

Season of Pentecost
July and August 2020 Brainstorming Summary
Monday, June 22, 2020

Members present: Linda Rousell, Larry Jorgenson, Marie Kordecki, Carole Koch, Vicki Zuker, Pastor Mary, Lynne Richmond, Karen Booth, Betty Kinney, Barb Gripton, Diane Thompson

Series: *Old School: Prophets*

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

20/20 Vision theme connection: Looking at the big picture of our faith, including spending some time in the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures, can help us hear God’s message for us today and understand that God’s vision for the world hasn’t changed.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We are following public health directives regarding large in-person gatherings. Worship will continue to be livestreamed from the sanctuary with a minimal crew to produce worship. We’ll continue with one worship service through the summer months assuming that we can seat approximately 150 persons using CDC guidelines using our sanctuary, back area, and Lounge.

Overview: We don’t always pay close attention to the certain parts of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, even though Jesus quoted it frequently. In fact, the prophets, especially the Minor Prophets (named that because the books are short in length and fit on one scroll), are overlooked even as they have a lot to say about how we love God and love one another. They are truth-tellers and fore-tellers (not fortune tellers or future tellers!) offering comfort to God’s people, but also challenging them and critiquing them for empty worship and a lack of care for the most vulnerable.

General discussion points: 1) The prophets’ messages are still relevant today. People have not changed. Our worship can still be empty (current idols: money, smart phones, etc.). We are not always faithful. We are divided. We don’t treat or care for others in a godly fashion. Speaking truth to power/leaders is often futile. 2) Prophets were thought be like pastors, intermediaries between the people and God. 3) Prophets were not part of the religious community. They were called out of other jobs.

Resources:

- [From Judgment to Hope: A Study on the Prophets](#) by Walter Brueggemann

NOTES: Prophets are “emancipated imaginers of alternative” (not simply predictors or social advocates). It’s important to understand their historical context, canonical context, and contemporary context.

- [Genesis to Revelation: The Minor Prophets](#) by Gene M. Tucker
- [God Isn’t Finished With Us Yet: Major Promises from the Minor Prophets](#) by James A. Harnish

NOTES: Prophets are like the “Maytag repairmen” of Scripture – spending lonely hours in the office where the phones never ring. They are largely unknown and unused. We don’t read or

quote them much. They are also poets who can lift us out of discouragement and into hope. “In their struggle with oppression, injustice, political corruption, military power, and personal morality, we find renewed strength for the struggle that confronts men and women who seek God’s justice in every age.” They have faith in God who keeps covenant. How do we listen to them in the present tense?

- Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today by Adam Hamilton
- Peculiar Treasures: A Biblical Who’s Who by Frederick Buechner
- <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/amanda-benckhuysen-on-preaching-from-the-minor-prophets/>
- <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-12-minor-prophets/>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/7-minor-prophets>
- Interview of Walter Brueggemann, “The Prophetic Imagination,” by Krista Tippett <https://onbeing.org/programs/walter-brueggemann-the-prophetic-imagination-dec2018/>
- <https://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/t/minor-prophets-god-still-speaks-12-session-study.html>
- https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2017/october/my-name-is-hosea.html?utm_source=preachingtoday&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=8368309&utm_content=674102125&utm_campaign=email

Music:

- #108 “God Hath Spoken by the Prophets”
- #451 “Be Thou My Vision”
- #577 “God of Grace and God of Glory”
- #2120 “Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”
- #2246 “Deep in the Shadows of the Past”
- #3008 “Open the Eyes of My Heart”
- #2002 “I Will Call Upon the Lord”
- #2086 “Open Our Eyes, Lord”
- #3106 “Your Grace Is Enough”
- Be Thou My Vision (UMH 451)
- God of Grace and God of Glory (UMH 577) – *Grant us wisdom, grant us courage...*
- God of Love and God of Power (UMH 578) – *We are not the first to be banished by our fears from thee; give us courage...*
- How Firm a Foundation (UMH 529) – *Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed...*
- “A Prophet Has a Lonely Task” sung to the tune of WAREHAM 8.8.8.8 (“The Church of Christ in Every Age”)

A prophet has a lonely task —
To help the world to see anew,
To name injustice, then to ask
What God is calling us to do.

On city streets among the poor,
In places spoiled for oil or coal,
At yet another time of war,



A prophet seeks the nation's soul.

O Lord, you taught us: Hear their shout!
Receive their call to turn from sin!
When others seek to shut them out,
The church must welcome prophets in.

