

Picture JESUS

eight service plans for Lent and Easter



HOWARD VANDERWELL & NORMA DE WAAL MALEFYT

This series of messages was prepared for the worship life of Hillcrest Christian Reformed Church for Lent 1999. Our intent during this season was to help members of the congregation to slow down the pace of life, to think reflectively and devotionally about their relationship with God by focusing on the person and work of their Savior.

We viewed the entire series of services as a gallery in which a variety of portraits were displayed. Each week we invited the worshipers to study the character of their Savior more closely. The portraits, all of them taken from the gospel of John, were intended to illustrate the multiple dimensions of the person and work of Jesus.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Scripture

Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22
Text: John 6:25-40

Sermon Notes

We began this series by explaining our intent to take worshipers through a seven-week tour of a portrait gallery. Each portrait was intended to give them another view of the character of the Savior. Our aim was to shape their expectations and encourage them to prepare for Holy Week.

In this first passage Jesus claims to be the bread of life. Contemporary Christians have two obstacles in understanding the intensity of what Jesus was saying. First, few of us have ever been so desperately hungry that we crave a piece of bread. And second, in our society bread is devalued; it's toward the bottom of the ladder as far as desired

foods are concerned. (We'd much rather have meat or some special dish!) So we need to make a large adjustment in order to enter this passage.

John 6 is a chapter with a good bit of bread in it, beginning with the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus makes the transition here from physical bread to spiritual bread and gives a rather extended discourse on what spiritual bread involves. By the end of the chapter he speaks about eating "my flesh" and drinking "my blood" (v. 54ff.).

To really understand this passage, worshipers need to sense that the centrality of bread continues throughout Jesus' ministry. At the Passover he instituted the Lord's Supper with its bread (Matt. 26:26-29). And on Easter Sunday two disciples recognized him "while he broke the bread" (Luke 24:35).

Jesus is dealing here with two very deep hungers in our lives, hungers far more important than physical hunger. First of all, we all have the hunger for acceptance. In that culture the offer of bread was an expression of acceptance, hospitality,



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and friendship. Second, we all have the hunger for eternal life, for knowing that after this life there is another glorious life that will go on forever. Jesus alone can provide an answer to that hunger.

We concluded our service and formally entered Lent with the Lord's Supper, in which we especially focused on Jesus offering himself to us as the bread of life.

Congregational Songs

"Lift Your Heart to the Lord" ^{PsH 515}

(The congregation joined the choir on the refrain of this introit hymn.)

"God Is Here" ^{PsH 516, PH 461, TWC 701}

"Gift of Finest Wheat" ^{PsH 300, PH 521}

"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts" ^{PsH 307}

"Eat This Bread" ^{PsH 312}

"I Received the Living God" ^{With One Voice 700}

"We Are People on a Journey"/"Somos pueblo que camina" ^{New Century Hymnal 340}

Choral Suggestions

"Take and Eat This Bread," Francis Patrick O'Brien (G.I.A. G-3768; SATB anthem with optional instrumental parts and congregational refrain.)

Instrumental Suggestions

Note: Unless noted, instrumental music suggestions are organ selections.

"Partita on 'Come, Let Us Eat,'" Tim Fields (A VA DE; Morningstar MSM-10-824)

"Lift Your Heart to the Lord," Robert Hobby (3 *Hymns of Praise*, Set 5; SALVE FESTA DIES; Morningstar MSM-10-760)

"Break Now the Bread of Life," Jack Goode (*Pre-ludes on Hymn Tunes*; BREAD OF LIFE; Hope)

Meditation Music for Communion

"In the Quiet Consecration," David Cherwien (*Interpretations IX*; KINGDOM; AMSI SP-106)

"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts," Jack Goode (*Pre-ludes on Hymn Tunes*; QUEBEC; Hope)

Liturgy Notes

- We presented the John 6 passage as a dramatic reading, adapted from *The Dramatized New Testament* (Baker, 1994).
- The selections for the meditation music were played by organ and solo violin.
- All worshipers were invited forward to receive the bread and the cup. Readings, congregational

song, and meditation music were woven through the time of the sacrament.

- Psalm 25:1-10 can be read with a congregational refrain, "To You, O Lord, I Lift My Soul" (SFL 50) sung at the beginning, after stanzas 3 and 7, and at the end.

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

THE LIVING WATER

Scripture

Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:16,17,23-25

Text: John 4:1-15



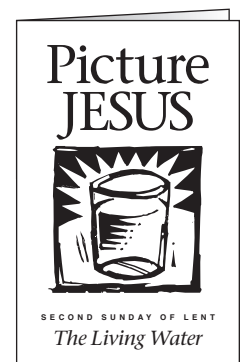
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Sermon Notes

During the first week of Lent, we mentioned two obstacles to understanding the bread metaphor that Jesus used. We have even greater obstacles to understanding the living water metaphor. Our congregation, used to the abundance of water in the Great Lakes area, had no concept of what it's like to be completely out of water. What a contrast to the experiences of Jews in arid Palestine! To understand Jesus' intent, we needed to enter the world and experience of the original hearers.

We looked at the Feast of Tabernacles, *Sukkot*, a Jewish celebration that most of us knew little about. (For a service drama on the Feast of Tabernacles, see *RW 53*, pp. 16-19.) Together we experienced the spirit in Jerusalem as the people gathered to celebrate a bountiful harvest. We lived into the climactic event of the week when the procession of priests poured

Subscribers to *RW* may use the art throughout this article for bulletin covers during Lent and Easter. There is art for each of the eight service plans. Below is one way to lay out the art and text.



the pitcher of water on the altar, while the worshipers chanted selected Hallel Psalms (Psalms 111-118) as their plea that God would save them by sending water for a new year.

With that understanding as background, we were ready to meet the woman at the well and observe how Jesus turned a casual conversation into a life-changing moment by directing her attention to living water. It is critical to notice that Jesus does not declare himself to *be* living water, but to *give* living water. The commentary on this is found in John 7:37-38, where the Holy Spirit is identified as the living water. The indispensable connection between the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit is obvious.

We wanted all worshipers to picture both the tragedy and the hope of today. Jesus makes the living water available. Some find life, but many try to quench their thirst elsewhere.

Congregational Songs

Psalm 63: "O Lord, My God, Most Earnestly" PsH 63
 "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" PsH 488, TH 304, TWC 506
 "Lord Jesus Is Calling to All Who Would Hear" PsH 536
 Psalm 22: "Amid the Thronging Worshipers" PsH 239,
 TWC 340

Choral Suggestions

"Come to the Water," John Foley SJ (OCP 9489, SATB anthem with congregational refrain and optional instrumentals)

Instrumental Suggestions

"There Is a Green Hill Far Away," Cynthia Dobrinski (Agape 1426, a bell anthem)

"Baptized in Water," Dale Wood (*Woodworks*; BUNESSAN; SMP KK357)

"As a Deer in Want of Water," Sigfrid Karg-Elert (*Karg-Elert Album for Organ*; FREU DICH, O MEINE SEELE; Marks Music M 152)

Liturgy Notes

- The bell prelude is based on the tune THE GREEN HILL (PsH 63).
- The service included Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 12, with everyone responding to the

questions "Why is he called 'Christ,' meaning 'anointed?'" (31) and "Why are you called a Christian?" (32).

- Our Scripture reading of the John 4 passage took the form of a Scripture drama adapted from *The Dramatized New Testament*. (See also the dramatic monologue "Come and See" on p. 34.)

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE MIRACLE - WORKER

Scripture

Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Text: John 2:1-11



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Sermon Notes

To understand Jesus, we must be able to understand that he was a miracle worker. A look at Jesus' first miracle at Cana gave us the opportunity to think through these extraordinary works of Jesus.

First we looked at what distinguishes miracles from other amazing events. A miracle is an intervention of supernatural power that overrides natural law. The gospel records several dozen such events in the ministry of Jesus.

Revisiting the wedding reception in Cana gave us the opportunity to observe one of Jesus' miracles and to discern his motive in performing it. Both the surprise and the authenticity of this miracle needed to be set forth, but we also needed to draw lessons from the entire pattern of miracles in his ministry. Jesus' purpose was clear—to reveal the glory of God so that others would believe in him. As a congregation we needed to understand that receiving healing, food, and safety was quite secondary to the primary purpose—to display God's glory in order that people would believe.

But we also needed to realize that Jesus did not always perform miracles and that perhaps we understand him best when we wrestle with why he some-

LENTEN PRAYER CALENDAR

In the weeks prior to the beginning of Lent, each staff member and ministry group was contacted to suggest three to five prayer requests for the congregation for a Lenten Prayer Calendar. These requests were assembled with one request for each day and printed in booklet form. A copy of the prayer calendar was distributed to each household of the congregation at the beginning of Lent.

times refused to do miracles. As a case in point, we looked at Matthew 4:11, where Jesus refused to perform a miracle in response to Satan’s temptation. We also looked at Mark 15:29-30, where he refused to come down from the cross and “save himself.” The existence of miracles (or lack of them) can be explained only in terms of God’s purpose.

Congregational Songs

“All Glory Be to God on High” PsH 247, PH 133, RL 620, TH 102, TWC 8

“Your Hands, O Lord, In Days of Old” PsH 363, TWC 409

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” PsH 568, PH 376, RL 464, TH 529, TWC 558

“O Jesus, We Adore You” PsH 472, TH 255

“O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High” PsH 364, PH 83, RL 342, TH 155, TWC 193

Choral Suggestions

“Jesus, Joy of Man’s Desiring,” J. S. Bach (Schmitt, Hall McCreary SCHCH 1578, SATB anthem; see also the revised text and setting for congregation in *RW* 45, p. 17.)

Instrumental Suggestions

“All Glory Be to God on High,” Raymond H. Haan (*Festival Hymn Preludes*; ALLEIN GOTT; SMP KK329)

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” Peter Pindar Stearns (*Twelve Hymn Preludes for General Use*; HYFRY-DOL; Flammer HF-5145)

“Partita on “Deo Gracias,” Michael Burkhardt (Morningstar MSM-10-844)

Liturgy Notes

- The service included a Litany of Profession taken from the contemporary testimony *Our World Belongs to God*, 24-26, found on pages 1026-1027 of the *Psalter Hymnal* (worship edition). After the reading of each section, the congregation responded by speaking the refrain “Lord of the Universe” (PsH 362).

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE SHEPHERD

Scripture

Psalms 23; Ephesians 2:1-10

Text: John 10:11-18

Sermon Notes

Presenting the portrait of Christ as the shepherd was very challenging, primarily because it is so familiar to all. Often that which is most familiar can be the hardest to communicate with freshness.

We recalled together how the Old Testament prophets had warned God’s people about dangerous and unfaithful shepherds who were more concerned about fattening themselves than caring for the flock. (Ezek. 34:1-10). We knew from our own experience about thieves who broke in to steal, kill, and destroy

(John 10:10). And we all know people like the hired hands, who were not willing to take any risks to protect sheep that didn’t really belong to them (John 10:12-13). Each of these—the unfaithful shepherd, the thief, and the hired hand—creates a lot of insecurity and danger for the sheep.

Then, in contrast to these negative examples, we looked at Christ, the Good Shepherd pictured in John 10. The Good Shepherd has an intimate bond with his sheep. He knows them, and they know him. The Good Shepherd is also seeking his “other” sheep, who must yet be brought in. Most important is the willingness and commitment of the Good Shepherd to lay down his life for the sheep. In making such a sacrifice, the shepherd was actually becoming the “Lamb,” whose sacrifice we were preparing to mark on Good Friday.

In the final meditation, we walked through Psalm 23, with its beautiful descriptions of the richness and security that the child of God experiences. There, and throughout the service, we kept coming back to one probing question: Do you know this Shepherd?

Congregational Songs

“Magnify the Lord” PsH 622, SFL 13

“The Lord, My Shepherd Rules My Life” PsH 23, SFL 201

“My Shepherd Is the Lord” PsH 162

“Alleluia” PsH 639

“O Lord, My Shepherd” *Songs for Contemplative Worship* Set 1, Sam Owen Batts (Morningstar MSM-55-9850)

Choral Suggestions

“Shepherd Me, O God,” Marty Haugen (G.I.A. G-2950, SATB anthem with optional instrumental parts and congregational refrain)

“Shepherd of My Heart,” Francis Patrick O’Brien (G.I.A. G-3770, SATB anthem with optional instrumental parts and congregational refrain)

Instrumental Suggestions

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need,” Douglas Wagner (SMP S-HB16, bell anthem)



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“Brother James’ Air,” Barbara Kinyon (Agape 1220, bell anthem)

