

Lent & Easter 2020 Worship
Brainstorming Summary
Season of Lent and Easter
"A Place at the Table"
Monday, February 3, 2020

Members present: Jerry Hagans, Susan Hagans, Pastor Mary, Lynne Richmond, Kate Robbins, Betty Kinney, Vicki Zuker, Ron Zuker, Marie Kordecki, Linda Rousell, Carole Koch, Jeff Verry, Larry Jorgenson, Dave Booth, Karen Booth, and Jean Kelly (via email before and after the gathering)

We spend a lot of our time around tables – eating, talking, working, and even playing games. The table is a place of connection and community when we're accepted and included. But so often, people are excluded from being around the table.

"Sorry, this seat is taken." "There's no more room." "You can't sit here."

So often, people feel the sting of rejection, the pain of inadequacy, and the reality of uncertainty.

"We're going to have to let you go." "It's not you, it's me." "Don't call us, we'll call you."

In a world of lay-offs and pink slips, break up texts and voicemails, and so much negativity and rejection, Jesus invites us to a table of grace and calls us to extend the table to others. In this Lenten season, we'll hear the stories of some of the Bible's overlooked, outcasts, castaways, and dropouts - and we'll discover that grace means everyone has a place at the table.

2020 theme: 20/20 Vision – Seeking God's Vision for Ourselves, Our Church, Our Community, and Our World

20/20 Theme connection: No one is invisible or unworthy in God's eyes. There is a place at God's table for everyone.

Ideas for the series:

- Create a devotional for each week based on the topic. This could include other Bible stories that relate:
 - Hagar and Ishmael – cast out
 - Leah – unloved
 - Elijah – left behind, has-been,
 - Disciples
 - Leper – untouchable, unclean
 - Judas – betrayer
 - Children – vulnerable
 - Jeremiah – young
 - Prodigal Son – sinner
 - Older Brother – overlooked
- Send out a survey to our congregation via E-mail and Facebook with the questions:
Describe a time when you felt left out, overlooked, or alone.

General discussion points: 1) This series grew out of a clergy camp idea. 2) Big question #1: Who don't we see at our table? Big questions #2: We say we welcome all. What messages do we send that say otherwise? Responses: 3rd shifters, the "Nones." It's not our table; it belongs

to Jesus. Are we excluding him? 3) The titles are not set in stone. Language is important. How do we choose the right words to describe people who have been excluded? How will the community see it as they read our electronic sign? 3) Lent is a time for self examination. What do we need to change? Will we answer the big questions? 4) It is fitting that we are moving from "The Best of Enemies," where the principle characters were forced to sit across from each other at a table for two to work through their differences. 5) Thoughts from Jean Kelly (black) and Karen Booth (dark red):

I saw in your notes that you mentioned my kid's table. I am happy to share it again. Unfortunately, the exclusion often starts at a very young age. Does the table for one, such as a desk, fit into the series?

Thank you for agreeing to lend your table. I've thought about the desk as a table too, though not always as a negative thing (below).

Also, have read through the brainstorming notes. My star word happens to be "welcome", so, have thought about this a lot already. Have thought about when and who I haven't welcomed as well as who and when I wasn't welcomed.

My star word is "create." Rather ironic I think given I spend a whole lot of my time doing just that. I find it much easier to be creative when I've had a chance to talk and listen, especially when it comes to our worship team. I do need a quiet time and space (like my desk) to do the actual creating, i.e. a good mix of group and alone time. The idea of an open concept office where no one has personal space is a nightmare for me.

Your comment on Open office concept hit a nerve as I left that behind 4 years ago tomorrow. My last two-three working years were spent in the contemporary office that Meijer created from a vacant warehouse. Many glass walls and railings in the building.

Our workspaces were like corrals with 4' border walls, 18" from desktop to top of wall. We had "we space" and "me space". One requirement was that we not violate the "we space" as we were located in same area as Senior Management. We had one VP that did not want to see any sign of clutter or personal items.....very challenging for a job that required a lot of collaboration, creativity, and evaluation of product. The "me space" was adequate work space, but, no privacy. Some wore headphones to minimize distractions.

Resources:

- *The Voice* translation may be helpful as a way to engage Scripture readings and participants. *The Voice* is a unique translation and is meant to be read aloud. These key ideas from <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/The-Voice-Bible/> explain what sets this translation apart.
 - Standard type indicates text that is faithful to the original text's meaning, not as a word for word translation.
 - Italic type indicates words that are not directly tied to the original language. They give a fuller meaning to the modern reader without having to read footnotes.
 - Delineated material, shown on the following pages in the text boxes, give the passage cultural, historical, theological, or devotional context. This would not be read in worship.
 - Screenplay format identifies who is speaking (bolded text) or stage directions (italics in parentheses). I (Karen) added "narrator" to identify the narrative parts.
- *What's so Amazing about Grace?* by Philip Yancey <https://www.amazon.com/Whats-So-Amazing-About-Grace-ebook/dp/B000FCJYGO>

Visuals: Tables – card table, picnic table, lunch table, dinner table, Communion table, kids’ table (Jean Kelly), adding leaves to the tables, desk, table for one. Idea from Jean: I was thinking about the DaVinci table from his Last Supper fresco. Would there be room along the wall under the ledge to set up a long table with simple table cloth, place settings, and symbolic items such as a rooster, crown of thorns, etc to represent those at that table. If tables would be needed, I have 2 of those 5’ x 3’ heavy duty molded plastic fold up portable tables. Related idea from Karen: Include silhouettes behind the table. On a related note: Check out “The Last Supper – Day 5 Thursday of Easter Events in Rocks by Patti Rokus” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVj6v0wMUwg>

Activity related to DaVinci’s Last Supper (Jean): Design a picture of the family dinner table for individuals to show the place occupied by each of their family members.