For in our welcome, Lord, we'll find
A living faith, a new world-view,

A life more peaceful, just and kind,
A church that gladly welcomes you.

Biblical Reference: Matthew 10:40-42

Tune: William Knapp, 1738 ("The Church of Christ in Every Age")

Alternate tune: CANONBURY, Robert Schumann, 1839 ("Lord,
Speak to Me, That I May Speak")

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns:

www.carolynshymns.com

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Ideas for the series:

- FLAT PROPHET (similar to FLAT JESUS) and word for each week (highlighted in each message title)
- Offering a monologue or back story for each prophet (timeline, etc.)
- Connecting Biblical prophets to modern-day prophets – who's speaking on God's behalf now? What do we need to hear?
- Use resources for those without Internet to stay connected throughout this series
- God moment/Star Word reflection each week – JUSTICE, etc.
- Weekly reading of a minor prophet
- Invitation to Rabbi Alan Alpert to share about prophets
- Pattern in the prophets: straying from God and going our own way (usually at the expense of and detriment to others), suffering because of God's judgment and personal sin, redemption because of God's faithfulness, and hope for a new and better day

2020 Social Justice issues: Human Trafficking (Jan.), Prayers for Ethical Leaders (Feb.), Prison Reform (March), Creation Care (April), Human Sexuality (May), Racism and Privilege (June), Hunger and Food Insecurity (July), Addiction (Aug.), Childhood Trauma (Sept.), Healing Political Divisions (Oct.). Not sure about November or December.

Related Social Justice discussion points: 1) We are talking about more than just being nice to each other. This is about making sure everyone has equal rights and opportunities. 2) Current use of social media is not particularly sociable; it is divisive.

Visuals:

- Inspirational graphics by Jim Le Page <https://www.jimlepage.com/bible-art-shop/bible-books-vol-1>
- Prophets poster <https://jordanladikos.com/portfolio/prophets-infographic/>
- Methodist cross and flames

- Sanctuary: Green paraments. Big jug with “water” flowing from it. One item representing the week’s prophet and word in front of the table in big letters. Move the letters to the ledge if we are back in the sanctuary.
 - Amos – plumb line (Larry)/JUSTICE
 - Hosea – heart/LOVE
 - Micah – scales of justice/FAITH
 - Nahum – gavel (Betty)/JUDGE
 - Habakkuk – fig tree (P. Mary)/WAITING
 - Joel – piece of fabric/CHANGE

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

Potential worship leaders: Chris Beaudoin, Brad Hilleary, Dirk Fuller, Rose Emmons, Brian Mosley, Larry Swisher, and Gary Cooper

July 12, 2020: “Amos: Justice for All”

6th Sunday after Pentecost – LIVESTREAM

Lectionary 7-14-19 (7: 7-17)

Scripture: Amos 5: 18-24, 7: 7-17 (Common English Bible)**Key verse:** 5: 24 used in MLK Jr speech

A statement of divine disgust

¹⁸ Doom to those who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; ¹⁹ as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or sought refuge in a house, rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. ²⁰ Isn’t the day of the Lord darkness, not light; all dark with no brightness in it?

²¹ I hate, I reject your festivals; I don’t enjoy your joyous assemblies. ²² If you bring me your entirely burned offerings and gifts of food—I won’t be pleased; I won’t even look at your offerings of well-fed animals. ²³ Take away the noise of your songs; I won’t listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

A vision of a plumb line

⁷ This is what the Lord showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸ The Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

“A plumb line,” I said.

Then the Lord said, “See, I am setting a plumb line in the middle of my people Israel. I will never again forgive them. ⁹ The shrines of Isaac will be made desolate, and the holy places of Israel will be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

Exchange between Amaziah, Jeroboam, and Amos

¹⁰ Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, reported to Israel’s King Jeroboam, “Amos has plotted against you within the house of Israel. The land isn’t able to cope with everything that he is saying. ¹¹ Amos has said, ‘Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will be forced out of its land.’”

¹² Amaziah said to Amos, “You who see things, go, run away to the land of Judah, eat your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³ but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s holy place and his royal house.”

¹⁴ Amos answered Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I a prophet's son; but I am a shepherd, and a trimmer of sycamore trees. ¹⁵ But the Lord took me from shepherding the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

¹⁶ "Now then hear the Lord's word. You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel, and don't preach against the house of Isaac.'

¹⁷ "Therefore, the Lord proclaims: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, and your land will be measured and divided up; you yourself will die in an unclean land, and Israel will surely be taken away from its land.'"

Synopsis: It's difficult to hear God's call to care for those who are in need and the most vulnerable in our community, especially when times are good for us and things are going well. Worship of God is an offering, but worship sends us into the world in mission and ministry on behalf of God whom we worship and who cares about all of God's creation.

Felt need: To understand a prophet's role and hear God's call to social justice - everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities.

Visuals: lion, rushing water, plumb line

Media:

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted Amos 5: 24 in "I Have a Dream" speech. The full text to the speech is available at <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1951-/martin-luther-kings-i-have-a-dream-speech-august-28-1963.php>. The last part of the speech is at <https://www.newsweek.com/martin-luther-king-jr-i-have-dream-speech-full-text-video-1482623>.
- "Justice." Length: 1:46. Cost: free with our membership. The hard work of justice for everyone is far from over. <https://journeyboxmedia.com/product/justice/> **Comments:** Liked this video the best. It could be used later in the series.
- "Seek Justice." Length: 1:32. Cost: \$15.98 (after 7/1 it is \$19.98). God desires justice in our lives – in our personal lives, in our society, and in the world. Jesus showed what it mean to care for the "the least of these" and we are to do the same. Seek justice. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/25450/seek-justice> **Comments:** Liked it but it does go a bit fast. **Note from Karen:** I can slow it down 10% or more.
- "Overview: Amos." Length: 7:12. Free. Overview of the whole book of Amos. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGgWaPGpGz4> **Comment:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Amos.

Related info:

- <https://sojo.net/articles/social-justice-christian-tradition-not-liberal-agenda>
- "Amos speaks with brutal frankness in denouncing sin. He collided with the false religions leaders of his day and was not intimidated by priest or king. He continued to speak his message boldly. God requires truth and goodness, justice and righteousness, from all people and nations today as well. Many of the conditions in Israel during Amos' time are evident in today's society. We need Amos's courage to ignore danger and stand against sin." (<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphics-am>)

Social holiness: Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, Board of Church and Society: “Social holiness is unique to Methodism. United Methodists have a long commitment to social holiness. It is in our DNA. It is part of who we are. Wesley has said, ‘There is no religion that is not social, no holiness that is not social.’ Wesley goes on to say that without social holiness, we cannot exist. It is because of God’s love for us and Christ’s love that we reach out into the world to walk with others and to accompany them in their journeys. Because social holiness is unique to us, it means that we must be in this together. We live our lives together and we live our lives with all of God’s creation. We walk with one another. We walk with those who are poor those who are vulnerable, those who live on the margins of life. It is a gift that God has given us and we have claimed as Methodists who are committed to social holiness; that we would be with one another in this journey as we live our lives together.”

Activity:

Music: #2048 “God Weeps”; #2177 “Wounded World that Cries for Healing”

Discussion points: 1) Elyse Ihlefeldt’s star word is JUSTICE. 2) Amos was a vine dresser of fig trees (and sheep owner – a man of some wealth). 2) Justice and righteousness (right aim before God – an archer’s term) are connected in the same way that worship, mission, and service are related, i.e. love God and love neighbor. 3) Amos spoke while times were relatively good, yet many people were still hurting. He referred to the wealthy women of Samaria who demand that their husbands satisfy their cravings as “the cows of Bashan.” “The derogatory language perhaps suggests that they, like the livestock of **Bashan**, were well fed, ironically in preparation for the coming slaughter.” 4) Social holiness – John Wesley called followers to go and where no one else wants to go. 5) Related current event: COVID-19 hitting the marginalized harder.

July 19, 2020: “Hosea: Love Without End”

7th Sunday after Pentecost – LIVESTREAM

Lectionary 8-4-19

Scripture: Hosea 11: 1-11 (Common English Bible)

Divine love

^{11:1} When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ² The more I called them, the further they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and they burned incense to idols. ³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up in my arms, but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴ I led them with bands of human kindness, with cords of love. I treated them like those who lift infants to their cheeks; I bent down to them and fed them.

Divine frustration

⁵ They will return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria will be their king, because they have refused to return to me. ⁶ The sword will strike wildly in their cities; it will consume the bars of their gates and will take everything because of their schemes. ⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me; and though they cry out to the Most High, he will not raise them up.

Divine compassion

⁸ How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart winces within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.

Israel's and Judah's responses

⁹ I won't act on the heat of my anger; I won't return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a human being, the holy one in your midst; I won't come in harsh judgment. ¹⁰ They will walk after the Lord, who roars like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. ¹¹ They will come trembling like a bird, and like a dove from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the Lord.

