

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST 2018

SERIES 1: TRANSITIONS

SERIES OVERVIEW

Starting today, we begin a transition in the worship life of the church, and among United Methodists in particular, we enter what for many of us may be a time of significant transition.

Christians around the globe today begin a new season, the Season after Pentecost. Sometimes this season is referred to as ordinary time. It's called ordinary time because the Sundays themselves are referred to with ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.) after the Day of Pentecost. Trinity Sunday marks the first Sunday after Pentecost. Next week marks the second, and so forth.

This season is not called ordinary time not because things become normal, much less average or blasé during the nearly six months that make up this season (from Trinity Sunday through Christ the King Sunday). If there is anything "ordinary" about it in that sense, it is that, like all other seasons, it has a common underlying purpose among the Sundays and weeks that compose it. The ordinary or underlying purpose of the Season after Pentecost is for the church to live out its ministries fully and accountably in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because there is a diversity of gifts and a diversity of ministries within each congregation, the form of the Revised Common Lectionary we have adopted as The United Methodist Church provides also for maximal diversity among its readings. During this season of the year, The United Methodist Church follows what is sometimes referred to as the "semicontinuous" track of the lectionary (as opposed to the "complementary track" some other churches have chosen to follow). In the semicontinuous track, none of the readings are chosen to relate directly (or even indirectly) to the others, except that the Psalm always functions as a prayerful response to the first reading, most often from the Old Testament. Otherwise, the Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel readings are not related to each other. Instead, the invitation is to follow one track of readings at a time (Old Testament, Epistle, or Gospel), even if you choose to read all of them in worship, and use the track you follow to do more of a deep dive into the Scriptures at that point.

The only exceptions within the Season after Pentecost to this pattern of readings are found on Trinity Sunday, All Saints, and Christ the King, each of which has a kind of "bookend" function for the season. On these Sundays, as during the "axial" seasons of Advent through Christmas Season, and Lent through Easter Season, all of the readings are chosen to connect to each other focused ultimately on the gospel reading. These days mark the hinge points or segue between an axial season (Easter for Trinity, Advent for Christ the King, and Extended Advent, if you choose to observe it, for All Saints).

Picking up on the bookend or hinge function of Trinity Sunday for the Season after Pentecost, we use the first Sunday in this season to function as launch for our first series in this season,

“Transitions.”

Trinity Sunday marks the transition from the preparatory work we have been doing during Lent and Easter Season to the performing of our ministries as participants in the life and with the power of the Trinity during the extended season that lies ahead. We chose the reading from Romans as the focus for this day because we found it has the fullest expression of the dynamics of life in the Trinity among the readings for Trinity Sunday in Year B.

The weeks of June that follow Trinity Sunday mark a particular time of transition for many United Methodist congregations that may experience a change in pastoral leadership on or before July 1. We chose the Old Testament readings as our focal point for these weeks because this set of readings from I Samuel has a common theme of transition in leadership, from Eli to Samuel (June 3), from Samuel to Saul (June 10), and from Saul to David (in two stages, June 17 and June 24).

Week 1: May 27 **Life in the Trinity : Prologue to Post--Pentecost**
[Romans 8:12-17](#)

Week 2: June 3 **WHAT?**
[I Samuel 3:1-10](#)

Week 3: June 10 **WHY?**
[I Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20](#)

Week 4: June 17 **WHO?**
[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)

Week 5: June 24 **HOW?**
[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

Confession of Faith

The Nicene Creed

UMH 880

Prayers of the People

[BOW 495](#)

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

[UMH 8](#)

Confession, Pardon, and Peace

[UMH 8](#)

The peace may be exchanged as the offering is collected.

Music during Peace/Offering

“Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”

UMH 79

OR

“Father, Spirit, Jesus”

CCLI# [4578901](#)

The Great Thanksgiving

[BOW 70-71](#) OR

[A Great Thanksgiving for Trinity Sunday](#)

Music During Communion

“Maker in Whom We Live”

UMH 88

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

UMH 141 OR

“There Is a Redeemer”

[CCLI# 11483](#)

“Child of God”

[Available from Choristers Guild](#)

Thanksgiving after Communion

Almighty God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
by which you nourish all your people
with eternal life
and make us one in Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world.
Send us now in unity
as living signs of the mystery of your Trinity
to live and work in your Shalom
for the Shalom of all. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH

“All Creatures of Our God and King”

UMH 62 OR

“Glory” (“Let there Be Peace”)

[CCLI# 7071972](#)

Pastor:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with you and remain with you always.

Deacon (or Pastor, if no deacon is available)
Go in peace to love and serve our Triune God.

People: Thanks be to God!

Choral/Ensemble Postlude

“Follow Me” (Miller/McFee)

MUSIC NOTES

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty (¡Santo! ¡Santo! ¡Santo!)

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 64/65

Recommended Key: D

Tempo: 96-108 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ

Notes: If you have the option in your setting, add brass to the singing of the hymn to brighten the tone and enliven the atmosphere. There are plenty of arrangements of this hymn available for congregations, choirs, handbells, and instrumental ensembles.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)
[Lead Sheet](#)

Trinity Song

Source: CCLI, [7068847](#)

Recommended Key: Db (if transitioning to next song) or D

Tempo: 72-80 bpm

Instrumentation: Piano, organ, plucked guitar (arpeggiated), solo ostinato (wind, string, etc.)

Notes: Divide the congregation into two parts—left and right, women and men, A and B, or other formats—and give them the instruction to sing through the melody together in its entirety a couple of times. Then invite one part of the congregation to sing the first part of the song and continue repeating as the other part of the congregation sings the second part of the song, both simultaneously. If your church has a choir or praise team, be sure to divide them and prepare them to sing these two parts together as well.

Holy Holy Holy (Heber/Maher)

Source: CCLI, [6527091](#)

Recommended Key: Db (with congregation) or D (band/praise team only)
Tempo: 108-112 bpm
Instrumentation: Band/Praise Team
Notes: If vocal range is a concern, feel free to use the verses only (in traditional strophic form found in many hymns) with the rhythm Maher suggests. Bands will find it quite manageable, and the verses are so well known that the chorus isn't vital to maintaining the integrity of the hymn.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 79
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 104-116 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Stanzas 1-4 of this classic hymn, rooted in a translation (and later paraphrase) of the Latin *Te Deum*, offer praise to God in a manner reminiscent of the singing in the book of Revelation. The ecstatic praise culminates in a doxological statement of praise to the Trinity in stanza 4.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Father, Spirit, Jesus

Source: CCLI, [4578901](#)
Recommended Key: A (Congregational), B or C (band/praise team only)
Tempo: 120 bpm
Instrumentation: Band/Praise Team
Notes: The verses are rhythmically complex, so I suggest having only a soloist or praise team sing them. The congregation would best sing the chorus only.

Maker, in Whom We Live

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 88
Recommended Key: Eb
Tempo: 108-116 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: This prominent hymn of Charles Wesley addresses the three persons of the Trinity in the first three stanzas, with a statement of doxological praise.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Children of the Heavenly Father

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 141
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 78-84 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, guitar, flute, or violin melody or ostinato
Notes: Encourage choirs to sing in four-bar phrases, with a breath only at the end of a line. If your choir is interested in singing a cappella, this hymn is easier than many.
Resources: [History of Hymns \(Hawn\)](#)
[History of Hymns \(Bjorlin\)](#)

There Is a Redeemer

Source: CCLI, [11483](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 92 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, guitar, or a cappella
Notes: As an act of thanksgiving, this song can be sung in its entirety or using the chorus only, either by the whole congregation or choir only.

Child of God

Source: Choristers Guild; *Roll Down, Justice*
Recommended Key: Ab
Tempo: 100 bpm (eighth note)
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, rhythm section
Notes: The words draw the congregation into a relationship with a rhythm and pattern of “you” and “I” language, and the later reference to Romans 8:35,37 (“There is nothing, or no one who can separate”) declares that the people of God will not be driven apart from God or one another, regardless of how people interpret “truth.” The accompaniment is in a gospel style, and it requires a slight swing and a fairly slow tempo.
Resources: [Roll Down, Justice \(collection\)](#)
[Child of God \(anthem\)](#)

All Creatures of Our God and King

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 62
Recommended Key: Eb or D
Tempo: 68-74 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: This is an adaptation of the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, which personifies elements of creation as members of God's family. If you wish to sing fewer than seven stanzas, choose stanzas 1, 5, and 7. The seventh stanza concludes the hymn by offering praise to the Trinity.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)
[Organ and Choral Setting](#)
[Spanish Hymn Translation](#)
[French Hymn Translation](#)

Glory (Let There Be Peace)

Source: CCLI, [7071972](#)
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 74-78 bpm
Instrumentation: Band/Praise Team
Notes: This song echoes the words of the "Prayer of St. Francis," but also the more modern song "Let There Be Peace on Earth" by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson (UMH 431). The song is very accessible for many congregations. Interestingly, the bridge melody uses every note of the major scale.

PREACHING

If you've ever been an associate pastor in a congregation large enough to have an associate pastor, you know what today is: It's one of those "associate pastor" Sundays, along with the Sunday after Easter Sunday, and the Sunday after Christmas Eve, and maybe the Sunday nearest July 4, especially if it's going to be a long weekend.

You know, the Sundays with complicated things to talk about— like skeptical Thomas casting shade on the others for a whole week, or raging, paranoid Herod ordering the slaughter of every male child in Judea under two, or church-state relationships, or, today, the doctrine of the Trinity. Hard stuff. Stuff the senior pastor would rather not handle, and, of course, won't handle, because you are there. The senior pastor is on vacation— along with a good chunk of your "regular" congregation.

Been there. Done that. And sorry, the associate never gets the t-shirt.

Of course, for roughly ninety percent of our congregations in the U.S., there is no associate pastor. For most of you coming to another Trinity Sunday means it's you

again, struggling to help your congregation make sense of the only Sunday of the year devoted to a doctrine it took the early church almost 400 years to flesh out in ways most of them could agree to. But you don't have 400 years to work on this week's sermon. It's here. And it's you. It's all you.

Been there. Done that, too. And sorry, most small and midsize churches don't have t-shirts.

But they do have you.

Though maybe not for long.

You may be appointed elsewhere by July 1.

And if not this year, then maybe it was last year, or it might happen next year.

January through March tends to be the "antsy season," with a lot of us wondering if we're going to get that call from the district superintendent about an "opportunity." Once that call has come, the end of May through June, when most of our annual conferences are held in the United States, is also "transition season." We're starting to say our goodbyes in earnest, eyeing our shelves to figure how many book boxes we'll need this time, and scanning the walls of the house or the parsonage to figure out what needs to be painted and what needs to be repaired before we move again. We're still where we've been, physically, but psychically we're living in anticipation and maybe some dread of where we're going, how we're going to get there, and what comes next.

United Methodist clergy who may be on the move aren't the only ones living into transition this time of the year. Lots of families are, too. Schools have let out. Graduations happen. More marriages take place in June than in any other month of the year. It may be the time for the summer camp or work schedule, the first inklings of the empty nest, or the start of life together as a married couple and all the expense (and stress!) that often entails.

For many of us in the U.S., vacation season begins right about now. For churches in the sunbelt, that often means younger families are at the beach or in the mountains during the weekends, and some number of older families and individuals start heading north to find cooler breezes.

All of these changes, all of these transitions, are happening about right now.

So it's no wonder a lot of our congregations will start a summer schedule soon. If they usually have two or more services, they might combine them and hold just one. Choirs and Sunday schools may be off entirely or on a reduced schedule until vacation season is over and school is back in session.

What does all of this have to do with today in the church year, with Trinity Sunday?

Quite a lot, actually. Because today is one of those "transition Sundays" in the church year, as well as in the wider rhythms of modern American and United Methodist ecclesial life.

Today we make the transition from seasons of preparation for discipleship and mission (Lent and Easter) to an extended season of performance, living out our discipleship on God's mission in Christ's name and the Spirit's power.

Everything we have become as a result of these previous weeks of preparation, baptism, confirmation, and commissioning, we now start putting to the test.