Music:

- #3149 “For Everyone Born A Place at the Table”
- #3168 “Come to the Table of Grace”
- All Are Welcome in this Place
- #378 “Amazing Grace”

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

February 26, 2020: Ash Wednesday

Worship at 7:00 p.m. Central UMC

Rev. Dr. H. Michael Lemmons, District Superintendent from the AME church is preaching.

Scripture:

Sermon: “”

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

March 1, 2020: “Isaiah – A Place for the Unclean/Sinner”

Scripture: Isaiah 6: 1-8 “Isaiah’s Commission” (The Voice)

Narrator: ⁶ In the same year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a grand throne way up high with a flowing cape that filled the whole temple. ² *Bright* flaming creatures waited on Him. Each had six wings: two covering its face, two covering its feet, and two for flying. ³ *Like some fiery choir*, they would call back and forth continually.

Flaming Creatures: Holy, holy, holy is the Eternal, the Commander of *heavenly* armies!

Narrator: The earth is filled with His glorious presence! ⁴ They were so loud that the doorframes shook, and the *holy* house kept filling with smoke.

⁵ **Isaiah:** I am in so much trouble! I’m ruined!

I’m just a human being—*fallible and stammering*.

My lips are encrusted with filth; and I live among people just like me.

But here *I am*, and I’ve seen with my very own eyes *none other than* the King, the Eternal, Commander of *heavenly* armies.

Narrator: ⁶ Then one of the flaming creatures flew to me holding a red-hot ember which it had taken from *God’s table*, the *temple* altar, with a pair of tongs. ⁷ The creature held it to my lips.

Flaming Creature: Look! With the touch of this *burning ember* on your lips, your guilt is turned away; all your *faults and* wrongdoings are forgiven.

Narrator: ⁸ Then I heard the Lord's voice.

Eternal One: Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?

Isaiah: Here I am! Send me.

Synopsis: When we experience God's glory and holiness, we see ourselves more clearly and see our need for God's forgiveness. And God continues to call us to service in God's Kingdom.

Felt need: To confess our sin, experience God's grace, and hear God's call to serve

Visuals: Hand reaching down from heaven – changes from an accusatory pointing posture to one of welcome. Red hot flaming (branding) iron; tongs with burning charcoal.

Media: "Isaiah 6: 1-8." Length: 1:17. Cost: \$15.00. Short, meditative montage depicting portions of the Isaiah 6 text. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/11763/isaiah-61-8>

Comments: The video is way too calm feeling, totally wrong for this passage. Betty scale: 2.5/5. No.

Readers' Theater: "Go and Tell." A look at God's question "Whom shall I send" and a challenge to answer the call. Actors: 2 Minutes: 7-8 minutes. Genre: Drama.

<https://skitguys.com/scripts/go-and-tell>

Related info: <https://prezi.com/itzlzt0i2k52/structure-of-a-call-story/>

Activity: Holy Communion

Music: Holy Is the Lord, Holy, Holy, Holy (UMH 64), Here I Am, Lord (UMH 593)

FYI: We host Family Promise this week at the Day Center since the bathrooms will be under construction.

Alternate titles: Isaiah – A Place for the: Imperfect, Only Human (verse 5), Fallible, Tainted (from The Message translation), Impure

Discussion points: 1) Why are some people not in church? They don't feel they belong, might not be accepted, or wouldn't be understood. 2) Picture this: The "unwelcome" walking towards LHUMC. Who might be unwelcome? Person with a gun, pedophile, the poor, drunk/addicted, homeless, 3rd shifters (the service times are a problem here). 2) Kate's story: As a kid she went to church every other week with her grandparents. She didn't feel that she belonged with other kids who knew each other from school or with the adults. By the time she was a teen she stopped going and did not return until she was an adult. 3) Susan has seen how some "outsiders" understand the holiness of God and feel convicted by him. There was one young man who didn't feel he could walk into the sanctuary, a holy space, in his tennis shoes. 4) Jeff noticed some people who attended a "high church" in Kentucky who seemed to appreciate it as a sanctuary, but did not want to be "part of the club," a feeling echoed by Carole. 5) Do we expect to experience God's glory? That the sanctuary is a place for the gathering of sinners? 6) Pastor Mary recalled a guy who came to church without shoes. His only pair was dirty from working on the parsonage roof. He had a good understanding of who he was in relationship to God.

March 8, 2020: "Zacchaeus - A Place for the Outcast"

Jeff Verry preaching

Scripture: Luke 19: 1-10 “Zacchaeus the Tax Collector” (English Standard Version)

¹He entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” ⁹And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Synopsis: From the beginning of sacred history, God identifies with the outcast in the lonely, the orphan, the widow, the prisoner, and the foreigner. Jesus sees those who are not in the circle. Jesus sees the unseen and invites us to make a place at the table for them.

Felt need: To open our eyes to see ~~those who are unseen and make space~~ people the way Jesus sees them.

Visuals: Small man, tax forms, tree

Media: We did not watch any of these videos as a group.

- “Jerusalem in the Morning...Zacchaeus.” Length: 2:26. Cost: \$17.50. The diminutive Zacchaeus tells the tale of when Jesus came to town. This hilarious video imagines what it might have been like had there been radio call-in shows during the time of Jesus’ public ministry. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/63796/jerusalem-in-the-morning%E2%80%A6zacchaeus>
- “Zacchaeus Today.” Length: 2:58. Cost: \$22.00. A modern businessman confronts the fact that his life is out of control and considers whether Jesus might help him as he did Zacchaeus in the Bible. <https://www.sermonspice.com/product/66012/zacchaeus-today>

Related info: Lectionary – November 3, 2019

- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4362/worship-connection-november-3-2019>
- <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4365/sermon-options-november-3-2019>

Activity:

Music: #2130 “The Summons”; #383 “This Is a Day of New Beginnings”; #389 “Freely, Freely”; #378 “Amazing Grace”/#3104 “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)”; “Heaven’s Eyes” from *Prince of Egypt* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDEWZnPJGRU>

Alternate titles: Zacchaeus – A Place for the: Sinner, Hated, Despised, Wrong-Doer

Discussion points: 1) Zacchaeus was seeking to see who Jesus was (verse 3), but Jesus was looking to see who Zacchaeus was (verse 5). 2) We need to change our perspective. There is no need to take the part about Zacchaeus’ stature literally. Maybe the “wee” man kids sing about in Sunday School is a “we” man. 3) Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector (rich and despised by others). People who called him a sinner, kept him from seeing Jesus. 4) Verse 8 is in the present tense. It could mean that he changed his ways right then or that he might have been generous all along and no one noticed. 5) Jeff: We need to move from an invitational model (come and see) to a “we will come to you” model (“door dash for Jesus). 6) How can we open our social circle to a horseshoe to make room for others? 7) Jesus saw

Zacchaeus in the tree. Who are today's tree climbers? Greta Thunberg (17 yr-old Swedish climate activist) 8) Note about tax collectors: Today the IRS is among the least liked and trusted companies along with airlines, internet service providers, social media, etc.

March 15, 2020: "Ethiopian Eunuch - A Place for the Seeker/Outsider"

Scripture: Acts 8: 26-40 (The Voice)

Narrator: ²⁶ A heavenly messenger brought this *short* message from the Lord to Philip *during his time preaching in Samaria*:

Messenger of the Lord: Leave Samaria. Go south to the Jerusalem-Gaza road.

Narrator: *The message was especially unusual because this road runs through the middle of uninhabited desert.* ²⁷ But Philip got up, *left the excitement of Samaria*, and did as he was told to do. *Along this road, Philip saw a chariot in the distance. In the chariot was a dignitary from Ethiopia (the treasurer for Queen Candace), an African man who had been castrated. He had gone north to Jerusalem to worship at the Jewish temple,* ²⁸ and he was now *heading southwest* on his way home. He was seated in the chariot and was reading aloud from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ Philip received another prompting from the Holy Spirit:

Holy Spirit: Go over to the chariot and climb on board.

Narrator: ³⁰ So he started running until he was even with the chariot. Philip heard the Ethiopian reading aloud and recognized the words from the prophet Isaiah.

Philip: Do you understand the meaning of what you're reading?

The Ethiopian: ³¹ How can I understand it unless I have a mentor?

Narrator: Then he invited Philip to sit in the chariot. ³² Here's the passage he was reading from the Hebrew Scriptures:

Like a sheep, He was led to be slaughtered.

Like a lamb about to be shorn of its wool, He was completely silent.

³³ He was humiliated, and He received no justice.

Who can describe His peers? *Who would treat Him this way?*

For they snuffed out His life.

The Ethiopian: ³⁴ *Here's my first question.* Is the prophet describing his own situation, or is he describing someone else's calamity?

Narrator: ³⁵ That began a conversation in which Philip used the passage to explain the good news of Jesus. ³⁶ Eventually the chariot passed a body of water beside the road.

The Ethiopian: Since there is water here, **is there anything that might prevent me from being ceremonially washed through baptism and identified as a disciple of Jesus?**

Philip: ³⁷ If you believe in your heart that Jesus the Anointed is God's Son, then nothing can stop you.

Narrator: The Ethiopian said that he believed.

³⁸ He commanded the charioteer to stop the horses. Then Philip and the Ethiopian official walked together into the water. There Philip baptized him, *initiating him as a fellow disciple.*

³⁹ When they came out of the water, Philip was immediately caught up by the Holy Spirit and taken from the sight of the Ethiopian, who climbed back into his chariot and continued on his journey, overflowing with joy. ⁴⁰ Philip found himself at a town called Azotus (*formerly*

Verse 36b is possibly a reference to the Jewish prohibition of full participation in temple worship by men who have been castrated—a prohibition he likely encounters in this very visit to Jerusalem.

the Philistine capital city of Ashdod, on the Mediterranean); and from there he traveled north again, proclaiming the good news in town after town until he came to Caesarea.

Synopsis: We don't always understand everything about faith in Jesus, and we need others to help us grow closer to God. Many times it's the person who is seeking faith and whose experience is very different than our own who reminds us how to reclaim our passion for the Gospel.

Felt need: To be honest about our questions – and to be open to hearing others' questions

Visuals: Open scroll/bible open to Isaiah, water (baptism)

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

- "Philip and the Ethiopian." Length: 4:53. Cost: \$15.00. In this scene, Philip follows an angel's instructions and confronts an Ethiopian man who is reading from the book of Isaiah. Based on Acts 8:26-40, this scene helps audiences see, like the Ethiopian, that Jesus is the One spoken of in the book of Isaiah. <http://www.tedandcompany.com/videos/philip-and-the-ethiopian-video-download/>. Also available as a script for \$25.00. **Comments:** Liked the background, fake horse riding, and Ethiopian's passion. Use it.
- "Philip and the Ethiopian Acts 8 Sunday School Lesson Resource." Length: 3:31. Cost: A watermarked version is available for free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9nVKgt6yrM>. We can't legitimately use the video without subscribing to Sharefaith.com.
- "Philip Meets the Ethiopian man." Length: 3:01. Cost: Free. Animated retelling of Luke 19: 1-10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2D72x1dMwU>

Related info: 1) This story also relates to the debate over human sexuality. The eunuch was an outsider because of his race, religion (Gentile), and gender identity. 2) Lectionary – April 29, 2018 (<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2710/worship-elements-april-29-2018> - call to worship). 3) A New Kind of Christianity by Brian McLaren

Activity: Noisy offering for UMCOR Sunday. Related craft for Sunday School

<http://www.michellepaigeblogs.com/2013/05/sunday-school-craft-philip-and.html>.

Music: Christ Beside Me (2166); #3164 "Down to the River to Pray"

Alternate titles: No suggestions

Discussion points: 1) A eunuch is a man who has been castrated for the express purpose of being a guard (keeper of the bed) for wealthy women. 2) Footnote from the NRSV on v. 27: That the eunuch is coming from worship in the Jerusalem Temple implies that he is a Diaspora Jew or a proselyte (convert). 3) God comes to different people in different ways, an indication of the inclusive nature of the church and God's love. Example: Cornelius and his family were baptized then came to faith. 4) Jerry: The people who come to the table might not be the sinners. Maybe the sinners are the ones setting the table. 5) The eunuch wanted to be a disciple. He was important in spreading the Good News to Africa. There is an Ethiopian holy day in his honor. 6) Two thirds of people cannot point to a singular moment when they came to faith. 7) The seeker was the one who pointed out the water. Late life baptisms are rare.

March 22, 2020: "Mephibosheth - A Place for the Broken"*

*Not sure about this title – it could be "Undeserving"

Scripture: II Samuel 9: 1-13 (The Voice)

David: ⁹Is anyone from Saul's family still around that I could honor for the sake of *my friend* Jonathan?

Narrator: ²One servant from Saul's household, Ziba, was still alive, and they brought him to King David.

David: Are you Ziba?

Ziba: At your service, *Majesty*.

David: ³Is anyone from Saul's family still alive to whom I could show the kindness of God?

Ziba: Jonathan has a son who is still alive; he is crippled, unable to use his feet.

David: ⁴Where is he?

Ziba: He lives with Machir, son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

Narrator: ⁵⁻⁶David sent for *Jonathan's son* Mephibosheth and had him brought to *Jerusalem* from the house of Machir, son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. When he arrived, Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, grandson of Saul, laid facedown on the floor *and honored the king*.

David: Mephibosheth!

Mephibosheth: At your service, *my king*.

David: There's no need to be frightened. I intend to treat you kindly for the sake of your father, Jonathan, *who was my loyal friend*. I will return to you all the territory that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always be welcome at my table.

Narrator: ⁸Mephibosheth again prostrated himself *before the king*.

Mephibosheth: What am I to you that the king should look with favor on a dead dog like me? *I am as one of your servants*.

Narrator: ⁹Then the king summoned Ziba, who had been Saul's servant.

David: Everything that belonged to *his grandfather* Saul and his family I have returned to your master's descendant. ¹⁰You, your sons, and your servants will work on his farms and bring in his produce, so that he *and his household* will have food. But Mephibosheth will always eat at my table.

Narrator: Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.

Ziba: ¹¹I am your servant, and you are my lord and king. Whatever you command I will do.

Narrator: *From then on*, Mephibosheth ate at the king's table as though he were one of David's own sons. ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son, Mica; and all who lived in the house of Ziba became Mephibosheth's servants *and worked for him*. ¹³Mephibosheth remained in Jerusalem, where he always ate at the king's table. He was lame and could not walk on either foot.

Verse 4-6: David still remembers his deepest friendship. The loss of Jonathan haunts David, and he desires to show honor to the family of God's anointed, Saul. David promised his friend Jonathan that if he ever became king, he would treat Jonathan and his descendants with kindness. Their friendship was important to David; and although he thinks all of Saul's family has been destroyed, he wants to find out if somewhere there might be a relative of Jonathan whom he may honor in gratitude for all Jonathan did for him.

Synopsis: We are sometimes quick to close off relationships with others because of their family connections or family history. King David's invitation reminds us to treat each person as an individual – and not allow previous experiences to be a reason to withhold God's grace.

Felt need: To show kindness even when others (or their loved ones) have hurt us

Visuals:

Media:

- “David’s Promise – Bible Stories Read Aloud.” Length: 1:54. Cost: Free. Animated retelling. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VveSv4EjWOI>
- “David and Mephibosheth: Animated Bible Story for Children.” Length: Use only the first 3 minutes 32 seconds. Cost: Free. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDTYvpoU1Nk>

Related info: Activity: UMCOR Sunday

Music: “Carbon Ribs” (John Mark McMillan) – special music by Michael Boersma?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCq6u_8q_iE &

<https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/3530822107858788231/>; “Carried to the Table” by Leeland; #2236 “Gather Us In”; #3149 “A Place at the Table”

Alternate titles: Meshibopheth – A Place for the: Challenged, Handicapped, Uninvited, Least Likely, Least of These, Sidelined; Meshibopheth – A Place for All: Kinds, Circumstances

Discussion points: 1) Mephibosheth was physically disabled. For him to be invited to the king’s table was unthinkable. David owed him nothing. What does it mean to invite someone like this? What kind of flack could David have expected as a consequence? 2) Cannonsburg hosted a special ski time for people with disabilities. <https://www.woodtv.com/news/kent-county/adaptive-ski-clinic-held-at-cannonsburg-resort/>. 3) LHUMC’s sanctuary is barrier-free. 4) Jeff noted that a high school had a small quiet graduation ceremony for an autistic student who had trouble in noisy environments **before** the regular graduation. Another amazing adaption: A tactile Rubik’s cube for the blind. 5) Did David respond out of grief? 6) Family dynamics (bad connections) separate people on a regular basis.

March 29, 2020: “Mary Magdalene - A Place for the Ill/Untouchable”

Scripture: Luke 8: 1-3 (The Voice)

⁸ Soon after this incident, Jesus preached from city to city, village to village, carrying the good news of the kingdom of God. He was accompanied by a group called “the twelve,” ² and also by a larger group including some women who had been rescued from evil spirits and healed of diseases. There was Mary, called Magdalene, who had been released from seven demons. ³ There were others like Susanna and Joanna, who was married to Chuza, a steward of King Herod. And there were many others too. *These women played an important role in Jesus’ ministry, using their wealth to provide for Him and His other companions.*

Synopsis: Illness – in body or mind – is something that everyone deals with at one time or another, and it is not a barrier to being called to follow Jesus or to being a powerful witness to his love and grace.

Felt need: To recognize God’s call on those who struggle with physical and mental illness

Visuals: Table, broken jar

Media: We did not watch any of these as a group. Continue to look for media that focuses on mental illness.

- Available Feb. 5 – “Easter Upside Down – Mary.) Sneak preview is available at <https://skitguys.com/videos/easter-upside->

[down?utm_source=Skit+Guys+News&utm_campaign=2e24193540-EMAIL CAMPAIGN 2020 01 23&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0 1f8e8a4026-2e24193540-26165634&mc_cid=2e24193540&mc_eid=c7d26fab5b](https://skitguys.com/news/2020/01/23/email-campaign-2020-01-23&utm_source=Skit+Guys+News&utm_campaign=2e24193540-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_01_23&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1f8e8a4026-2e24193540-26165634&mc_cid=2e24193540&mc_eid=c7d26fab5b) at around 2 minutes.

- “Karen’s Story: Trials.” Length: 4:48. Cost: \$16.99. Trials. We all face them. Whether it’s the patience we need for standing in a long line or a call in the middle of the night delivering bad news. We all face trials. Listen as Karen describes her life story and how the trials in her life have given her an incredible view of Faith and God. More specifically, listen as she describes how her trials and suffering melted her heart to God.
<https://skitguys.com/videos/karens-story-trials>
- “Mary Magdalene’s Confessional.” Length: 4:07. Cost \$15.00. A stark and poignant journey through the thoughts and feelings of Mary Magdalene upon learning about the death and resurrection of Jesus. <https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/19795/mary-magdalenes-confessional>

Related info: 1) Lectionary – June 12, 2016. 2) February 4, 2020 Upper Room devotion, “In God’s Time,” a look a depression, suicide, and healing.

Activity:

Music: #266 “Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer” (sung to the tune of “Amazing Grace”); #367 “He Touched Me”

Alternate title: Mary Magdalene – A Place for the: Stigmatized, Stereotyped, Ostracized, Ashamed, Burdened, Scarred, Defeated, Troubled, Lonely, Outcast, Dispossessed, Overlooked, Left Alone, Struggling; Mary Magdalene – A Place for: Us, People who Think They Don’t Belong

Discussion points: 1) Mary Magdalene is mentioned twelve times in the gospels, including here in Luke 8 and at the resurrection. She was not a prostitute. Luke 7: 36-50 tells of a woman who had lived a sinful life who anoints Jesus’ feet with perfume, a potential source of confusion. Mary Magdalene was released/healed from seven demons. She was from Magdala, a city on Lake Galilee. 2) Pastor Mary chose her because she is a woman, to dispel the myth of prostitution, she was an important part of Jesus’ ministry, and to shed light on mental illness. 3) What demons did the other disciples have? 4) In Luke, people are healed from sin (as opposed to being healed from disease). 5) The church has not done a good job dealing with the stigma attached mental health issues including depression, anxiety, dementia, Alzheimer’s, etc. 6) Jerry: Can we ascribe certain characteristics to Mary such as strength, persistence, good speaker, leader, etc?

April 5, 2020: “Barabbas - A Place for the Losers”

Palm Sunday

Rev. Susan Hagans preaching – “Barabbas – A Place for the Misguided or the Mistaken” might be better?

Scripture: Matthew 27: 15-26 (The Voice)

Narrator: ¹⁵ Now the governor had a custom. During the *great Jewish festival of Passover*, he would allow the crowd to pick one of the condemned men, and he, *Pilate*, would set the man free. *Just like that. Gratuitous, gracious freedom.* ¹⁶ At this time, they had a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd gathered, Pilate offered them a choice:

Pilate: Whom do you want me to free? Barabbas or Jesus, whom some call the Anointed One?

Narrator: ¹⁸ Pilate knew the chief priests and elders hated Jesus and had delivered Him up because they envied Him.

¹⁹ Then Pilate sat down on his judgment seat, and he received a message from his wife: “Distance yourself utterly from *the proceedings against* this righteous man. I have had a dream about Him, a dream full of twisted sufferings—*He is innocent, I know it, and we should have nothing to do with Him.*”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders convinced the crowd to demand that Barabbas, not Jesus, *whom-some-call-the-Anointed-One*, be freed and that Jesus be put to death.

Pilate (*standing before the crowd*): ²¹ Which of these men would you have me free?

Crowd (*shouting*): Barabbas!

Pilate: ²² What would you have me do with this Jesus, whom some call the Anointed One?

Crowd (*shouting*): Crucify Him!

Pilate: ²³ Why? What crime has this man committed?

Crowd (*responding with a shout*): Crucify Him!

Narrator: ²⁴ Pilate saw that unless he wanted a riot on his hands, he now had to bow to their wishes. So he took *a pitcher of water*, stood before the crowd, and washed his hands.

Pilate: You will see to this crucifixion, for this man’s blood will be *upon you* and not upon me. *I wash myself of it.*

Crowd: ²⁵ Indeed, let His blood be upon us—upon us and our children!

Narrator: ²⁶ So Pilate released Barabbas, and he had Jesus flogged and handed over to be crucified.

Verse 17: Pilate could call Him “Jesus of Nazareth” or “Jesus the Carpenter,” but he says, “whom some call the Anointed One.” It is significant that Pilate is in a position where he passes judgment. He determines who will live and who will die, and he is preparing to hold court.

Verse 22: It is clear Pilate has laid his own trap. He realizes he has given the crowd a choice, but the crowd doesn’t choose as he expects them to.

Synopsis: What do you do when you hitch your wagon to the wrong star? When you take the wrong path? When you think you are absolutely right, but you are not?

Felt need: To confess our arrogance and choose Christ no matter the cost.

Visuals:

Media: “Our Risen Savior: Barabbas.” Length: 3:25. Cost: \$16.99. We all know what happens to Jesus after the crowd chooses him for crucifixion. But rarely do we consider what happened to Barabbas. Watch this interpretation of what Barabbas must have been contending with. <https://skitguys.com/videos/our-risen-savior-barabbas> **Comments:** Very well done. Use at the end of worship to make the transition from Palm Sunday to the Passion.

Related info: 1) “The Conscience of a Spouse” –verse 19, message from Pilate’s wife - <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4871/the-conscience-of-a-spouse-2>)

“Answering Pilate’s Question” – verse 22 -

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2494/answering-pilates-question>

Activity: Palms, Holy Communion – **Rev. Jerry Hagans will help preside**

Music: #280 “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”; #277 “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”; #278 “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

Communion hymns: #2269 “Come, Share the Lord”; #292 “What Wondrous Love Is This?”; #618 “Let Us Break Bread Together”

Closing song: #378 “Amazing Grace”/#3104 “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)”

Alternate title: Barabbas – A Place for the Derelict, Second Chances

Discussion points: 1) Jesus Barabbas and Jesus of Nazareth were both very popular and sources of trouble for the governor. Barabbas – love of power, revolutionary, violent, blood on his hands. Jesus – power of love, revolutionary (in a different way), brought before Pilate. 2) The crowd was probably picked by the Temple priests. Jesus was a rule breaker, but his trial was rigged. Pilate made a politically wise choice to avoid trouble with Rome. 3) We make choices every day. Do we choose to be in charge or follow Jesus? Do we vote with a conscience informed by Christ? Do we love power or relinquish it? 4) In this scene, everyone washes their hands of being responsible for the crucifixion ensuring the no one, i.e. everyone, is actually responsible for it. 5) Because Jesus refused to defend himself, Barabbas goes free and has a place at God’s table. The second person is the thief on the cross. 6) Barabbas is never mentioned again. 7) How many people know that “Hosanna” means “save us”?

Historical background:

Barabbas in the New Testament is a prisoner mentioned in all four Gospels. He was chosen by the crowd, over Jesus, to be released by Pontius Pilate in a customary pardon before the feast of Passover.

In Matthew 27:16, Barabbas is called a “notorious prisoner.” In Mark 15:7 and Luke 23:19, he was “in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection” against the occupying Roman forces. John 18:40 describes him as a bandit. His name may mean “son of the father”. He may have actually been a freedom fighter in the Jewish resistance to the Romans, an important rebel leader and hero of their faith. Any leader in the fight against the hated Romans would have been very popular with the common people.

But Jesus was also very popular with the popular people. When he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday he was greeted by large excited crowds. Many believed that he was the long-awaited Messiah, who with God’s help would overthrow all oppressive rulers and establish a new eternal Kingdom of God. They knew of his healings and many crowds had heard his teachings.

But if Jesus and Barabbas were both very popular, why did the crowd call for Jesus to be crucified and Barabbas to be released? The likely explanation is that the crowd was dominated by employees of the Jewish religious authorities and their servants, and they had been told to shout out for Barabbas to be released. The religious authorities feared Jesus and his popularity was a threat to their power. Also, because Jesus was arrested late at night and brought before Pilate early the next morning, most of Jesus’ followers probably didn’t know where he was. And his closest followers had apparently gone into hiding out of fear of arrest. Therefore no one was there to take a stand for Jesus.

Thoughts from Pastor Susan:

Barabbas thought, as did Judas, that the only way to defeat the Romans was with violence. The Jewish people were under occupation by the hated Romans, heavily taxed, unfairly so. The only way was to get rid of them all, to lead violent insurrections, to kill the Romans using any means possible.

Jesus, the son of God, preached peace. If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other cheek as well. If one steals your cloak, give him your coat as well. Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you. And before Pontius Pilate made his final decision, in the Gospel of Mark,

Pilate asks Jesus “Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you!” But Jesus said made no further answer. “He never said a mumblin’ word” (song)

We live in a world of choices. Every day. Every hour. Some small choices. Some huge. As, do I choose peace, or violence, as a way of life? And sometimes you make a choice that affects your whole life, and late at night, sleep defies you as you try to justify what you did. And there’s no justification, not really. Not that holds up in God’s eyes. But you plow forward anyway, on the wrong path.

How often do we not choose the way of Jesus? What would Jesus want us to do? To choose? Yet he chose to give his life so Barabbas could be set free.

So, the two men came before Pontius Pilate: the murderer and zealot, and the peacemaker and teacher. And Jesus chose not to even defend himself. He gave himself up, with love for us all, so that the undeserving Barabbas could be set free. A love so all embracing that losers such as us, could be set free! What kind of love is this? A love for us to receive at this table, set for us.

The table is set for those who have made mistakes, for the misguided, for the losers, for all of us.

(Who is invited? e.g. Brother Jim: Hennessee’s)

April 9, 2020: Holy Thursday - “The Table - A Place of Grace for Everyone”

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

Synopsis: Remembering God’s saving work from the Exodus until the Last Supper invites us to come to the table of grace that is for all people.

Felt need: To hear the story of God’s salvation and respond

Visuals: Three vignettes, one for each scene:

- A door with lintel or doorposts. Props: “blood” for marking the doorpost.
- Paul seated at his writing desk. Props: table, oil lamp or candle, pen, parchment.
- A low table with disciples reclining around it. Props: cups, bowls, bread, towel, pitcher, basin, proper clothing for Jesus.

Notes: The following is based on a multisensory worship service for Holy Thursday by Daniel Benedict, January 2012. We used it as the basis for April 5, 2012 Holy Thursday service pretty much as follows.

Gathering: People enter and take their seats.

The room is semi dark (cover the windows).

The Communion Table is illuminated, but the candles are not lit.

Greeting

Music: #2254 “In Remembrance of Me”

Prayer of Confession/Pardon/Prayer of Illumination

Scripture drama #1: Exodus 12: 1-4, 11-14 (NRSV)

Lights: ↑ ½ way on door frame. Turn door spotlight ON remotely.

Narrator stands stage right and reads:

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the LORD. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

All house lights ↓. Show clip from “Prince of Egypt.”

Someone enters from the behind the left screen, dips a sponge in red paint and marks the doorposts and lintel with paint.

Music: #123 “El Shaddai” or #2002 “I Will Call Upon the Lord”

Paul move to the desk during the song.

Lights: Turn door spotlight OFF remotely. ↓ door frame. ↑ ½ way on Paul’s desk.

Paul lights the candle on the desk, picks up the feather pen, and writes.

Scripture drama #2: I Corinthians 11: 1-2, 23-26 (NRSV) Narrator stands stage right and reads:

Hear these words written by the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth:

^{11:1}Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. ²I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.

²³For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Music: #2254 “In Remembrance of Me” stanza one

Paul extinguishes the candle on the desk. Lights: ↓ Paul’s desk.

Paul moves offstage during this song.

**Jesus and the disciples enter from the right,
then move to the table laden with real food and drink.**

**Jesus faces the congregation. Peter is opposite Jesus. The other disciples take their seats
around the table, light the candles, eat and drink.**

Lights: ↑ ½ way on Last Supper.

Scripture drama #3: John 13: 1-17, 31-35 (NRSV)

Narrator: ¹Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Jesus' and the disciples' actions follow the narration.

²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter.

Simon Peter: Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus: You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.

Simon Peter: You will never wash my feet.

Jesus: Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.

Simon Peter: Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!

Jesus: One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.

Narrator: ¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he spoke to them.

Jesus: Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Lights remain on the Last Supper.

Jesus, the disciples, and the narrator leave the chancel.

Thanksgiving and Holy Communion (Rev. John Thompson)

Jesus and Peter serve communion (use pita bread).

Disciples will move to the foot washing station at the front right pew.

After communion people can choose to kneel in prayer, sing (#618 "Let Us Break Bread Together"; #2223 "They'll Know We Are Christians"; #2176 "Make Me a Servant"), participate in foot washing, return to their seats.

Prayer/Benediction. Leave in silence.

April 10, 2020: Good Friday - Worship at 12:00 p.m. at Temple UMC

Scripture:
Sermon:
Music:

April 12, 2020: Easter Sunday - "Thomas - A Place for the Skeptic/Doubter"

Scripture: John 20: 19-31 (The Voice)

Narrator: ¹⁹ On that same evening (Resurrection Sunday), the followers gathered together behind locked doors in fear that some of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem were still searching for them. Out of nowhere, Jesus appeared in the center of the room.

Jesus: May each one of you be at peace.

Narrator: ²⁰ As He was speaking, He revealed the wounds in His hands and side. The disciples began to celebrate as it sank in that they were really seeing the Lord.

Jesus: ²¹ I give you the gift of peace. In the same way the Father sent Me, I am now sending you.

Narrator: ²² Now He drew close enough to each of them that *they could feel His breath*. He breathed on them:

Jesus: Welcome the Holy Spirit of the living God. ²³ You now have the mantle of God's forgiveness. As you go, you are able to share the life-giving power to forgive sins, or to withhold forgiveness.

Narrator: ²⁴ All of the eleven were present with the exception of Thomas. ²⁵ He heard the accounts of each brother's interaction with the Lord.

The Other Disciples: We have seen the Lord!

Thomas: Until I see His hands, feel the wounds of the nails, and put my hand to His side, I won't believe what you are saying.

Narrator: ²⁶ Eight days later, they gathered again behind locked doors; and Jesus reappeared. This time Thomas was with them.

Jesus: May each one of you be at peace.

Narrator: ²⁷ He drew close to Thomas.

Jesus: Reach out and touch Me. See the punctures in My hands; reach out your hand, and put it to My side; leave behind your faithlessness, and believe.

Thomas (filled with emotion): ²⁸ You are the one True God and Lord of my life.

Jesus: ²⁹ Thomas, you have faith because you have seen Me. Blessed are all those who never see Me and yet they still believe.

Narrator: ³⁰ Jesus performed many other wondrous signs that are not written in this book. ³¹ These accounts are recorded so that you, too, might believe that Jesus is the Anointed, *the Liberating King*, the Son of God, because believing grants you the life He came to share.

Synopsis: Thomas is a powerful reminder of the need for each of us to experience the reality of resurrection for ourselves – and to come just as we are to Jesus – even if it means wondering and questioning.

Felt need: To bring our doubts and questions – and to know that it's never too late to come to Jesus

Visuals:

Media: "JESUS Reigns: Thomas." Length: 2:59. Cost: \$16.99. Thomas wasn't known as a doubter when Jesus was alive; He was a fierce follower and believer. But when Jesus returned from the grave, Thomas needed to see and touch his wounds before he could

reconcile what he was seeing. This mini movie is a great follow-up to use on the Sunday after Easter or as a companion to the Anthem on Easter morning.

<https://skitguys.com/videos/jesus-reigns-thomas> **Comments:** Jesus appeared to Thomas to make sure he knew he was worth it: He came back for me. Betty scale: 5/5.

Related info: Sunrise Service at Mona Lake?

Activity: Holy Baptism, Reception of New Members

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

Alternate title: No suggestions

Discussion points: 1) Skeptic – the ambiguity of this word makes it a good choice for a title. It is possible to be skeptical and faithful. Jesus calls us to be faithful. 2) Jerry: It is hard to believe that Jesus didn't come back mad. Jeff: Not yet at least. 3) Jesus doesn't view people as objects.