“Beside Still Waters” Howard Starks (Agape 1047, bell anthem)

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need,” Mack Wilberg (Hinshaw HMC1424, SATB)

Liturgy Notes

The format and style of this service was different from all the others. The entire service was very reflective and meditative in spirit, similar to Taizé worship. The following helped to create the slow and leisurely pace that we were striving for:

- The Prayers of the People were divided into sections, each of which concluded with this response “Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.”
- The sermon took the form of four meditations woven throughout the service.
- The lighting and visuals of the sanctuary were subdued, contributing to the meditative spirit of worship.
- All the music and songs focused on the shepherd character of Christ. The bell choir played the prelude from the narthex. The music within the service was played by an instrumental ensemble composed of two violins, two flutes, a viola, a bassoon and keyboard. Both choral anthems included a congregational refrain as well as instrumental parts.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE FOOTWASHER

Scripture

Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10

Text: John 13:1-17

Sermon Notes

About the time that I was preparing this message, I saw a full-page seminary ad in *Christianity Today*. Across the page in boldface letters were the words “Want to be World Class? Grab a Towel!” What an excellent lead-in for this sermon!

To fully understand the impact of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, our congregation needed to enter the mind and heart of Jesus as he approached this task. Jesus knew that when he made arrangements for this Passover feast, he was also making arrangements for the great personal crisis that was looming before him. He was also well aware of the difficult task he faced in confronting Judas about his betrayal contract and confronting Peter about his approaching denials.

For a number of good reasons, the footwashing should never have happened. For one thing, it went against social custom. Servants and slaves washed feet, not leaders like Jesus. Also, the pain and hurt Jesus was feeling as he contemplated the coming hours must have made it almost unbearable to wash

feet around the circle with both Judas and Peter sitting there. So why did he do it? Was it just a matter of protocol? Was it a matter of dirty feet? Of ceremonial fulfillment?

According to verses 12-17, the footwashing was a teaching session for Jesus. And the lesson was about leadership. The disciples were somewhat polarized over two kinds of leadership—power leadership and service leadership. The same polarization has been present ever since in the church.

More than a simple teaching session, the towel on Thursday evening was also a prophecy of the ultimate washing Jesus would provide on Friday through his crucifixion.

Perhaps grabbing a towel is a much better symbol of Christian discipleship than we’ve been willing to admit.

Congregational Songs

“Fill Thou My Life, O Lord, My God” PsH 547, RL 147, TH 589

“All Praise to You, My God, This Night” PsH 441, PH 542, RL 77, SFL 78, TH 401, TWC 361

“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service” PsH 603, PH 427, TWC 426

“The Servant Song” SFL 248

“What Wondrous Love” PsH 379, PH 85, SFL 169, TH 261, TWC 212

“O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High”

“May the Mind of Christ, My Savior” PsH 291, SFL 72, TH 644, TWC 560

Choral Suggestions

“Christ’s Own Body,” Margaret Tucker (Choristers Guild CGA801, unison/two-part anthem with keyboard, opt. congregation, and handbells)

Instrumental Suggestions

“What Wondrous Love,” Lloyd Larson (Beckenhorst HB150, a bell anthem)

“Wondrous Love,” Samuel Barber (Schrimmer 44477)



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“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service,” Charles Callahan (*Six Meditations on American Folk Hymns*; PLEADING SAVIOR; Concordia 97-6140)

“All Praise to You, My God, This Night,” Richard Purvis (*Seven Chorale Preludes*; TALLIS CANON; Fischer 0 3450)

Liturgy Notes

- Because of the emphasis on humble service toward others, we found this service to be an ideal time to focus on some of the mission and outreach efforts of our congregation.
- Both the service music and the congregational songs of the service reflected the calling of humble service as an expression of the mind of Christ.

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT

(PALM SUNDAY)

THE KING

Scripture

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11

Text: John 12:12-19



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Sermon Notes

Palm Sunday and Jesus as King always go together. As a congregation we needed to understand that the triumphal entry was not an isolated event. Eagerness for a king had always been a part of the Christian faith. Israel's desire for a king, David's prominence as king, and God's promise about David's son being on the throne had always shaped and formed their

SERVICE OF CONFESSION FOR LENT

Call to Confession

In this season in which we remember our Savior's suffering, let us confess our sinfulness to him.

Our Prayer of Confession

Most holy and merciful Father, we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned against you by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not fully loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not always had in us the mind of Christ. You alone know how often we have grieved you by wasting your gifts, by wandering from your ways, by forgetting your love. Forgive us, we pray you, most merciful Father, and free us from our sin. Renew in us the grace and strength of your Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son, our Savior. Amen.

Assurance of God's Pardon

First Sunday: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Second Sunday: Romans 4:16-17, 23-25

Third Sunday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Fourth Sunday: Ephesians 2:1-10

Fifth Sunday: Hebrews 5:5-10

Sixth Sunday: Philippians 2:5-11

Hymn: "Christ, the Life of All the Living" ^{PSH 371}
stanza 1

A Commitment to Holy Living

Since we have been saved by grace, how shall we live in obedience to Him who saved us?

We will love the Lord our God with all our heart, our mind and our strength; and we will love our neighbors as ourselves.

And how will it be clear that your Lord has first place in your life?

We will have no other gods before God; we will not make for ourselves any substitute gods; we will not abuse the name of the Lord but speak it only in reverence and love; we will honor the Lord's day through worship, witness, and fellowship with God's people.

And how will it be clear that you love others as yourself?

We will honor our parents and hold the family in high esteem; we will not abuse, hate, or injure our friends or neighbors by word, gesture or deed; we will live sexually holy and disciplined lives; we will not steal; we will not lie; we will not grasp for what we do not have, nor reject others for having it.

Will you commit yourselves to this obedience?

Yes, by God's grace we will do it!

expectations. That's why Jerusalem was seen as the location that had to be prepared to receive God's messianic King.

We also needed to sense that the idea of Jesus as King was deeply threatening. Herod massacred babies in Bethlehem because he was afraid a king was coming. The religious leaders became angrier on Palm Sunday because of the idea of Jesus as a king. According to Matthew, much of the beating and ridicule that Jesus received at his trial was directly related to the idea that he claimed to be a king. Pilate even hung the sarcastic sign "King of the Jews" over Jesus' head on the cross.

With all that as background, we stepped into the Palm Sunday scene, trying to understand how different groups there reacted in different ways. Their reactions were shaped by whether they understood

his kingship or not and whether they viewed it as a welcome event or a threat to their power.

In an effort to make the message appropriate to the events of our world, I tried to portray the difference between two kinds of Christianity—that which believes Jesus is king today, and that which believes that he will become king some day off in the future. The implications are so far-reaching!

Then we went back to Bethlehem, noting how Herod was stirred to violence by the idea of Jesus as king. We admitted together that Herod may have been very evil, but he certainly was correct in his understanding that this child would be a king and that it would be impossible to side-step him. Either we must embrace Jesus or totally reject him. There is no middle ground. All the different segments of the crowd on Palm Sunday found that out—sooner or later.

ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

Our Lenten services included a time when the children of the congregation gathered on the steps at the base of the pulpit. Each week we looked at a cross (one of six different types) and talked about its special meaning. After the service we hung a drawing of the cross in the narthex, adding the new one each week.

Week 1: The Latin Cross



The Latin Cross is the most common and familiar to most of us. Long ago people started using this cross to remind them of Jesus and how he died for us. Today, whenever we see the cross, we know that the church that displays it believes in Jesus. Notice that the cross is empty. Why? Because Jesus is alive!

Week 2: The Passion Cross



This is sometimes called the Crusader's cross because it's the kind the Crusaders carried with them. As they traveled to the Holy Land, these Christians sometimes wanted to stop and worship God. A cross with a pointed bottom could be driven into the ground easily, creating a place for worship and reminding them of how Jesus suffered for them.

Week 3: The Crosslet



The crosslet hardly seems to be a cross at all until we look at it very carefully. It really is four crosses made into one by joining their bases at the center. The tops are pointing in all four directions. Jesus died for people from all directions—north, south, east, and west. God wants the whole world

to know about the Jesus. The crosslet reminds us how big God's love is.

Week 4: The Jerusalem Cross



The Jerusalem Cross is the only one named after a city, the city where Jesus was crucified. This cross includes five little crosses to represent the five wounds of Jesus—two for each of his hands where he was nailed, two for each of his feet nailed to the cross, and one to represent the spear in his side. This cross helps us never to forget how much Jesus suffered.

Week 5: The Anchor Cross



At first, this cross looks very different—it has an anchor built into it. Some of the first disciples were fishermen, and they knew how important an anchor was. When you throw an anchor out, it drops to the bottom of the sea and holds the boat steady so it doesn't drift away, even during a violent storm.

This special cross reminds us that Jesus is our anchor. He will always hold us tightly and keep us steady—just like an anchor keeps a boat safe.

Week 6: The Cross and Crown



Ask the children to identify the two shapes in this figure—a cross and a crown. The form of this cross tells us a lot about Jesus. It tells us that Jesus suffered and died on the cross. But today Jesus is no longer on the cross. He is no longer in the tomb either. He is wearing a crown in heaven and ruling as the King of kings!

Congregational Songs

“All Glory, Laud and Honor” PsH 376, PH 88, TH 235, TWC 204

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna” PsH 378, PH 89, RL 282, TWC 203

“Man of Sorrows, What a Name” PsH 482, RL 279, TH 246, TWC 226

“All Hail, King Jesus” *Renew* 35

Choral Suggestions

“African Psalm,” Patrick Liebergen (Alfred 16025, SAB anthem)

“Jesus, the King,” Lloyd Larson (Beckenhorst BP1234, SAB anthem)

Instrumental Suggestions

“Partita on ‘All Glory, Laud and Honor,’” Michael Burkhardt (ST. THEODULPH; Morningstar MSM-10-306)

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna,” Michael Burkhardt (*Five Lenten Hymn Improvisations*; ELLACOMBE; Morningstar MSM-10-309)

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna,” Frank Stoldt (*Five Hymn Settings*; ELLACOMBE; Morningstar MSM-10-931)

Liturgy Notes

- The service included a Litany of Profession constructed from the contemporary testimony *Our World Belongs to God*, 25, 27, 28.
- Our Palm Sunday service normally includes a palm processional or parade (depending on placement within the service) by all children of the congregation. The congregation sings while the children process.
- We distribute large used carpenter nails to all members of the congregation that they may carry with them through Holy Week as a devotional tool and reminder of Christ’s great sacrifice and gift to us.

GOOD FRIDAY

THE LAMB

Scripture

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-15; 5:7-9

Text: John 1:29; 10:11, 14-18

Sermon Notes

To gain a deeper understanding of the lamb metaphor, we made a number of visits. We first visited Jerusalem at Passover time and found it a very noisy place. Not only were crowds of pilgrims in town milling around in the temple courts, but large numbers of animals were being slaughtered for the sacrifices that the people had come to make.

Stepping back into history gave us the opportunity to visit a Hebrew home and join their celebration of the traditional Hebrew Passover feast. We saw the mother preparing for the celebration, the father leading the family around the table, and the child answering a critical question: “What does this



ceremony mean to you?” (Ex. 12:26). That set the stage for the father’s explanation of slavery in Egypt, the plagues, the Passover lamb with blood on the doorposts of the house, and God’s great deliverance.

Next we visited the other side of the Jordan River where John the Baptist was gathering followers, when suddenly he pointed to Jesus and declared, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Together we stood at Calvary, witnessing the people’s cruelty toward Jesus, the intensity of his suffering, his willingness to endure it, and the sacrifice it involved. In his crucifixion, Jesus was serving as the sacrificial lamb of God.

Our final visit involved the scene in the temple on the Day of Atonement. After the sacrifices had been made, the priests laid their hands on the scapegoat and sent him out into the wilderness, carrying the sins of the people.

These visits, all of which reinforced the idea of sacrifice, prepared us to approach the Lord’s table.

Congregational Songs:

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” PsH 383, PH 98, RL 300, TH 247, TWC 221

“O Christ the Lamb of God” PsH 257, SFL 44

“Ah, Holy Jesus, How Have You Offended” PsH 386, PH 93, RL 285, TH 248, TWC 231

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” PsH 384, PH 100, RL 292, SFL 66, TH 252, TWC 213

“Just As I Am, Without One Plea” PsH 263, PH 370, TH 501, TWC 445

“There Is a Redeemer” *Renew!* 232

“What Wondrous Love”

“Now Behold the Lamb” (see p. 28)

Choral Suggestions

“Christ We Do All Adore Thee,” Theodore Dubois (the final movement from *Seven Last Words*; also found in *The Covenant Hymnal* 297)

“Surely He Has Borne Our Griefs,” Paul Laubengayer (Morningstar MSM-50-3025, SATB anthem with C instrument)

“Heavy,” Russell Nagy (High Street JH552, SATB anthem)

Instrumental Suggestions

“Passacaglia in C Minor,” J. S. Bach

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” Michael Burkhardt (*Five Lenten Hymn Improvisations*; HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN; Morningstar MSM-10-309)

Communion Meditation Music

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus,” David Cherwien (*Lamb of God*; ST. CHRISTOPHER; Morningstar MSM-10-302)

“Just as I Am,” Dale Wood (*Wood Works Book 2*; WOODWORTH; SMP KK400)

Liturgy Notes

- Our Good Friday evening worship is usually a Tenebrae service with a series of readings, songs, and diminishing light. The service moves to a quiet and reflective participation in the Lord’s Supper, and concludes in the dark with the tolling of the bell seven times to represent the fullness of Christ’s suffering for us.
- The Burkhardt, Cherwien, and Wood selections were played by organ with the melody lines played by solo instrument. We used flute, oboe, and bassoon on the different pieces.

E A S T E R

THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE

Scripture

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Text: John 11:25-26; 20:1-9

Sermon Notes

Easter is the best story in all of preaching, but the challenge to remain fresh becomes a bigger one each year.



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Instead of focusing on the actual resurrection story of Easter, this time we took a close look at the story of the resurrection of Lazarus as a prophetic portrayal of Jesus’ own resurrection power.

We began by affirming the historicity of Jesus’ physical resurrection. Then we backed up (chronologically) to the story of Jesus’ raising of Lazarus. We explored a variety of dimensions of the narrative and then concentrated on Jesus’ bold statement to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25-26).

By examining the reality of death today and the wide variety of reactions to death, we noted humanity’s basic resistance to and fear of death. Our awareness of such resistance and fear in our own hearts made us “ripe” to hear about the great Easter professions that Jesus is teaching us to make in these verses: A world that assumes death is the last word discovers that tombs are temporary! For those who believe in Jesus there is eternal life.

We spent a little while exploring the depth of Jesus’ statement “Whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:26). We have no better way to describe it. Human language is so limited. Even what we call death in the final analysis is not death for the Christian. We possess eternal life!

Such certainty, joy, and hope provided the basis for the remainder of our Easter morning celebration.

Congregational Songs

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” PSH 388, PH 113, RL 325, SFL 172, TH 277, TWC 234

“The Strife is O’er, the Battle Done” PSH 391, PH 119, RL 319, TH 275, TWC 233

“I Know That My Redeemer Lives” TH 690, RL 321, TWC 239

“Come and See” SFL 176

“A Shout Rings Out, a Joyful Voice” PSH 392

“This Joyful Eastertide” PSH 403, RL 328, TH 284

“Hallelujah Chorus,” G. F. Handel

Choral Suggestions

“On Earth Has Dawned This Day of Days,” Hal Hopson (Choristers Guild CGA 709, two-part—any combination of voices—with keyboard and optional handbells)

“Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen,” Stan Pethel (Coronet Press 392-41629, SATB anthem)

“The Easter News,” Russel Nagy (Highstreet JH550, unison/ two-part anthem)

“Since By Man Came Death,” G. F. Handel

Instrumental Suggestions

“Fanfare,” William Mathias (*The Oxford Book of Wedding Music*, Oxford University Press)

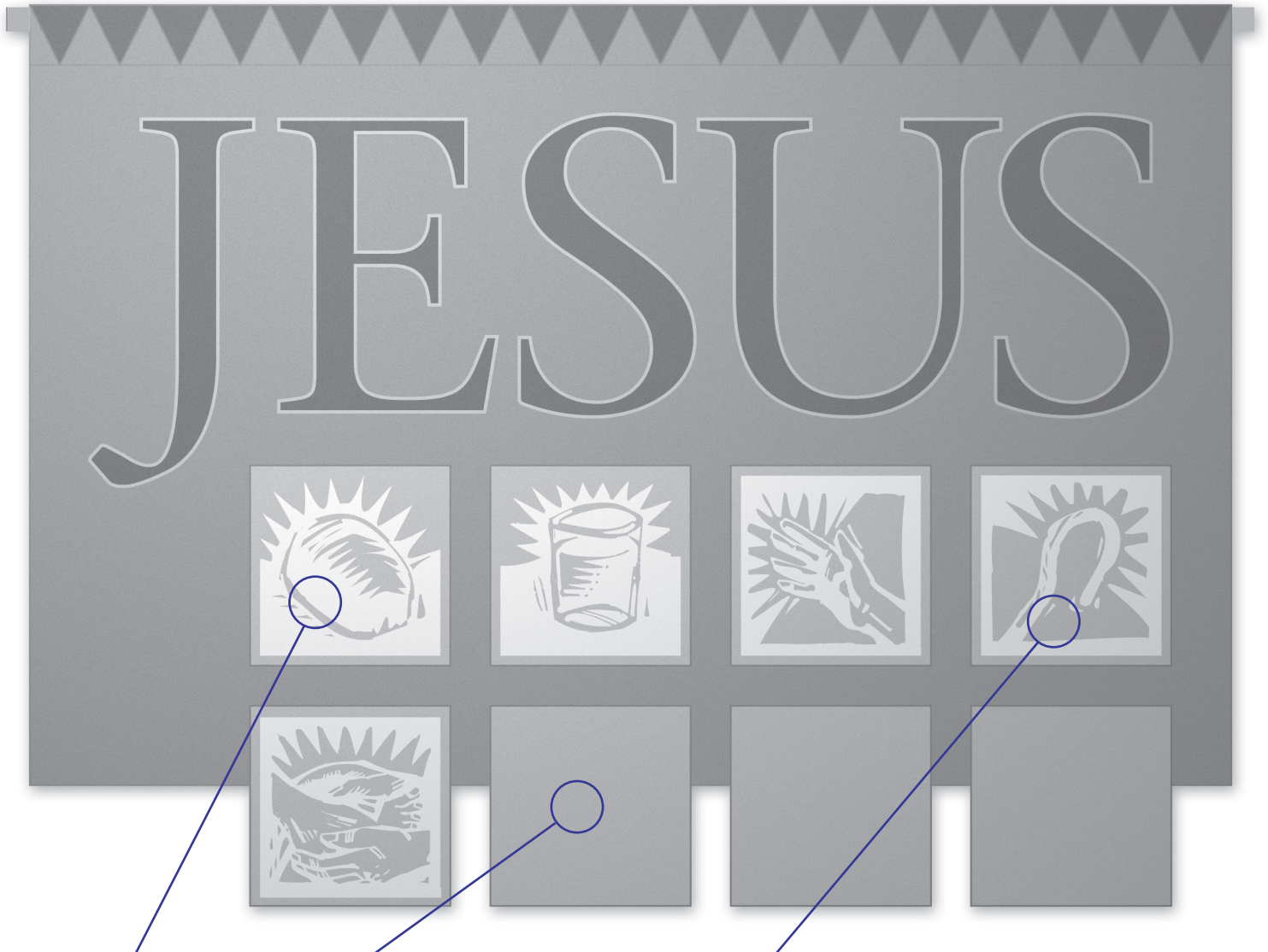
“This Joyful Eastertide,” Andrew Clarke (*Easter Trilogy* set 2; VRUCHTEN; Morningstar MSM-10-405)

“The Strife Is O’er,” Lisa Shoemaker-Lohmeyer (Morningstar MSM-10-418)

“Toccat for Organ,” John Weaver (Boosey and Hawkes)

Liturgy Notes

- The Scripture passage for the morning was read by members of the congregation as a Scripture drama (adapted from *The Dramatized New Testament*)
- We crafted a litany for pastor, choir, and congregation based on 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.
- We traditionally close Easter morning worship with the congregation and choir singing the “Hallelujah Chorus.” ■



This banner design is meant to coordinate with the bulletin cover designs for each week (see note on page 11). Although not high drama, the addition of a symbol each week does offer a review of the service already held and builds some anticipation for the future.

The square of fabric that is added each week can be attached with Velcro. I'd suggest that you make two squares of fabric for each symbol: one blank and the other showing the symbol. In the early weeks especially, the banner looks too plain without the blank squares.



Although the symbols in the above design pretty much follow Paul Stoub's artwork, you can certainly simplify them for better legibility when the banner is viewed from a distance.

—Dean Heetderks