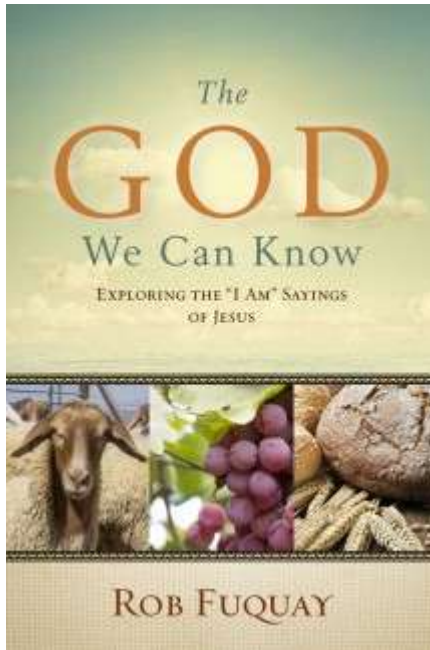


Brainstorming Messages & Scripture Lent and Easter 2015

Monday, February 2, 2015

Members present: David Booth, Brad Dean, Gary Cooper, Lynne Richmond, Fred Woodworth, Roger Richmond, Michael Boersma, Marcia Woodworth, Mary Ivanov, Ron Zuker, Vicki Zuker, Karen Booth, Chris Beaudoin; and dinner guests Ivan, Ana, and Luke Ivanov.



During Lent, everyone will be encouraged to participate in a church wide book study of The God We Can Know. This book will also serve as the jumping off point for Pastor Mary's. There are short videos that can be used in the small group settings.

Our Goal:

"The worship we hope to develop will be rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will be relevant to local and emerging culture, while addressing the needs of believers and unbelievers alike. Above all, it will intentionally engage people physically, emotionally, intellectually, and soulfully."

Felt needs: What physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual need are we addressing in this service so that worship is engaging and a means of making disciples? What question needs to be posed/answered so that we are making disciples?

General discussion points: 1) Lent is a time of preparation and self-denial. It can also be a time where we develop new habits, like being part of a small group. Examples of both are listed at the end of the February Harbor Light. 2) The "I am" statements are only found in the Gospel of John. 4) Pastor Mary is part of a lectionary study group composed of area Methodist pastors. Three churches from this group will be doing the book study along with us. 5) As we read Exodus (February 22), we will ask Rabbi Alpert to speak to what this book means to the Jewish people. It is likely that we will host this four-church gathering. 6) Look at the relationship between paired statements Jesus said, e.g. "I am the light of the world" and "You are the light of the world."

Wednesday, February 18, 2015: Service at Central UMC

Ash Wednesday

Bishop Deborah Kiesey will preach. Kendra Robbins has a cello solo. Lake Harbor typically has about twenty people (maybe more) who attend this service.

February 22, 2015: "Knowing the Great "I Am""

Lent #1

Synopsis: God is Creator of the universe, and yet God is as close to us as our own breathing. God knows and loves the entire world, and God knows and loves each of us intimately. God desires that we know Him, just as we are known to Him, and God desires that we understand that He is

enough for us. His grace is sufficient for us. We begin the season of Lent with the intent to know God more fully and to be transformed in the process.

Metaphor/visuals: I AM who I AM. Desert (book's image). Burning bush.

Music suggestions: O God, Our Help in Ages Past ([UMH 117](#)); Great Is Thy Faithfulness (UMH 140); Just as I Am, Without One Plea (UMH 357); How Majestic Is Your Name ([TFWS 2023](#)); Be Still and Know I am God (TFWS 2057); Lord I Lift Your Name on High (TFWS 2088)

Contemporary suggestions: Here I Am to Worship by Tim Hughes; 10,000 Reasons by Jonas Myrin and Matt Redman; Blessed Be Your Name by Matt and Beth Redman; How Great Is Our God by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, and Ed Cash

Media possibilities:

- www.sermonspice.com/product/12112/moses-at-burning-bush. God speaks to Moses at the burning bush. Length 1:45 Cost \$10 (Lynne: animation good... perhaps show during children's time?)
- www.sermonspice.com/product/10513/I-AM-intro. Intro to series on dramatic I AM statements of Christ. Length: 0:31. Cost: \$5. **Discussion:** This short into could be used more than once.

