

All Church Worship Brainstorming Summary for Spring 2017 Worship

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Members present: Karen Booth, Jim Post, Mary Ivanov, Vicki Zuker, Marie Kordecki, Barb Gipton, Roger Richmond, Jean Kelly, Lynne Richmond, Carole Koch, Dave Booth, Larry Jorgenson, Bonnie Jorgenson, Michael Boersma

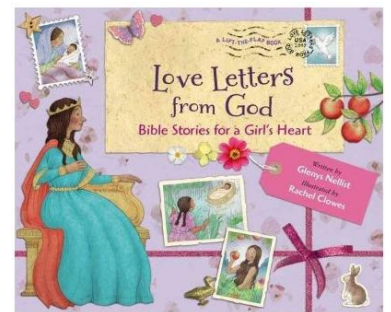
“The worship we hope to develop will be rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will be relevant to local and emerging culture, while addressing the needs of believers and unbelievers alike. Above all, it will intentionally engage people physically, emotionally,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

“Faith of Our Mothers”

Resources:

- Love Letters from God: Bible Stories for a Girl’s Heart by Glenys Nellist
- Hymn texts by Edith Sinclair Downing (included in italics)
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/downing-edith-sinclair>
- “Women Who Went Beyond” series
<http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/small-groups/26221/women-who-went-beyond-series>
- Preaching the Women of the Old Testament: Who They Were and Why They Matter by Lynn Japinga



Background information: Pastor Mary has never preached this series before, but it makes sense since Glenys Nellist will be here for Children’s Sunday. She will use some stories from the book shown above. Most of these stories have only been shared in Sunday School, not worship. We’ll look for ways to connect Bible time stories to today.

Visuals: We will consider how to work with a May 5 wedding. Drop cloth with silhouettes (bathroom signage, mud flaps, hood ornament). Fabric – blue river, red cord, red & purple for royalty and temple, red for Pentecost. Tambourine. Stick heart. Big red heart with God in the middle. Disco ball (Dancing with the Stars). Family tree/ancestry.com.



Introductory videos: It is unlikely that anyone had an easy life in Bible times, but women faced unique challenges.

- “Cards You’ve Been Dealt.” Length: 4:23. Cost: \$15.99. In our lives we are dealt a hand of cards, some representing great moments and some that are filled with crisis. When you are dealt your hand, how will you respond? In this thought-provoking video, Eddie talks about God’s perfect plan which is far more than just a random shuffle of the deck. <https://skitguys.com/videos/item/cards-youve-been-dealt>. **Comments:** Too long. If it could be edited for length it would be more useable. **Idea after the meeting:** Could we write a shorter intro to the series using this idea? Hand out a card each week, gluing something different on the cards each week. For example, on May 7 it might read, “For such a time as this.” Amazon: 48 decks for \$21.12.
- “The March of the Unqualified.” Length: 1:43. Cost: We own it. Last used on 8/19/07. "God can't use me or at least shouldn't." We've probably all thought it at some point. However, studying the Bible shows us that many flawed people were used by God in powerful ways. They were just as unqualified as you. So now what's your excuse? <https://www.ignitermedia.com/products/23-the-march-of-the-unqualified> **Comments:** This might fit better on May 21 as we look at Rahab’s story.



April 23, 2017: “Rise Up and Resist”

2nd Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Exodus 1 (The Message)

¹These are the names of the Israelites who went to Egypt with Jacob, each bringing his family members: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, ⁴Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵Seventy persons in all generated by Jacob’s seed. Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁶Then Joseph died, and all his brothers—that whole generation. ⁷But the children of Israel kept on reproducing. They were very prolific—a population explosion in their own right—and the land was filled with them.

⁸A new king came to power in Egypt who didn’t know Joseph. ⁹He spoke to his people in alarm, “There are way too many of these Israelites for us to handle. ¹⁰We’ve got to do something: Let’s devise a plan to contain them, lest if there’s a war they should join our enemies, or just walk off and leave us.”

¹¹So they organized them into work-gangs and put them to hard labor under gang-foremen. They built the storage cities Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. ¹²But the harder the Egyptians worked them the more children the Israelites had—children everywhere! The Egyptians got so they couldn’t stand the Israelites ¹³and treated them worse than ever, crushing them with slave labor. ¹⁴They made them miserable with hard labor—making bricks and mortar and back-breaking work in the fields. They piled on the work, crushing them under the cruel workload.

¹⁵The king of Egypt had a talk with the two Hebrew midwives; one was named Shiphrah and the other Puah. ¹⁶He said, “When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the sex of the baby. If it’s a boy, kill him; if it’s a girl, let her live.”

¹⁷But the midwives had far too much respect for God and didn't do what the king of Egypt ordered; they let the boy babies live. ¹⁸The king of Egypt called in the midwives. "Why didn't you obey my orders? You've let those babies live!"

¹⁹The midwives answered Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women aren't like the Egyptian women; they're vigorous. Before the midwife can get there, they've already had the baby."

²⁰God was pleased with the midwives. The people continued to increase in number—a very strong people. ²¹And because the midwives honored God, God gave them families of their own.

²²So Pharaoh issued a general order to all his people: "Every boy that is born, drown him in the Nile. But let the girls live."

Synopsis: **Shiphrah** and **Puah** were Hebrew midwives who resisted Pharaoh's demands to destroy Hebrew boys. They risked doing saving work because of their faith in God. How is God calling us to resist evil? As we celebrate the power of new life in resurrection, where are we bringing new life into the world by acting out our faith?

