

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



8/14/2022 - Proper 15

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

“Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don’t know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher’s life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus’ teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus’ words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

THEME OF THE DAY

WE WANT PEACE, BUT GOD’S WORD DIVIDES

We often divide humanity into groupings that are not really significant: this ethnic group versus that one, men versus women, wealthy versus the poor. Yet, every ethnic group is under God’s law. That law convicts both men and women of sin. Because of sin, the wealthy and the poor will both die. Only through faith in Christ is sin forgiven and the sting of death removed. God’s Word creates that saving faith, but not in everyone who hears it. Fallen man retains the awful power to resist the working of the Spirit inside him... to reject the gift of faith. Therefore, God’s Word produces the only people grouping that ultimately matters: believers and unbelievers. We want to overcome division and live in peace with other people. Here is a hard truth: total peace is impossible for the believer to achieve. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility and opposition. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises us our perseverance will be rewarded.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23:23-29 – The Word of the LORD divides what is true from what is false.

SECOND READING

*** Hebrews 12:1-13 – The Hebrews who converted to Christianity faced great opposition. They were often divided from their friends, separated from their livelihood. How would they persevere? By fixing their eyes on Jesus.

GOSPEL

Luke 12:49-53 – Jesus was fully aware that his work would cause division that would often cut close to home.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3

Ambitious:

Setting 3

Opening Hymn:

870 - O Church, Arise

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 4A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:

590 - O Holy Spirit, Enter In

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*838 - The Will of God Is Always Best

Closing Hymn:

876 - Fight the Good Fight

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

option: opening - 590; pre-sermon - 870 if preaching on Second Reading

870 - O Church, Arise may be new for some; consider introducing first stanza as necessary

815 - I Look Not Back - final stanza fits second reading on fixing eyes on Jesus; new tune should be introduced

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



8/21/2022 - Proper 16

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE FIRST WILL BE LAST; THE LAST WILL BE FIRST

When it comes to the difficult and uncomfortable topic of who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, it is natural to want to avoid the issue. One way we do that is to direct our attention to theoretical questions. “What is heaven like?” “How old will we be there?” Today, someone asks Jesus, “Lord, are only a few going to be saved?” Jesus brushes these questions aside. Instead, he answers the question we should be asking. Rather than talking about how many will be saved, Jesus explains how to be among the saved. What he teaches today through his Word is a hard truth. The doorway into heaven is narrow. Scripture consistently teaches that those individuals who are certain they will be first through that door are more likely to be last, if they make it through at all. Instead, the one who believes he is the last one God should let into his kingdom and that his only chance of getting in is through the grace of Christ will enter first.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 66:18-24 – The LORD teaches that not only will those who seemed far from his kingdom be among the first to enter eternal glory, but some of those who seemed to be part of his kingdom will be shut out.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 12:18-24 – Being first in God’s eyes has nothing to do with keeping the Law God gave to Moses and everything to do with the gracious work of the mediator of the new covenant.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 13:22-30 – Jesus teaches that the last will be first and the first will be last.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3

Ambitious:

Setting 3

Opening Hymn:

621 - Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 103A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.
(Luke 13:29)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 10-16

Hymn of the Day:

698 - Seek Where You May to Find a Way

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

798 - I Lay My Sins on Jesus

Closing Hymn:

607 - Ten Thousand Reasons

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

607 - Ten Thousand Reasons should be introduced, depending on local familiarity

Notes for the conservative service:

Cantor could sing verses of closing hymn as congregation learns this song

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



8/28/2022 - Proper 17

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE HUMBLE WILL BE EXALTED; THE EXALTED WILL BE HUMBLD

Everyone knows that humility is a positive trait and pride is a negative one. So, why bother talking about what we already know? Because in spite of that knowledge, we still helplessly fall into the trap of pride. We cannot help but think that our ascent to the exalted status we desire is our responsibility. We even take our exaltation into our own hands, either by treating poorly those we believe we can stand on top of or by showing favoritism to those we believe can provide us with upward mobility. Rather than minimizing pride as a sin that is common or harmless, Jesus’ words today confront us with this hard truth. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled by God. But Jesus also gives us the promise we need to be freed from pride’s trap. Our exaltation doesn’t need to be our responsibility because Jesus has already made it his. Those who humble themselves, Christ will exalt.

FIRST READING

*** Proverbs 25:6-7a – Solomon provides common sense about humility and pride.

SECOND READING

James 2:1-13 – James teaches that showing favoritism treats others with judgment rather than mercy, putting us at risk of receiving the same from God.

GOSPEL

Luke 14:1,7-14 – Jesus teaches some ways to demonstrate humility and promises that those who humble themselves will be exalted.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 3

Ambitious:

Setting 3

Opening Hymn:

616 - Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 112A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 14:11)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 3

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:

729 - Son of God, Eternal Savior

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

732 - In Unity and Peace

Closing Hymn:

928 - May the Grace of Christ Our Savior

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

616 - Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator; probably best to introduce at least the first stanza

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



9/4/2022 - Proper 18

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

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THEME OF THE DAY

PUT DOWN WHAT YOU LOVE; PICK UP WHAT YOU LOATHE

It is an unavoidable hard truth. Our relationship with Jesus will put us in situations where we must decide where love for him ranks compared to love for other people and things. And Jesus is not content to be one of many important things in our life; he wants to be first. He wants us to follow his Word unwaveringly, even when he asks us to do difficult things. As a result, following Jesus will force us to let go of things we love and embrace things we would naturally loath. Jesus is loving and honest. He doesn’t hide this hard truth! Instead, he tells us up front that we must count the cost of following him. That means calculating what we might have to give up as his followers. He wants us to do that now, ahead of time, rather than waiting until we are in the heat of the moment and emotions are running high. However, our calculations should not only consider what we might give up for Jesus. They also entail calculating what we get through him! When we perceive the infinite blessings we find in Christ, the decisions we must make, while difficult, will be clear. Whatever is lost as we follow Jesus pales in comparison to what we gain.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – Through Moses, the LORD sets two paths before Israel: one leading to life, the other to death. Life was found in listening to God’s voice.

SECOND READING

Philemon 1,7-21 – The case of the escaped slave, Onesimus, returning to his owner, Philemon, is a perfect example of the cost involved in following Jesus. Paul encourages Philemon to free Onesimus and embrace him as a brother.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 14:25-35 – Jesus teaches us that truly following him will come at a cost: the need to carry a cross, the need to give up everything. Count the cost.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Ambitious:

Setting 3

Opening Hymn:

703 - I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 1A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

or

Setting 3

Hymn of the Day:

694 - Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*831 - Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me

Closing Hymn:

617 - Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

707 - Cling Tightly to the Word of God includes 'take up your cross' language and is not a difficult sing; with six stanzas it would work well to introduce one or two

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



9/11/2022 - Proper 19

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

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THEME OF THE DAY

THE FOUND ARE LEFT; THE LOST ARE FOUND

“He’s lost.” We use that term not only to refer to someone who is bewildered about where they are but also to refer to someone who is in a helpless, hopeless state. Mankind’s natural state is one of complete spiritual helplessness, a profound lostness. It manifests itself in countless ways. The one who simply wants God to leave him alone: lost. The one who feels she can handle life on her own: lost. The one who thinks he has the right to repent of his sins on his own timetable and on his own terms: lost. The one who thinks God owes them in some way: lost. Wandering around physically lost can lead to winding up in bad places. But the hard truth is that wandering around spiritually lost puts you in the worst place of all. Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us alone in our lostness. He relentlessly seeks us. He involves the rest of the Christian community in seeking the lost and rejoicing over the found.

FIRST READING

Hosea 3:1-5 – The LORD called Hosea to seek his adulterous wife and love her again. This served as an object lesson, showing our God is a God who seeks and redeems those who are lost.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 – A member of the church at Corinth had been lost in sin, but through loving church discipline, had been moved to repent. Paul encourages the members to lovingly welcome him back.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 15:1-10 – Through two parables, Jesus rebukes those who consider themselves already found and not in need of repentance.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
with Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Ambitious:

The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:

612 - How Great Thou Art

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 51A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:

654 - Jesus Sinners Does Receive

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

833 - I Run to Christ

Closing Hymn:

606 - Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

833 - I Run to Christ - straightforward melody but new and may need introduction in some congregations

Notes for the conservative service:

Using three new items from Setting 2 assumes that they have been practiced (and possibly auditioned) in previous weeks

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C 2021-2022



9/18/2022 - Proper 20

SERIES THEME

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THEME OF THE DAY

SERVE GOD WITH MONEY; YOU CAN’T SERVE GOD AND MONEY

There are more than 2300 Bible passages that speak about money. Why? Money is a master Satan frequently tempts us to serve. And that evil foe knows how successful his efforts with money can be. Money provides us with a false comfort and a sense of security. It serves as a source of pride. It serves as a wonderful tool for a favorite pastime: justifying ourselves in our own eyes and the eyes of others. Jesus knows that serving money makes it impossible to serve God. The human heart is not big enough for both. As a result, Jesus does all he can to expose the futility of serving money. He also helps us see that the only one truly worth serving is our gracious, loving God. When we serve God, money is put in its proper place. Instead of money being a lord to serve, it becomes a resource for serving the Lord. This is the hard truth. There is no way for us to serve both God and money. But we can serve God with our money.

FIRST READING

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20 – King Solomon knew from experience that if you serve money, you will end up disappointed.

SECOND READING

*** 1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19 – Saint Paul teaches in straightforward language that serving money will lead to spiritual destruction. But serving God with our money leads to a fulfilling life.

GOSPEL

Luke 16:1-13 – All money actually belongs to God; he loans it to us to manage for his glory. Through a parable, Jesus teaches us to be shrewd in the way we use money to serve him.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA
with Setting 1 Sanctus and Agnus

Ambitious:

The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:

708 - Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 128

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:

807 - All Depends on Our Possessing

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

*819 If God Himself Be for Me

Closing Hymn:

678 - Once in the Blest Baptismal Waters

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

753 - My Worth Is Not in What I Own - If this hymn was not sung at Proper 13, it would be a good fit here

Notes for the conservative service:

Notes for the ambitious service:

Worship Plan - Church Year C

2021-2022



9/25/2022 - Proper 21

SERIES THEME

HARD TRUTH

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THEME OF THE DAY

WHAT SEEMS TO HELP IN LIFE FAILS IN DEATH; WHAT SEEMS TO FAIL IN LIFE HELPS IN DEATH

Last week we learned the hard truth that while money can help make life easier in some ways, it cannot bring true happiness and fulfillment. This week we see that as much as money lets us down in life, its ultimate failure to deliver on its promises happens in death. Those who live with hearts filled with love for money and void of love for God will receive the only eternity that money can buy: one void of God and filled with pain. Though we might be fooled into thinking money helps in life, it will certainly fail us in death. Conversely, that which seems to offer little help in life will never fail us in death. The best example of this is the gospel. Those who hear and heed the Scriptures often appear to receive little benefit in life. Living by God’s Word doesn’t make life easier. In fact, faithfully following Christ often means a more challenging life, one filled with crosses and self-denial. Great wealth gains you the admiration and respect of the world. Being true to Scripture is more likely to gain you scorn and ridicule. Yet those who find the help they need in God rather than in money will never be disappointed. In death they will receive a reward that dwarfs even the best things money can buy.

FIRST READING

Amos 6:1-7 – At the time of Amos, the Israelites enjoyed peace and prosperity, but spiritually they were drifting away from the LORD. The prophet warns not to let prosperity provide a false sense of security.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 13:1-6 – Because the Lord is our helper in both life and death, in all aspects of life we strive to live for him.

GOSPEL

*** Luke 16:19-31 – Jesus tells us a parable about two men, one whose confidence was in his wealth, another whose confidence was in his God.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Conservative:

Setting 2 Kyrie, Gloria, GA, Sanctus
with Setting 1 Agnus

Ambitious:

The Service (hymn tune canticles) [American]

Opening Hymn:

631 - Speak, O Savior, I Am Listening

Psalm of the Day:

Psalm 146A

Gospel Acclamation Proper Verse:

If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

Gospel Acclamation setting:

Setting 2

or

Additional Settings

Sets 1 or 2 for Propers 17-23

Hymn of the Day:

817 - Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

Third Hymn or Distribution Hymn:

813 - He Will Hold Me Fast

Closing Hymn:

718 - Though Thoughtless Thousands Choose the Road

Optional New Hymns, perhaps requiring advance preparation/cantors:

813 - He Will Hold Me Fast - the chorale setting in Accompaniment for Hymns would make this a straightforward sing; if using the piano setting, cantors could help the congregation navigate through the setting

818 - My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone (Psalm 62) - If this hymn was not sung at Proper 13, it would be a good fit here

Notes for the conservative service:

For many congregations, either 813 or 818 would be a good choice, but perhaps not both this first year

Notes for the ambitious service: