**All Church Worship Brainstorming**

**“Questions Jesus Asked”**

Monday, January 29, 2024

(5 weeks of Lent, Holy Week, Easter)

**Members present:** David Booth, Ed Baranowski, Betty Kinney, Annette Erbes, Mudgi Cavender, Jean Kelly, Karen Post, Jim Post, Pastor Mary, Vicki Zuker, Ron Zuker, Mark Erbes, Karen Booth

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

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

**Series synopsis:** Jesus was fond of asking questions, many of which cut right to the heart of what it means to be human. Author Magrey deVega explores six of the most provocative questions Jesus posed to others and guides us in answering them for ourselves.

**Related video:** [Book intro by the author](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1s0EeQG4DS0)

# Webinar: *Wrestling with the Questions Jesus Asked with Magrey deVega and James Howell -* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2EsSS7a3p4>

**Resources** from the author: [Amplify Media](https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify/series/unitedmethodistpublishinghouse/69265-questions-jesus-asked)

**2024 theme connection:** *Asking these questions takes courage. Not only do they reveal what Jesus really cares about, they open a window into our hearts. We all have questions for God, but growth happens when we turn things around and ask what Jesus wants to know about us. When we dare raise them, these questions bring us a fuller appreciation for the wisdom, power, and presence of God in our lives. Are you willing to step out into faith? Are you ready to answer the questions Jesus asked?*

**2024 Theme:**  Following the Jesus Way

**Inspiration:** [*The Jesus Way*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARSGgC9iQb0) by Phil Wickham

**Related songs:** *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*

**Key verse:** John 13: 34 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

**Social Justice Issue for February 2024:** Homelessness, Affordable Housing

**Social Justice Issue for March 2024:** Mental Health (Advocacy Day is 3/13/24)

**Noisy offering for February 2024:** Souper Bowl of Caring (Hand2Hand/MAP Food Pantry)

**Noisy offering for March 2024:** UMCOR Sunday

**Visuals – more ideas on the** [**website**](https://lakeharborumc.org/2024/01/january-29-2024-brainstorming-for-lent-and-easter-worship/)**:** Big question mark; props to go with each Sunday’s message; painted backdrop – words from each week and large question mark.

**Leading questions:**

* What’s an important question you’ve been asked?
* What’s a memorable question you’ve asked someone else?
* What are your questions about faith?
	+ Annette was able to ask her pastor/father many hard questions. There weren’t always simple answers. Q: What is hell? A: Where God is not.
	+ What about science and faith? They are not mutually exclusive. Note after the meeting: Check out [this review](https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2024/january-february/what-hath-darwin-scripture-dru-johnson-evolution-hebrew.html?utm_source=CT%20Daily%20Briefing%20Newsletter&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=10531&utm_content=15569&utm_campaign=email) of Dru Johnson’s What Hath Darwin to Do with Scripture?
	+ What about last second conversions before death? We don’t know, but it is possible.
* What questions do you wish you’d have asked someone who has passed away - or whom you no longer speak to?

**General discussion points:**

1. Luka has gone to a new high school club, “Finding Answers.” He was expecting philosophical questions, but it seems to be about “church stuff,” and was told “every question you will ever have has answers in the bible.” That doesn’t seem likely with very specific (hard) questions.
2. Jesus’ questions are significant. They move us toward a thoughtful faith.
3. Vicki is glad there is room for personal understanding within the United Methodist Church. That’s very different from her mother’s reformed upbringing. Pastor Mary noted that there are some good things that come from a structured faith tradition, especially when you are going through hard times.
4. What if Catholics are right and we are wrong?
5. Pastor Mary’s three ‘knowns’: God is here. Jesus came. The Spirit is present. Everything else is messy.
6. God’s grace is for everyone.
7. Wesley’s manifesto connected grace and responsibility.
8. With his kids grown, Ed is happy to have them know Jesus, and not so concerned about which denomination they are a part of.
9. Religious rules: We are all a bit hypocritical about which rules are okay. We tend to break many.
10. Most faith questions are quite specific and tend to arise around the issues of:
	1. Death – Is it okay to cremate a loved one? How do we prepare for death?
	2. Human sexuality
	3. Politics
11. Jesus’ questions were/are sometimes about himself and sometimes about us, i.e. he is speaking to our humanity. How is personal faith lived out in the world we are in?

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**February 14, 2024:** “” - Rev. Jodie Flessner

Ash Wednesday - Worship at Central UMC

**Scripture:**

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**February 18, 2024:** “Who Do You Say I Am?”

1st Sunday in Lent

**Key verse:** 18When Jesus was alone praying, his disciples came to him, and he asked them, “What do people say about me?”

**Scripture:** Luke 9: 18-27 (Matthew 16: 13-19; Mark 8: 27-29)

### Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

18Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, *“Who do the crowds say I am?”*

19They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”

This is a rhetorical question.

20“But what about you?” he asked. *“Who do you say I am?”*

Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”

### Jesus Predicts His Death

21Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 22And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

23Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. **25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?** 26Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

27“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

**Synopsis:** At the beginning of Lent, the question is about identity - both for Jesus and for us - and is probably the most important question Jesus asks. Who do you say Jesus is every day? What difference does it make to believe in Jesus?

**Felt need:** To explore what we believe about Jesus, ourselves, and our relationship to him

**Visuals:** IDENTITY. Empty photo frames – ask people to imagine how they picture Jesus

**Hands-on item:** Paper photo frame made (Ellison Press)

**Activity:** Ashes (if not received on Ash Wednesday). Congregational meeting between worship services (?). Quiet time for reflection and writing down our answer to the day’s question.

**Media possibilities:** [Lumo Project Luke 9: 18-27](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-luke.html/lumo-luke-9-18-62/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 8:42 (Start video at 0:00. End at 1:54.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music:** *The Summons* (FWS 2130), *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* (FWS 2129)

**Children’s Time:** Variety of hats we wear. Do we present the same self to others as we do to God?

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

1. Context in Luke 9: Jesus is headed towards Jerusalem.
2. Who is Jesus? The Christ a.k.a. the Messiah (Anointed One of God). What does that mean for us? There was discussion about what Jews and Muslims believe about Jesus, so I (Karen Booth) don’t have good notes about this. Here are some resources:
	1. [The Islamic Perspective on Jesus](https://www.whyislam.org/jesus-pbuh/): Jesus was a messenger of God; was born of a virgin; performed miracles; was a servant of God; and was rescued by God from persecution in this world.
	2. [My Jewish Learning: Who Was Jesus?](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ask-the-expert-who-was-jesus/) There isn’t a single Jewish perspective on Jesus. Three are cited in this article. “The short answer: Judaism does not consider Jesus to be a prophet, the messiah, or the son of God.” For more information, read [“What Do Jews Believe About Jesus?”](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-do-jews-believe-about-jesus/) and [“Q & A with Amy-Jill Levine.”](https://blog.smu.edu/perkins/qa-with-amy-jill-levine/)
3. Jesus asks us to take up our cross daily. We aren’t very good at denying ourselves or making sacrifices. Jean’s mom thought of a special needs child as a “cross to bear.”
4. Worldly gains, i.e., money, power, other identity in other people’s eyes, can’t compare with what we gain in following Jesus.
5. Religious identity is often connected to politics in a scary way. When we hear, “The American people want…”, which Americans people do they mean?
6. Over time, we see a different side of friends and relatives. It is hard to accept or understand the social/political/religious rifts as a sign we no longer share values. Some of us have learned to say (internally), “let it ride,” to avoid further conflict.
7. False information is often shared as being true. The source and its trustworthiness matter. Falsehoods shared under the guise of faith are spiritual manipulation. Unfortunately, people often stubbornly cling to falsehoods rather than being open to new, accurate information. We should seek what is real and true.

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**February 25, 2024:** “Why Are You Afraid?”

2nd Sunday in Lent

**Key verses:** 23After Jesus left in a boat with his disciples, 24a terrible storm suddenly struck the lake, and waves started splashing into their boat.

**Scripture:**Matthew 8: 23-27 (Mark 4: 35-41; Luke 8: 22-25)

### Jesus Calms the Storm

23Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

26He replied, **“You of little faith,***why are you so afraid?”* Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

27The men were amazed and asked, **“What kind of man is this?** Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

**Synopsis:** Everyone is afraid at some point, and Jesus asks a seemingly obvious question in the midst of a fearful time. Fear can make us feel like we’re sinking and out of control, but listening to Jesus and remembering that he is present reminds us that fear doesn’t have to overwhelm us.

**Felt need:** To be honest about our fears and share them with Jesus (and others) so that we might find comfort

**Visuals:** FEAR. Boat and water.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [Lumo Project Matthew 7:24-8:34](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-matthew.html/lumo-matthew-7-24-8-34/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 7:55 (Start video at 5:38. End at 6:35.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.
* [“Jesus Calms the Storm.”](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus-calms-the-storm.html/english.html) Cost: Free. Length: 2:00. Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.
* [“Monsters, Inc” trailer.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGbgaHoapFM) Cost: Free. Length: 1:43. Monsters Incorporated is the largest scare factory in the monster world, and James P. Sullivan is one of its top scarers. Sullivan is a huge, intimidating monster with blue fur, large purple spots and horns. His scare assistant, best friend and roommate is Mike Wazowski, a green, opinionated, feisty little one-eyed monster. Visiting from the human world is Boo, a tiny girl who goes where no human has ever gone before.

**Music:** *Be Still, My Soul* (UMH 534), *It Is Well with My Soul* (UMH 377), *Stand By Me* (UMH 512), *It Is Well* (Bethel Music)

**Children’s Time:** Bag of fears – spiders, water, step ladder

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* Scripture “You of little faith” (v. 26) view #1: This strikes us as snarky. The disciples have seen Jesus do many miracles. They have faith in him. Jesus continues to surprise them. “What kind of man is this?” (v. 27) Do we go to the Lord first when we are fearful, like the disciples did here, or do we try to handle it on our own?
* Scripture “You of little faith” (v. 26) view #2: Is Jesus just calling his disciples back to the moment. They had not yet given him a chance to help them.
* Big questions: What makes us feel like we’re sinking? What about Jesus calms us?
* What do we fear? Change. The future. Dying, not death.
* When Vicki was diagnosed with cancer, both Vicki and Ron found peace in going to God first. It helped Karen Post to give God her worries when her mom was diagnosed with cancer. There was a sense that most of us hand over the big problems to God, but don’t necessarily run to him for every little thing.
* What brings people to church? It is often when something bad happens in a big way. We need to be sensitive to that when people walk through our doors.
* We tend to forget to say thank you for all the good things or for God’s help getting through tough times.
* “Bruce Almighty” reminds us that we don’t even want to be God.
* Ed was surprised to hear how a friend’s faith grew after his 13-year-old child died.
* Calvin’s January series featured [Dr. Lydia Dugdale](https://calvin.edu/directory/series/lydia-dugdale), an internal medicine physician and medical ethicist who wrote, *The Lost Art of Dying.* Modern society has written off the suffering aspect of dying. The author guides people to “recover their sense of finitude, confront fears, accept how bodies age, develop meaningful rituals, and involve communities in end of life care.”

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**March 3, 2024:** “Why Are You Anxious?”

3rd Sunday in Lent

**Key passage:** 25Can worry make you live longer? 26If you don't have power over small things, why worry about everything else?

**Scripture:**Luke 12: 22-34 (NIV) **Do Not Worry**

22Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 2**3 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.** 24Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life*? 26Since you cannot do this very little thing, *why do you worry about the rest?*

27“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

32“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Synopsis:** Jesus convicts us with his questions about worry. There’s comfort in his words, but it’s complicated to simply “give up” worry because it’s a part of having free will. But there are ways that we can respond to worry so that we can move toward greater hope.

**Felt need:** To hear Jesus’ words about worry - and respond with a focus on gratitude and the blessing of community

**Visuals:** WORRY. Wild flowers on the altar.

**Hands-on item:** Heart cut-outs.

**Activity:** Holy Communion

**Media possibilities:** [Lumo Project Luke 12: 22-34](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-luke.html/lumo-luke-12-1-59/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 9:19 (Start video at 3:25. End at 5:20.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music:** *Seek Ye First* (UMH 405), *Come and Find the Quiet Center* (FWS 2128), *All Things Bright and Beautiful* (UMH 147)

**Children’s Time:** Treasure chest full of hearts. Children’s book: *The Monster at the End of This Book* starring lovable, furry old Grover.