Felt need: To resist evil and celebrate new life by acting out our faith.

Visuals (8/24/14 lectionary)/**white:** Bricks/mortar, birthstool, newborn, **basket/reeds/river** (could stay up for two weeks), baby boy stuff, family tree

Media: None.

Activity:

Music: "Sing Praise for Hebrew Midwives" based on Exodus 1:15-2:10 by Edith Sinclair

Downing- sung to the tune of #278 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" (Ellacombe 76.76 D) or #560 "Help Us Accept Each Other" (Acceptance 76.76 D).

*Sing praise for Hebrew midwives,
for by them God was served.*

*They brought to birth God's people.
A remnant was preserved.*

*They used both fact and fiction,
and found a cunning way
to counter male dominion,
and give God's will full sway.*

*Praise, too, the loving mother
who saved her son from death.*

*She placed him in the water,
with trembling, fearful breath.*

*Then entered Pharaoh's daughter,
who found the hidden one.
Defying her own father,
she took him for her son.*

*Sing praise for this son, Moses,
who, by the midwives' act,
was saved to lead God's people,
and given faith he lacked.*

*Revere defiant women
who seek to bring to birth
new life from wombs of promise
to live God's will on earth.*

Other music: #117 "O God Our Help in Ages Past"; #378 "Amazing Grace"; #400 "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"; "Rise Up, Rise Up" by Matt Maher

Liturgy: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/shiphrah-and-puah-protectors-of-life-39239/>

Discussion points: 1) The original title, "Fight the Power," is also the name of a (foul) hip, hop song by Public Enemy. 2) It is significant that the midwives were actually named, lied to Pharaoh, refused to go along with his demands, risked saving others because of their deep faith, and remained, as far as we can tell, unharmed. 3) Men's Lenten Bible study: The women were very unempowered in Bible times. Baby girls were often put to death if there was already one girl in the family (this happens today in China and India, creating a very lopsided population). The phrase "hand in marriage" refers to how women were always under the control of men. Children had no value. 4) Though much has changed, women still

have a long way to go. 5) Resisting evil is part of our baptism vow. 6) Ancenstry.com: Pastor Mary has seen a good video on Facebook.

April 30, 2017: "Sister Act"

3rd Sunday in Easter

Scripture: Exodus 1: 22-2: 10, Exodus 15: 20-21 (The Message)

^{1:22}So Pharaoh issued a general order to all his people: "Every boy that is born, drown him in the Nile. But let the girls live."

^{2:1}A man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman.

²The woman became pregnant and had a son. She saw there was something special about him and hid him. She hid him for three months. ³When she couldn't hide him any longer she got a little basket-boat made of papyrus, waterproofed it with tar and pitch, and placed the child in it. Then she set it afloat in the reeds at the edge of the Nile.

⁴The baby's older sister found herself a vantage point a little way off and watched to see what would happen to him. ⁵Pharaoh's daughter came down to the Nile to bathe; her maidens strolled on the bank. She saw the basket-boat floating in the reeds and sent her maid to get it. ⁶She opened it and saw the child—a baby crying! Her heart went out to him. She said, "This must be one of the Hebrew babies."

⁷Then his sister was before her: "Do you want me to go and get a nursing mother from the Hebrews so she can nurse the baby for you?"

⁸Pharaoh's daughter said, "Yes. Go." The girl went and called the child's mother.

⁹Pharaoh's daughter told her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me. I'll pay you." The woman took the child and nursed him.

¹⁰After the child was weaned, she presented him to Pharaoh's daughter who adopted him as her son. She named him Moses (Pulled-Out), saying, "I pulled him out of the water."

^{15:20}Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine, and all the women followed her with tambourines, dancing.

²¹Miriam led them in singing, "Sing to God—what a victory! He pitched horse and rider into the sea!"

Synopsis: **Miriam** watches the drama unfold as her baby brother, Moses, is saved from the Nile River and later she sings a song of praise after the Israelites find freedom from Pharaoh and slavery in Egypt. Her trust in God is evident even in the "what if" moments. How can we trust in God even when the future is uncertain?

Felt need: Trust in God even when the future is uncertain.

Visuals (8/24/17 lectionary)/**white:** Bricks/mortar, birthstool, newborn, **basket/reeds/river**, tambourine

Media:

- "In God's Hands." Length: 4:29. Come and meet Moses mother from Exodus 2 and learn from her faith, that our children are not ours to hold onto; they were meant to be held by their Creator. <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/23324/in-gods-hands>.

- “Miriam – Little Bible Heroes.” Length: 2:12. Animated version of the story.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUsOXNFB_4c.

Activity:

Music: “Come, Sing the Joy of Miriam” based on Exodus 15: 1-18 by Edith Sinclair Downing - sung to the tune of #57 “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” (Azmon CM) or #378 “Amazing Grace” (Amazing Grace CM).

<p><i>Come, sing the joy of Miriam, for she has seen dry land. Come, dance with her as now we join this grateful, glorious band.</i></p>	<p><i>Our faithful God delivers us when enemies assail. The world will bring false promises. Our God will still prevail.</i></p>	<p><i>empowered, strong, and free. Come, live our praise through all our days, serving God’s family.</i></p>
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Come, journey on with Miriam,

Other music: #117 “O God Our Help in Ages Past”; #378 “Amazing Grace”; #2189 “A Mother Lined a Basket”

Discussion points: 1) Miriam figures out what to do for her brother, taking a big risk. She trusts God. 2) Lynne’s Sunday School class loves this story and how it demonstrates love. 3) Miriam’s song, recorded in chapter 15, is the first one in the Bible. It is a beautiful picture of worship. 3) This was part of the 2016 Surf Shack VBS curriculum.

May 7, 2017 at 10:00 am: “The Prayerful Girl”

4th Sunday in Easter
Children’s Sunday

Scripture: Esther 2-8, especially 4 and 7. Because this is so long, here is a summary from the Introduction to Esther from The Message translation of the Bible written in 2002:

It seems odd that the awareness of God, or even the people of God, brings out the worst in some people. God, the source of all goodness and blessing and joy, at times becomes the occasion for nearly unimaginable acts of cruelty, atrocity, and evil.

There is a long history of killing men and women simply because they are perceived as reminders or representatives of the living God, as if killing people who worship God gets rid of God himself. We’ve recently completed a century marked by an extraordinary frenzy of “god” killings. To no one’s surprise, God is still alive and present.

The Book of Esther opens a window on this world of violence directed, whether openly or covertly, against God and God’s people. The perspective it provides transcends the occasion that provoked it, a nasty scheme to massacre all the exiled Jews who lived in the vast expanse of fifth-century B.C. Persia. Three characters shape the plot. Mordecai, identified simply as “the Jew,” anchors the story. He is solid, faithful, sane, godly. His goodness is more than matched by the evil and arrogant vanity of Haman, who masterminds the planned massacre. Mordecai’s young, orphaned, and ravishing cousin, Esther, whom he has raised, emerges from the shadow of the royal harem to take on the title role.

It turns out that no God-representing men and women get killed in this story – in a dramatic turnaround, the plot fails. But millions before and after Esther have been and, no doubt, will continue to be killed. There is hardly a culture or century that doesn’t eventually find a Haman determined to rid the world of evidence and reminders of God. Meanwhile, Esther continues to speak the final and definitive word: you can’t eliminate God’s people. No matter how many of them you kill, you can’t

get rid of the communities of God-honoring, God-serving, God-worshiping people scattered all over the earth. This is still the final and definitive word.

Synopsis: **Esther**, King Xerxes, Mordecia, Haman

Felt need: To recognize the sovereignty and faithfulness of God, especially in these words of Mordecai to his young niece, Esther: "If you don't speak up now, we will somehow get help, but you and your family will be killed. It could be that you were made queen for a time like this!" (Esther 4:14)

Visuals (9/27/15 lectionary)/**white:** Bulletin cover created by child or youth. Hand, crown, festival, joy, food, gifts. **Tiara, rose, red and purple fabric**

Media: We did not preview these as a group, except for the first one. Michael says there is a Veggie Tales version of Esther (length: 30 minutes).

- "Esther – Little Bible Heroes." Length: 1:22. Animated children's story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-TplgzBd9g> **Comments:** Short, sanitized summary of the story.
- "Esther." Length: 5:59. Cost: \$15.00. Esther was courageous indeed. Her story is found in the book of Esther and details a life full of unexpected twists and turns. <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/22481/esther>
- "The Story of Esther." Length: 6:51. Cost: \$19.99. This engaging, humorous, and poignant animated retelling of the Biblical story will surely be a hit with audiences of all ages. <http://www.sermonspice.com/product/52820/the-story-of-esther>
- "One Night with the King." Length: 13:48. Cost: Free. Excerpt from the movie in which Ester speaks out to the king. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRampj_02a0 (full version at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4saPofrlbA>)

Activities: Holy Communion – kids serve with parents. Bibles for third graders. Recognition of Christian Education leaders.

Music: "Come, Let Us Honor Esther" by Edith Sinclair Downing - sung to the tune of #278 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" (Ellacombe 76.76 D) or #560 "Help Us Accept Each Other" (Acceptance 76.76 D).

*Come, let us honor Esther
her courage we applaud.*

*When she could live with riches,
she dared to honor God.*

*She could not rest with privilege
deny her people's fate.*

*She chose to live her calling:
serve those outside the gate.*

*God, grant that we, like Esther,
have courage for our quest,*

*and use our past experience
to serve those not at blessed.*

*Help us to trust you fully
that we may find our bliss.*

*And answer when you call us
for 'such a time as this.*

Other music: "For Such a Time as This" by Wayne Watson – Michael might be able to update the tune from 1998 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jh6vyzqG8IE>).

Hands-on item: "For such a time as this" on something (stone?)

Discussion points: 1) There is a wedding on Friday, May 5. Is there a chance we might want to leave some wedding stuff up? 2) Glenys Nellist will be here and do Children's Time. 3)

Wikipedia: Esther relates the story of a Hebrew woman in Persia, born as Hadassah but known as

Esther, who becomes queen of Persia and thwarts a genocide of her people. The story forms the core of the Jewish festival of Purim, during which it is read aloud twice: once in the evening and again the following morning. Esther is the only book in the Bible that does not explicitly mention God. 3)

<http://www.womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/esther-her-story/> 4) Pastor Mary did not preach a message

on Children's Sunday last year, but may need to find a way to tell Esther's whole story this year. 5) Theme: Saving others. "For such a time as this" comes from Esther 4:14. 6) Mordecai, Esther's uncle, groomed her to be queen. They both hid their identities as Jews until the time was right. 7) Purim was celebrated on March 11-12, 2017. 8)

Skit idea: The story reminds Roger of the television show, "The Bachelor," in which the ladies are paraded by the bachelor and only one, Esther, is given the final rose. "Minor" difference: There aren't gallows in the TV show.