And today, as we begin that journey and that work, we do so, as we do every year, with this core reminder about how we do it. We do it as participants in the life of the God whose mission sends us, a God we know as Trinity, One in Three, and Three in One.

Our reading from Romans today points squarely to this.

"All who are led by the Spirit are children of God... When we cry, Abba, Father, it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

This is our journey, a journey led by the Spirit, a journey in which we cry out to the Father, a cry comes from the Spirit interacting intimately with our own spirits, and a journey that we undertake as joint heirs, siblings, of Jesus Christ.

It's a big, big transition we make today. We mark how big that transition is even in the fairly dramatic change of the color of the paraments after today from nine solid Sundays of white and gold to next week's green, which will take us into November.

But because this transition is all about us operating within the very life of the Triune God, it is a transition we can welcome. We don't welcome all transitions in our lives. And we shouldn't. Some of them are unjust, harmful, even life-threatening. But this transition we can welcome.

The Spirit leads us outwardly. This isn't something theoretical; it's something many in our midst today can give abundant witness to. We experience the Spirit leading us, showing us the way. We may not talk about it much. But we do experience it. All the time.

We don't always know where the Spirit is leading us, especially in times of transition. I'm in such a time as I write this in my final week "in office" as your director of worship resources. By the time you read this, I likely will have started new work, a new appointment, with InfoServ in early March. Things have been in transition for me since last August. Along the way, I inquired about an open position at InfoServ, and I sensed then the possibility of the Spirit leading me toward it. But I didn't know if that would happen. What I did know is I could trust the Spirit was leading.

How did I come to know that? I mean, know that, not just consider it a possibility? It's because this life we have in the Trinity is a thing. Paul wasn't theorizing. He was describing what a lot of us since have come to experience directly ourselves, or indirectly through others.

We are joint heirs with Jesus. He is our sibling now, walking with us.

And how do I know that? Jesus was walking with my co-worker and collaborator, Dawn Chesser, too. This may sound strange, because, as I say, a lot of us don't often talk about these things, but Jesus appeared to her in a vision, and said to her a single word, "Trust." And she told me and a few others about how our mission-companion and sibling had spoken in this way, and I can tell you, as she had become convinced, that this word was not only for her. "Trust." Perhaps it is a word for you or others around you going through challenging times of transition just now, too.

The Spirit is leading us. Jesus is walking with us, supporting us on the way. We experience both of these things kind of externally. But we also experience the Spirit moving us internally. Sometimes it's to call out in prayer to "our Father in heaven." You know, that prayer Jesus gave us to use. Or sometimes just the opening words, the bare address. We've really been adopted into the Trinity. And when we cry out to the Father like that, well, we know it, we feel it, don't we? God is our Father in heaven. God is our Mother, too, though Paul doesn't use that term here. God is our heavenly parent, and we are God's children.

SIDEBAR: "Heavenly Father"

By Taylor Burton-Edwards

A word about “heavenly parent” or “heavenly Father.” This doesn’t mean ethereal, ether-like, vaporous. It means parent- or father-by-adoption. When we are adopted, we become the children of the one who adopts us in every way but genetics. Our adoptive parents care for us as if we were theirs by birth. Many adoptive parents and extended families make no distinction between those born among them and those adopted by them. These parents and families raise them as their own, and as among their own, with all the ways parents and extended families mark their own. Mannerisms, speech patterns, foods and sports teams that are family favorites, all become part of the life of the children they adopt.

“Our Father in heaven” does not mean “a father who is up in the sky, far from us,” but rather marks the “country” from which the one who adopts us comes, and the customs into which the one who adopts us will orient us for the rest of our days. To cry “Abba! Father” is not only to be heard and loved and responded to by the one we call, it is also to recognize God’s adoptive parent role in enculturating us into the ways of heaven here, in this earthly life.

END SIDEBAR

We are God’s adopted children, children of this Triune God who leads us, walks with us, moves us, enculturates us. And being children, we grow, change, and mature; and we are all different. Just as Three in One does not mean Three who are identical within the One God, so our enculturation, life, and mission within the Triune God does not mean we are all the same, or become all the same. Conformity with the image of Jesus, God’s only-begotten-son, another way Paul wrote about the nature and result of our life in the Triune God (Romans 8:29), does not mean uniformity with one another, either, except in one respect, which Paul identifies at the end of verse 17: “if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may be glorified with him.”

Just as Jesus, God in flesh, brought suffering in the flesh into the heart of the Triune God, so, as we suffer with Christ, we are brought more and more into the same heart. Here is saving mystery, the suffering brought into the heart of the Triune God propelling us with the love of God toward all who suffer in this life, even if it brings more suffering to us. For when it does, we, in and with God, are also being glorified.

We are led by the Spirit, being moved inwardly by the Spirit regularly to call out to our adoptive Parent-of-Heaven, a parent whose mannerisms continue to shape us in our uniqueness, even as we are made joint heirs with Jesus, our brother, in our work, in engaging our mission, in using the gifts poured into us by the Spirit, in moving into the places and among the people and creatures who suffer, and so experiencing and knowing the glory of the Holy Three, Holy One, pulsing and flowing ceaselessly in us,

and us in the Holy One, Holy Three.

This is what we get to do. This is who we get to become. This is who our Triune God is making us to be, starting here, now.

Welcome to the Season after Pentecost.

Welcome to life and ministry in Triune God.

Welcome to transitions and changes we cannot begin to imagine.

Welcome. And let's get started. Amen.

PLANNING NOTES

Reading Notes

NRSV texts, artwork and [Revised Common Lectionary Prayers](#) for this service are available at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).

Lectioinaire en français, [Le Lectionnaire Œcuménique Révisé](#)

Calendar Notes

The colors for today (Trinity Sunday) are white and gold. Starting next Sunday and until All Saints Sunday (November 4), the color is green.

May

All Month [Christian Home Month](#) (2018 Theme: Families Called to Peace)
[Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#)

May 27 [Trinity Sunday](#)
[Peace with Justice Sunday](#)

May 28 [Memorial Day \(USA\)](#)

June

Pray for annual conferences convening throughout the month, for all receiving new appointments or assignments, for those leaving existing appointments or assignments, and for congregations and other ministries receiving new leadership.

June 3 **June Worship Series: "Transitions"**

June 17 [Father's Day \(USA\)](#)

June 19 [Juneteenth \(USA\)](#)

July

July 1 **July Worship Series Begins: "Healing Hands"**

July 4 [Independence Day \(USA\)](#)

August

All Month [Back to School Resources](#)

August 5 **August Worship Series Begins: "Life Together"**

September

All Month [Season of Creation](#) (2018 Discipleship/UMCom Series coming soon)

September 3 [Labor Day \(USA\)](#)

September 15-

October 15 [Hispanic Heritage Month \(USA\)](#)

October

October 6 **October Series in Job (in development)**

[World Communion Sunday](#)

October 14 [Children's Sabbath](#)

October 21 **Laity Sunday (2018 Resources forthcoming)**

October 31 [Reformation Day](#)

November

November 1 [All Saints Day](#)

November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)

[Daylight Saving Time Ends \(USA\)](#)

A Season of Saints (2018 Resources Forthcoming)

November 11 [Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday](#)

[International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church](#)

[Veteran's Day \(USA\)](#)

[Extended Advent Begins](#)

November 18 [Bible Sunday](#)

November 18-25 [National Bible Week \(USA\)](#)

November 22 [Thanksgiving Day \(USA\)](#)

November 25 [Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday](#)

[United Methodist Student Day](#) (offering)

For Your Planning Team: Transitions

Week 1: Life in the Trinity: Prologue to Post-Pentecost

The Series

Transitions

Week 1: May 27

Life in the Trinity : Prologue to Post-Pentecost

[Romans 8:12-17](#)

Week 2: June 3

WHAT?

[I Samuel 3:1-10](#)

Week 3: June 10

WHY?

[I Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20](#)

Week 4: June 17

WHO?

[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)

Week 5: June 24

HOW?

[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

Planning for This Service

Today launches a new series and a new season, the Season after Pentecost. As we noted in the Series Overview and the Preaching Notes, the focus of this new season is to help us live out the ministries we have been given using our spiritual gifts, all in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Today marks the beginning of a season of missional action and focus in the life of the church.

We mark that beginning by remembering and getting deeply in touch with the reality that makes our mission possible for us—the reality that our life and work is in and through our Triune God.

And we take the time in this series to transition into that beginning, even as this time of the calendar year marks all kinds of transitions for many of us, including not a few United Methodist pastors, deacons, and congregations who will experience a move during the coming weeks.

The promise for this series is that, grounded in the life of our Triune God, we will be equipped and supported in working through questions and seasons that come with this and every time of transition in our lives.

Today's service makes a transition from Easter Season to where we're heading by preserving, for today, at least, a kind of dramatic act of entry to kick it off, and by continuing the Easter Season practice of weekly Communion. At the same time, the form of that act of entry is different— this time three bells rung in harmony, then straight into opening songs without an intervening act of testimony. The form of the Great Thanksgiving changes as well. These changes, modulated this way, are intentional. They signal some continuity with what has come before, but also introduce enough difference that it's clear we're starting to head in a different direction, starting now.

We begin to see just how different beginning next week.

One last word. This service is not designed to “explain” the Trinity. Worship is not a theology class. This service is designed to bear witness to and give thanks for the reality of life we, as the baptized, share in the Trinity. Do not try to explain Trinity today. Focus on praise and testimony.

Additional Resources for this Service

[2015 Planning Helps for these readings](#)

[Ecumenical Prayer Cycle](#): (Click link to find countries for this week when they are posted)

**TRANSITIONS
WHAT?
Second Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
June 3, 2018**

FULL SERVICE ORDER

Abbreviations

AH=The Africana Hymnal

BOW=United Methodist Book of Worship

UMH=United Methodist Hymnal

CCLI= Christian Copyright Licensing International, SongSelect

TFWS=The Faith We Sing

W&S= Worship & Song

SOZ=Songs of Zion

The worship space should be arranged as if it is in a period of construction throughout this series, culminating with the finishing of the space on Week 5.

For this week, most “regular” worship furnishings should be absent—no Lord’s Table, no font, no pulpit, no lectern, no (unattached) crosses.

The service for today is built to be lay-led, on the model of morning prayer. The role of the pastor today is to preach and offer the blessing. We recommend that a child (trained and capable of reading aloud well) read the Scriptures throughout the rest of this series. If the pastor is absent (as will be the case in some places because of annual conference), a layperson may preach and offer the final blessing using the appropriate modifications as noted.

Silence may be observed. When worship begins, a leader may rise and say:

CALL TO PRAISE AND PRAYER

Greeting:

Leader: O Lord, open our lips.

People: And we shall declare your praise.

Song of Praise

“Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above”

“Crag and Clay”

UMH 96 OR

CCLI # [6189422](#)

SCRIPTURE

Readings

Song: "I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry"

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (UMH 854)

TFWS 2051

[I Samuel 3:1-20 \(NRSV\)](#)

Sermon

Response

"Song of Zechariah"

"When Everything Falls"

What?

UMH 208 OR

CCLI# [5490411](#)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayers of the People

[BOW 571](#) or TFWS 2201 OR

CCLI # [7039048](#)

The Lord's Prayer

BLESSING AND PEACE

Pastor or Lay Leader (wording for Lay Leader noted in parentheses)

Our lives are full of transitions.

Everything changes.

Amidst all change,
at every stage of transition,
God's saving love for us and all creation
abides.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you (us) and remain with you (us) always. **Amen.**

Signs of peace are exchanged.

Postlude

MUSIC NOTES

Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 96

Recommended Key: F

Tempo: 104-112 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ or piano

Notes: The AABA' form of this tune makes it very easy to teach if

your congregation does not already know it. A descant, choral reharmonization, transposition to the key of G, and trumpet part is included in the *Music Supplement to The United Methodist Hymnal*.

Crags and Clay

Source: CCLI, [6189422](#)
Recommended Key: Bb (Congregational singing), Bb-D (band/praise team only)
Tempo: 66 bpm
Instrumentation: Solo guitar, piano, or band
Notes: Make note that there is a lead sheet for this on CCLI SongSelect, but if you are looking for a vocal score, there is not one available. Lowering the key will be required for congregational singing. Beautiful images of God's presence amid imperfections are found throughout this song, and the ending contains text from Psalm 139:14.

I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2051
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 84-92 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, guitar, organ, band, solo wind instrument
Notes: There are many possibilities for accompaniment with this song, including all instrumentation options listed above. This hymn gives a narrative of a life unfolding with a God who works in our lives from birth to death and beyond. This song comes from a folk tradition, so keep the accompaniment simple and light, with the melody gentle and lyrical.
Resources: [History of Hymns \(Hawn\)](#)
[History of Hymns \(Nance\)](#)

Song of Zechariah

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 208
Recommended Key: A
Tempo: 100-108 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: This canticle is a combination of readings and sung response, in the same form as the Psalter contained in *The United Methodist Hymnal*. Have the accompanying instrument play the melody before the singing, or instruct the

choir to sing through once to model the line. The tune is very familiar to many congregations, so singing it in worship should be very accessible. The Scripture text comes from Luke 1:68-79.

When Everything Falls

Source: CCLI, [5490411](#)
Recommended Key: Bb (Congregational song), Bb-C (Band/praise team only)
Tempo: 72-80 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, solo guitar, or band
Notes: This song speaks of the presence of God, especially in trying times. The rhythms, melody, and range can be quite challenging, so having a band and soloist or praise team without congregation would be a good option in this case.

Prayers of the People (*The Faith We Sing*)

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2201
Recommended Key: Eb
Tempo: 82-88 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or solo guitar; winds or strings on melody
Notes: The congregation sings the refrain every time, with the concluding line begun by a leader (“Lord, in your mercy”) and the congregation responding (“Hear our prayer”). The accompaniment can either continue underneath the reading of the intercessions and spoken requests, or it can be silent during the intercessions. If silence is chosen, resetting the tonality for the leader may be necessary before singing.

Prayers of the People (The Brilliance)

Source: CCLI, [7039048](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 100-108 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or guitar
Notes: This short song is intended to be sung as responses for intercessory prayer. Continue the rolling accompaniment underneath the spoken intercessions, and vary the responses between the A theme (“You hear us calling...”) and the B theme (“Lord, have mercy”).

PREACHING NOTES

WHAT?

“What?”

It’s what we often say in English, at least in parts of the United States, when we hear or see or feel something that shocks us, or stuns us, or feels unbelievable, or out of place.

“What?” we say.

Then we may say or think, “Did I hear that right?” Or “Am I seeing what I think I’m seeing?” Or “This doesn’t feel right.”

“What?”

It’s perhaps one of the first things we will say when we hear news that means we’re about to enter a period of transition. It’s what the pastor or deacon who gets that call from the district superintendent thinks when he or she sees the number on the screen, or hears the voice at the other end of the call. It’s what the staff-parish chair thinks when the district superintendent notifies her about the date and time for the take-in. It’s what a lot of people may think when news gets out that their pastor or deacon won’t be there after June or maybe sooner.

“What?”

It’s what loyal employees think when word comes down that their entire division is shutting down and their jobs are gone. It’s what families of members of the military, armed forces, or police, or firefighters think when people dressed in uniform appear at their door with news to share. It’s what parents think when they get a call or email from their child’s college saying their child is failing or in trouble and it’s time to take them home. It’s what we think when something doesn’t feel right—there’s pain, or memory loss, or a sudden lack of coordination—so we go to the doctor for tests. And it may be what we think when the test results are in and the diagnosis comes.

“What?”

Or, perhaps less dramatically, it’s what we say when we’re asleep, and someone awakens us unexpectedly.

“What?”

The Hebrew text of our reading this morning does not say Eli said “What?” when

Samuel wakened him twice one night, claiming Eli had called him and he was there to do Eli's bidding.

But I don't think it's a stretch to imagine that's what he may have been thinking. "What? No, no, I didn't call you. Go back to bed."

And the second time:

"What? Again? No, I told you, I didn't call you. Go back to bed!"

But the third:

"Oh. I see. Go back to bed. And if he calls you again, say, "Speak, O Lord our God, your servant is listening."

Samuel spoke as Eli instructed. And it was news from the Lord that would likely make Samuel say, "What?" Eli's sons had disdained the priesthood, treating it as their privilege to advantage themselves rather than fulfill God's calling to serve among the people. Eli had failed to rein them in, so his household was done for, and no amount of sacrifices now could repair or atone for the damage that had been done. We don't know what Samuel said, just that he then lay there in his bed all night long, pondering it, wondering what to do about it.

What?

Often, when this story is told, I find preachers focus on the failings of Eli and the faithfulness of Samuel. The story, as written, certainly supports that kind of focus.

But today, I'd like us to focus on the faithfulness and wisdom of the failed priest. It is Eli, in this story, who ultimately shows us how to handle ourselves in the face of things that make us say, "What?"

Note in verse 5 that Samuel heard the voice of the Lord and assumed it was Eli's voice. Let that sink in. Though we learn in verse 7 that Samuel had never before heard the word of the Lord come to him, the moment he did, he was sure the voice was of the priest who had taken him in and raised him, the priest whom he accompanied and served in his ministrations to the Lord through sacrifice, prayer, and other forms of ritual. What does this say about how those we raise will hear God's voice?

And Eli was a failed priest, failed in that he had not successfully led his sons to take up

his work after him. But still, when the voice of the Lord came to Samuel, Samuel heard Eli. Eli's sons wouldn't listen to their father, much less God. Samuel did. Indeed, Samuel heard God's voice as Eli's voice.

We may think Eli was a bit slow about recognizing the voice Samuel was hearing as being the voice of the Lord. But let us not miss that he did notice this. And he did more than notice. He taught Samuel how to respond.

And the next morning, it was Eli who initiated the follow up conversation about what happened. It was Eli who insisted Samuel hold back nothing of what the Lord had told him. And though what Samuel told him, no doubt with some trepidation, was certainly enough to make anyone say, "What?," Eli's response showed the way forward. "It is the Lord. Let him do what pleases him" (vs. 18, NRSV).

We may find ourselves facing all sorts of transitions in our lives just now— in our families, in our work, in our schooling, in our congregation, in our denomination, in our community, in our nation, and in our world. I can say there hasn't been a day go by recently when I haven't heard some news that made me say, "What?"

But Eli shows us the way to deal with each "What?" It's to keep listening. It's to let the "What?" keep coming until we understand where it's coming from, even if we don't yet know what it all means. It's to realize the Lord may be speaking to us or to someone else in the midst of our "What?" And if it's not to us, directly, it's to encourage those to whom the Lord is speaking to share what they heard, and not be afraid to share it. And then, it's to walk into what the Lord is saying, or as we talked about it last week, where the Spirit is leading us as God's children, trusting, "It is the Lord."

Somewhere, in every "What?," or in the places where each "What?" leads, we are hearing from God. The "What?" indicates our initial shock, or fear, or disbelief, or awe in the face of something we sense is changing, transitioning. The "What?" is a gift that catches our attention and causes us, if we pay attention, to seek to learn more, to get greater clarity, even if we fear we won't like what greater clarity will bring. The "What?" pursued as Eli pursued it, may be the Spirit's groan from within us, too deep for words, that leads us to cry out "Abba! Father!" And then, then, we can choose, like Eli, to listen, and keep listening some more.

And when we do, we still may not understand, much less like, the "Why?" behind the "What?," much less what is going to come next.

But we'll be able to do it, knowing our Lord is in it, and we are in the Lord. Amen.

PLANNING NOTES

Reading Notes

NRSV texts, artwork and [Revised Common Lectionary Prayers](#) for this service are available at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).

Lectonnaire en français, [Le Lectionnaire Œcuménique Révisé](#)

Calendar Notes

The color from now until All Saints Day or All Saints Sunday (November 1 or 4) is green. Consider using different shades or patterns of green throughout the coming months, if you have means available to do so. On All Saints, the color is white or gold.

June

Pray for annual conferences convening throughout the month, for all receiving new appointments or assignments, for those leaving existing appointments or assignments, and for congregations and other ministries receiving new leadership.

June 3 **June Worship Series: "Transitions"**

June 17 [Father's Day \(USA\)](#)

June 19 [Juneteenth \(USA\)](#)

July

July 1 **July Worship Series Begins: "Healing Hands"**

July 4 [Independence Day \(USA\)](#)

August

All Month [Back to School Resources](#)

August 5 **August Worship Series Begins: "Life Together"**

September

All Month [Season of Creation](#) (2018 Discipleship/UMCom Series coming soon)

September 3 [Labor Day \(USA\)](#)

September 15-

- October 15 [Hispanic Heritage Month \(USA\)](#)
- October
- October 6 **October Series in Job (in development)**
[World Communion Sunday](#)
- October 14 [Children's Sabbath](#)
- October 21 **Laity Sunday (2018 Resources forthcoming)**
- October 31 [Reformation Day](#)
- November
- November 1 [All Saints Day](#)
- November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)
[Daylight Saving Time Ends \(USA\)](#)
A Season of Saints (2018 Resources Forthcoming)
- November 11 [Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday](#)
[International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church](#)
[Veteran's Day \(USA\)](#)
[Extended Advent Begins](#)
- November 18 [Bible Sunday](#)
- November 18-25 [National Bible Week \(USA\)](#)
- November 22 [Thanksgiving Day \(USA\)](#)
- November 25 [Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday](#)
[United Methodist Student Day \(offering\)](#)

For Your Planning Team: TRANSITIONS: WHAT?

Transitions Series Map

Week 1: May 27 Life in the Trinity : Prologue to Post-Pentecost
[Romans 8:12-17](#)

Week 2: June 3 WHAT? (is changing, is God doing)
[I Samuel 3:1-20](#)

Week 3: June 10 WHY? (when transition is unwanted)
[I Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20](#)

Week 4: June 17 WHO? (will lead us?)
[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)

Week 5: June 24

HOW? (will our next stage go? will our new leader lead?)

[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

Planning for This Service

Today, things are very different. This is on purpose. Many annual conferences meet over the first weekend in June, and so many congregations are either without their pastor entirely, or their pastor may not have had the kind of time to prepare for a regular service because of the demands of being at conference this week. So this service is designed to be lay led. It does not require a pastor at all.

As we move through this series on Transitions, we will be experiencing a transition through time of the development of our patterns of worship as Methodist people in the United States.

As we think about early American Methodist worship spaces, they were largely “blank” halls designed not for Sunday morning worship, but for Sunday evening meetings of the Methodist Society. There were not Communion tables, lecterns, or baptismal fonts, because for the sacraments Methodists would attend Sunday morning worship with the Anglicans. If there was a pulpit, it was minimal. We recommend removing as much of the “regular furniture” from the front as you can for today’s service, and if any of it cannot be moved, simply do not use it.

What we’re wanting to convey by this is the sense that the space is “under construction,” that we’re in a time of transition where things aren’t like what they were, nor yet what they will be.

Today’s service is in the form of morning prayer, which lay at the basis of the early Methodist preaching services common when the travelling elder was not in town (eleven weekends out of twelve for many early American Methodist Episcopal churches). We use our current form for Morning Prayer (see UMH 876-877) as the basic outline for this service order.

Today’s service may not take a full hour. It may not even take much more than half an hour. Don’t make the sermon longer or stretch elements to fill the time. Take the time you need to take, no more. Extend your time for fellowship afterward if you like, and then go home!

Additional Resources for this Service

This is the first time this set of readings has appeared in the Season after Pentecost since Discipleship Ministries started its website in 1997 because it is the earliest Easter has appeared in Year B since that time.

[Ecumenical Prayer Cycle](#): (Click link to find countries for this week when they are posted)

TRANSITIONS
WHY?
Third Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
June 10, 2018

FULL SERVICE ORDER

Abbreviations

AH=*The Africana Hymnal*

BOW=*United Methodist Book of Worship*

UMH=*United Methodist Hymnal*

CCLI= Christian Copyright Licensing International, [SongSelect](#)

TFWS=*The Faith We Sing*

W&S= *Worship & Song*

SOZ=*Songs of Zion*

The worship space should be arranged as if it is in a period of construction throughout this series, culminating with the finishing of the space on Week 5.

For this week, the pulpit returns to the worship space, or, if it could not be moved last week, may be used this week.

The service for today is built on the model of an early twentieth-century Methodist preaching service (1905 Methodist Hymnal). The pastor (“minister” in 1905 language) may take a more active role than last week. We recommend that a child (trained and capable of reading aloud well) read the Scriptures throughout the rest of this series. If the pastor is absent (as will be the case in some places because of annual conference), a layperson may preach and offer the final blessing using the appropriate modifications as noted.

On screen as people enter, or in a printed bulletin at the very top of the service order, these words should appear:

Let all our services begin exactly at the time appointed, and let all our people kneel in silent prayer on entering the sanctuary.

Voluntary (Prelude)

Singing from The Methodist Hymnal (the people standing)

“All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord”

UMH 554

“Blessed Assurance”

UMH 369 OR

“Blessed Assurance” (My King Is Coming)

CCLI # [6527149](#)

The Apostles Creed (recited by all, still standing)

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

Prayer

[Collect for the Day](#) (Thematic 1)

The Lord’s Prayer (repeated audibly by all, both minister and people kneeling)

Psalm 138

UMH 853

Gloria Patri

UMH 70

Scripture for the Day

1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20

Worship in the Presentations of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Song

“O for a Heart to Praise My God”

UMH 417 OR

“Broken Vessels” (Amazing Grace)

CCLI# [7019974](#)

The Sermon

Why?

Prayers of the People (the people kneeling)

[BOW 571](#) or TFWs 2201 OR

CCLI # [7039048](#)

Singing from the Methodist Hymnal

Invitation to Christ or to Join with the Church

“Come Ye Sinners”

“Come Ye Sinners”

UMH 340

CCLI # [7035184](#)

Doxology and Benediction

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH 94 OR

New Doxology

CCLI# [5075025](#)

Pastor or Lay Leader (wording for Lay Leader noted in parentheses):

We all face transitions

we do not want,

that we know may not be for the best,

but we cannot avoid.

In every transition,

even those we cannot stand,

God’s saving love for us and all creation

abides.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with you (us) and remain with you (us) always. **Amen.**

[Postlude]

MUSIC NOTES

All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal, 554*

Recommended Key: Ab (if using ARMENIA)

Tempo: 104-112 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ or piano

Notes: This hymn of Charles Wesley is a song of unity with an amazing abundance of language to support the images of connection: “joins,” “together,” “hand in hand,” “we all,” “the same,” “agree,” “concentered all,” “harmony,” “one,” “common,” “fellowship,” “meet.” Because the hymn is written in CM (common meter), there are plenty of other tune options other than ARMENIA if that tune is not familiar to

your congregation. Other suggested tunes include AZMON and ST. ANNE, among others.

Blessed Assurance

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 369
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 58-64 bpm (dotted quarter—"traditional")
120-128 bpm (eighth note—"gospel")
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or band
Notes: This hymn is consistently one of the most sung hymns throughout the church. It is revered in many different cultural contexts, too, so there are different ways to approach the performance practice. I have recommended two tempos, depending on the style it is played. Choirs, praise teams, and soloists can all lead the singing of this rousing hymn. Arrangements of this tune for other ensembles (handbells, for instance) are ubiquitous.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)
[Gospel piano accompaniment](#)
[Handbell selections](#)

O For a Heart to Praise My God

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 417
Recommended Key: F (if using RICHMOND)
Tempo: 100-112 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Another CM (common meter) hymn, it is possible to sing this hymn with the tune provided—RICHMOND—but it can also be paired with any number of CM tunes. RICHMOND is joyous and presents a tune characterized by joy, but there are a few tricky leaps throughout. AZMON would also be recommended here, in addition to LAND OF REST.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace)

Source: CCLI, [7019974](#)
Recommended Key: Em (G)
Tempo: 66-70 bpm
Instrumentation: Band, piano, or solo guitar
Notes: An interesting take on the classic hymn, the tune

AMAZING GRACE is not incorporated here, but the first stanza of the hymn is repeated as the pre-chorus in this song. I think it would also be possible to avoid the chorus and simply use the pre-chorus in place of it. In doing so, the focus is placed upon the “Amazing Grace” text with the repetition of each chorus. The vocal range is very accessible for most congregations, and the melody can be easily learned.

Prayers of the People (*The Faith We Sing*)

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2201
Recommended Key: Eb
Tempo: 82-88 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or solo guitar; winds or strings on melody
Notes: The congregation sings the refrain every time, with the concluding line begun by a leader (“Lord, in your mercy”) and the congregation responding (“Hear our prayer”). The accompaniment can either continue underneath the reading of the intercessions and spoken requests, or it can be silent during the intercessions. If silence is chosen, resetting the tonality for the leader may be necessary before singing.

Prayers of the People (The Brilliance)

Source: CCLI, [7039048](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 100-108 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or guitar
Notes: This short song is intended to be sung as responses for intercessory prayer. Continue the rolling accompaniment underneath the spoken intercessions, and vary the responses between the A theme (“You hear us calling...”) and the B theme (“Lord, have mercy”).

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 340
Recommended Key: Fm or Em
Tempo: 98-104 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, guitar, or band
Notes: This minor pentatonic tune, RESTORATION, is one of the

easiest to sing in the hymnal, and it is very idiomatic of the shape-note repertoire. The larger musical form of the work (not divided up in phrases) is AA, meaning that the melody is the same between the stanzas and the refrain. This hymn makes a very memorable invitation and is easily led in traditional or contemporary settings.

Resources:

[History of Hymns \(Hawn\)](#)

[History of Hymns \(Spaulding/Henry\)](#)

[Choral Introit \(Council\)](#)

Come Ye Sinners

Source:

CCLI, [7035184](#)

Recommended Key:

Bb

Tempo:

72-76 bpm

Instrumentation:

Band, guitar, or piano

Notes:

Congregational singing with this song would be best saved for the chorus. The stanzas can be sung by a soloist. The hymn incorporates much of the original hymn text, but the chorus is heavily adapted, and the bridge is original material. The tune is completely different from RESTORATION.

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Source:

The United Methodist Hymnal, 94

Recommended Key:

Eb or D

Tempo:

68-74 bpm

Instrumentation:

Organ or piano

Notes:

This one-stanza hymn of Trinitarian praise is often referred to as “The Doxology,” or interestingly enough in some United Methodist churches, “The New Doxology.” This text was written to provide a text without the completely masculine, one-dimensional references to God found in Thomas Ken’s original hymn (UMH, 95). The combination of text and tune create a statement of praise that has both energy and theological integrity.

Resources:

[Lead Sheet](#)

New Doxology

Source:

CCLI, [5075025](#)

Recommended Key:

F

Tempo:

86-98 bpm

Instrumentation: Band, piano, or guitar
Notes: This song incorporates the melody and text of Thomas Ken's original work. A couple of notes: If you refer to the lead sheet on CCLI SongSelect, there is an unnecessary rest in the middle of each phrase of the verses. Sing all the way through the entire phrase without the rest. If you need to take the rest, the tempo may be too slow, or you may need to work on your breathing! Also, the incorporation of Ken's text restores the concern over heavy use of masculine imagery for God. If this song is chosen, you may wish to balance this imagery with more expansive images and language in other places in the liturgy.

PREACHING NOTES

When news of change and a time of transition comes, especially a transition we do not want and can see more harm than good in, it's the very next question after "What?"

"Why?"

It can be a useful question, an empowering question, even a question that could, at times, lead to a different kind of change that would be for the better.

But let's be honest about the degree of our own self-interest in asking "Why?" We ask "Why?" first as a kind of primal response, out of our own pain, confusion, and discomfort with the news we have received and where we see things going—for us and ours. We ask "Why?" as a kind of demand for the messenger or the change-maker to explain themselves, to justify the pain, discomfort, or confusion they're putting us through. The deeper our sense of our own loss and pain, the more demanding our "Why?" becomes. There had better be a good explanation for this... or else.

Or else, what? Or else our relationship is in trouble. Or else I may start to treat you not merely as a threat, but as an enemy to be defeated or destroyed. Or else I'm going to defect in place, or maybe not remain in place. Or else I'm going to make you regret that decision. Or else... you get the idea.

Last week, we encountered Eli and Samuel at the "What?" stage of the transitions they were facing.

This week, we find Samuel very much in the “Why?” stage.

At “What?” we’re just trying to make sure we heard it right, and let it sink in.

At “Why?” we’re fighting back, often out of our own stuff and sense of pain around the situation. We’re saying, “Have you really thought through this? Have you considered the consequences?” Which is another way of saying, “That’s a bad idea, and now I’m going to tell you why it’s a bad idea and expect/trust you to change your decision.”

Samuel’s at “Why?”

There had been a secret called meeting of all the elders of Israel. Samuel hadn’t called this meeting. He wasn’t there. At that meeting, they decided it was time for Samuel to step aside as judge and anoint a king to replace him. They also decided how they’d approach telling Samuel the news— by giving him their own version of a “Why” he’d have a hard time refusing, because it was the same reason Samuel had displaced Eli as priest and prophet. “You are old, and your sons do not follow in your ways” (vs.5, NRSV).

They weren’t wrong. Verses 1-3 in this chapter, which we didn’t read today, are quite clear that indeed Samuel had gotten old and had appointed his sons to take over his judging duties throughout the region; and his sons had abused the office to enrich themselves—just as Phinehas and Hophni, Eli’s sons, had done.

So maybe Samuel should have seen this coming.

Still, verse 6 tells us his response to this wasn’t the “This is the Lord. Let God do what God pleases” we saw last week from his mentor, Eli.

No. “The thing displeased Samuel,” it says in the NRSV (vs. 6). More literally, the Hebrew could be translated, “The[ir] word was evil in the eyes of Samuel.” He was more than “displeased.” He was offended. He was mad.

So he prayed to God.

SIDEBAR: Prayer in a Hebrew/Jewish Context
by Taylor Burton-Edwards

The Hebrew verb used here and commonly translated “to pray” comes from a Hebrew root word meaning “to judge” (pallel). The verb form as it appears in this week’s text is

reflexive, meaning “to act as judge for oneself” or “intercede for oneself” or “plead one’s case” as if before a judge. We still get a sense of this in the older English usage “I pray you” just before a request (“I pray you, pass me the ketchup!”), though that usage has since been largely displaced by the word “Please” (short for “if it pleases you,” from the French).

So there’s a somewhat significant shift in thought worlds between Samuel, himself “judge-emeritus of Israel” praying to the Lord, and the ways we may think about the use of the verb “to pray.” It’s more like Samuel the judge judging himself before the Lord, whom he sees as ultimate judge. It is Samuel standing before God, taking in both what has been said to him, and his own judgment of it as “an evil word” and bringing all of that to the Lord.

Prayer as self-judgment before God does not bring a demand for a specific resolution. Rather, it brings a request for a response, the response of God’s judgment and wisdom to show us the way forward in our particular circumstance.

END SIDEBAR

We don’t know what Samuel said. We just know what he did. He prayed. He took in what had been said to him, he offered his own assessment of these words, and waited for God’s reply.

And God responded.

In God’s response, we hear God’s wisdom, and we see some of the hurt and anger Samuel must have brought in his prayer. Samuel’s hurt and anger said, “Help me change their minds, God!” God’s wisdom says, “You can’t win this. Do what they ask.” Samuel’s hurt and anger likely said, “They’ve rejected me!” God’s wisdom says, “No. They haven’t rejected you as judge. They’ve rejected me as king.”

And God gives Samuel the opportunity to give further voice to his hurt and anger in the form of warning the people of what their decision will mean for them if indeed they pursue it.

Warn them, Samuel does. He doesn’t refuse their request. But he does warn. He speaks from his heart in this “Why?” moment. A king will convert their sons into his soldiers, their daughters into his domestic staff, their wine and produce into feasts for his courtiers, their freedom for his use as his slaves.

It was a strong warning. But, as God had noted, not enough to dissuade the elders from

their decision. Indeed, they doubled down, or at least got much more specific.

“We are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like other nations, that our king may govern us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.” (1 Samuel 8:20, NRSV).

We could address at some length just how misguided and disastrous their desire to be like other nations and have a king whose primary focus was annual military campaigns would be. Samuel could have, too.

But it would have made no difference.

The leaders had spoken. This was on them. Samuel would not prevail against them. God instructed Samuel to let them have their way.

In the season of “Why?” the answers that come may not be answers, or they may not be satisfying, and they may even be evil in our eyes. We may be deeply offended and hurt along the way. We may shake our heads at what we may see as the foolishness or danger of the decisions being made above our paygrades. We may be right. But we don’t have the power to change them.

What we have the power to do in our season of “Why?” is exactly what Samuel and God did. We can pray, processing what we’re seeing before the face of the Almighty. We can hear God’s word for us in the face of our “Why?”. We can hear God reminding us of our role, and God’s, in the midst of our situations. And maybe we can sense God reminding us that God still has good work for us to do, even if it’s not what we’ve been doing, and even if the outcome of our work won’t be what we had hoped for. Maybe we can sense God nudging us, just a bit, to get over ourselves enough to let the healing of our hurt begin, and a next chapter begin to unfold.

Maybe.

But you won’t know if you don’t ask “Why?”

Or if you don’t ask the right person.

Some of you here today may be in your own season of “Why?” You wonder about what you know is your own weakness, the messes you’ve made that have hurt you or others, or the messes others have made that have wounded you or worn you down. You may not get to a peace about it all anytime soon. I won’t guarantee you there’s any quick fix

for that, any shortcut to happiness or success.

But I will testify to you, as will many here if you ask, that I know and we know what it is in our seasons of “Why?” to be led by the Spirit, to be moved by the Spirit to pray, to be heard and answered by the Father when we do, and to be embraced by Jesus. And that just may be worth far more than ten thousand charms. Amen.

PLANNING NOTES

Reading Notes

NRSV texts, artwork and [Revised Common Lectionary Prayers](#) for this service are available at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).

Lectioinaire en français, [Le Lectionnaire Œcuménique Révisé](#)

Calendar Notes

June

Pray for annual conferences convening throughout the month, for all receiving new appointments or assignments, for those leaving existing appointments or assignments, and for congregations and other ministries receiving new leadership.

June Worship Series: “Transitions”

June 17 [Father’s Day \(USA\)](#)

June 19 [Juneteenth \(USA\)](#)

July

July 1 **July Worship Series Begins: “Healing Hands”**

July 4 [Independence Day \(USA\)](#)

August

All Month [Back to School Resources](#)

August 5 **August Worship Series Begins: “Life Together”**

September

All Month [Season of Creation \(2018 Discipleship/UMCom Series coming soon\)](#)

September 3 [Labor Day \(USA\)](#)

September 15-

October 15 [Hispanic Heritage Month \(USA\)](#)

October

October 6 **October Series in Job (in development)**

[World Communion Sunday](#)

October 14 [Children's Sabbath](#)

October 21 **Laity Sunday (2018 Resources forthcoming)**

October 31 [Reformation Day](#)

November

November 1 [All Saints Day](#)

November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)

[Daylight Saving Time Ends \(USA\)](#)

A Season of Saints (2018 Resources Forthcoming)

November 11 [Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday](#)

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November 18-25 [National Bible Week \(USA\)](#)

November 22 [Thanksgiving Day \(USA\)](#)

November 25 [Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday](#)

[United Methodist Student Day \(offering\)](#)

For Your Planning Team: TRANSITIONS: WHY?

Planning for This Service

Transitions

Week 1: May 27

[Romans 8:12-17](#)

Life in the Trinity: Prologue to Post-Pentecost

Week 2: June 3

[I Samuel 3:1-20](#)

WHAT? (is changing, is God doing)

Week 3: June 10

[I Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20](#)

WHY? (when transition is unwanted)

Week 4: June 17

[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)

WHO? (will lead us?)

Week 5: June 24

[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

HOW? (will our next stage go? will our new leader lead?)

Additional Resources for this Service

[2015 Planning Helps for these readings](#)

[Ecumenical Prayer Cycle](#): (Click link to find countries for this week when they are posted)

TRANSITIONS

WHO?

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B

Father's Day

June 17, 2018

FULL SERVICE ORDER

Abbreviations

AH=*The Africana Hymnal*

BOW=*United Methodist Book of Worship*

UMH=*United Methodist Hymnal*

CCLI= Christian Copyright Licensing International, [SongSelect](#)

TFWS=*The Faith We Sing*

W&S= Worship & Song
SOZ=Songs of Zion

The worship space should be arranged as if it is in a period of construction throughout this series, culminating with the finishing of the space on Week 5.

For this week, the Lord's Table returns to the worship space, and Communion is celebrated. Next week, the final week in the series, the baptismal font returns.

ENTRANCE

"Welcome"

W&S 3152

"I Thank You, Jesus"

W&S 3037

OR

"We Will Not Go"

CCLI# [5083873](#)

Prayer for Illumination

Surely, O God, your welcoming presence is with us,
and your Spirit longs to lead us
even to places we may not want to go.

We thank you, Jesus,
that you bring us from a mighty long way
to your way of life, and hope, and peace.

Even now, Triune God,
breathe, speak, and enflesh your word among us,
as we hear it read and preached,
and as we ponder it in our own hearts.

Then, stir us to get up,
and do something about it. **Amen.**

WORD AND RESPONSE

Reading

[1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 \(NRSV\)](#)

Sermon

Who?

Response

*The pastor invites the congregation to reflect on those places where they need to make decisions about possible leadership during times of transition, and to ask themselves, as Samuel asked Jesse, "Is **everyone** here?" or "Who's not yet at this table that needs to be here?" As the choir or ensemble sing, write down the names of those you may have overlooked or had not yet considered, and see where the Spirit leads.*

Song (Choir or Ensemble) "Draw the Circle Wide" W&S 3154

The congregation may join the choir or ensemble in singing the chorus the last time through.

Prayers of the People
(include an extra petition for fathers)

[BOW 571](#) or TFWS 2201 OR
CCLI # [7039048](#)

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table
Confession, Pardon, and Peace

[UMH 8](#)
[UMH 8](#)

The peace may be exchanged as the offering is collected.

Music during Peace/Offering
“Come, Let Us Dream”
“All the Heavens”

W&S 3157 OR
CCLI# [3118520](#)

The Great Thanksgiving

Music During Communion
“Come to the Table of Grace”
“What Feast of Love”

[BOW 78-79](#)

W&S 3168
W&S 3170 OR

“Invitacion Fountain”

CCLI# [3483224](#)

Thanksgiving after Communion

Almighty God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
by which you nourish all your people
with eternal life
and make us one in Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world.
Send us now in peace
with our vision renewed
to see as you see,
and with hearts that beat as yours. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH

“Sois La Semilla”
“All Creation”

UMH 583 OR
CCLI# [2650436](#)

Pastor:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you always.

Deacon (or Pastor, if no deacon is available)

Go in peace to love all kinds of people
and serve our God with them all.

People: Thanks be to God!

Postlude

MUSIC NOTES

Welcome

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3152
Recommended Key: E
Tempo: 90-96 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano or band
Notes: While the congregation is best suited to sing the chorus, the stanzas are worth teaching and internalizing within the church as a statement of welcome. This welcome extends from a statement of Christian hospitality, but it also includes imagery that supports the welcome at Christ's Table. The rhythms are syncopated, but with repetition can be learned over a period of weeks. Do not let the piano play the melody throughout; allow the voice to lead. It makes the singing easier and better!

I Thank You, Jesus

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3037
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 88-96 bpm (dotted quarter)
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or band
Notes: If your church has a choir, they will love singing this rocking, swinging hymn of praise to Jesus. It is a statement of faith and praise that also includes a very subtle use of inclusive language. This hymn also makes a great pairing with the classic text, "We've Come This Far by Faith," which can be found in *The Africana Hymnal*, 4042.

Resources: [Hymn Study](#)

We Will Not Go

Source: CCLI, [5083873](#)
Recommended Key: Eb
Tempo: 120-136 bpm
Instrumentation: Band, piano, additional percussion
Notes: This song is lively and energetic, and the text includes

multiple biblical references that are poignant to the theme of being led by God. The vocal range in Eb is well within the ability of most congregations, but there is a good bit of rhythmic syncopation. Allow the voices to lead if possible without the incorporation of the melody from a single accompaniment instrument.

Draw the Circle Wide

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3154
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 66-70 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano or band
Notes: Even though the tempo of 66-70 bpm is suggested, be sure to keep the pulse relaxed. I tend to prefer a tempo on the slow end of that range. This hymn is a hymn of welcome and inclusion that many congregations sing while joining hands.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Prayers of the People (*The Faith We Sing*)

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2201
Recommended Key: Eb
Tempo: 82-88 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or solo guitar; winds or strings on melody
Notes: The congregation sings the refrain every time, with the concluding line begun by a leader (“Lord, in your mercy”) and the congregation responding (“Hear our prayer”). The accompaniment can either continue underneath the reading of the intercessions and spoken requests, or it can be silent during the intercessions. If silence is chosen, resetting the tonality for the leader may be necessary before singing.

Prayers of the People (*The Brilliance*)

Source: CCLI, [7039048](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 100-108 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or guitar
Notes: This short song is intended to be sung as responses for intercessory prayer. Continue the rolling accompaniment underneath the spoken intercessions, and vary the

responses between the A theme (“You hear us calling...”) and the B theme (“Lord, have mercy”).

Come, Let Us Dream

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3157
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 60-66 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or guitar; solo wind or string instrument on melody
Notes: This hymn contains a very prophetic text that embraces the language of dreams. The text and tune fit is especially appropriate at the words, “let us ascend the mountaintop” and “the lowly raised.” In preparation of the choir, make sure to instruct them to build intensity through the half notes to keep the phrase moving. If you don’t have a choir, this vocal modeling can also be embodied by a song leader.
Resources: [Setting to GIFT OF LOVE Hymn Study](#)

All the Heavens

Source: CCLI, [3118520](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 74-78 bpm (see notes below)
Instrumentation: Acoustic ensemble (guitar, piano, fiddle) or light keyboard
Notes: Note the recommended tempo is 74-78 bpm, which if you have seen the vocal score on CCLI SongSelect, might appear daunting. There are lots of ornamentations on the melody found there, but I recommended singing in quarter, eighth, or half notes and omitting all of the ornaments (sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note triplets). Keep the melody simple.

Come to the Table of Grace

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3168
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 86-94 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, organ, or rhythm section
Notes: This hymn is one of the best choices for the distribution of Communion elements. Congregations can sing this confidently without a score because there is only a change

of one word each time: “grace,” “peace,” “love,” and “joy.” The melody is easy to sing, and the song includes the theological perspective that it is Christ’s Table, not ours. Thus, we share in the meal as Christ shared it with his disciples and continues to share it with us.

Resources:

[Hymn Study](#)

What Feast of Love

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3170
Recommended Key: Em (G)
Tempo: 116-120 bpm (eighth note)
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or any instrumental ensemble
Notes: The tune GREENSLEEVES is so familiar that many people will confidently sing this series of questions and answers. Each answer begins with the words of the traditional “What Child Is This” refrain: “This, this is Christ the king.”

Resources:

[History of Hymns \(Hassell\)](#)

[History of Hymns \(Kisner\)](#)

Invitacion Fountain

Source: CCLI, [3483224](#)
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 82-90 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, solo guitar, or band
Notes: The song is quite easy to learn, and the melody of the chorus has interesting leaps and contours. When leading, I encourage singing each phrase of the verses with a longer held note at the end. As written in the SongSelect vocal score, the last note in each phrase is so short that the congregation is left wondering where to enter next. Lengthening the last note of each phrase will help them better anticipate the next entrance.

Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed)

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 583
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 100-108 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or Latin guitar/percussion ensemble
Notes: The key to singing this song is keeping it light and lively.

The melody must have some bounce, and the joy of the text must be reflected upon the choir and song leaders. If you're not quite ready to sing the hymn in Spanish, have a soloist sing the first stanza in Spanish, and then have the congregation sing the three stanzas in English.

Resources:

[History of Hymns](#)

All Creation

Source:

CCLI, [2650436](#)

Recommended Key:

A

Tempo:

92-102 bpm

Instrumentation:

Band or solo guitar

Notes:

This joyous song needs energy in the pulse. For this reason, I have not recommended a keyboard instrument alone. It is possible to use piano, but it does not have the percussive quality of a strummed guitar and/or percussion. There is a great deal of syncopation, but it is easily taught and learned because of the repetition. Be sure an accompaniment instrument does not double the melody line. This will cause the song to drag and the rhythm to become too complicated. Leading with voice will offer the best results.

PREACHING NOTES

Strange news, maybe unwelcome news comes.

And we say, "What?"

Change is coming. We're going to enter some sort of time of transition. There's no avoiding it.

And we say, "Why?"

Often the change that comes, the transition we enter, involves a third question, "Who?"

"Who is going to lead us now?"

"Who will do what the folks who aren't with us any more used to do?"

“Who is going to get us through this time of not having the answers to those first two questions?”

“What?” indicates our shock, but also a desire to learn more. In times of transition, the season of “What?” can be a season of learning.

“Why” expresses our own sense of hurt and loss, and maybe a bit of anger about what’s going on. The season of “Why?” can be a season of bargaining (or demand!) for a different future, or it can point us to sources for healing and growth.

“Who?” indicates anxiety. There’s no question change is coming. The “Why?” questions have been asked, and perhaps our numbers have been diminished further by those who have been culled or have culled themselves from our ranks. While this raises some anxiety about how things will get done, (we’ll talk about How next week!), the pressing question it tends to raise is who will do it now.

That’s a lot of uncertainty.

That uncertainty breeds anxiety.

And anxiety tends to generate tunnel vision in the people charged with finding new leaders or a new way forward.

Tunnel vision isn’t always a bad thing. There’s another name for it in sports. It’s called “being in the zone” or “being in flow state.” Get in the zone on the basketball court or the baseball diamond, and you can have three straight three-point shots or pitch a perfect game. Or ask Shawn White about those back to back 1440s in his third run on the half-pipe at Pyeongchang that got him the gold medal. Anxiety plus their disciplined skills can get athletes into a heightened state of awareness where they can focus and perform what look like miracles with the appearance of complete ease.

But if we’re in the season of “Who?,” and we get into tunnel vision around that, the results can be far from gold medal worthy.

In this week’s reading, we find Samuel in a position where he has every reason to be asking “Who?” questions. The king the people asked for and whom he has anointed has turned out to be even worse than Samuel had warned a king might be. He is enriching himself with booty, losing battles, usurping the priesthood, and, as it turns out, is prone to alternating fits of depression and rage. Saul is a disaster as king.

But there was no way to get rid of him. He was the king. This wasn't a democracy.

Well, there was a way. Insurrection. Rivals to the throne. You could become a rival and risk splitting up the nation that had just been united around Saul. Then you'd get to deal with the violent aftermath of all that.

So it wasn't just that Saul's failings were demoralizing. They were destabilizing. They were dangerous. And everybody knew that.

So anxieties ran high. Eggshells everywhere.

Samuel was dejected. Even God was sorry about it (see verse 35!).

There was nothing the people could do that wouldn't make things even worse. But there was something God could do. And so there was something Samuel could do.

In the theo-politics of ancient Israel, it was understood, at least by some, that it was God who provided the king. God could make a king, just as God had raised up judges and prophets, and, if needed, God could make another one. The new one couldn't rule while the first one was alive. But the process of identifying the new one could begin at any time.

God was done with Saul, because Saul had proven himself to be done with any real allegiance to God.

It was time to identify the next king.

It was time for Samuel to get out his horn filled with oil for anointing and go anoint the one God would identify, one of the sons of Jesse in Bethlehem.

It's a season of anxiety. Samuel can't go anointing the next king willy-nilly. Madman Saul would have him killed the instant he heard of it.

In a season of anxiety, a season of "Who?," you tend to become really clear about what you *can't* do. You may easily lose sight of what you can.

So yes, Samuel couldn't travel from Ramah to Bethlehem and announce, "I'm here to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king." But that didn't mean he couldn't do the anointing. He didn't know that. But God did.

God reminded Samuel of something Samuel seemed to have forgotten. He wasn't just a judge and a prophet who could anoint kings. He was also a priest who could offer sacrifices. He could take a sacrifice and his priestly gear with him and offer a sacrifice to which he would invite Jesse and sons.

Sometimes in a season of "Who?," we find ourselves asking, "Who, me?" and we forget our own gifts that make us perfect candidates for what is needed at the time.

But God doesn't.

And God didn't.

So Samuel went. He wasn't wrong to be anxious. Having the former judge of all Israel on the move in this anxious season could send all sorts of anxiety-raising signals, all by itself. Having that ex-judge arrive at your city gates to do something there—this might not be good. The elders of the city saw him on the road, and in their own panic (they were even trembling, verse 4), they asked whether he were coming to their town with peaceful intent. Seriously, they'd have reason to worry if he were not. If he were going to organize an army of Bethlehemites against Saul-- not an inconceivable thought in those times-- and Saul heard of that, Saul would have every person and everything in the town destroyed. They couldn't risk that.

Anxious times, the season of "Who?"

Samuel was admitted, probably escorted to the sacrificial site, then sent out word for Jesse and his sons to meet him there. He would get everything ready to offer a sacrifice there, but he would not offer it until he had anointed the next king.

Samuel didn't know whom he would anoint. He only knew it was to be one of the sons of Jesse. That pairing of knowledge (one of the sons of Jesse, the one God would designate personally) and ignorance (of which son it would be) may have been the key God used to prevent Samuel from falling prey to a tunnel vision that would prevent him from seeing God's choice.

You know the story. From the oldest to the youngest son called to the sacrifice, one after another of Jesse's sons was summoned to appear before Samuel. The very first one, Eliab, appeared to be right out of casting central for the part: tall, great looking, and the oldest of Jesse's sons. But Samuel heard God tell him, "Not this one. I look on the heart" (vs 17).

Then not the next, nor the next, nor the next. Until all the sons present were rejected.

I don't know about you, but when I'm in an anxious state, and I've got six puzzle pieces in front of me, and none of them fits the spot, I assume I've missed something and try going back over the six I have. And then I start looking for ways to make one of the puzzle pieces work. I don't think, right away, "there must be a missing puzzle piece."

Samuel shows us the way forward in this anxious season of "Who?" And in the process, we learn just how anxiety had affected everyone in the system. "Are all your sons here?" he asks Jesse. Samuel would have had every reason to presume that when there's a sacrifice the whole family is called to, they'd make sure the whole family was there. But no. Jesse was anxious, too. He was anxious about his flocks. He was anxious about quick compliance with a strange order. So he didn't bother to try to invite his youngest son, David, who was tending the sheep.

David was summoned; God said he was the one; and Samuel anointed him.

In the season of "Who?" we find ourselves in times of transition; we get anxious; we try to force fit things; and in all of that, we risk missing whom God may be providing for us in such a time as this.

Are you in a season of "Who?"

You may not be able to let go *all* the anxiety.

But you may be able to interrupt it long enough to breathe and to seek God's voice and the Spirit's leading. It's there. And often, it's the voice reminding us to ask a question we may not have thought to ask in our anxiety-driven tunnel vision. Is everyone here? Who's not yet at the table? What kind of face haven't we seen? What kind of voice haven't we heard? What kind of abilities and disabilities haven't we considered?

May we trust the One who knows us better than we know ourselves to lead us to those we don't yet know and maybe find among them the answer to our "Who?"

Amen.

PLANNING NOTES
Reading Notes

NRSV texts, artwork and [Revised Common Lectionary Prayers](#) for this service are available at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).

Lectioinaire en français, [Le Lectionnaire Œcuménique Révisé](#)

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WHAT? (is changing, is God doing)

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WHY? (when transition is unwanted)

Week 4: June 17
[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)

WHO? (will lead us?)

Week 5: June 24
[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

HOW? (will our next stage go? will our new leader lead?)

Planning for This Service:

This week, we're nearly back to normal, even if for many of our congregations, the third Sunday of the month is not a normal time to celebrate Holy Communion. Everything but the font is now in place. It will return and be put to use next week.

Why Communion in this service? Because in our Scripture for today, the story that unfolds works because there is going to be a sacrifice. Samuel, the priest, is back on duty. So it's time for our pastors to do the same by presiding at our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, Holy Communion.

That, and we're in week four of a five-week series. And the general energy of this series is moving "upward," and the depth of our worshipful work is increasing as we progress. We've moved from morning prayer, to preaching, to Communion (this week), to an altar call with baptismal reaffirmation next week at series wrap.

If you're looking for ways to segue from sermon into response, look at the Preaching Notes. Throughout this series, I've written them with the needed segues in mind.

Finally, today is Father's Day in the United States. As with all "special or civic days," plan worship around the Scriptures for the day, not the civic or special day. The service order provided helps you do that. We're worshiping our God today, not fathers. So plan a good reception-- or maybe a cookout on the grounds-- for fathers after worship. And be sure to include fathers in the prayers of the people today.

Additional Resources for this Service

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**TRANSITIONS
HOW?
June 24, 2018**

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W&S= Worship & Song

SOZ=Songs of Zion

The “reconstruction” (or transition) of the worship space is now complete.

For this week, the font returns to the worship space, front and center, with a Paschal Candle beside it (if you have one), and reaffirmation of baptism is celebrated.

ENTRANCE

“Trouble in My Way”	AH 4118
“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”	AH 4012 OR
“Precious Lord”	UMH 474
“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”	UMH 127 OR
“Everlasting God”	W&S 3021 (CCLI# 4556538)
“Strong Tower”	CCLI# 4448873

Prayer for Illumination

Guide us, guide us, Great Jehovah,
into your way for us,
and for each one of us.

Thank you for your presence among us,
and with us,
in every change,
every challenge,
and every triumph, great or small.
And thank you for your word,
stories of your faithfulness,
and what it looks like for us to be faithful to you.
Even now, Everlasting God,

breathe, speak, and en flesh your word among us,
as we hear it read and preached,
and as we ponder it in our own hearts.
Then, stir us to get up,
and do something about it. **Amen.**

WORD AND RESPONSE

The Word Enacted

Here, children may act out in silence the drama of the reading about to be heard. One child may climb a stepladder, raise arms to show muscles, and shake fist as if to dare any of the other children to attack. Another child, a smaller one, may raise a hand to volunteer to go, and another child may start to put a robe on the small child that is way too big, and put in the child's hand a garden tool (hoe or shovel) that is too big for the child to handle. The small child will then take off the robe, put down the garden tool, and pick up a sling and five small stones, then start whirling the sling. End scene.

Reading (by another child)

[1 Samuel 17: \(1a, 4-11, 19-23\), 32-49 \(NRSV\)](#)

Sermon

How?

Response

The pastor invites the congregation to reflect on the ways they've tried to "put on ill-fitting armor," or others have tried to place it on them, or they've tried to put it on others. As the choir or ensemble sing, write down on a card provided the "ill-fitting armor," the burden, you're ready to take off, and the names of others you've burdened by trying to fit them into your mold of what they should be. Pray for them and for the strength for yourself to take off your own ill-fitting armor and not put it on others. If a new appointment begins next week, invite the congregation to write the name of the current pastor/deacon and the one/ones who are coming and to pray for the new pastor/deacon, as well.

Song (Choir or Ensemble) "Come As You Are"

CCLI# [7017790](#)

The congregation may join the choir or ensemble in singing the chorus the last time through.

Reaffirmation of Baptism

Introduction

All standing in body and/or spirit.

Pastor or Deacon:

Sisters and brothers in Christ:
through the sacrament of baptism
God's Spirit has been poured out upon water,
water poured over and immersing us,
water that flows freely for all who will receive it,

water from the streams of God's saving power and justice,
water that brings hope to all who thirst for righteousness,
water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth.

Today we come to the waters,
to renew our commitments
in each other's presence
to Christ who has raised us,
the Spirit who has birthed us,
and the Creator who is making all things new.

We come as we are.

We lay our burdens down.

And we take up afresh the gifts God has given each of us.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

Pastor:

And so I ask you, will you continue to turn away from the powers of sin and death?

**We renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,
reject the evil powers of this world,
and repent of our sin.**

Will you let the Spirit use you with your unique gifts
as prophets to the powers that be?

**We accept the freedom and power God gives us
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression
in whatever forms they present themselves.**

Will you proclaim the good news and live as disciples of Jesus Christ, his body on
earth?

**We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior,
put our whole trust in his grace,
and promise to serve him as our Lord,
in union with the church which Christ has opened
to people of all ages, nations, and races.**

Will you be living witnesses to the gospel, individually and together,
in all the ways *you* can, wherever you are, and in all that you do?

**We will remain faithful members of Christ's holy church
and serve as Christ's representatives in the world.**

Will you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures
of the Old and New Testaments?

**We affirm and teach the faith of the whole church
as we put our trust
in God, the Father Almighty.
in Jesus Christ, his only Son.
and in the Holy Spirit,
one God now and forever.**

Thanksgiving Over the Water
(Pastor)

The Spirit of the Lord is with us.
Even so, come Lord Jesus!

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the life you birthed in us
by baptism into Jesus Christ
will never die.

Your justice never fails.
Your mercy is everlasting.
Your healing river flows.
Your Spirit blows where you will.

We cannot stop you, God!

But sometimes we try.

We try to block the flow,
or we redirect the winds of the Spirit,
taking on burdens not ours to bear,
relying on our own strength
instead of on the gifts the Spirit has given us,
or placing burdensome expectations on others,
or walking so far away from the life-giving Stream
that we do not hear its sound,
and we forget its power.

We parch ourselves.

**We are dry and thirsty,
worn out and weary, O God.
Come, refresh us!**

*The pastor offers gestures of calling upon the Holy Spirit
to come upon the people and the water.
The people are invited to offer the same gestures as they respond.*

Come upon us, Holy Spirit!
Come upon us, Holy Spirit!

Come upon these waters.
Come upon these waters.

Let these waters be to us drops of your mercy.
Let these waters remind us of your righteousness and justice.

Let these waters wash away our need for false masks.
Let these waters restore our confidence in what you have made us to be.

Let these waters renew in us the resurrection power of Jesus.
Let these waters make us long for your coming reign.

Most Holy God, Abba, Father and Mother of all that is!
Glory to you!

Jesus Christ, Savior, Lord!
Glory to you!

Spirit of fire, Spirit over the waters, Spirit of holiness!
Glory to you!

Eternal God, One in Three and Three in One!
All glory is yours, now and forever. Amen!

All who are baptized and have reaffirmed their vows are invited to come to the font to use the water as a sign of refreshing. Before they use the water, they may place their cards listing burdens and names face-down in a basket beside the font, and their offerings in another basket. After each uses the water, another says to her or him:

Your burdens are gone.
Remember you are baptized, and be thankful!

Music during Reaffirmation

“Shall We Gather at the River”

UMH 723

“Glory, Glory, Hallelujah”

AH 4089 (also here:

https://hymnary.org/text/glory_glory_hallelujah_since_i_laid_my_b OR

“All My Fountains”

CCLI# [5925670](#)

“The River Is Here”

CCLI# [1475231](#)

THANKSGIVING

Prayers after Reaffirmation

Deacon or Pastor or Child:

You’ve taken our burdens, O God,
and made us free to move and breathe in you.

We pray for all who are burdened,
by sin, shame, guilt,
or expectations they cannot meet
and should not have to...

Silence

In your mercy,
hear our prayers.

You’ve cleansed our hearts, Holy Spirit,
and renewed our sense of life and strength.

We pray for all we or others may wrongly consider unclean:
people who are abused,
people who are or have been in jail or prison,
people without homes or safe places to live indoors,
people living with HIV,
people with mental illness,
people who are unlike our cultural norms
in age, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, or culture.

Silence

In your mercy,
Hear our prayers.

You’ve rekindled the flame of righteousness and justice, Jesus,
and made us thirst again for Shalom for all.

We pray for all who work for and support justice, peace, and health in our world:
for leaders of nations, communities, and corporations,
for diplomats, soldiers, and police,
for physicians, first responders, nurses, and medical assistants,
for forest rangers, climate scientists, and all whose work protects water, air, and land.

Silence

In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You've healed us,
and you're healing us still, O God.

We pray for those we know who need your healing now,
all who have asked us to pray,
and all who grieve for health or life lost to sickness, injury, or death.

Silence

In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You've taught us, Jesus,
and so we pray:

The Lord's Prayer

SENDING FORTH

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"
"More Than Conquerors"

UMH 557 OR
CCLI# [7014648](#)

[If this is the last Sunday for a pastor, deacon, or other clergy staff:

An Order of Farewell to a Pastor or Deacon

[BOW 598](#))

Pastor:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you always.

Deacon (or Pastor, if no deacon is available)

Go in peace
and in the strength the Spirit has given and renewed in you

to love and serve our God.
People: Thanks be to God!

Postlude

MUSIC NOTES

Trouble in My Way

Source: *The Africana Hymnal*, 4118
Recommended Key: Db or D
Tempo: 108-116 bpm
Instrumentation: a cappella
Notes: This song is in a call-and-response format. It can be sung by a congregation, but it would need to be taught by repetition with leadership from a small group. The congregation could sing on the leader or response parts; either is acceptable. Claps on beats 2 and 4 could also be added, and the leader is responsible for setting the tempo and the character of the singing. It is also possible for a small group only to sing this song.

Resources:

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Source: *The Africana Hymnal*, 4012
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: Very rubato, without tempo
Instrumentation: a cappella
Notes: “Long-meter” hymn singing is a remarkable tradition within the African American church. The term “long meter” does not relate to the syllabic meter of the text, but the style in which the text is sung. Long-meter hymns are most often sung a cappella, although accompaniment can be added. This style of singing requires a confident leader to guide the congregation through the music, and it also requires experience from within the congregation. For examples on contextual performance practice, see the video in the resources below.

Resources: [“Reflect, Reclaim, Rejoice” Video](#)
[History of Hymns](#)

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 474
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 56-64 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or rhythm section
Notes: I prefer accompanying this hymn with a slow swing rhythm, although there can be other variations. Choirs also love singing this hymn a cappella, so that is a great option to support congregational singing. This hymn also works well for soloists who wish to take some liberty with tempo, rhythm, and ornamentations on melody.

Resources:

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 127
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 96-104 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: The basses in your choir will love you dearly if you sing the CWM RHONNDA tune because of the echo near the end! Many congregations will be familiar with this tune. Keep the pulse moving and the atmosphere confident.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Everlasting God

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3021
Recommended Key: A, Bb, B, or C
Tempo: 112-116 bpm
Instrumentation: Band or solo guitar
Notes: This song can get a bit tricky at the transition between “wait upon the Lord” and “Our God.” One way to get around this is to omit the words “we will” in measures 2 and 6. This will allow enough space for a quick breath to get through this awkward transition. This text and tune are triumphant and joyful, and congregations can sing it quite well.

Strong Tower

Source: CCLI, [4448873](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 72-76 bpm

Instrumentation: Band, piano, or solo guitar
Notes: The range is manageable, but the jump in tessitura (an average range within a section) between verse and chorus must be anticipated. The jump signifies the strength in the “tower” metaphor.

Come As You Are

Source: CCLI, 7017790
Recommended Key: Bb
Tempo: 130-136 bpm
Instrumentation: Band, solo guitar, or piano
Notes: This song of invitation is a call for people to lay down their burdens and come to Christ’s table. The song can be found on Discipleship Ministries’ CCLI Top 100 project [yellow list](#), which means we encourage worship planning teams to be in dialogue about this song and its use in worship. One of the issues lifted up is the personification of “heaven,” which is not terribly severe in and of itself, but is a prime example of ambiguity of divine address. It can create confusion by equating “heaven” and “God,” especially to someone not particularly steeped in Christian doctrine (like someone in worship for the first time).

Shall We Gather at the River

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 723
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 84-88 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or a cappella
Notes: This hymn is a gospel-era favorite by Robert Lowry, who also wrote hymns such as “Up from the Grave He Arose,” “Nothing But the Blood,” and the refrain and tune for “Marching to Zion.” Vocal soloists are also encouraged to consider the setting of this hymn by Aaron Copland, which he entitled “At the River.” See the resource link below to the songbook that includes this title.

Resources: [Vocal Solo \(Copland\)](#)

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah

Source: *The Africana Hymnal*, 4089
Recommended Key: F

Tempo: 128-134 bpm
Instrumentation: Piano, band, or rhythm section
Notes: This tune is, for all practical purposes, the same tune set with “Will the Circle Be Unbroken,” and is easily singable by many congregations, regardless of style. A gospel-style accompaniment can add a good bit of energy to the singing of this song. The text focuses upon the transformation felt “since I laid my burdens down.”

All My Fountains

Source: CCLI, [5925670](#)
Recommended Key: C
Tempo: 96-106 bpm
Instrumentation: Band or solo guitar
Notes: The rhythms are somewhat difficult, so this song may be best sung by a soloist or small group. It can be a powerful metaphor when used with ritual action involving water, but it might prove difficult for congregational singing.

The River Is Here

Source: CCLI, [1475231](#)
Recommended Key: G or F
Tempo: 108-112 bpm
Instrumentation: Band, solo guitar, or piano; percussion preferred
Notes: If using a keyboard instrument as the accompaniment with this song, do not double the melody. Allow the voice to lead, and have the pianist play simple chords on the beats. This song offers another powerful statement when used with ritual action involving water.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 557
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 108-116 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: It is easy to accompany and sing this hymn as if it were a march in 3/4 time, but I would encourage a gentler approach, with more emphasis on count 1 and less on 2 and 3, with more legato accompaniment. Remember, the first note is not on count 1!

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

More than Conquerors

Source: CCLI, [7014648](#)

Recommended Key: F or G

Tempo: 70 bpm

Instrumentation: Band or solo guitar with percussion

Notes: The text includes an allusion to Romans 8:37, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (NRSV). Make note that the tempo marking on the file in SongSelect is far too fast and not the same as the recording by the Rend Collective, which is the tempo listed here—70 bpm. There is also a possibility of adding polyrhythm (in this case, 2 against three) with percussion, especially in the chorus. Using polyrhythms can build intensity if it is used subtly and does not detract from the melody.

PREACHING NOTES

We come to the end of this series on transitions today, even as, for many United Methodist congregations in the United States, today may mark the end of the leadership of a pastor or deacon, and next week the beginning of ministry of a different pastor or deacon, among them. Maybe among you.

I grew up in a different denomination and under a different kind of clergy placement system-- a congregational call system. When a pastor would leave, it could be months, and more typically more than year, before a new pastor would be in place. In between, we'd have one or more interim pastors to preach, lead worship, and provide some pastoral care, plus some support from a regional denominational leader to help guide our search process for a new pastor, as well as work with the interims to address any internal business we needed to attend to get ready for the next pastor.

All clergy placement systems have their advantages and disadvantages. In the congregationalist-with-regional-support model I had known before, one advantage may have been we got considerable time to “get over” our ideas of what a pastor should be and do based on the previous pastor’s strengths and practices, so we might be just a little less likely unconsciously to transfer those ideas of what a pastor “should” be onto the new pastor we would call. That doesn’t mean it didn’t happen. It certainly did to

some degree. It just means it may have been somewhat less likely to happen, or that, if it did, we may have been more consciously aware of it and able to correct for any harmful effects that might come with it.

We get attached to those we love and who love us.

More than this, we get attached to *how* those we love love us. Indeed, we get attached to how they do every little thing they do.

And those attachments and the emotional bonds that come with them abide, even when the person to whom we had originally attached them is no longer among us or no longer functioning in the same capacity as she had in the past.

And when the person is gone or the role has changed, those attachments, down to how the other person did every little thing, have a way of shifting from attachments to unconscious expectations.

And the reality is, those expectations for how every little thing will be done hardly ever fit the new person.

So we enter the final service in this series, and we reach the final season of transition, the season of “How?” Though it’s a season in our churches marked by appointment, this can often be a season of disappointment, as we find the new person or situation doesn’t do every little thing the same way the previous one did. But, instead, it could be a season of re-enchantment, in which we discover how this new person can do these or other things, some different, some familiar. Most likely, it will be a mixture of both.

Today’s story from the Scriptures is full of possible angles. We could talk about the typical “underdog beats the big bad bully.” Or we could frame it as the Lord using the humble yet confident smaller to defeat the boisterous, braggadocious bigger. Or we could follow [Malcolm Gladwell’s take](#) that Goliath was doomed from the start because he had a vision disorder as part of his gigantism.

But today, we’re going to focus on just four verses: I Samuel 17:37-40. It’s a part of this story a lot of us may just pass over, maybe because the rest is so exciting, and this part just seems a little weird —maybe even humorous.

David has accepted the challenge to face the Philistine champion, the giant Goliath, one on one.

If you're going to fight an army's champion, you should look like your army's champion, right? Isn't that what everyone expects? After all, Goliath did. His very impressive armor is described in some detail in verses 5-7. It weighed upwards of 150 pounds. You're going to need at least a sword, a bronze helmet, and a prodigious coat of mail. Because that's what champion warriors wear. That's HOW they dress. That's HOW they do battle.

Trouble is, Saul's battle gear doesn't fit David, at all. It's way, way too big, and it's way, way too heavy. David can't even walk in it. He tries. But no going.

It's okay to laugh at the image of it. It's ludicrous.

But the line at the very end of verse 39, and on into verse 40, isn't funny. It's maybe the most important thing that happens in this whole story, especially when we find ourselves in the season of "How?"

David took off the armor Saul placed on him. All of it.

Then he got the stuff he knew how to use-- a shepherd's staff, his bag, some smooth stones from the wadi, and his sling.

The rest is legendary.

All because he took off the armor someone else put on him, and used the gifts, the tools, and the skills he knew how to use best.

And, King Saul let him.

In the season of "How?" we're almost destined, or in our good United Methodist terms, appointed to transfer our expectations of how our current pastor or deacon, or a previously beloved pastor or deacon, did every little thing onto every new pastor or deacon we receive. The swiftness of our transition period in The United Methodist Church, essentially none, with no interim, makes this nearly inevitable. We will be like Saul clothing David with his armor.

Maybe the fit won't be nearly as comically bad as Saul's armor was for David. But the fit of our expectations for how our next leader will do every little thing will never, ever be perfect. If we try to play Saul at this point, when he's putting that armor on, we'll be disappointed. We won't be able to help that.

But we have another option in this Season of “How?” We have the option Saul eventually took, the one of letting David do what he could do with the gifts, tools, and skills he had. This one we have to choose, consciously. Unconsciously, we’ll transfer our expectations every time. So we’ll experience some disappointment, every time. We may not even be aware that’s happening, or have a name for it. But it is happening, and this is what it is. Transference happens, especially when there’s someone new in a role occupied by someone we loved, admired, or respected. And so some disappointment happens, as well.

But if we choose to let our next leader use her own gifts, tools, and skills; if we consciously say to ourselves and one another, “I don’t know how this next person will do what she does, but I’m looking forward to discovering that,” we won’t get rid of all feelings of disappointment when she’s different from the one before, but we’ll set ourselves up for re-enchantment rather than disenchantment, and we’ll set her up to act confidently in her gifts, tools, and skills.

And who knows what Goliaths we’ll see fall when we do.

Today we may all be on the edge or in the middle of some sort of season of “How?”

And that’s why we’re reaffirming baptism today.

Because it’s in baptism that we remember what we’re all supposed to be about.

It’s in baptism that the Holy Spirit first starts pouring spiritual gifts into our lives.

It’s in this community, living this baptismal covenant together, that we’re learning how to use these gifts and to live as Christ’s representatives on mission with him in the world.

And it’s always in this Triune God, Source and End of all, that we move through every season of transition, from What, to Why, to Who, to How.

Sisters, brothers, siblings in Christ, lay down the burdens you don’t even realize you place on one another, and lay down every burden others have placed on you.

Then come to these waters, and walk, and run, and live free. Amen.

PLANNING NOTES
Reading Notes

NRSV texts, artwork and [Revised Common Lectionary Prayers](#) for this service are available at the [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).

Lectonnaire en français, <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=94>

Calendar Notes

June

Pray for annual conferences convening throughout the month, for all receiving new appointments or assignments, for those leaving existing appointments or assignments, and for congregations and other ministries receiving new leadership.

July

July 1 **July Worship Series Begins: “Healing Hands”**

July 4 [Independence Day \(USA\)](#)

August

All Month [Back to School Resources](#)

August 5 **August Worship Series Begins: “Life Together”**

September

All Month [Season of Creation](#) (2018 Discipleship/UMCom Series coming soon)

September 3 [Labor Day \(USA\)](#)

September 15-

October 15 [Hispanic Heritage Month \(USA\)](#)

October

October 6 **October Series in Job (in development)**

[World Communion Sunday](#)

October 14 [Children’s Sabbath](#)

October 21 **Laity Sunday (2018 Resources forthcoming)**

October 31 [Reformation Day](#)

November

November 1 [All Saints Day](#)

November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)

[Daylight Saving Time Ends \(USA\)](#)

A Season of Saints (2018 Resources Forthcoming)

- November 11 [Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday](#)
[International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church](#)
[Veteran's Day \(USA\)](#)
[Extended Advent Begins](#)
- November 18 [Bible Sunday](#)
- November 18-25 [National Bible Week \(USA\)](#)
- November 22 [Thanksgiving Day \(USA\)](#)
- November 25 [Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday](#)
[United Methodist Student Day \(offering\)](#)

**For Your Planning Team: And in the Power of the Holy Spirit...
Proclaim Jubilee!**

Planning for This Service

Transitions

- Week 1: May 27 Life in the Trinity: Prologue to Post Pentecost
[Romans 8:12-17](#)
- Week 2: June 3 WHAT? (is changing, is God doing)
[I Samuel 3:1-20](#)
- Week 3: June 10 WHY? (when transition is unwanted)
[I Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20](#)
- Week 4: June 17 WHO? (will lead us?)
[I Samuel 15:34-16:13](#)
- Week 5: June 24 HOW? (will our next stage go? will our new leader lead?)
[I Samuel 17:32-49](#)

Planning for Today's Series End: HOW?

Our Transitions series concludes today.

We mark the conclusion with the completion of the "transition" of our worship space, welcoming the font back among us after its three-week absence.

In our end is our beginning.

At the end of this series, at the end of an appointive year, and perhaps at the end of the ministry of a pastor or deacon among you, we mark the beginning and font of our life together in Jesus Christ.

And at the end of this service, if it is the end of an appointment, we make room for an

act of farewell to a pastor or deacon as part of the Sending Forth.

The preaching notes will help you segue smoothly into the act of Response to the Word, which uses a very recently composed contemporary worship song for an altar call. We don't expect the congregation to sing this song, though they may. The "coming forward" also isn't during the song, but right after, in the act of baptismal reaffirmation. This uses the 2008 General Conference baptismal reaffirmation with minor adaptations in wording to fit the action of "laying down burdens" referred to in today's sermon and altar call song.

The preaching notes will also help you complete the sense of series promise with which we started out.

Be sure today, in your announcement slide set, or in the bulletin, or through social media or other contacts during the coming week, to get folks ready for the next series: "Healing Hands."

We chose this theme, based on the readings from Mark and John during July, because these texts highlight a central element of the earthly ministry of Jesus and an element that continues in a variety of ways in whatever forms of ministry we're living out today: healing. Here's the Series Map:

Healing Hands...

July 1

Bring Life

[Mark 5:21-43](#)

July 8

Send Forth

[Mark 6:6b-13](#)

July 15

Become Known

[Mark 6:14-16 \(17-29\)](#)

July 22

Draw Crowds

[Mark 6:53-56](#)

July 29

Feed the World

[John 6:1-14 \(15-21\)](#)

Finally, some words of thanks.

I have been writing worship planning helps as your Director of Worship Resources since September 2005.

Thanks to Daniel T. Benedict, who preceded me in this office, and who began our worship website and weekly planning helps twenty years ago. Dan gave me a gift of time in coming into this office by having completed his worship planning helps well into the late fall of that year to help give me a running start. I'm leaving in early March of this year and have now completed resources through the end of June. Though there will no longer be a director of worship resources to do what I have done full-time, I hope this will be enough advance work to give at least a bit of a running start to whoever continues to write service orders and planning notes for these series, as well as continue the other roles Dan before me, and now I, have fulfilled.

Thanks to Safiyah Fosua and Dean McIntyre, the Directors of Transformational Preaching and Music Resources with whom Dan concluded his journey, and I began mine in this role. You taught the youngest director among you, and one of the youngest on the whole staff at the time, not only how to do my work, but how to work in this highly diverse and sometimes divergent community of this general agency, and, by extension, the wider United Methodist Church. You were outstanding in your own work, patient with my brashness, caring when I found myself battered and bruised, and always wise in your guidance.

Thanks to Jean Musterman, the coordinator for the work Dean, Safiyah, and I did together for nearly half my time here. Jean did her work with excellence, expected excellence (and got it) from each of us, and spoke with a refreshing candor, especially when she would remind me it was time to shut down my computer and go home. Jeannie, of blessed memory, maybe I've finally taken your advice.

Thanks to Dr. Carol Krau, PhD, "Team Queen" as Dean often addressed her. Your sense of humor, your passion for adult formation and discipleship, and your enthusiasm for the creativity of the former "Congregational Leaders Team" were infectious, life-giving, and always a joy to behold.

Thanks to MaryJane Pierce Norton, longtime AGS for our division, when we called them divisions, and in her retirement (yes, she was called out of retirement) our interim General Secretary. She is perhaps the wisest and most capable leader I have known anywhere. She knew our staff and our work, and she knew not only our own agency, but how the whole connectional structure functioned, or could function, to an unmatched degree. I learned a lot about leadership in this work from watching and working with her.

Thanks to Steve Manskar, who invited me to join the Covenant Discipleship Group he was part of, and that Dan Benedict had founded while he was here. Steve doesn't just talk Wesleyan Discipleship; he lives it. And it's been nothing but a blessing to be with him and the others who have been in this group over the years since 2005-- some of whom still are!

Thanks to Dawn Chesser, Amy Sigmon, and Jackson Henry who came to compose the worship staff I've been privileged to work with for these past three years. Just as I had some years earlier, they each walked into shoes impossible to fill, but like David,

decided not to try to wear them. They have made their own way in their roles, and we, both as a team, and I would say as an agency, have been the better for it. It has been a joy and a privilege to work with them to re-envision how we do our work, to live out the vision of collaborative worship planning we'd been teaching but not actually practicing for many years, and get to the quality, creativity, and depth of resourcing we have now been able to offer since Advent 2016. And thanks to Barbara Day Miller, whose consulting with us made that transition from solo work to collaborative work not only possible, but the best work I think we've ever done.

There are many more to thank-- colleagues I've worked with in Discipleship Ministries and other agencies, bishops, General Conference worship leaders, the list goes on. Know I mean no slight in not mentioning them all by name here. There are just too many. These, to me, simply require my special thanks.

Finally, thanks to you, for your faithfulness to your congregation and the ministries of The United Methodist Church, for your giving, for the opportunity to have served you in this way, and for kind words I have received from many of you as you have learned my time in this role was drawing to a close.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

The Rev. Taylor W. Burton-Edwards

Additional Resources for this Service

[2015 Planning Helps for these readings](#)

[Ecumenical Prayer Cycle](#): (Click link to find countries for this week when they are posted)