Synopsis: We can easily fall into a trap where God's love is conditional – for ourselves and for others. We assume that God treats us like we sometimes treat others – withholding love and grace. But the message of the prophets is that God is faithful to the covenant-promise God makes with us. God will love us to the end.

Felt need: To claim God's love that doesn't end even when we're unfaithful to our promises

Visuals: Sandwich board for street preacher. Lectionary: Child, incense, cords/bands, heart, lion, birds/dove.

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

- "Loved." Length: 4:57. Cost: \$15.00. Loosely based on the story of Gomer and Hosea from the bible, this parable shows that God's love is unconditional, his grace is unceasing, and his forgiveness is for each of us. www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/7512/loved

Comments: It is a little long, but the message of love is one that people need to hear. This is not just a story about marriage, but a parable about love and forgiveness, specifically how God is like a faithful spouse and loving father.

- "Always Will." Length: 3:35. Cost: \$20.00. True love keeps no records of wrongs. This powerful story of love and forgiveness is based on the book of Hosea. It portrays the questions we face when love gets hard, and our responsibility to love like Christ. <https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/28234/always-will>
- "This Love." Length: 1:35. Cost: \$19.98. In this world we have distorted the meaning of love. This reflective mini-movie compare the world's version of "love" to the perfect, immeasurable, everlasting love of God. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/22502/this-love>
- "Overview: Hosea." Length: 7:35. Free. Overview of the whole book of Hosea. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU> **Comment:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Hosea.

Related info: "God wanted the people in the northern kingdom to turn from their sin and return to worshipping him alone, but they persisted in their wickedness. Throughout the book Israel is described as ignorant of God, with no desire to please him. Israel did not understand God at all, just as Gomer did not understand Hosea. Like a loving husband or patient father, God wants people to know him and to turn to him daily." (<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphics-hos>)

Activity:

Music: Reckless Love; #121 "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

Discussion points: 1) Hosea reads like a soap opera. God directs Hosea to marry a prostitute, a practitioner of the world's oldest profession. Hosea's experience is very specific. It is intended to show how God loves us. We are focusing on the end of the story which tells of God's faithfulness and steadfast love. 2) Amos attitude at the beginning of this book is judgmental. He sounds like a street preacher who shouts at people. What good does shouting do? 3) Amos shows us that God is the judge and will love us to the end. 4) Star Word – Both kids and adults should have love.

July 26, 2020: "Micah: Faith-Full Living"

8th Sunday after Pentecost – LIVESTREAM

Lectionary 2-2-20

Scripture: Micah 6: 1-8 (Common English Bible)

Key verse: 6: 8

God's dispute with Israel

^{6:1} Hear what the Lord is saying:

Arise, lay out the lawsuit before the mountains; let the hills hear your voice! ² Hear, mountains, the lawsuit of the Lord! Hear, eternal foundations of the earth! The Lord has a lawsuit against his people; with Israel he will argue.

³ "My people, what did I ever do to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ I brought you up out of the land of Egypt; I redeemed you from the house of slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before you. ⁵ My people, remember what Moab's King Balak had planned, and how Balaam, Beor's son, answered him! Remember everything from Shittim to Gilgal, that you might learn to recognize the righteous acts of the Lord!"

What does the Lord require?

⁶ With what should I approach the Lord and bow down before God on high? Should I come before him with entirely burned offerings, with year-old calves? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with many torrents of oil? Should I give my oldest child for my crime; the fruit of my body for the sin of my spirit?

⁸ He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.

Synopsis: "Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly" has almost become a slogan for faithful living. But God's message is a caution – to resist temptation to feel good about empty rituals that don't bring us closer to God and instead see the connection between claiming our faith and doing our faith.

Felt need: To hear the connection between worship and faithful living that seeks God's purpose and not our own

Visuals: courtroom. Lectionary: briefcase, Exodus, prayer, scales of justice, ministry.

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

- "A Four-fold Blessing." Length: 2:29. Cost: \$20.00. This modern church classic is a beautiful prayer that challenges our notions of what is considered a blessing while calling us to act on the empathy that we feel for others. www.skitguys.com/videos/a-fourfold-blessing **Comments:**

This is based on "A Non-Traditional Blessing." Its text and a related blessing by Sir Francis Drake are below. **Use it.**

- "The Prophet Micah in 3 Minutes." Length: 3:28. Cost: Free. An overview of the book of Micah. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rqBQ-yBo5s
- "Overview: Micah." Length: 6:38. Free. Overview of the whole book of Micah. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFEUEcylwLc> **Comments:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Micah.

Related info: "Micah emphasized the need for justice and peace. Like a lawyer, he set forth God's case against Israel and Judah, their leaders, and their people. Throughout the book are prophecies about Jesus, the Messiah, who will gather the people into one nation. He will be their King and Ruler, acting mercifully toward them. Micah makes it clear that God hates unkindness, idolatry, injustice, and empty ritual - and he still hates these today. But God is very willing to pardon the sins of any who repent." (<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphics-mic>)

Activity:

Music: What Does the Lord Require of You? (FWS 2174); #2153 "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"; "Do Something" by Matthew West

A Non-traditional Blessing by Sister Ruth Fox: This is sometimes called "A Franciscan Bless" or "Four-Fold Blessing." <http://www.thesacredbraid.com/2016/07/22/a-non-traditional-blessing/>

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough **foolishness*** to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.

Blessing by Sir Francis Drake:

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,

We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.
AMEN

Discussion points: 1) ***Foolishness** is a good word to describe what it takes to think you can make a difference. 2) Handout: Print out the non-traditional blessing. 3) Star Word – Faith is not on the list, but faithfulness and blessing are.

August 2, 2020: "Nahum: God Is Judge"

9th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture: Nahum 1: 2-11 (Common English Bible)

Power of the creator

² The Lord is a jealous and vengeful God; the Lord is vengeful and strong in wrath. The Lord is vengeful against his foes; he rages against his enemies.

³ The Lord is very patient but great in power; the Lord punishes. His way is in whirlwind and storm; clouds are the dust of his feet.

⁴ He can blast the sea and make it dry up; he can dry up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; the bud of Lebanon withers.

⁵ The mountains quake because of him; the hills melt away. The earth heaves before him—the world and all who dwell in it.

⁶ Who can stand before his indignation? Who can confront the heat of his fury? His wrath pours out like fire; the rocks are shattered because of him.

⁷ The Lord is good, a haven in a day of distress. He acknowledges those who take refuge in him. ⁸ With a rushing flood, he will utterly destroy her place and pursue his enemies into darkness.

A challenge to God's enemies

⁹ What are you plotting against the Lord? He is one who can annihilate! Distress will not arise twice.

¹⁰ They are tangled up like thorns, like drunkards in their cups. They are consumed like stubble that is entirely dried up.

¹¹ From you goes out one who plots evil against the Lord— a worthless counselor!

Synopsis: We pray “deliver us from evil” as a part of how Jesus taught us to pray, but it’s difficult to trust in God’s ultimate judgment. We want to do the work of revenge ourselves, and releasing that desire to judge and seek revenge can be healing and hopeful for us.

Felt need: To confess our propensity to judgment and our desire for revenge – and trust that God’s judgment will come (for us and for others)

Visuals:

Media:

- “Awesome Power Worship Intro.” Length: 1:21. Cost: \$15.00. This high-energy introduction to worship is based on verses from Psalm 77 and Nahum 1. Complete with crashing ocean storms, lightning, a tornado, and volcanoes exploding with rocks and lava, it displays the awesome and dangerous power of God's creation, then finishes with a call to worship. "If God is for us, who can stand against us? We stand in His presence. He is here -now- let us worship!"

<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/33296/awesome-power-worship-intro>

Comments: Feels “big.” Like it. Betty scale: 3/5.

- “The Prophet Nahum in 3 Minutes.” Length: 3:11. Cost: Free.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8QO2gbqgvc>

- “Shoes.” Length: 2:58. Cost: We own it. Last used 7/10/16. God, in Christ, stepped into our shoes and walked. But are we willing to do the same for people who aren’t like us, and who may not believe the same things we believe? Christians can struggle with being judgmental,

until they walk in someone else's shoes. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/14670/shoes> **Comments:** This is not the kind of judgment we'll talk about.

- "Overview: Nahum." Length: 5:06. Free. Background information on the whole book of Nahum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y30DanA5EhU> **Comments:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Nahum.

Related info:

- "Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, is the subject of Nahum's prophecy. The news of its coming destruction was a relief for Judah, who was subject to Assyrian domination. No longer would Judah be forced to pay tribute as insurance against invasions. Judah was comforted to know that God was still in control. Nineveh is an example to all rulers and nations on the world today. God is sovereign over even those who are seemingly invincible. We can be confident that God's power justice will one day conquer all evil."(<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphics-na>)
- **Notes from Karen's bible:** Nineveh's fate might be Judah's if the people do not turn away from sin and to God. The message is also consoling: God can be counted on to destroy the enemies of those who trust in God. ...If we trust in God, no enemy can destroy us; if we turn away from God and trust in ourselves, we are in mortal danger.

Activity: Holy Communion

Music:

Discussion points: 1) Nahum is pointing to God as judge. We don't often like the idea of being judged by God though we may take comfort in his role in judging (others) in this particular time. 2) What Nahum really would like is revenge. See Jim Le Page's poster of giving the finger to Nineveh. We might not want to use the visual, but it is a good metaphor to use as everyone will know what that means. 3) We pray, "Deliver us from evil." 4) There is a tension in the prophets, a call to accountability which asks us to repent and change. So what are we going to do right now to show that we have changed? Will we be like the rich man who stepped over poor Lazarus then is called to account for his indifference or will we do something for the Lazaruses of the world now? 4) Jesus' three offices are of prophet, priest, and king. He calls us to take care of the widows and orphans (the most vulnerable). 5) Jonah could not run from God. God is still in charge. 5) Context: Assyria was bad news. God won't allow the arrogant or violent empires of the world to endure forever. How do we deal with people who have been wronged? God grieves for them. 6) Lynne was recently surprised when her step-mom, Wilma, recalled how her mother had been murdered but she has forgiven him. 7) On a related note: Pastor Mary recently watched, "Emmanuel," based on the killings that took place at Charleston AME Church in 2015 by Dillon Ruth. He had been part of their bible study. He hoped to start a race war; what he got was forgiveness. 8) And another related note: We are also surprised by the forgiveness from community's forgiveness for the West Nickel Mines School shooting. 9) Pastor Mary has had people tell her that they couldn't come to church for Holy Communion because their hearts were not right. 10) Star Words – It is unlikely that anyone has judge, but someone probably has acceptance or trust.

August 9, 2020: "Habakkuk: Waiting on God's Time"

10th Sunday after Pentecost – LIVESTREAM

Lectionary 11/10/19 (1:1-4; 2:1-4)

Scripture: Habakkuk 1: 2-4, 1: 12-2:3, 3: 1-2, 16-19 (Common English Bible) **Key verses:** 2: 2-3

The prophet complains

² Lord, **how long** will I call for help and you not listen? I cry out to you, "Violence!" but you don't deliver us. ³ Why do you show me injustice and look at anguish so that devastation and violence are before me? There is strife, and conflict abounds.

⁴ The Instruction is ineffective. Justice does not endure because the wicked surround the righteous. Justice becomes warped.

The prophet questions the Lord

¹² Lord, aren't you ancient, my God, my holy one? Don't let us die. Lord, you put the Chaldean here for judgment. Rock, you established him as a rebuke.

¹³ Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you are unable to look at disaster. Why would you look at the treacherous or keep silent when the wicked swallows one who is more righteous?

¹⁴ You made humans like the fish of the sea, like creeping things with no one to rule over them. ¹⁵ The Chaldean brings all of them up with a fishhook. He drags them away with a net; he collects them in his fishing net, then he rejoices and celebrates.

¹⁶ Therefore, he sacrifices to his net; he burns incense to his fishing nets, because due to them his portion grows fat and his food becomes luxurious. ¹⁷ Should he continue to empty his net and continue to slay nations without sparing them?

² I will take my post; I will position myself on the fortress. I will keep watch to see what the Lord says to me and how he will respond to my complaint.

The Lord responds

² Then the Lord answered me and said, **Write a vision, and make it plain upon a tablet so that a runner can read it. ³ There is still a vision for the appointed time; it testifies to the end; it does not deceive. If it delays, wait for it; for it is surely coming; it will not be late.**

The Lord's victory

³ The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth:

² Lord, I have heard your reputation. I have seen your work. Over time, revive it. Over time, make it known. Though angry, remember compassion.

The prophet responds

¹⁶ I hear and my insides tremble. My lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters my bones. I tremble while I stand, while I wait for the day of distress to come against the people who attack us.

¹⁷ Though the fig tree doesn't bloom, and there's no produce on the vine; though the olive crop withers, and the fields don't provide food; though the sheep are cut off from the pen, and there are no cattle in the stalls; ¹⁸ I will rejoice in the Lord. I will rejoice in the God of my deliverance. ¹⁹ The Lord God is my strength. He will set my feet like the deer. He will let me walk upon the heights.

Synopsis: It is hard to wait for answers from God in prayer, especially when we feel helpless and overwhelmed by what we experience personally and the struggles around us. Offering honest prayers is a faithful act, and waiting on God's timing is faithful, too.

Felt need: To trust in God's timing and faithfulness, especially as we deal with evil and suffering

Visuals: Fig tree

Media:

- "Hold On." Length: 1:48. Cost: We own it. Last used 11/18/18. This poignant short film addresses the struggle of waiting on the Lord, featuring beautiful footage of nature and urban environments which match the narrative. **Comments:** Perfect! Use it.
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/76890/hold-on>
- "Fragile." Length: 1:48. Cost: \$19.99 <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/93717/fragile> **Comments:** We are using this on July 5.
- "While I'm Waiting." Length: 2:43. Cost: \$19.98. Discovering the results of God's plan takes time - and with it, patience. This powerful video illustration features the music of singer/songwriter John Waller and imagery from the hit film "Fireproof" to communicate the power of God's perfect timing if we are only willing to wait on Him.
<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/13819/while-im-waiting>
- "Faith in the Desert." Length: 2:40. Cost: \$20.00. God is in control even when we fail, even in times of doubt. We just need to have faith in the times of uncertainty. God gives and takes away, but we just need to trust that He knows exactly what He is doing.
- "Overview: Habakkuk." Length: 6:48. Free. Overview of the whole book of Habakkuk.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPMaRqGJPUU> **Comments:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Habakkuk.

Related info:

- "When Habakkuk was troubled, he brought his concerns directly to God. After receiving God's answer, he responded with a prayer of faith. Habakkuk's example is one that should encourage us as we struggle to move from doubt to faith. We don't have to be afraid to ask questions of God. The problem is not with God and his ways but with our limited understanding of him."
(<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphics-hab>)
- **Notes from Karen's bible:** The book of Habakkuk addresses the question of unjust suffering and evil by presenting the prophet's appeal to the Lord's together with God's answer to the Babylonian betrayal of Judah....In modern times, Habakkuk's address to the Lord raises the question of divine absence in relation to the Shoal (Holocaust) and other atrocities.

Activity:

Music: #2180 "Why Stand So Far Away, My God?"

Discussion points: 1) Habakkuk goes back and forth with God. His story feels like Job's. 2) On a related note: Lynne felt like Job too in May with a flood, hospitalization, and another flood. She didn't doubt God was with her and Roger. Her neighbor's response was that God had let her down. 3) In scripture, waiting, praying, and hoping are all faithful acts. 4) How long will current injustices continue? What is our responsibility now? 5) Pastor Mary has noticed yet again how the Western mind-set during the pandemic is, "I want it and I want it now. I won't be happy unless I get it." The Eastern mindset is much more patient, i.e. her in-laws saying, "Waiting for bread (or relatives or whatever) for a week is nothing. Imagine this going on seven years." Where is our contentment in all circumstances? 6) Star Word – Waiting is someone's word. We might consider looking for contentment, patience, or restraint too.

August 16, 2020: “Joel: Change of Heart” (emphasis changed from heart to change)

11th Sunday after Pentecost – LIVESTREAM

Lectionary 10/27/19 (2:23-32) & Ash Wednesday

Scripture: Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17, 23-32 (Common English Bible)

Ash Wednesday verses

Pentecost verses

Announcement of alarm and peril

2 Blow the horn in Zion; give a shout on my holy mountain! Let all the people of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is near—² a day of darkness and no light, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread out upon the mountains, a great and powerful army comes, unlike any that has ever come before them, or will come after them in centuries ahead.

Change your hearts

¹² Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow; ¹³ tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will have a change of heart and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?

¹⁵ Blow the horn in Zion; demand a fast; request a special assembly. ¹⁶ Gather the people; prepare a holy meeting; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the groom leave his room and the bride her chamber. ¹⁷ Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the Lord’s ministers, weep. Let them say, “Have mercy, Lord, on your people, and don’t make your inheritance a disgrace, an example of failure among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

²³ Children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the Lord your God, because he will give you the early rain as a sign of righteousness; he will pour down abundant rain for you, the early and the late rain, as before. ²⁴ The threshing floors will be full of grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and fresh oil. ²⁵ I will repay you for the years that the cutting locust, the swarming locust, the hopping locust, and the devouring locust have eaten— my great army, which I sent against you. ²⁶ You will eat abundantly and be satisfied, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has done wonders for you; and my people will never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God—no other exists; never again will my people be put to shame.

²⁸ **After that I will pour out my spirit upon everyone; your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. ²⁹ In those days, I will also pour out my spirit on the male and female slaves.**

³⁰ **I will give signs in the heavens and on the earth—blood and fire and columns of smoke.**

³¹ **The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ³² But everyone who calls on the Lord’s name will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be security, as the Lord has promised; and in Jerusalem, the Lord will summon those who survive.**

Synopsis: Our faith is grounded in the power of a changed heart that only God can bring about. We experience God's possibilities as God's spirit guides us to dream and see visions of God's Kingdom coming now and in the future.

Felt need: To hear God's call to repent (return) to God and open our hearts to receive God's grace

Visuals: Lectionary - rain, thresh/grain, wine/oil, locusts, plenty, people, manacles
blood/fire/smoke, eclipse, red moon

Media:

- "The Ogre The New Man." Length: 2:29. Cost. \$20.00. The film follows a man that has become an ogre who catches a glimpse of himself and decides to turn from what he has become. This is a great way to set up the ideas of the new man, repentance, or maturity.
<https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/44861/the-ogre-the-new-man>
- "Lent: A Prayer of Repentance." Lent is a time of reflection and repentance. A time to confess our sins and ask God to forgive, cleanse and help us. <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/49702/lent-a-prayer-of-repentance>
- "Overview: Joel." Length: 6:48. Free. Overview of the whole book of Joel.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQLazbgz90c> **Comments:** Send the congregation a link to this video before Sunday as a way of learning more about Joel.

Related info: "The locus plague was only a foretaste of the judgment to come in the day of the Lord. This is a timeless call to repentance with the promise of blessing. Just as the people faced the tragedy of their crops being destroyed, we, too, will face tragic judgment if we live in sin. But God's grace is available to us both now and in that coming day."
<http://inductive.indubiblia.org/graphicsjoel>

Activity: Rending (ripping) clothing or fabric (verse 2: 13)

Music: Change My Heart, O God (FWS 2152)

Discussion points: 1) Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17 is read on Ash Wednesday. Pastor For many, this is one of the most meaningful services for them each year. Pastor Mary: We are called to be honest. We are reminded that we have work to do all the time. Carole: God sits heavy on us this day. 2) Vicki (said tongue-on-cheek) likes that God is the one that is responsible for changing her. 3) End of series questions: What did we learn? What do we need to change? Are we becoming more like Jesus? 4) Star Word – No one will probably have "change," but might have renewal or opportunity.

Series: Party Time!

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

20/20 Vision theme connection: God's vision for the church isn't a "doom and gloom" scenario, but God also calls for the community of faith to celebrate together as a way to give thanks, build community, and grow closer to God as the Giver of every good gift.

We know there were important celebrations for the Israelite community and in Jesus' time, and many of those celebrations are connected to the Christian calendar we keep today. This series will

help us to look back at our faith ancestors so that we might look back to learn more about ourselves and look forward seeking God’s wisdom and vision for our lives and our world.

- <https://www.vergenetwork.org/2016/08/02/the-sacrament-of-party/>
- <https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2017/sacrament-of-party.html>
- <https://spiritualregurgitations.com/2016/08/08/the-sacrament-of-the-party-hmmm/>
- <http://www.cpcdanville.org/ministries/worship-arts/media/the-ministry-of-reconciliation-the-sacrament-of-party/>
- <https://loving-community.net/a-season-of-good-news-the-sacrament-of-party-10-celebrations-in-10-days/>

Possible Scripture references:

Hebrew Scripture – Offer descriptions of festivals and how they relate to our church calendar year.

Note that the celebrations happen whether times are good or not? Have we celebrated birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, retirements, graduations, end of the school year, etc. during the current crisis?

Wedding at Cana

Parable of the Wedding Banquet

PARTIES (3 weeks)

August 23, 2020: ""

12th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture:

Media:

Synopsis:

Related info:

Felt need: To

Activity:

Visuals:

Music:

August 30, 2020: ""

13th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM

Scripture:

Media:

Synopsis:

Related info:

Felt need: To

Activity:

Visuals:

Music:

September 6, 2020: ""

14th Sunday after Pentecost - LIVESTREAM – Labor Day weekend

Scripture:

Media:

Synopsis:

Related info:

Felt need: To

Activity: Holy Communion

Visuals:

Music: