a meeting of Jesus and Caesar (indirectly), in the Pharisee's question to Jesus about paying taxes. Today's scripture reading gives us another indirect comparison between these two men. 2) We need to move from Palm Sunday to Passion Sunday. "A Tale of Two Friends" at the end of worship would do that. 3) After Easter, we can look back and say that it all works out. That is hard to see in the interim.

April 18, 2019: Holy Thursday, "When Jesus Tells You What to Do"

Meal at 5:45 p.m., Worship at 7:00 p.m., Prayer vigil follows

Scripture: Matthew 26: 17-30 (CEB) "Passover with the Disciples & Last Supper"

¹⁷On the first day of the Festival of Thin Bread, Jesus' disciples came to him and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?"

¹⁸Jesus told them to go to a certain man in the city and tell him, "Our teacher says, 'My time has come! I want to eat the Passover meal with my disciples in your home.'" ¹⁹They did as Jesus told them and prepared the meal.

²⁰⁻²¹When Jesus was eating with his twelve disciples that evening, he said, "One of you will surely hand me over to my enemies."

²²The disciples were very sad, and each one said to Jesus, "Lord, you can't mean me!"

²³He answered, "One of you men who has eaten with me from this dish will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will die, as the Scriptures say. But it's going to be terrible for the one who betrays me! That man would be better off if he had never been born."

²⁵Judas said, "Teacher, you surely don't mean me!"

"That's what you say!" Jesus replied. But later, Judas did betray him.

²⁶During the meal Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and eat it. This is my body."

²⁷Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He then gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this and drink it. ²⁸This is my blood, and with it God makes his agreement with you. It will be

poured out, so that many people will have their sins forgiven. ²⁹From now on I am not going to drink any wine, until I drink new wine with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Scripture: John 13: 1-17 (NIV) "Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet"

¹It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Synopsis: Jesus embodies the love he asks us to share in sharing the Last Supper and washing his disciples' feet. Even as we know what's ahead, how do we hear him and follow his way?

Felt need: To hear what Jesus says - and do what he says

Visuals: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/last-supper/>,
<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-washes-feet/>

Media possibilities: "The Last Supper." Length: 4:03. Cost: \$20.00. Visual liturgy of John 13.
<https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/49835/the-last-supper>

Related info:

Activity: Simple meal, Holy Communion, hand/foot washing

Music: Bread of the World (UMH 624), Depth of Mercy (UMH 355), Jesu, Jesu (UMH 432)

Discussion points: 1) The Last Supper is also shared in the Gospel of Mark, but the foot washing is only in John. 2) Serve simple finger food at the back of the sanctuary. 3) We may need a new prayer vigil signup sheet. 4) Jesus' disciples did not understand why Jesus was washing their feet. The bishop washes the feet of ordination candidates following Jesus' example. The pope has done the same thing for the poor.

April 19, 2019: Good Friday

Worship at 12:00 p.m. at Covenant Community RCA

Scripture:
Sermon:
Music:

April 21, 2019: Easter Sunday - "When Jesus Saves You"

Scripture: Matthew 28: 1-10 (CEV) "The Resurrection"

¹The Sabbath was over, and it was almost daybreak on Sunday when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

²Suddenly a strong earthquake struck, and the Lord's angel came down from heaven. He rolled away the stone and sat on it. ³The angel looked as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards shook from fear and fell down, as though they were dead.

⁵The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to a cross. ⁶He isn't here! God has raised him to life, just as Jesus said he would. Come, see the place where his body was lying. ⁷Now hurry! Tell his disciples that he has been raised to life and is on his way to Galilee. Go there, and you will see him. That is what I came to tell you."

⁸The women were frightened and yet very happy, as they hurried from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and greeted them. They went near him, held on to his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said, "Don't be afraid! Tell my followers to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

Synopsis: Jesus' crucifixion isn't the end of the story, and his saving work doesn't end at the cross. We don't just sit in awe at resurrection either. The joy of salvation is lived out when we go and tell (and show) others about it. The reality of resurrection isn't something to keep to ourselves, but something to share.

Felt need: To claim the unexplainable joy of resurrection and promise of new life

Visuals:

Media possibilities: We did not look at any of these as a group, but will do so on a Monday.

- "He Is Still Risen." Length: 1:35. Cost: \$20.00. The reality of the Resurrection hasn't changed in 2,000 years. This mini movie demonstrates that the significance and impact of the gospel are the same today as they were back then.
<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/66553/hes-still-risen>
- "This Is Resurrection." Length: 2:26. Cost: Free with our membership. **This is Resurrection** uniquely brings together those who have doubts and those who are certain about faith, showing us that resurrection is more than just a story to believe in- it's something that happens every day. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/this-is-resurrection/>
- "Alive (with music)." Length: 2:23. Cost: \$20.00. Easter spoken word poetry telling the dramatic resurrection story of Jesus Christ's arrest, crucifixion, death and resurrection- He is Risen! Jesus is ALIVE! <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/53692/alive-with-music>
- "Just Like You Said." Length: 1:37. Cost: \$17.98. This Easter-themed mini movie reflects on the fact that Jesus' death and resurrection happened just as he predicted - and encourages believers to rejoice in the reality that our own resurrection will also happen just as he said.
<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/62107/just-like-you-said>

Related info: Sunrise Service?

Activity: Noisy offering

Music: Christ the Lord is Risen Today (UMH 302), Christ Is Alive (UMH 318), He Is Lord (UMH 177)

Discussion points: 1) Jerry is willing to speak at the sunrise service at Mona Lake Boat Club. 2) Some translations of Matthew 25:5 use “Greetings!” instead of “Don’t be afraid.”

April 28, 2019: “When Jesus Tells You to Go and Keep Going”

Scripture: Matthew 28: 16-20 (CEB) “The Great Commission”

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go.

¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ Jesus came near and spoke to them, “I’ve received all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.”

Synopsis: The disciples respond in worship and with doubt when they see the risen Jesus. He gives them the Great Commission - to go, baptize, and teach. They are sent out beyond their home and comfort to share Good News with the assurance of Jesus’ presence - God with us.

Felt need: To commit to our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior

Visuals:

Media possibilities: We did not look at any of these as a group.

- “The Great Commission – Matthew 28.” Length 0:36. Cost \$10.00. A kinetic typography video. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/64853/the-great-commission-matthew-28>
- “Our Mission after Easter.” Length: 1:41. Cost: We own it. Last used: 4/12/15. The resurrection of Jesus is cause for great celebration on Easter Sunday. However, it’s in the days after Easter that Jesus appeared to His disciples and gave the church its mission. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/59334/our-mission-after-easter>
- “As You Go.” Length: 2:16. Cost: \$18.98. This is a thought-provoking story of how 2 teenagers are living out the Great Commission . <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/64217/as-you-go>

Activity: Holy Baptism/Reaffirmation of Baptism

Music: Go Ye, Go Ye, Into the World (FWS 2239), You Are the Seed (UMH 583), Go Forth for God (UMH 670), Lord, You Give the Great Commission (UMH 584), Shine, Jesus, Shine (FWS 2173), Christ Beside Me (FWS 2166); #389 “Freely, Freely”

Discussion points: Jesus tells everyone to go and baptize.