Discussion points: 1) Offer the imposition of ashes today. 2) When God says, "I am," is that enough for us? It was not enough for the Israelites, even when bread and meat came down from heaven. This appears to be a pretty good picture of addiction. 3) There is a certain comfort in what we know, even if it is as undesirable as the life of slavery the Israelites had known. 4) Note that the United States has existed half as long as the Israelites were in Egypt. 5) Send out information about the Gospel of John sent out before we begin this series. 6) Rewrite Exodus as a dramatic reading or humorous skit (a la Bill Cosby's Noah skit – right?). Potential Moses: Roger Knopf. 7) Ideas for a burning bush can be found on Pinterest. Can we find a video clip to project on the wall instead? 8) The website www.thegodwecanknow.com includes a number of materials for advertising and worship.

Liturgy possibilities:

Children's Time Prayer:

We'll incorporate this prayer at the end of each Children's Time. I'll ask a different child to lead us each week: **Dear God, We are thankful you are the God we can know. You are with us here and everywhere we go. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Litany

One: Just as God spoke to Moses, God wants to speak to us. Let us open our hearts to God who wants to be known and who says,

All: "I Am Who I Am."

One: When life pressures us to care more for things than for God, remember that Jesus said,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry."

One: When we feel puzzled about which choices are right, we can ask for guidance from the one who said,

All: "I am the Light of the World."

One: When we feel vulnerable and lost, we can find comfort in knowing that we are continuously being sought by the one who said,

All: "I am the Good Shepherd. Come to me."

One: When we feel powerless and weary, we can find power offered to us by the one who said,

All: "I am the True Vine. Abide in me."

One: When we wonder who's in and who's out with God, we can find reassurance in the grace embodied in Jesus who welcomed all, saying,

All: "I am the Way. Follow me."

One: When we face loss and pain, we can find hope in the one who promised us renewed and abundant life, saying,

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Live in me."

Prayer of Illumination: Dear God, Help us to open our eyes, our ears, our minds, and our spirits to understand who you are and to know you. Be with us as we draw near to you and closer to each other. In your son's holy name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Exodus 3:1-14 (New International Version)

Dramatic Reading

¹Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

⁴When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

¹¹But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

¹²And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

¹³Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

¹⁴God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

March 1, 2015: "Knowing God's Satisfaction"

Lent #2

Synopsis: We live in a world where "satisfaction" is important, and many times instant gratification goes along with the desire for satisfaction. Most of the time, we're looking for "what's in it for me?" Likewise, there's always "something better out there" - like the next version of the iPhone or any other device. How do we hear Jesus' promise of satisfaction in such a world? How do we show our trust in him to satisfy our deepest needs?

*How might we challenge to the congregation to fast for the remainder of Lent? Tithe for a month?

Metaphor/visuals: I am the Bread of Life. Bread/wheat,

Holy Communion/songs for Communion: Let Us Break Bread Together (UMH 618); Fill My Cup, Lord (UMH 641); One Bread, One Body (UMH 620); Eat This Bread (UMH 628)

Music suggestions: My Hope Is Built ([UMH 368](#)); Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (UMH 384); All Who Hunger ([TFWS 2126](#)); You Satisfy the Hungry Heart (UMH); Rolling Stones' "I Can't Get No Satisfaction."

Media possibility: www.sermonspice.com/product/52401/communion. My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Communion...His gift to us! Length 3:32 Cost \$15 (Lynne: show during Communion while congregation comes forward?)

Discussion points: 1) We live for instant gratification. Think how much has changed since 1994 as Today show hosts look at the internet in its infancy (<http://www.today.com/allday/flashback-nbc-anchors-glimpse-future-internet-archive-videos-2D79366025>). 2) Take-off on Apple's iPhone: iSatisfaction. 3) What is the first thing you wanted or though you needed today? Maybe that is what you need to give up unless it is at the bottom of the hierarchy of Maslow's needs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs). 4) Brad's dad truly practiced self-denial by completely giving up all sweets during Lent. 5) Consider what we should "fast from" and "feast on": Skip social media, like Facebook and Twitter for a set time each day. Forego eating out. Give extravagantly/tithe for a month. Set aside a short amount of time each day to disconnect; spend that time in prayer and bible reading.

Liturgy possibilities:

Call to Worship

One: Come, let us worship Jesus, the Bread of Life!

All: Christ has come from heaven to feed us with divine vitality.

One: We worship the One who offers the world everlasting life.

All: Bread of heaven, feed us till we want no more.

Litany

One: When we feel hungry for more of something—even when we're not sure what that something is, we can remember that Jesus said,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry."

One: When we feel distracted by other means of fulfillment in the world, help us to remember that Jesus said,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry."

One: When we find ourselves feeling inadequate or incomplete in our daily lives, remind us that we fill ourselves up on Jesus' sustaining words,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry."

One: When we look around at friends and strangers, assessing how we measure up to others, help us to remember that we are enough and are satisfied by God's grace when we hear Jesus say,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry."

One: When we worry that the satisfaction we have now may one day run out, let us rest in the truth and fullness of Jesus' promise,

All: "I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry." Amen.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to remember that even when we feel like we don't do enough to honor you, you accept us just as we are because you made us and love us. Let us be constant reminders to each other that we are enough. We invite you to join us in this place, making your presence evident in our community. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Scripture: John 6:25-59 (Today's English Version) - **could be shortened to verse 35 or 40**

²⁵When the people found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Teacher, when did you get here?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "I am telling you the truth: you are looking for me because you ate the bread and had all you wanted, not because you understood my miracles. ^{27E} Do not work for food that spoils; instead, work for the food that lasts for eternal life. This is the food which the Son of Man will give you, because God, the Father, has put his mark of approval on him."

²⁸So they asked him, "What can we do in order to do what God wants us to do?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "What God wants you to do is to believe in the one he sent."

³⁰They replied, "What miracle will you perform so that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, just as the scripture says, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³²"I am telling you the truth," Jesus said. "What Moses gave you was not the bread from heaven; it is my Father who gives you the real bread from heaven. ³³For the bread that God gives is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴"Sir," they asked him, "give us this bread always."

³⁵"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶Now, I told you that you have seen me but will not believe. ³⁷Everyone whom my Father gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me, ³⁸because I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And it is the will of him who sent me that I should not lose any of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them all to life on the last day. ⁴⁰For what my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day."

⁴¹The people started grumbling about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴²So they said, "This man is Jesus son of Joseph, isn't he? We know his father and mother. How, then, does he now say he came down from heaven?"

⁴³Jesus answered, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. ⁴⁴People cannot come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me; and I will raise them to life on the last day. ^{45E} The prophets wrote, 'Everyone will be taught by God.' Anyone who hears the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶This does not mean that anyone has seen the Father; he who is from God is the only one who has seen the Father. ⁴⁷I am telling you the truth: he who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died. ⁵⁰But the bread that comes down from heaven is of such a kind that whoever eats it will not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If you eat this bread, you will live forever. The bread that I will give you is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live."

⁵²This started an angry argument among them. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

⁵³Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them to life on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is the real food; my blood is the real drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me, and I live in them. ⁵⁷The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died. Those who eat this bread will live forever."

⁵⁹Jesus said this as he taught in the synagogue in Capernaum.

March 8, 2015: "Knowing God's Guidance"

Lent #3

Synopsis: From fold-out maps to GPS to smart phones, we have navigation tools at our fingertips. We can be fairly certain of having the right directions for where we're headed, but what about our spiritual journey? We all need God's guidance, whether we know it or not, and yet we don't always pay such close attention to God's direction. How do we intentionally seek God's guidance and take it willingly? What happens when we don't seek God's direction, or when we think we can make it on our own?

*How might we challenge one another to seek God's guidance more directly through prayer and fellowship with others?

Metaphor/visuals: I am the Light of the World. Sun (book's images). Compass (Ron has 240). Spotlight (Gary) vs. Small flashlight (Karen).

Music suggestions: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (UMH 206); Be Thou My Vision (UMH 451); This Little Light of Mine (UMH 585); Come, We That Love the Lord (UMH 732); Guide My Feet (TFWS 2208); We Are Marching (TFWS 2235-b)

Contemporary suggestions: Open the Eyes of My Heart by Paul Baloche; Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone) by John Newton, Chris Tomlin, and Louie Giglio; True Light (as sung for the Singing Christmas Tree <http://blogs.monashores.net/lawtons/files/2013/09/15-True-Light.mp3>); Great Is the Lord by Michael W. Smith

Discussion points: 1) Litany: Illustrate each part of the litany with a different silhouette (heart, crying, pushing away, and two doors/fork in the road). Use the litany between two praise songs. 2) The bible holds answers to life's problems. Illustration: Ask someone to randomly open the bible, point to a passage, and begin reading. Ask how that applies to (his/her own) life. 3) It is amazing how often the bible verse of the day is just what you need to hear. Encourage people who don't receive some form of the verse of the day, to sign up to receive one. 4) Dim the lights so that we can spotlight the cross.

Media possibilities:

- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/26772/light. This video weaves scripture with light images. Length 1:19. Cost \$20.
- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/19572/He-is-our-light. This video encourages the audience to stop looking to the world for freedom from darkness.... to start looking to Jesus.... He is our Light. Length 2:14. Cost \$20.
- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/42268/Christmas-Eve-Glory. Video about the Light of Heaven invading earth (Lynne: end video with the dove above the candles) Length 1:56 Cost \$17. **Discussion:** Liked the candles. Would need to get rid of Merry Christmas.

- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/40349/chasing-the-light. Through worship, may we open our hearts and hands, giving sufficient attention to the one called "The Light of the World." Length 1:49 Cost \$17.98. **Discussion:** Several people liked this one about the little girl and fireflies too.

Liturgy possibilities:

Prayer: Loving God, we come together today, rejoicing and dancing in the light that you shine on us, allowing us to see you, know you, and find our way to you through your son Jesus. We know that you are with us in this place. Help us open our eyes to see you, our ears to hear your Word, and our hearts to know your love. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Litany

One: When we look around us and feel that only darkness and emptiness surround us, illuminate our hearts with Jesus' words,

All: "I am the Light of the World."

One: When we look for God in the places of pain and suffering, pleading for that holy presence to be made evident even in the gloomiest of places, help us to see God at work through Jesus' promise,

All: "I am the Light of the World."

One: When we feel far away from God, even when we try to create that distance ourselves, remind us that the love of God is always touching us through Jesus' words,

All: "I am the Light of the World."

One: When we can't figure out where to go next, what to do, or who to be, help us to hear God's call and see the path illuminated for us by the one who says,

All: "I am the Light of the World."

One: When we wonder how we will go out into the world and shine God's light, sharing God's love with all the earth, let us follow Jesus' lead as he reveals himself to us, saying,

All: "I am the Light of the World." Amen.

Prayer

Loving God, Creator of Light.

We thank you for coming to us in Jesus Christ,
 showing us who you are
 and who we are created to be in you.

Light the dark corners of our minds.

Warm the cold places in our hearts.

Fill the empty chambers of our spirits.

Heal the brokenness in our lives. Amen.

Scripture: John 7:2, 14; 8:12-20 (Contemporary English Version)

^{7:22} It was almost time for the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁴ When the festival was about half over, Jesus went into the temple and started teaching.

^{8:12} Once again Jesus spoke to the people. This time he said, "I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life."

¹³ The Pharisees objected, "You are the only one speaking for yourself, and what you say isn't true!"

¹⁴ Jesus replied:

Even if I do speak for myself, what I say is true! I know where I came from and where I am going. But you don't know where I am from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge in the same way that everyone else does, but I don't judge anyone. ¹⁶If I did judge, I would judge fairly, because I would not be doing it alone. The Father who sent me is here with me. ¹⁷Your Law requires two witnesses to prove that something is true. ¹⁸I am one of my witnesses, and the Father who sent me is the other one.

¹⁹"Where is your Father?" they asked.

"You don't know me or my Father!" Jesus answered. "If you knew me, you would know my Father."

²⁰Jesus said this while he was still teaching in the place where the temple treasures were stored. But no one arrested him, because his time had not yet come.

March 15, 2015: "Knowing God's Care"

Lent #4

Synopsis: We seek security in our lives. Whether it's a child who finds security from a favorite toy or blanket, a teen who finds security in relationships with friends (or even from a cell phone!), or an adult who draws security from a well-padded bank account, we search for security all around us. Jesus invites us to find security in him, and he also tells us that we can't earn it. It is a gift of God.

Metaphor/visuals: I am the Gate for the Sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. Sheep (book's image).

Music suggestions: Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us (UMH 381); Spirit Song (UMH 347); He Leadeth Me (UMH 128); The King of Love My Shepherd Is (UMH 138); Shepherd Me, O God (FWS 2058)

Contemporary suggestion: In Christ Alone by Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

Media possibilities:

- www.sermonspice.com/product/44367/Jesus-is-the-gate. Shepherds in Israel still use stone sheep pens today to protect their flocks from wild animals. The shepherds themselves serve as the gate by sitting in the narrow openings. Length 2:21 Cost \$15. **Discussion:** Excellent illustration! Use it! Like the question at the end: Have you entered the gate?
- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/33995/i-am-your-shepherd. I am your shepherd. I will give you rest....lyrics of video song: "His love is for us all." Length 2:54 Cost \$15

Discussion points: 1) From the video: The pens look full. It seems like there should always be room for more sheep if this is a good analogy. 2) If we are not careful in how we interpret this "I am" statement, it can seem like it excludes people. The point is that the gate offers both protection and freedom for the sheep. 3) Where do we find security? At work (prison – Brad Dean). In the familiar. Knowing there is a plan (as long as we trust the planner). Blankets/thumbs/pacifiers /stuffed animal/parent (for small children). Doors, if we can hide behind them and they keep "bad stuff" out. Knowing that in death does not conquer us (for Christians--- Dietrich Bonhoeffer's calm demeanor before his execution. For more information see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietrich_Bonhoeffer). Joy in owning fewer possessions. It depends on our age and life experience (Gary's story of his young co-worker). In faith (If God is for me, who can stand against?). 4) Examples of massive things that seemed secure, but failed: Ancient castles. Titanic. IAG. Enron. Spruce Goose. Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Chernobyl. Three Mile Island. Technology.

Liturgy possibilities:

Litany

One: When we find ourselves wondering how we are expected to navigate this confusing, intimidating world, help us to remember that we are not alone because Jesus says,

All: "I am the Good Shepherd."

One: When we feel tempted to stray from our communities, to try to make it on our own without the help of those who care about us, remind us that we are never out of your care when Jesus tells us,

All: "I am the Good Shepherd."

One: When we take a risk and venture out alone anyway, remind us that there is no distance we can wander that God is not still guarding and holding us close when Jesus says,

All: "I am the Good Shepherd."

One: When we're too tired to do or to think anymore, help us to remember to rest and feel safe under the keep of Jesus, who says,

All: "I am the Good Shepherd." Amen.

Prayer:

Holy God, we come to you today in gratitude for your love and care. We can become so busy and consumed with stress and deadlines that we need a reminder of who we are, whose we are, and why we are here. Thank you for loving us through all of it. We need your guidance and care to do the work you call us to do and to be the people you call us to be. Help us, Lord, as we seek to do your will as your beloved children. Amen.

Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Prayer (If using during Lent, St. Patrick's Day is March 17.)

Benediction – Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ be with us, Christ before us, Christ behind us,

Christ in us, Christ beneath us, Christ above us,

Christ on our right, Christ on our left

Christ where we lie, Christ where we sit, Christ where we arise,

Christ in every heart of everyone who thinks of us,

Christ in every eye that sees us.

Christ in every ear that hears us.

Salvation is of the Lord,

Salvation is of the Christ,

May your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us. Amen.

Scripture: John 10:1-18 (The Message)

¹"Let me set this before you as plainly as I can. If a person climbs over or through the fence of a sheep pen instead of going through the gate, you know he's up to no good—a sheep rustler!

²The shepherd walks right up to the gate. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep recognize his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he gets them all out, he leads them and they follow because they are familiar with his voice. ⁵They won't follow a stranger's voice but will scatter because they aren't used to the sound of it."

⁶Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about. ⁷So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. ⁸All those others are up to no good—sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them. ⁹I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

¹¹"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary. ¹²A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf. ¹³He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him.

¹⁴"I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me. ¹⁵In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before myself, sacrificing myself if necessary. ¹⁶You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd. ¹⁷This is why the Father loves me: because I freely lay down my life. And so I am free to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down; I also have the right to take it up again. I received this authority personally from my Father."

March 22, 2015: "Knowing God's Power"

Lent #5

Synopsis: "It's easy to give up when we think we're running alone." As Jesus prepares the disciples for his departure, he offers the image of the vine and branches to remind them that he is the source of strength for them. There are times when we struggle to believe that God's strength is enough for us, but what does it look like for us to let Jesus be the vine? How do we understand Jesus' words about "cutting away" both in terms of pruning for growth and removing dead branches?

Metaphor/visuals: I am the True Vine. Grapevines/vineyard/grapes/pruner. Vines (book's image). Power strip.

Music suggestions: Bless Be the Ties that Binds (UMH 557); One Bread, One Body (UMH 620); We are One in the Spirit (TFWS 2223); O Blessed Spring (TFWS 2076)

Contemporary suggestion: One Thing Remains by Brian Johnson, Christa Black Gifford, and Jeremy Riddle (Ana Ivanov could sing this in worship)

Media possibilities:

- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/33383/the-true-vine. Animation emphasizing John 15...that Jesus is the only True Vine Length 0:45 Cost: We own it. (Last used on 11/24/13)
- www.sermonspice.com/product/24779/power-strip. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. What would this same analogy look like in today's technological world? Length 2:31 Cost \$15. **Discussion:** This is a good analogy for today, but it is something we could present in person. Who would be silly enough to forget to connect to the power source? See p. 69 of the book for author Rob Fuquay's furnace story for one example. It also reminds us of a scene in "Christmas Vacation."

Discussion points: 1) Plant cutting can be put into soil and will root. Many plants can come from one. 2) Grapevines: New cuttings are often grafted onto old root stock. There is power in the root stock. No roots/no power. 3) Faith is passed down through generations of families in much the same way. Example of four generation families at Lake Harbor: Block/Decker/Sroka. Deephouse/Deephouse/Robbins. 4) Pruning: It doesn't seem painful when talking about cutting away dead vines. It is harder (painful) when we are looking at having new growth (the branches – that's us) cut away so that we can bear more fruit.

Liturgy possibilities:

Litany

One: When we feel isolated, we can remember that Jesus said,

All: "I am the True Vine; abide in me."

One: When we feel powerless, we can find strength in remembering that Jesus said,

All: "I am the True Vine; abide in me."

One: When we are tempted to try to go it alone, we can reach out to other believers, remembering that Jesus said,

All: "I am the True Vine; abide in me."

One: When life becomes so busy that time with God seems impossible to find, we can regain our focus by remembering that Jesus said,

All: "I am the True Vine; abide in me."

One: When we stress about the quality of the fruit we are or are not producing, we can relax and trust the source of our life and growth, the One who said,

All: "I am the True Vine; abide in me." Amen.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for bringing us all here together again. We have learned so much about you through the words of your son, Jesus Christ, and we hunger for a deeper sense of you and your love for us. Be with us as we continue on this journey; help us to love one another and to use the gifts you gave us for the building up of your kingdom. In your name we pray. Amen.

Scripture: John 15:1-8 (9-17) (The Message)

¹"I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer.

²He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. ³You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

⁴"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

⁵"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. ⁶Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. ⁷But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. ⁸This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

.....

⁹“I’ve loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you’ll remain intimately at home in my love. That’s what I’ve done—kept my Father’s commands and made myself at home in his love.

¹¹“I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. ¹²This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. ¹³This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. ¹⁴You are my friends when you do the things I command you. ¹⁵I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.

¹⁶“You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

March 29, 2015: “Knowing God’s Way”

Palm Sunday

Synopsis: This is more than just believing something or believing in Jesus. To follow Jesus as the “way” means that we have relationship with a living Savior (who saves us from sin) and a living Lord (who demands our allegiance). How do we make Jesus our way?

**How does this relate to Palm Sunday? Those who greeted Jesus when he came into Jerusalem quickly learned that his way of being Messiah wasn’t what they expected. How do we struggle even today to follow Jesus who doesn’t promise that we won’t have struggles, but promises that he’ll be with us through them?

Metaphor/visuals: I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. Path (book’s image).

Music suggestions: The Summons (TFWS 2130); I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (TFWS 2129)

Contemporary suggestions: Give Me Jesus (Fernando Ortega/Jeremy Camp); Jesus Paid it All (Kristian Stanfall/Newsboys); Big House (Audio Adrenaline)

Media possibilities:

- www.sermonspice.com/product/24951/I-AM-you-are-follow-me. I AM ...a phrase that first appears in Exodus...a name that Jesus reclaims. He then empowers us by giving one simple command: "Follow me." Length 2:02. Cost \$20. Lynne: use as a benediction? **Discussion:** Liked the text. Mixed reviews on the music.
- [www.sermonspice.com/product/53506/palm-sunday-\(we-worship-you\)](http://www.sermonspice.com/product/53506/palm-sunday-(we-worship-you)). Use as an intro to your time of worship on Palm Sunday Length 1:15 Cost \$9
- www.sermonspice.com/product/45920/palm-sunday. The triumphant entry of Jesus, celebration of His arrival, and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Length 1:40. Cost: We own it. Last used 4/13/14. Not sure if we want to use it again so quickly.

Discussion points: 1) How can we incorporate the palms? Mary will begin with palms and end with passion. It seems likely that it will be difficult for some people to participate in Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship given that spring break begins on Friday. 2) Note from last year: Members who got the fan palms were expected to participate in the palm processional through the gate of Jerusalem. We had 40+ participants. People who did not participate got the single fronds. 3) It would be great to include a real donkey (Petting zoo: The Lord needs it.).

Liturgy possibilities:

Litany

One: When we face a complicated situation that challenges us to see what God wants us to do, we can remember Jesus saying to his friends,

All: "I am the Way."

One: When we find ourselves wondering if we're really accepted by God, we can take comfort in remembering the grace embodied in Jesus who said,

All: "I am the Way."

One: When we are tempted to believe that we know who's in and who's out, we can remember that Jesus welcomed outsiders and outcasts and said,

All: "I am the Way."

One: When we fall into the trap of thinking that faith is about rules, we can remember the call to relationship found in Jesus' words,

All: "I am the Way."

One: When we wake in the morning and wonder what God asks of us in that day's encounters, we can find our model and our answer in the one who said,

All: "I am the Way."

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for working in our lives every day and allowing us to gather together to learn more about you through your son Jesus Christ. We thank you for the work you have already done in our lives and in the life of our church and we know you are not finished with us. Please be with us as we draw near to you and closer to each other. In your son's holy name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: John 14:1-7 (Today's New International Version)

¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

²My Father's house has plenty of room; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Thursday, April 2, 2015: "Knowing God Who Serves"

Maundy Thursday

Synopsis: Jesus' relationship with his disciples was intimate as they ate together and served together, but the image of Jesus washing their feet is possibly the most powerful example of servanthood other than the crucifixion. He connects his service to love, and so we continue to serve in his name as a way to share his love and grace.

Metaphor/visuals: Basin and towel

Holy Communion?

Music suggestions: Jesu, Jesu (UMH 432); Taizé-style music from UMH and TFWS

Media possibility: www.sermonspice.com/product/34217/the-last-supper. Re-creation of The Last Supper from Big Book Media Length 4:07 Cost \$25

Activity: Foot washing (or hand washing)

Discussion points: 1) Thirty to seventy people typically attend Maundy Thursday services. 2) The format has varied widely and has include a Seder; Communion; multisensory service/three short

vignettes including foot washing (an adaption of the service found at <http://www.gbod.org/resources/multisensory-worship-service-for-holy-thursday>); Tenebrae Service with choir; Stations of the Easter; Communion served in groups of twelve around a table. 3) Consider having a large table down the center aisle and having each person serve the next one. 4) Plan on having childcare available. 5) This is the first year that Roots will be at Lake Harbor on Maundy Thursday. We will need to find a way to work together.

Scripture: John 13 (The Message)

¹Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end.

²It was suppertime. The Devil by now had Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.

³Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. ⁴So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. ⁶When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, “Master, *you wash my feet?*”

⁷Jesus answered, “You don’t understand now what I’m doing, but it will be clear enough to you later.”

⁸Peter persisted, “You’re not going to wash my feet—ever!”

Jesus said, “If I don’t wash you, you can’t be part of what I’m doing.”

⁹“Master!” said Peter. “Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!”

¹⁰Jesus said, “If you’ve had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you’re clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you’re clean. But not every one of you.” ¹¹(He knew who was betraying him. That’s why he said, “Not every one of you.”) ¹²After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

Then he said, “Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master,’ and rightly so. That is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other’s feet. ¹⁵I’ve laid down a pattern for you. What I’ve done, you do. ¹⁶I’m only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn’t give orders to the employer. ¹⁷If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life.

THE ONE WHO ATE BREAD AT MY TABLE

¹⁸“I’m not including all of you in this. I know precisely whom I’ve selected, so as not to interfere with the fulfillment of this Scripture:

The one who ate bread at my table

Turned on his heel against me.

¹⁹“I’m telling you all this ahead of time so that when it happens you will believe that I am who I say I am. ²⁰Make sure you get this right: Receiving someone I send is the same as receiving me, just as receiving me is the same as receiving the One who sent me.”

²¹After he said these things, Jesus became visibly upset, and then he told them why. “One of you is going to betray me.”

²²The disciples looked around at one another, wondering who on earth he was talking about. ²³One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved dearly, was reclining against him, his head on his shoulder. ²⁴Peter motioned to him to ask who Jesus might be talking about. ²⁵So, being the closest, he said, “Master, who?”

²⁶Jesus said, “The one to whom I give this crust of bread after I’ve dipped it.” Then he dipped the crust and gave it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. ²⁷As soon as the bread was in his hand, Satan entered him.

“What you must do,” said Jesus, “do. Do it and get it over with.”

²⁸No one around the supper table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹Some thought that since Judas was their treasurer, Jesus was telling him to buy what they needed for the Feast, or that he should give something to the poor.

³⁰Judas, with the piece of bread, left. It was night.

³¹When he had left, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is seen for who he is, and God seen for who he is in him. The moment God is seen in him, ³²God’s glory will be on display. In glorifying him, he himself is glorified—glory all around!

³³“Children, I am with you for only a short time longer. You are going to look high and low for me. But just as I told the Jews, I’m telling you: ‘Where I go, you are not able to come.’

³⁴“Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. ³⁵This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.”

³⁶Simon Peter asked, “Master, just where are you going?”

Jesus answered, “You can’t now follow me where I’m going. You will follow later.”

³⁷“Master,” said Peter, “why can’t I follow now? I’ll lay down my life for you!”

³⁸“Really? You’ll lay down your life for me? The truth is that before the rooster crows, you’ll deny me three times.”

Friday, April 3, 2015:

Good Friday

There is still no word on who is arranging this service, nor on the actual churches that participate.

Scripture: John 18-19

April 5, 2015: “Knowing God’s Possibilities”

Easter

Synopsis: Lazarus isn’t the main character in the reading from John, but his death is the main topic of conversation. Lazarus’ sisters are the main characters who remind us that we will all face the death of people we love. The Easter story calls us to face death and to find hope. We have to believe in Jesus and trust that what he says is true. And the promise is for this moment - right now. Jesus says, “I am.” He doesn’t say “I have been” because he doesn’t ever give up on us or write us off. He doesn’t say “I will be” because we don’t have to “get it right” before he comes to us. The invitation to believe and trust is for all of us at every step of our journey. The God we can know and the God who knows us is the God who offers hope and new life and wants us to know his presence and power in our lives.

Metaphor/visuals: I am the Resurrection and the Life. Flower (book’s image).

Music suggestions: Tell Me the Stories of Jesus (UMH 277); Christ the Lord Is Risen Today (UMH 302); He Lives (UMH 310); Up from the Grave He Arose (UMH 322); Crown Him with Many Crowns (UMH 327); Because He Lives (UMH 364)

Contemporary suggestions: Mighty to Save by Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan; How Great Is Our God by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, and Ed Cash

Media possibilities: The first 3 of the mini-movies are possible worship service introductions:

- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/36791/made-new. Christ is risen and we have been made new in Him. Length 1:34 Cost \$14.99
- www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/36999/risen. Easter worship introduction. Length 1:16 Cost \$17.98
- www.sermonspice.com/product/46606/it-changes-everything-Easter-intro. Use this mini-movie to welcome people into your Easter service with a special emphasis on people who don't normally attend church. Length 1:34. Cost \$17.98.
- www.sermonspice.com/product/34218/the-empty-tomb. Visual liturgy by the Lumo project. Length 3:27 Cost: We own it. Last used 4/20/14.

Discussion points: 1) Potential Easter morning musicians: Bruce Wright (trumpet), Oak Reed (trumpet), Liz Miller (trombone). 2) Videos: There was some interest in using "It Changes Everything" or "Made New." 3) We have a rough cross, cross that can be covered in lily blossoms, crown of thorns, and tomb rock. Check out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd2Y35R4gM>, to see how one church created their tomb. 4) Consider displaying the rough cross near the entry. Attach finishing nails to the cross so that people can poke their notes or prayers directly to the cross. 5) Communion idea: Freeze grape juice around a large, wire crown of thorns. Place the rough wooden cross in the middle of the sanctuary atop a plastic covered table. Rest the frozen crown of thorns on the cross. Let the juice thaw, falling onto pieces of pita bread for communion. 6) Start with John 6 (Jesus and Martha) and move to John 20 (Jesus in the garden with Mary). 7) Service opener: Video of the stone being rolled away. Check out these possibilities: <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/motion-backgrounds/30311/The-Stone-Rolls-Away> and <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/motion-backgrounds/45105/Easter-Tomb-He-Is-Risen>. Use the video to build into the first song.

Sunrise service at Mona Lake Boat Club shelter: The service, sponsored by First Congregation Church and Lake Harbor UMC, begins before sunrise. There is approximately of 15 minutes of contemplation, five minutes of message, and one a capella song. Contact Cyndi Barefoot for more details.

Holy Baptism or Reaffirmation of Holy Baptism Holy Communion?

Liturgy possibilities:

Litany

One: When we find ourselves wondering why loss has come, we can remember Jesus' words as he faced death:

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

One: When we are tempted to give in to the lie that life will never change for us, Jesus says,

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

One: When life's disappointments cause us to stumble, Jesus reminds us,

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

One: When we ask God to give us back something we've lost, Jesus reminds us to look forward, saying,

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

One: God works on both sides of the grave, giving us life now and life yet to come, through Christ who said,

All: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Amen.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your ever-present grace and love. Thank you for the beauty of new life that we see every morning. Even when we are unsure of what will happen next, help us to remember that you are with us, holding us in your hand and loving us no matter what happens. In your son's name we pray. Amen.

Litany

One: We live; God gives!

All: Hallelujah!

One: We cry; God supplies!

All: Hallelujah!

One: We need; God speeds!

All: Hallelujah!

One: So let us with joy, joy, joy

All: Return what God has given. (Africana Worship Book, Year A. ©Discipleship Resources.)

Scripture: John 11:17-27 (New Revised Standard Version)

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus^f had already been in the tomb four days.

¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles^f away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³Jesus said to her, "**Your brother will rise again.**" ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Note from Pastor Mary: I'd want to include a reading of the message of the empty tomb as well, but I wonder if we could do something with Martha's conversation in combination with Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden (John 20).

Other:

Have the choir sing the benediction from the back of the sanctuary.

MNO is having a soup supper on Wednesday, March 11.