

Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 8) - 7/2/2023

SERIES THEME

DEFINE CHRISTIAN

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, “A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus.” Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, “A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others.” Is that completely false? And if you aren’t humble, does that mean you aren’t Christian?

In our next worship series Christ himself defines the term Christian and describes what Christians do. We will be struck by how often we do not do all those things. There likely are times when people could look at our behavior and assume we were unbelievers. Yet throughout this series Jesus will demonstrate that ultimately a Christian is one who runs to Christ for forgiveness precisely because he has failed to live like what he is—a Christian. As we receive the mercy of Christ, it moves us to strive with all our being to better fit Christ’s beautiful definition, doing all the things Jesus says that Christians do. Our worship follows this path:

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Loves God above All

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Finds Rest in Jesus

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Is Planted by the Word

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Lives as Wheat among Weeds

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Seeks Spiritual Wealth

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Trusts God to Provide

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost – The Christian Answers Doubt with Faith

THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN LOVES GOD ABOVE ALL

Not all love is good. It is self-destructive to love bad things. However, it is just as harmful to love good things in a bad order. For example, it would seem to be a good thing that a man loves his dog. But if he loves his dog more than he loves his wife, his “love” for both is disordered. That is not in the best interests of the man, his wife, or even his dog. For love to be healthy, it needs to be properly ordered.

The Christian loves God above all things. For the Christian understands that everything in this present world is transitory. Relationships fail. Empires fall. Accomplishments are quickly forgotten. But nothing about God is transitory. God’s love is eternal. He promises the Christian everlasting life. And so the Christian struggles not simply to avoid loving bad things. The Christian struggles to love God above all other good things too. Because the Christian understands that God is of ultimate value.

FIRST READING

Exodus 32:15-29 – Aaron’s feeble excuses for why the Israelites fell into idolatry remind us of our own shallow rationalizations for failing to love God above all things.

SECOND READING

1 Timothy 6:11-16 – St. Paul describes the man of God in action, struggling to love God above all things.

GOSPEL

***Matthew 10:34-42 – Jesus calls us to love him above all—more than family or friends, more than personal safety or even life itself.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 2

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

704 - Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

Psalm of the Day:

27

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 2

Hymn of the Day:

702 Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

711 - Jesus Calls Us o'er the Tumult

Closing Hymn:

710 - Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

710 - Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9) - 7/9/2023

SERIES THEME

DEFINE CHRISTIAN

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In our next worship series Christ himself defines the term Christian and describes what Christians do. We will be struck by how often we do not do all those things. There likely are times when people could look at our behavior and assume we were unbelievers. Yet throughout this series Jesus will demonstrate that ultimately a Christian is one who runs to Christ for forgiveness precisely because he has failed to live like what he is—a Christian. As we receive the mercy of Christ, it moves us to strive with all our being to better fit Christ’s beautiful definition, doing all the things Jesus says that Christians do.

THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN FINDS REST IN JESUS

Without rest, we suffer. Studies show that after 36 hours without sleep, most people will experience extreme fatigue and hormonal imbalances, resulting in decreased attention, poor decisions, and even speech impairment. Other studies show if someone takes no breaks during their workday, their productivity is lower than those who do take periodic breaks. We need rest.

Christians know they need more than sleep or breaks. We need more than physical rest. We need spiritual rest. The Christian knows that the only place to find that type of rest is Jesus. Jesus provides more than a pause in work, more than enjoyable recreation. Jesus provides the removal of our sins, the cleansing of our guilty conscience, and a gentle new yoke of discipleship. In Jesus, the Christian finds rest from his burdens, rest from his battles, and rest forever in heaven.

FIRST READING

Exodus 33:12-23 – The Lord gives Moses spiritual rest by promising that his Presence will go with Israel and allowing Moses to see a glimpse of his glory.

SECOND READING

Romans 7:15-25a – Jesus Christ gives spiritual rest to the one who wants to do what is good yet cannot carry it out.

GOSPEL

***Matthew 11:25-30 – Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to come to him for rest.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 4

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

833 - I Run to Christ

Psalm of the Day:

62

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 4

Hymn of the Day:

706 Come unto Me, Ye Weary

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*814 - Just as I Am, without One Plea

Closing Hymn:

818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone

833 - I Run to Christ

834 - Still, My Soul, Be Still

Notes for the conservative service:

834 would need introduction; other two new ones might have been sung before (818) or are pretty easy (833)

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10) - 7/16/2023

SERIES THEME

DEFINE CHRISTIAN

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, “A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus.” Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, “A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others.” Is that completely false? And if you aren’t humble, does that mean you aren’t Christian?

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN IS PLANTED BY THE WORD

Planting seed by hand can seem magical. In your hand the seed looks insignificant and lifeless. Yet you put the seed into the soil, and the natural process of life begins. All by itself, the seed germinates and sprouts and reaches to the sun. Except when it doesn’t! Plant multiple seeds and often only some, perhaps just a small amount, will sprout. As these few sprouts grow, birds and pests and weeds and weather attack. The reality is that once the seed leaves your hand, you are at the mercy of forces beyond your control.

Today, God uses that experience from nature to explain the supernatural process by which God calls humans to faith through the gospel. The Christian is planted by the Word. The Christian can plant the seed of the gospel into the soil of another’s heart. What happens after that is completely beyond our control. Yet God promises us that his Word always accomplishes his good purposes. God’s Word is powerful, all on its own, without our help.

FIRST READING

***Isaiah 55:6-11 – God’s Word always works—a seed that produces the fruit that God earnestly desires.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3:5-11 – We sow the seed of God’s Word, but only God can make that seed grow.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 – Jesus pictures ministry as a sower scattering seed to all with no regard for where it might land.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 4

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

981 - In This Place Your Word Is Planted (SBO)

Psalm of the Day:

65

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 4

Hymn of the Day:

644 Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

712 - Delay Not! Delay Not

Closing Hymn:

925 - On What Has Now Been Sown

or

640 - God's Word Is Our Great Heritage

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

981 is service builder only

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 11) - 7/23/2023

SERIES THEME

DEFINE CHRISTIAN

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, “A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus.” Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, “A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others.” Is that completely false? And if you aren’t humble, does that mean you aren’t Christian?

In our next worship series Christ himself defines the term Christian and describes what Christians do. We will be struck by how often we do not do all those things. There likely are times when people could look at our behavior and assume we were unbelievers. Yet throughout this series Jesus will demonstrate that ultimately a Christian is one who runs to Christ for forgiveness precisely because he has failed to live like what he is—a Christian. As we receive the mercy of Christ, it moves us to strive with all our being to better fit Christ’s beautiful definition, doing all the things Jesus says that Christians do.

THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN LIVES AS WHEAT AMONG WEEDS

The wheat that grows in the Middle East is a variety that looks much like wild grass or weeds. It is difficult to tell wheat and weeds apart until shortly before harvest time, when the wheat stalks develop a head containing the kernels of grain. Try and pull the weeds out of a wheat field and you will likely pull up a fair amount of wheat accidentally. So you need to wait for the harvest to separate wheat from weeds.

This week Jesus uses that image to illustrate life this side of heaven. Christians are pictured as wheat planted by the Lord. Evil and unbelieving evildoers are pictured as weeds. We might want God to take care of evil now—to pull up all the weeds. But he tells us to wait for the harvest. God is going to fix the problem of evil in this world, but it might not be today or even tomorrow. What does God want us to do while we wait? He wants us to live like wheat among weeds, serving the purpose for which he planted us. That means being faithful, fruitful, and mindful of the coming harvest.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 44:6-11 – Like wheat among weeds, Christians live surrounded by evil in this world. But God promises that the presence of evil in this world does not mean that God doesn’t care for us.

SECOND READING

Romans 1:18-25 – Jesus’ parable about the wheat and weeds could give the impression that God is ambivalent about evil. But God’s wrath is real and will be fully revealed at the harvest.

GOSPEL

***Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 – The Lord has a plan to separate wheat and weeds. Christians will be perfectly separated from every evil at the final harvest.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 4

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

873 - Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray

Psalm of the Day:

19

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 4

Hymn of the Day:

491 Come, You Thankful People, Come

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*641 - Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide

Closing Hymn:

605 - From All That Dwell below the Skies

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 12) - 7/30/2023

SERIES THEME

DEFINE CHRISTIAN

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, “A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus.” Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, “A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others.” Is that completely false? And if you aren’t humble, does that mean you aren’t Christian?

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN SEEKS SPIRITUAL WEALTH

What do you consider your life’s priorities? If you made a list, what would be near the top? Faith, family, and friends would probably head the lists of many. Financial security and health would be right up there. Reputation and recreation would likely make the cut. But perhaps a more interesting question than “What do you consider your life’s priorities?” is “Which of the items on that list would you be willing to sacrifice to save your top priority?” What if you had to give up the whole list—family, friends, finances, health, reputation, recreation—to save just one priority: faith?

This week we are given an honest assessment of what really matters in life. The kingdom is worth everything. Worldly wealth can buy the things of this world, the type of things that rust and decay, things that will not last. True wealth is spiritual wealth. It can be found only in God and his eternal blessings for us in Christ. The Christian seeks first spiritual wealth and will sacrifice anything to obtain it.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5-12 – The Lord offered to give Solomon anything he wanted. Solomon requested the spiritual wealth of a believing heart that could discern right from wrong.

SECOND READING

1 Timothy 6:17-21 – Paul warns against the two pet sins of those who have worldly wealth: arrogance and false hope.

GOSPEL

***Matthew 13:44-52 – Through a series of parables Jesus teaches the value of spiritual wealth.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 4

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

620 - O Worship the King

Psalm of the Day:

63

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 4

Hymn of the Day:

859 Your Kingdom, O God, Is My Glorious Treasure

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

539 - O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer

Closing Hymn:

827 - Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

539 - O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer

827 - Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing

Notes for the conservative service:

827 - new tune but pretty easy to pick up

Notes for the ambitious service:

539 should be introduced with cantor assistance; might have been used May 14.

Worship Plan - Church Year A 2022-2023



Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 13) - 8/6/2023

SERIES THEME

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN TRUSTS GOD TO PROVIDE

The hardest times to trust in God are the times we need him most. It’s easy to trust God when your job is great, your health is fine, your relationships are strong, your family is well. It’s easy to trust God when the sun is shining, but what happens when your life is suddenly overshadowed by dark days?

When tragedy or conflict affect us, we may wonder if God continues to care and provide for us. At those times the Christian focuses on certain foundational facts. The Christian was chosen, predestined, and adopted as God’s dear child. God has provided the Christian with innumerable spiritual blessings and promises the Christian an eternity of glory, peace, and joy. If we look at those spiritual blessing God provides to us, how could we doubt that he will, at the right time, give us everything we truly need? The Christian trusts God to provide.

FIRST READING

***1 Kings 17:1-6 -- Elijah told a wicked king God would send years of drought and famine. In those dark times, the Lord provided food for his faithful prophet.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 1:3-10 – Before the world was formed, God chose us to be his beloved children. This is why we can trust God to provide.

GOSPEL

Matthew 14:13-21 – Jesus graciously and abundantly provides for the needs of a great multitude.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

The Service (hymn tune canticles)

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

708 - Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Psalm of the Day:

136

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Additional Settings in Service Builder

Hymn of the Day:

603 All Praise to God Who Reigns Above

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

549 - Across the Lands

or

517 Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

Closing Hymn:

509 - Feed Your Children, God Most Holy

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

Notes for the conservative service:

509 has Bach harmonization in pew.

549 quotes the Gospel and may have been used for Ascension. Could be selected again to reinforce new tune.

517 quotes the Gospel and may have been used at Lent 4.

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year A

2022-2023



Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 14) - 8/13/2023

SERIES THEME

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE CHRISTIAN ANSWERS DOUBT WITH FAITH

Wherever faith clings to the promises of God, doubt is always lingering in the back of our mind, constantly asking the serpent’s garden question, “Did God really say?” How striking to think that one must have faith in God before it is even possible to doubt him!

It is not uncommon that, in times of adversity, doubt rears its ugly head—doubts about God’s care, God’s promises, God’s providence. In those times, the true answer to doubt is not found in some great miracle that removes adversity, but in the still small voice of our Savior God whispering to us in his Word. Through that Word Christ reaches out to us with nail-scarred hands, proof of his great love. Jesus gently says, “Why did you doubt?” Our faith is restored. The Christian answers doubt with faith because Jesus makes it so.

Optional to include with series theme:

This Sunday concludes a seven week focus on the characteristics of a Christian. After growing in our faith regarding the holy ministry and the characteristics of a Christian, next week begins an emphasis on Jesus’ church.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:9-18 – The Lord answers Elijah’s doubt not with a great show of power but with the gentle whisper of God’s gracious promise.

SECOND READING

***Romans 8:28-39 – Paul teaches that in all things, good times and bad, we can trust that God is carrying out his perfect plan for his glory and our salvation.

GOSPEL

***Matthew 14:22-33 – In the account of Peter walking on the water, we see how quickly doubt challenges faith. And we see how graciously Jesus responds to our doubt.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

The Service (hymn tune canticles)

Ambitious:

Opening Hymn:

984 - A Vicious Storm, a Raging Sea (SBO)

or

805 - Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Psalm of the Day:

73

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Alleluia. Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Additional Settings in Service Builder

Hymn of the Day:

847 Be Still, My Soul

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*819 - If God Himself Be for Me

Closing Hymn:

832 - Immovable Our Hope Remains

or

849 - Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

802 - All Is Well

832 - Immovable Our Hope Remains

875 - What Threat of Harm Can Hinder Me

845 - What God Ordains Is Always Good (Bauder)

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

802 requires introduction - prob cong sings only refrain

832 requires introduction

875 would require introduction

845 would require introduction