May 14, 2017: "Brave, Courageous, and Bold"

5th Sunday in Easter
Mother's Day

Scripture: Judges 4-5 (The Message) – only Judges 4: 1-16 is shown below

¹The People of Israel kept right on doing evil in God's sight. With Ehud dead,

²God sold them off to Jabin king of Canaan who ruled from Hazor. Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim, was the commander of his army. ³The People of Israel cried out to God because he had cruelly oppressed them with his nine hundred iron chariots for twenty years.

⁴Deborah was a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth. She was judge over Israel at that time. ⁵She held court under Deborah's Palm between Ramah and Bethel in the hills of Ephraim. The People of Israel went to her in matters of justice.

⁶She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "It has become clear that God, the God of Israel, commands you: Go to Mount Tabor and prepare for battle. Take ten companies of soldiers from Naphtali and Zebulun. ⁷I'll take care of getting Sisera, the leader of Jabin's army, to the Kishon River with all his chariots and troops. And I'll make sure you win the battle."

⁸Barak said, "If you go with me, I'll go. But if you don't go with me, I won't go."

⁹She said, "Of course I'll go with you. But understand that with an attitude like that, there'll be no glory in it for you. God will use a woman's hand to take care of Sisera."

Deborah got ready and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together at Kedesh. Ten companies of men followed him. And Deborah was with him.

¹¹It happened that Heber the Kenite had parted company with the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' in-law. He was now living at Zaananim Oak near Kedesh. ¹²They told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³Sisera immediately called up all his chariots to the Kishon River—nine hundred iron chariots!—along with all his troops who were with him at Harosheth Haggoyim.

¹⁴Deborah said to Barak, "Charge! This very day God has given you victory over Sisera. Isn't God marching before you?"

Barak charged down the slopes of Mount Tabor, his ten companies following him.

¹⁵God routed Sisera—all those chariots, all those troops!—before Barak. Sisera jumped out of his chariot and ran. ¹⁶Barak chased the chariots and troops all the way to Harosheth Haggoyim. Sisera’s entire fighting force was killed—not one man left.

Synopsis: Deborah has authority as a judge and leader, and she uses it to encourage others to follow God. She is quick to praise God and be bold in her trust. Her strength comes from God. What do we remember about those who have helped to shape us by using their gifts and their status to encourage us and move us to be faithful?

Felt need: To find (or be) a levelheaded role model who follows God.

Visuals/white: Blind justice. Wheel mired in mud (Barb and Marie). Gavel.

Media: “Deborah the Prophet.” Length: 2:39. Cost: Free. Violent retelling of the story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWBI6JW8psc>

Activity: Give a chocolate “treasure” to all women in the congregation. Use Mother’s Day prayer to acknowledge all experiences of mothering.

Music: “Hear Now the Voice of Deborah” based on Judges 4:4-9, 18-25; 5:1-31 by Edith Sinclair Downing - sung to the tune of #218 “It Came upon the Midnight Clear” (Carol CMD) or #696 “America the Beautiful” (Materna CMD)

*Hear now the voice of Deborah,
the prophetess who sings
a song to praise the Lord, her God,
who rules both princes, kings.
While sitting neath a shady tree
she welcomed those who came.
They heard her judge their piteous plight.
Could she their hope reclaim?
This mother of all Israel
relayed the Lord’s command:
“I will rout General Sisera,
give him into your hand.”
She found a soldier named Barak,
gave him a strategy
to fight against the Canaanites
and gain the victory.*

*Barak respected Deborah
but said he would not go
unless she also came with him
to slay their common foe.
Fulfilling well God’s prophecy
to use a woman’s plan
together they assembled men
to battle Canaan’s clan.*

*Then Israel’s forces overthrew
the Canaanites’ brigade,
and Jael was sent to Sisera
whom she by stealth betrayed . . .
God, with these women’s bravery
enable us today
to save our nation for your cause.
Send us new strength, we pray!*

Other music: #108 “God Has Spoken by the Prophets”

Discussion points: 1) The title comes from the theme song from “Wyatt Earp.” 2) The introduction to the Book of Judges which appears in the Message translation of the Bible, offers great background information. 2) Resource showing how they could have won the battle due to rain: <http://www.womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/deborah-and-jael/> 3) Hannah’s story was originally scheduled for Mother’s Day, but it seems like it would be very hard for many people to hear then. 4) Deborah is an unlikely candidate to be a prophet and judge – from our perspective. The Women in the Bible source, above, offers these notes:

The story of Deborah occurred in approximately 1125BC, when Deborah was a judge of Israel. The word 'judge' did not mean then what it means now. A judge in Israel was a tribal leader who

- in times of peace had authority to settle disputes and problems
- in times of war acted as a rallying point to gather the tribes and organize resistance.

Deborah is the only woman judge mentioned in the Book of Judges. The people of her time had no difficulty in accepting her as a judge. This suggests that judges were seen as 'God's people', and their gender was unimportant.

5) Barak needs Deborah before he goes to battle. She encourages him and shows her faith by telling him that God was marching before him. 6) Wheels in mud: No four-wheel drive or tires back then to help them out. 7) Pastor Mary's story: Her friend's (childless) mother realized Mary was crying because she was hungry and encourage her mother to feed her.

May 21, 2017: "Most (Un)likely to..."

6th Sunday in Easter
Graduation Sunday

Scripture: Joshua 2 and 6 (The Message)

^{2:1}Joshua son of Nun secretly sent out from Shittim two men as spies: "Go. Look over the land. Check out Jericho." They left and arrived at the house of a harlot named Rahab and stayed there.

²The king of Jericho was told, "We've just learned that men arrived tonight to spy out the land. They're from the People of Israel."

³The king of Jericho sent word to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you to stay the night in your house. They're spies; they've come to spy out the whole country."

⁴The woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, two men did come to me, but I didn't know where they'd come from. ⁵At dark, when the gate was about to be shut, the men left. But I have no idea where they went. Hurry up! Chase them—you can still catch them!" ⁶(She had actually taken them up on the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax that were spread out for her on the roof.) ⁷So the men set chase down the Jordan road toward the fords. As soon as they were gone, the gate was shut.

⁸Before the spies were down for the night, the woman came up to them on the roof ⁹and said, "I know that God has given you the land. We're all afraid. Everyone in the country feels hopeless. ¹⁰We heard how God dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt, and what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under a holy curse and destroyed. ¹¹We heard it and our hearts sank. We all had the wind knocked out of us. And all because of you, you and God, your God, God of the heavens above and God of the earth below.

¹²"Now promise me by God. I showed you mercy; now show my family mercy. And give me some tangible proof, a guarantee ¹³of life for my father and mother, my brothers and sisters—everyone connected with my family. Save our souls from death!"

¹⁴"Our lives for yours!" said the men. "But don't tell anyone our business. When God turns this land over to us, we'll do right by you in loyal mercy."

¹⁵She lowered them down out a window with a rope because her house was on the city wall to the outside. ¹⁶She told them, "Run for the hills so your pursuers won't find you. Hide out for three days and give your pursuers time to return. Then get on your way."

¹⁷The men told her, "In order to keep this oath you made us swear, ¹⁸here is what you must do: Hang this red rope out the window through which you let us down and gather your entire family with you in your house—father, mother, brothers, and sisters. ¹⁹Anyone who goes out the doors of your house into the street and is killed, it's his own fault—we aren't responsible. But for everyone within the

house we take full responsibility. If anyone lays a hand on one of them, it's our fault. ²⁰But if you tell anyone of our business here, the oath you made us swear is canceled—we're no longer responsible."

²¹She said, "If that's what you say, that's the way it is," and sent them off. They left and she hung the red rope out the window.

²²They headed for the hills and stayed there for three days until the pursuers had returned. The pursuers had looked high and low but found nothing.

²³The men headed back. They came down out of the hills, crossed the river, and returned to Joshua son of Nun and reported all their experiences. ²⁴They told Joshua, "Yes! God has given the whole country to us. Everybody there is in a state of panic because of us."

^{6:1}Jericho was shut up tight as a drum because of the People of Israel: no one going in, no one coming out.

²God spoke to Joshua, "Look sharp now. I've already given Jericho to you, along with its king and its crack troops. ³Here's what you are to do: March around the city, all your soldiers. Circle the city once. Repeat this for six days. ⁴Have seven priests carry seven ram's horn trumpets in front of the Chest. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, the priests blowing away on the trumpets. ⁵And then, a long blast on the ram's horn—when you hear that, all the people are to shout at the top of their lungs. The city wall will collapse at once. All the people are to enter, every man straight on in."

⁶So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and told them, "Take up the Chest of the Covenant. Seven priests are to carry seven ram's horn trumpets leading God's Chest."

⁷Then he told the people, "Set out! March around the city. Have the armed guard march before the Chest of God."

⁸And it happened. Joshua spoke, the people moved: Seven priests with their seven ram's horn trumpets set out before God. They blew the trumpets, leading God's Chest of the Covenant. ⁹The armed guard marched ahead of the trumpet-blowing priests; the rear guard was marching after the Chest, marching and blowing their trumpets.

¹⁰Joshua had given orders to the people, "Don't shout. In fact, don't even speak—not so much as a whisper until you hear me say, 'Shout!'—then shout away!"

¹¹He sent the Chest of God on its way around the city. It circled once, came back to camp, and stayed for the night. ¹²Joshua was up early the next morning and the priests took up the Chest of God. ¹³The seven priests carrying the seven ram's horn trumpets marched before the Chest of God, marching and blowing the trumpets, with the armed guard marching before and the rear guard marching after. Marching and blowing of trumpets!

¹⁴On the second day they again circled the city once and returned to camp. They did this six days.

¹⁵When the seventh day came, they got up early and marched around the city this same way but seven times—yes, this day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶On the seventh time around the priests blew the trumpets and Joshua signaled the people, "Shout!—God has given you the city! ¹⁷The city and everything in it is under a holy curse and offered up to God.

"Except for Rahab the harlot—she is to live, she and everyone in her house with her, because she hid the agents we sent.

¹⁸"As for you, watch yourselves in the city under holy curse. Be careful that you don't covet anything in it and take something that's cursed, endangering the camp of Israel with the curse and making trouble for everyone. ¹⁹All silver and gold, all vessels of bronze and iron are holy to God. Put them in God's treasury."

²⁰The priests blew the trumpets.

When the people heard the blast of the trumpets, they gave a thunderclap shout. The wall fell at once. The people rushed straight into the city and took it.

²¹They put everything in the city under the holy curse, killing man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey.

²²Joshua ordered the two men who had spied out the land, “Enter the house of the harlot and rescue the woman and everyone connected with her, just as you promised her.” ²³So the young spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, and brothers—everyone connected with her. They got the whole family out and gave them a place outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴But they burned down the city and everything in it, except for the gold and silver and the bronze and iron vessels—all that they put in the treasury of God’s house.

²⁵But Joshua let Rahab the harlot live—Rahab and her father’s household and everyone connected to her. She is still alive and well in Israel because she hid the agents whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶Joshua swore a solemn oath at that time:

Cursed before God is the man who sets out to rebuild this city Jericho.

He’ll pay for the foundation with his firstborn son,

he’ll pay for the gates with his youngest son.

²⁷God was with Joshua. He became famous all over the land.

Scripture: Matthew 1:5 (The Message)

⁵Salmon had Boaz (his mother was Rahab), Boaz had Obed (Ruth was the mother), Obed had Jesse,

Synopsis: **Rahab** is a most unlikely player in God’s great story, but mostly because we judge by her past – and not by her willingness to act in faith and take a risk to serve God and protect her family. Her brave response reminds us that God is able to use us – whatever our story – to bring hope and salvation in God’s name.

Felt need: To trust God is with us when we take a risk to serve God and protect family.

Visuals/white: Red cord/window.

Hans-on item: Twizzlers. Red yarn or string.

Media: We only watched “March of the Unqualified” and a bad LEGO video as a group.

- “Rahab and the Scarlet Cord” from “The Bible” series. Length: 3:59 (need to edit or black out the initial violence). Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA08bdjdGt0>
- “The March of the Unqualified.” Length: 1:43. Cost: We own it. Last used on 8/19/07. “God can’t use me or at least shouldn’t.” We’ve probably all thought it at some point. However, studying the Bible shows us that many flawed people were used by God in powerful ways. They were just as unqualified as you. So now what’s your excuse? <https://www.ignitermedia.com/products/23-the-march-of-the-unqualified>. **Comments:** Rahab is included in the list of unqualified.
- “Rahab and the Spies.” Length: 5:45. Cost: Free. A **good** retelling of the story using LEGOs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHIKdkomF8g>

Activity:



Music: "Everlasting God" by Lincoln Brewster; "Remember Faithful Rahab" (based on Joshua 2: 6, 16-25) by Edith Sinclair Downing - sung to the tune of #278 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" (Ellacombe 76.76 D)

<i>Remember faithful Rahab who harbored Hebrew spies by using devious methods, invention, intrigue, lies. Along with Egypt's midwives Rahab defies the king. She lets men out her window from which hung a red string.</i>	<i>When Joshua led the army destroying Jericho her family took refuge in her house, lying low. Rahab becomes the midwife for a new Israel, convinced that now God gives them this land where they may dwell.</i>	<i>Can we, too, risk beginning anew when God calls us to act with faith for others who place in us their trust? Remember righteous Rahab, ancestress of our Lord. She lives with all the faithful bound by the Spirit's cord.</i>
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Other music: #2226 "Bind Us Together"

Discussion points: 1) Read more at <http://www.womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/rahab-prostitute/>. 2) The title is a play on the "most likely to..." titles associated with graduates' futures. 3) Rahab is an unlikely player. She is judged by her past, as a prostitute – the card she was dealt. She shows bravery, intelligence, radical hospitality (*hesed*) and savvy by lying to the king's men, hiding then letting the spies go, and making a deal with them since she sees that their God is **the** God. God uses people we would have written off. 4) In Matthew 1, we see Rahab and Ruth in Jesus' family tree. Rahab's son, Boaz, let Ruth glean his fields. Boaz and Ruth later married and gave birth to Obed, King David's grandfather. 5) Red/scarlet: The color is associated with The Scarlet Letter (and "Easy A"), blood on the door during Passover, and the blood of Jesus' death.

May 28, 2017 at 10 am: "Waiting (and Praying) Is the Hardest Part" 7th Sun. in Easter

Scripture: I Samuel 1: 9-2: 11 (The Message)

⁹So Hannah ate. Then she pulled herself together, slipped away quietly, and entered the sanctuary. The priest Eli was on duty at the entrance to God's Temple in the customary seat.

¹⁰Crushed in soul, Hannah prayed to God and cried and cried—inconsolably. ¹¹Then she made a vow:

Oh, God-of-the-Angel-Armies,
If you'll take a good, hard look at my pain,
If you'll quit neglecting me and go into action for me
By giving me a son,
I'll give him completely, unreservedly to you.
I'll set him apart for a life of holy discipline.

¹²It so happened that as she continued in prayer before God, Eli was watching her closely. ¹³Hannah was praying in her heart, silently. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. Eli jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. ¹⁴He approached her and said, "You're drunk! How long do you plan to keep this up? Sober up, woman!"

¹⁵Hannah said, "Oh no, sir—please! I'm a woman hard used. I haven't been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. The only thing I've been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God. ¹⁶Don't for a minute think I'm a bad woman. It's because I'm so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I've stayed here so long."

¹⁷Eli answered her, “Go in peace. And may the God of Israel give you what you have asked of him.”

¹⁸“Think well of me—and pray for me!” she said, and went her way. Then she ate heartily, her face radiant.

¹⁹Up before dawn, they worshiped God and returned home to Ramah. Elkanah slept with Hannah his wife, and God began making the necessary arrangements in response to what she had asked.

²⁰Before the year was out, Hannah had conceived and given birth to a son. She named him Samuel, explaining, “I asked God for him.”

²¹When Elkanah next took his family on their annual trip to Shiloh to worship God, offering sacrifices and keeping his vow, ²²Hannah didn’t go. She told her husband, “After the child is weaned, I’ll bring him myself and present him before God—and that’s where he’ll stay, for good.”

²³Elkanah said to his wife, “Do what you think is best. Stay home until you have weaned him. Yes! Let God complete what he has begun!”

So she did. She stayed home and nursed her son until she had weaned him. ²⁴Then she took him up to Shiloh, bringing also the makings of a generous sacrificial meal—a prize bull, flour, and wine. The child was so young to be sent off!

²⁵They first butchered the bull, then brought the child to Eli. ²⁶Hannah said, “Excuse me, sir. Would you believe that I’m the very woman who was standing before you at this very spot, praying to God? ²⁷I prayed for this child, and God gave me what I asked for. ²⁸And now I have dedicated him to God. He’s dedicated to God for life.”

Then and there, they worshiped God.

¹Hannah prayed: I’m bursting with God-news! I’m walking on air. I’m laughing at my rivals. I’m dancing my salvation. ²Nothing and no one is holy like God, no rock mountain like our God.

³Don’t dare talk pretentiously—not a word of boasting, ever! For God knows what’s going on. He takes the measure of everything that happens.

⁴The weapons of the strong are smashed to pieces, while the weak are infused with fresh strength. ⁵The well-fed are out begging in the streets for crusts, while the hungry are getting second helpings. The barren woman has a houseful of children, while the mother of many is bereft. ⁶God brings death and God brings life, brings down to the grave and raises up. ⁷God brings poverty and God brings wealth; he lowers, he also lifts up. ⁸He puts poor people on their feet again; he rekindles burned-out lives with fresh hope, Restoring dignity and respect to their lives— a place in the sun! For the very structures of earth are God’s; he has laid out his operations on a firm foundation.

⁹He protectively cares for his faithful friends, step by step, but leaves the wicked to stumble in the dark. No one makes it in this life by sheer muscle! ¹⁰God’s enemies will be blasted out of the sky, crashed in a heap and burned. God will set things right all over the earth, he’ll give strength to his king, he’ll set his anointed on top of the world!

¹¹Elkanah went home to Ramah. The boy stayed and served God in the company of Eli the priest.

Synopsis: **Hannah** is prayerful and persistent. Her struggle drives her to prayer, and she makes a promise to God to dedicate her child to God’s service and keeps the promise after Samuel is born. Her praise comes after she sees



God's faithfulness over the long haul. Holding onto hope is a part of living our faith in God.

Felt need: Don't give up hope, even when we feel God isn't listening.

Visuals (lectionary 11/15/15)/**white:** Woman weeping/praying, old man, couple worshipping, new born

Activity: Consecration of memorial gifts. Tour of Memorial Garden?

Hands-on item: Rock with the word "hope"

Media: We only watched the last video as a group.

- "Hannah Has Samuel." Length: 3:01. Cost: Free. Animated story. **Karen's note:** This is worth considering. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiYumdP4C6k>
- "Hannah." Length: 5:59. Cost: \$15.00. Hannah had a dream but found herself disappointed and disillusioned as she waited for her dream to become a reality. <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/22482/hannah>
- "Hannah's Story." Length: 0:54. Cost: Free. Animated. Samuel tells Hannah's story. **Karen's note:** This is worth considering. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqB8hMzU9DU>
- "Hannah's Faith: A Faithful Woman." Length: 4:04 (needs to be trimmed on both ends to about 3:20). Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0KgChfAdGw>. **Karen's note:** If the language in the Latter Day Saint video weren't so archaic, it would be worth using.
- "The Story of Hannah." Length: 4:49. Cost: Free. An animated retelling using stick figures. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dNWtt6Lljc> **Comments:** Not a bad video, just a little long and emotional.

Music: "Whom Shall I Fear (God of Angel Armies)" by Chris Tomlin; "Wishing and Hoping" by Dion Warwick (also sung by Dusty Springfield) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZbrDo6pvT8> could be adapted if the last line, "You will be his," is changed to "He will be yours." This is the song from the beginning of MY Best Friend's Wedding."; "Hail Hannah, Full of Patience" based on 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:1-11, 18-21 by Edith Sinclair Downing - sung to the tune of #278 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" (Ellacombe 76.76 D) or #560 "Help Us Accept Each Other" (Acceptance 76.76 D).

*Hail Hannah, full of patience
devoted, favored one.*

*She as the barren first wife
by second wife was shunned.*

*Each year the trip to Shiloh
brought her a new defeat;*

*because she failed her husband
she wept and would not eat.*

*At last she prayed in silence,
and vowed in Eli's sight*

to give the Lord her male child,

till death, a Nazirite.

*She answered Eli's questions,
and cried out to be blessed.*

Then Eli said to Hannah:

"May God grant your request."

Then God remembered Hannah.

Her prayer was not ignored.

*She bore the son long hoped for,
and pledged him to the Lord.*

*She brought him to the temple
with proper sacrifice,*

*offering to God her first born,
a gift beyond all price.*

Sing praise for her son, Samuel,

*a prophet who did seek
to mediate God's power*

when Israel's time was bleak.

Sing praise for mother Hannah,

*whom we can honor now
by having faith and courage*

as we fulfill our vow.

Other music: #611 "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"; #139 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"; #496 "Sweet Hour of Prayer"; #2036 "Give Thanks"; #2188 "The Family Prayer"

Song"; #3042 "Shout to the North"; #3040 "You Are My All in All"; #3102 "You Are My King (Amazing Love)"

Discussion points: 1) The title is a reference to the Tom Petty song, "The Waiting." The chorus goes as follows: *The waiting is the hardest part. Every day you see one more card. You take it on faith; you take it to the heart. The waiting is the hardest part.* 2) <http://www.womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/hannah/>. 3) This was originally scheduled for Mother's Day, but it did not seem appropriate. 4) Hannah took a risk bargaining with God. Once she finally had a son, she had to give him up as she had promised. Oddly, her husband agrees. It is a great, but hard story to hear. 5) Mary, mother of Jesus, probably knew of Hannah's song in I Samuel 2:1. Hers is very similar. 6) Eli's response to Hannah, "You're drunk," is similar to the story of Pentecost.

June 4, 2017:

Pentecost Sunday

Les Longden will preach while Pastor Mary is at annual conference. His message will be about Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is often referred to as wisdom and wisdom is often seen as a woman. Could he use this connection to tie his message to this series? How does he feel about leaf blowers in a sanctuary?

June 11, 2017: "The Ripple Effect"

1st Sunday after Pentecost
Trinity Sunday

Scripture: II Kings 5: 1-16 (Contemporary English Version)

¹ Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army. The Lord had helped him and his troops defeat their enemies, so the king of Syria respected Naaman very much. Naaman was a brave soldier, but he had leprosy.

²One day while the Syrian troops were raiding Israel, they captured a girl, and she became a servant of Naaman's wife. ³Some time later the girl said, "If your husband Naaman would go to the prophet in Samaria, he would be cured of his leprosy."

⁴When Naaman told the king what the girl had said, ⁵the king replied, "Go ahead! I will give you a letter to take to the king of Israel."

Naaman left and took along seven hundred fifty pounds of silver, one hundred fifty pounds of gold, and ten new outfits. ⁶He also carried the letter to the king of Israel. It said, "I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Would you cure him of his leprosy?"

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in fear and shouted, "That Syrian king believes I can cure this man of leprosy! Does he think I'm God with power over life and death? He must be trying to pick a fight with me."

⁸As soon as Elisha the prophet heard what had happened, he sent the Israelite king this message: "Why are you so afraid? Send the man to me, so that he will know there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹Naaman left with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰Elisha sent someone outside to say to him, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River. Then you'll be completely cured."

¹¹But Naaman stormed off, grumbling, "Why couldn't he come out and talk to me? I thought for sure he would stand in front of me and pray to the Lord his God, then wave his hand over my skin and cure me. ¹²What about the Abana River or the Pharpar River? Those rivers in Damascus are just as good as any river in Israel. I could have washed in them and been cured."

¹³His servants went over to him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it. So why don't you do what he said? Go wash and be cured."

¹⁴Naaman walked down to the Jordan; he waded out into the water and stooped down in it seven times, just as Elisha had told him. Right away, he was cured, and his skin became as smooth as a child's.

¹⁵Naaman and his officials went back to Elisha. Naaman stood in front of him and announced, "Now I know that the God of Israel is the only God in the whole world. Sir, would you please accept a gift from me?"

¹⁶"I am a servant of the living Lord," Elisha answered, "and I swear that I will not take anything from you."

Naaman kept begging, but Elisha kept refusing.

Synopsis: **The Servant Girl** from Naaman's household shows deep faith and trust in God to bring healing and hope. We don't know her name, but we do know that her simple wish changed Naaman's life. Because of the Holy Spirit's presence with us and in us, we have the power to change the world.

Felt need: To trust in God's ability to bring healing and hope.

Visuals (lectionary 7/3/16)/**Green:** Letter, torn clothes, healing, **water/river**

Media: Servant Girl Shares with Naaman." Length: 1:55. Cost: Free. Animated story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQUwDzRDRQ> Follow up with "Naaman Gets Upset with Elisha" (1:18, Free, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23m2fzntDYw>) and "Elisha's Prophecy Fulfilled (3:39, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Fkfrl3dpJE>). **Comments:** We could use the first video if we fade it just before it ends or blur out the "robot."

Activity:

Music: #2236 "Gather Us In"; #605 "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters"; #396 Spirit of the Living God"

Discussion points: 1) Pastor Mary is hoping the confirmands, who have named themselves "Triple Threat," will help to choose music and/or read Scripture. 2) For more information go to <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/all-women-bible/Maid-Naaman-8217-s-Wife>. 3) The unnamed servant girl speaks up in verse 3, setting everything into motion. While she is unnamed, we know what she said. 4) If this story was part of a recent VBS, Karen couldn't find which one. 5) Naaman brought along the equivalent of \$2,754,000 in gold and \$200,000 in silver. Money could buy everything but a cure.