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* Fear is about big, existential issues, like dying. Anxiety is about day-to-day struggles. We need to be careful how we use the term, anxiety, as it is also a medical disorder.
* Worry: It is helpful to hear from Pastor Mary preach on her own struggles with worry.
* Scripture: This passage is part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.
* **Verse 23:** What about people who lack the basic necessities of food and clothing? And a slightly off note: Stand-up comedian, Sam Kinison, responded to food shortages saying, “See this here, this is sand, nothing grows in it! 100 years from now they will still be sand... We have deserts in America, we just don’t fricking live in them!... Take people to the food.”
* Karen Post remembers Jim bringing home a note with this “do not worry” verse for her from Tom VanDyke. She found it very helpful.
* Faith is a roller coaster ride, vacillating between times of little and great faith.
* Matthew Erbes noted how the African children with very few resources were so joyful.
* Pearl Jam’s “Last Kiss” song lyrics: Oh, where or where can my baby be? The Lord took her away from me. She’s gone to heaven, so I got to be good, so I can see my baby when I leave this world.
* Pastor Mary’s helpful question, “What’s the worst that can happen?”
* Solution to worrying less: Speak them aloud, write them down, or tell someone else.

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**March 10, 2024:** “What Do You Live For?”

4th Sunday in Lent, UMCOR Sunday, DST begins

**Key verse:** 34 Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said: If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me.

**Scripture:**Mark 8: 34-38 (NIV) **The Way of the Cross**

34Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?* 37Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

**Synopsis:** Jesus asks a dangerous question, and our answer can change the trajectory of our lives. God created each of us with a soul that seeks God and gifts that contribute to building God’s Kingdom here and now. We’re called to nurture our relationship with God and pursue what truly matters.

**Felt need:** To examine our focus and priorities in light of Jesus’ call to follow him

**Visuals:** PRIORITIES. Many different crosses on the altar.

**Hands-on item:** Small crosses.

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [Lumo Project Mark 8: 34-38](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-mark.html/lumo-mark-8-22-9-29/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 9:00 (Start video at 3:00. End at 3:54.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music:** *Where He Leads Me* (UMH 338), *Forth in Thy Name, O Lord* (UMH 438), *Father, I Adore You* (FWS 2038)

**Children’s Time:** Talk about giving up things for others.

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* The way we live out our faith, has eternal consequences. Are we living for the hope of heaven? Do we care about our souls? Isn’t it better to have hope now and live a better life than to have a last second conversion?
* Sometimes people’s final wish is to not have a memorial service. That’s too bad. Friends and relative miss the opportunity to grieve together and to begin to answer the question, “What do we live for?” Marcia Woodworth’s celebration of life is a perfect example of her witness to her faith. Maybe this should be another time to promote planning your own funeral.
* We each take up our crosses daily. Most times, it is in small ways.

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**March 17, 2024:** “Whom Will You Love?”

5th Sunday in Lent, St. Patrick’s Day

**Key verse:** 27This is what I say to all who will listen to me: Love your enemies, and be good to everyone who hates you.

**Scripture:**Luke 6: 27-36 (NIV) **Love for Enemies**

27“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32*“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?* Even sinners love those who love them. 33And *if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?* Even sinners do that. 34And *if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?* Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. **35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back**. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**Synopsis:** The Golden Rule (*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*) has become a popular sound bite, but Jesus’ questions that follow push us to a deeper kind of love that includes a heavy dose of empathy and runs counter to our cultural expectations.

**Felt need:** To commit to loving as Jesus loves

**Visuals:** LOVE ENEMIES. Coat and shirt.

**Hands-on item:** Golden Rule on a card.

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** [Lumo Project Luke 6: 27-36](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-luke.html/lumo-luke-6-1-49/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 9:00 (Start video at 4:27. End at 6:07.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music:** *Christ Beside Me* (FWS 2166), *Freely, Freely* (UMH 389), *Help Us Accept Each Other* (UMH 560)

**Children’s Time:** *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* Who are our enemies? That is such a strong word. While we may have different levels of being mad with others, an enemy would have to be at the bottom level.
* Including enemies in the Golden Rule (v. 35) is a gut punch.
* Doing good and posting it on social media doesn’t validate your character. Some may call it virtue signaling, humble bragging, self-righteous charity, or kindness porn. Why not random (and unadvertised) acts of kindness instead?
* Context: In Jesus’ time, Romans ruled Israel. It was relatively easy to point out one’s enemies.
* Food for thought on modern day enemies:
	+ What about minorities who are being treated poorly?
	+ What about Vladimir Putin? Other global leaders who look out for just themselves?
	+ What about us? Are we ever our own worst enemies?
	+ Jewish author, Amy-Jill Levine, does a good job of explaining “turning the other cheek” in her book, *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner’s Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven.* To make a long story short, in Bible times, it was acceptable to slap the cheek of an inferior with the back the hand (right hand on the left cheek). One was considered an equal if instead, you hit them with an open palm or fist. To “turn the other cheek” means getting hit with a right hand on the right cheek which is impossible to do without treating the other person as an equal.

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**March 24, 2024:** “What Are You Looking For?”

Palm & Passion Sunday

**Key passage:**

35The next day, John was there again, and two of his followers were with him. 36When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, “Here is the Lamb of God!” 37John's two followers heard him, and they went with Jesus.

38When Jesus turned and saw them, he asked, “What do you want?”

**Scripture:** John 1: 35-39 (NIV) **John’s Disciples Follow Jesus**

35The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

37When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, *“What do you want?”*

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

**Scripture:** John 12: 12-19 (NIV) **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King**

12The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

14Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

15“Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
    see, your king is coming,
    seated on a donkey’s colt.”

16At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

17Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. 19So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

**Synopsis:** At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, he asks his future disciples what they want - or perhaps what they’re seeking. He has been called the Lamb of God - the One who will redeem the world - and they follow him. As Jesus is welcomed with palms and presumed to be the Messiah who will fight and win by might, the assumptions of God’s redeeming work are up-ended by his display of sacrificial love for the world.

**Felt need:** To truly enter Jesus’ call to life and sacrificial love

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:** Palm branches. Lay coats and shirts from last week down for Jesus’ coming.

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [Lumo Project John 12: 12-19](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-john.html/lumo-john-12-1-50/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 8:00 (Start video at 1:57. End at 3:07.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.
* [“Behold Your King Is Coming.”](https://skitguys.com/videos/behold-your-king-is-coming) Length: 1:56. Cost: $18.00. Web license: Yes. As you hear and see the crowds celebrating and His enemies plotting, you’ll see Jesus enter Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophesy from Zechariah. Behold, your King is coming to you.

**Music:**

**Children’s Time:** Binoculars to look for the Jesus who has performed miracles. Related question and props: Are miracles like magic? Magic hat, wand, rabbit.

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:** How do we move from Palm to Passion Sunday?

* We don’t typically use John 1: 35-39 on Palm Sunday. This is from the beginning of his ministry, when he asks his disciples to “come and see.” It reminds us of some of the same themes and the film, “Jesus Revolution.”
* John 12: 12-19 is a typical Palm Sunday reading and the beginning of the end.
* Jesus can’t give his followers what they are looking for, a military victory. He knows what they need. Their wants and needs are totally different, just as ours are. He redeems people through love, not politics or military might.
* Do the Skit Guys have a video that will help us move from Palm to Passion Sunday?
* Someone likened Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey to face his enemies as the first century equivalent of a cub cadet facing a tank today.

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**March 28, 2024 at 7:00 pm:** “Why Have You Forsaken Me?”

Holy Thursday

**Key passage:**45At noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until three o'clock. 46Then about that time Jesus shouted, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?”

**Scripture:** Psalm 22: 1-5 (NIV)

### Psalm 22

#### For the director of music. To the tune of “The Doe of the Morning.”

#### A psalm of David.

1My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
    Why are you so far from saving me,
    so far from my cries of anguish?
2My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
    by night, but I find no rest.

3Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
    you are the one Israel praises.
4In you our ancestors put their trust;
    they trusted and you delivered them.
5To you they cried out and were saved;
    in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

**Scripture:** Matthew 27: 45-46 (NIV) **The Death of Jesus**

45From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *“Eli, Eli,* *lema* *sabachthani?”* (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

**Synopsis:** The events of the last night of Jesus’ earthly life show the deep love and grace of God as Jesus shares a meal with his friends and washes their feet - only to experience the deepest betrayal. Jesus’ question spoken from the cross cuts to our hearts as we feel the weight of his loneliness.

**Felt need:** To hear Jesus’ pain and admit our own pain and struggle

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Finger food potluck before the service (?), Footwashing and handwashing, Holy Communion, Prayer Vigil

**Media possibilities:** Last Supper

* [Communion: Remember Me](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/116831/communion-remember-me). Cost: Free. Length: 1:49. Web license: Yes. Every time you gather, eat, and drink, always give thanks, and remember Jesus.
* [It Matters.](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/94882/it-matters) Length: 1:28. Cost: Free. Web license: A prayer and observation on the importance of communion and the sacraments.
* [Lumo Project Matthew 26: 1-35](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-matthew.html/lumo-matthew-26-1-35/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 5:38 (Start video at 2:04. End at 3:47 or later depending on our needs.) Web license: Not sure.
* [The Last Supper – Matthew 26: 17-30](https://skitguys.com/videos/the-last-supper-matthew-2617-30). Cost: $11.98. Length: 1:58. Web license: Yes.

**Media possibilities:**

* [Lumo Project Matthew 27: 45-46](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-matthew.html/lumo-matthew-27-32-28-20/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 9:00 (Start video at 2:25. End at 2:55.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music:** *Make Me a Servant* (FWS 2176), *Come to the Table of Grace* (WS 3168); *O Lord, Hear My Prayer* (FWS 2200), *What Wondrous Love Is This* (UMH 292), *O How He Loves You and Me* (FWS 2108), *Lamb of God* (FWS 2113)

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* This is not our usual Holy Thursday focus. Is there a Skit Guys video that can “walk us through” the Last Supper and footwashing and lead us into Good Friday’s scripture?
* Why have you forsaken me? Was I bad? This is the loneliest question and one that GriefShare participants ask frequently.
* Loneliness has reached epidemic proportions:
	+ Canada now allows assisted suicide for anyone, not just terminal patients. It is seen as the solution to some people’s loneliness.
	+ Loneliness hasn’t always been a problem. The pandemic made it worse as have longer lifespans and families who are geographically distant.
	+ Making friends as an older adult is difficult. MNO tries to maintain connections with their goody bags.
	+ It is possible to be lonely when surrounded by people.
	+ Learning how to be alone, enjoying one’s own company, helps.
	+ Jim shared his experience walking into Fruitport School, not knowing anyone, and feeling lonely – something of a first for him.

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**March 29, 2024:**

Good Friday - Worship at TBA

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**March 31, 2024:** “Who Are You Looking For?”

Easter Sunday

**Key passage:**

15Jesus asked her, “Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener and said, “Sir, if you have taken his body away, please tell me, so I can go and get him.”

**Scripture:**John 20: 1-18 (NIV) **The Empty Tomb**

**20**Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

3So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15He asked her, *“Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”*

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

16Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

17Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

**Synopsis:** Mary is questioned first by angels and then by Jesus - both wanting to know the source of her sadness and Jesus wanting to know who she’s seeking. We, like Mary, are seeking something (or someone), and Jesus invites to answer him. Who are we looking for - and why?

**Felt need:** To claim the joy of resurrection and hope of new life

**Visuals:** HOPE. Empty frames. Strips of cloth.

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** [Lumo Project John 20: 1-18](https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-john.html/lumo-john-19-38-20-31/english.html). Cost: Free. Length: 8:01 (Start video at 1:15. End at 4:31.). Web license: Not sure. Visual liturgy.

**Music**: *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today* (UMH 302); *He Lives* (UMH 310); *Up from the Grave He Arose* (UMH 322); *Crown Him with Many Crowns* (UMH 327); *Because He Lives* (UMH 364), *In the Garden* (UMH 314)

**Children’s Time:** *Heaven is For Real for Kids*

**Social media:**

**Related articles:**

**Discussion points:**

* Scripture:
	+ Both the angels and Jesus asked Mary why she was crying.
	+ It would be nice to know how Jesus asked the question of Mary. What was his tone?
* This question is similar to the first question, “Who do you say I am?”
* Why does Jesus ask Mary who she is looking for? Does she want to hear her say she is looking for him?
* What is going through Mary’s head? She was crying. Did she have trouble seeing through the tears? Did she even look at his face? Was she thinking that the gardener would have known who was in the tomb? Had Jesus’ appearance changed so dramatically that she couldn’t recognize him?
* Mary recognizes Jesus when he calls her by name. How often have we recognized others by the specific way they call our names?
* Why had Mary gone to the tomb by herself? How could she have retrieved his body on her own?
* Pastor Mary’s dad died at home, so someone else took his body to the funeral home. It was important for her to go see and touch him. She realized that is not what we hang onto.
* [“No More Tears in Heaven”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxPj3GAYYZ0) by Eric Clapton
* Empty frame: Ho has your view of Jesus changed over Lent?
* Strips of cloth were used at both Jesus’ birth and burial.