

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST 2018 SERIES 6 (NOVEMBER): DWELLINGS

SERIES OVERVIEW

Beginning with All Saints Sunday and ending with Reign of Christ Sunday (Christ the King Sunday), November is a time when we look back in remembrance of the saints, but we also look forward as we await Christ's coming again, more poignantly expressed in the season of Advent. In this season, we discover the many places in which God dwells—the heavens, the earth, the church, and each one of us.

This month begins with the end. A new heaven and a new earth become the places where “the home of God is among mortals” (Rev. 21:3, NRSV). A significant set of bookends is also prominent this month: The Alpha and the Omega is a recurring theme from All Saints Sunday and Reign of Christ. If considered linearly, there is somewhat of an inverted bell curve this month, as the dwelling place of God is viewed as the top of the curve on both ends, and the sanctuary of the temple is the low point in the center.

The Hebrews texts point to Christ as the high priest, offering sacrifice in the place of more traditional blood and burnt offerings. It will be important this month to continually look backward and forward to lift up the connections between the offerings of priests and the offering of Christ, the high priest and humble monarch. This forward anticipation will also move toward Advent. For those observing an extended Advent, all these readings are salient parts of the whole season.

This month is also a time of great paradox because of the tension between death and life. All Saints Sunday involves remembrance, yes; but it also can be a time when death gives way to life. God is the beginning and the end, and death gives way to victory through Christ, the living and ultimate paradox.

When God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, where then does God dwell?

Week 1: November 4 **Hope**
[Revelation 21:1-6a](#)

Week 2: November 11 **Victory**
[Hebrews 9:11-14, 24-28](#)

Week 3: November 18 **Confidence**
[Hebrews 10:11-14 \(15-18\), 19-25](#)

Week 4: November 25
[Revelation 1:4b-8](#)

Love

DWELLINGS
WEEK 1: HOPE
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
November 4, 2018

PLANNING NOTES
Reading Notes

See full texts, artwork, and *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* for this Sunday at [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).
Para obtener más recursos leccionario, [Estudios Exegéticos: Homiléticos](#).

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

Calendar Notes

November

November 1 [All Saints Day](#)

November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)

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

[Dwellings \(2018 Resources Forthcoming\)](#)

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

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

[Veterans 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 \(offering\)](#)

December

December 1 [World Aids Day \(GBCS resources, Discipleship Ministries Resources\)](#)

December 21 [Longest Night/Blue Christmas](#)

December 24 [Christmas Eve](#)

December 25 [Christmas Day](#)

December 31 [Watch Night/ New Year's Eve/ Holy Name of Jesus](#)

January

January 1 [New Year's Eve/ Holy Name of Jesus](#)

January 6 [Epiphany Sunday/Epiphany](#)

January 13 [Baptism of the Lord](#)

January 11 [Human Trafficking Awareness Day](#)
January 20 [Human Relations Day](#)
January 21 [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)
January 18-25 [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#)
January 20 [Ecumenical Sunday](#)

Planning for This Series

For the month of November, we constructed a series by combining the All Saints Readings from November 1 with regular readings for the rest of the month. This series begins with All Saints Day and ends with Christ the King Sunday, with readings from Revelation. In the two middle weeks, we look at the readings from Hebrews. In this series, we ask the questions: “Where does God dwell? Where do we dwell?”

The reading from Revelation reminds us that the promised Kingdom of God is not some heavenly city in our imagination. Instead, it is our Earth, God’s good creation from the beginning, restored by the coming of Christ. God is coming to dwell with us, God’s beloved people. During this series, remind people that God dwells here and desires to be close to us. Our title for this week is “Hope,” and we can dwell in the hope that Christ is coming to abolish death and mourning and pain. As you go through this month, keep your eye on the coming season: Advent. What does it mean to dwell in hope as you move toward Advent?

Finally, as you prepare for this Sunday’s worship, be sure to remind your congregation that Daylight Savings Time ends this Sunday!

MUSIC NOTES

The following selections are congregational songs (most of which are chosen from this week’s Hymn Suggestions) with notes on key, tempo, and instrumentation, along with some practical and creative considerations in singing.

Better Is One Day

Source: CCLI [1097451](#)
Recommended Key: E
Tempo: 72-76 bpm
Instrumentation: Full band, piano, or guitar
Notes: One of the most popular CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) songs to have come from the 1990s, Matt Redman’s classic has been adapted across cultural lines and in different styles. We recommend this song of adoration as a possible theme song throughout the “Dwellings” series. Keep the rhythm of the accompaniment simple while the

congregation sings the chorus, which resembles a rhythmic chant.

Soon and Very Soon

Source: *Songs of Zion*, 198; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 706; *Come, Let Us Worship*, 385

Recommended Key: F–G

Tempo: 64–76 bpm (half-note)

Instrumentation: Full band, rhythm section, piano, or organ

Notes: This well-known gospel song of the late twentieth century is another suggestion for a theme song for this series, especially considering the hope found throughout these scriptural narratives, beginning with All Saints and ending with the Reign of Christ. The wide tempo suggested is based upon the variety of contexts in which it can be used.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Dwell in Your House

Source: CCLI [3001637](#)

Recommended Key: A

Tempo: 92–100 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, or piano

Notes: Another suggested theme song, this work from Hillsong turns the image of “dwelling” into where we may dwell with God. Inviting the congregation to sing the entire song or just the chorus are both appropriate approaches to this modern worship song.

Lord Reign in Me

Source: CCLI [2490706](#)

Recommended Key: Bb–C

Tempo: 92–96 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band or guitar with percussion

Notes: The final suggested theme song for this month, this text brings together the images of God’s dwelling place and the Reign of Christ into one song. The rhythmic, memorable chorus will “dwell” in your ear long after the sending forth is concluded. Using a percussion instrument with whatever is used for pitched accompaniment will help make the rhythmic

syncopation throughout the song more accessible for the congregation.

Arise, Shine Out, Your Light Has Come

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal, 725*
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 52–56 bpm (half note)
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: This hymn is fittingly paired with a tune (DUNEDIN) that rivals the majesty of the tune JERUSALEM (UMH 729), though in a shorter form. Though based upon the opening statement from Isaiah 60, the Revelation-esque images of the new Jerusalem are also found in this text. Especially appropriate for this series is the phrase, “as dwellings of salvation rise,” in the fourth stanza. Sing boldly and full of hope!

Beautiful Things

Source: CCLI [5665521](https://www.ccli.com/song/5665521)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 78–82 bpm
Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, piano, or small ensemble of any kind
Notes: The bridge of this modern song effectively recalls the text from Revelation 21:5 (“See, I am making all things new”). The simplicity of the tune longs for a simple accompaniment as well. If you are familiar with Gungor’s original recording, you will note that it begins with a piano, guitar, and cello. This would be a beautiful accompaniment throughout if desired. Full band can be used, but don’t feel like you have to use all the instruments all the time. Find ways to show creativity with the instrumentation you may have within your church. Even though we recommend the key of D, it is important to note that the original melody leaps an octave in the second chorus, which is far too high for a congregation to sing. Though the timbre will be different, you can accomplish the same effect by having a male voice on the stanzas and opening choruses before the leap, and then supplement with a mezzo female voice at the leap. When a congregation hears a male voice singing that high, the immediate thought is, “I can’t sing that,” and the voice

oftentimes shuts down instead of continuing singing an octave lower. A female voice in the same frequency range assures the congregation that it is ok to not strain and leave the voice in a lower range when singing.

Marching to Zion

Source: *Songs of Zion, 3; The United Methodist Hymnal, 733; The Upper Room Worshipbook, 139*

Recommended Key: F–G

Tempo: 48–68 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or rhythm section

Notes: The wide tempo variance suggested with this classic hymn is offered to reflect a wide variety of performance practice among different cultures. Any tempo in this range is appropriate, but if you should choose the slower tempo, it is also effective to use hand claps on beats 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

For All the Saints

Source: *The Faith We Sing, 2283*

Recommended Key: G

Tempo: 60–64 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ, piano, plucked guitar, possible wind and string instruments

Notes: For congregations who are used to singing the classic text “For all the Saints” with the SINE NOMINE tune (UMH 711), it may be a good time to try a new text built upon the same title. Hymn writer John Bell offers a series of statements of thankfulness for the saints. Both the text and tune have a different character than the more familiar selection. Add wind or string instruments on the melody or an improvised obbligato.

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

Source: *Come, Let Us Worship, 256; The United Methodist Hymnal, 731*

Recommended Key: Eb

Tempo: 86–92 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ or piano

Notes: This hymn by John Newton (well known for the hymn

“Amazing Grace,” UMH 378) recalls stories from Scripture about Zion—its strength, protection, and promise of a new day. The tune offers confidence and strength to the text, but it also has an interesting history. Be sure to read the History of Hymns article to learn about the origins and scandals of the tune.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Joy in the Morning

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2284
Recommended Key: Em–Fm
Tempo: 92–100 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or guitar
Notes: Taken from a choral work of the same title, this short chorus is an effective way to open or close a service during this season or the season of Advent. Keep the tempo moving forward with crisp sixteenth notes (a la snare drum) and an appropriate measure of bounce in the melody.

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 384; *The Upper Room Worshipbook*, 100
Recommended Key: Bb (BEECHER); F (HYFRYDOL)
Tempo: 104–112 bpm (BEECHER); 108–116 bpm (HYFRYDOL)
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Arguably the most prominent Wesleyan hymn in our collections, this hymn serves as a cornerstone for our hymnody and speaks of the Wesleyan understanding of grace in ways other hymns simply cannot. Lots of discussion has been made about the ideal tune for this hymn, and in many situations, it depends on your context. The two resources listed above contain the tunes most often used.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)
[Other resources](#)

PREACHING NOTES

Week 1: Rev. 21:1-6a (All Saints Day reading)

As someone who has the word “evangelism” in my job title, this passage from Revelation 21 serves as a touchstone for my work and ministry. Early in my tenure at Discipleship

Ministries, I was at a meeting at Wheaton College, outside of Chicago, and had the opportunity to visit the Billy Graham Library. In a special exhibit dedicated to telling the story of his life and ministry, there were pictures and artifacts from the countless revivals and services where he invited individuals to become Christian and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The exhibit concluded by making a similar invitation through a visual and experiential portrayal of the gospel message. The time to resume the meeting was quickly approaching, but after walking through this part of the exhibit, I felt compelled to return to the start of the gospel presentation, pull out my iPhone, and record what I experienced.

The final portion of the exhibit began by having the visitor walk through a cross-shaped opening in the wall, which led to a circular room with Jesus hanging on a cross as the central focal point. From that room, you entered a dark, quiet chamber, representing the tomb. While it was pretty dark, you could see a glimmer of light coming from the other side of the room. As you walked toward the light, the sound of music became louder, until you were in a very bright room painted with blue skies and clouds, as the Hallelujah Chorus played on repeat. Upon exiting the heavenly room, immediately outside the door, there is a box for you to place a card affirming that you have accepted Jesus into your heart.

As I walked back to my meeting, I wrestled with the messages playing over and over in my head. Yes, we are in need of a Savior, and Jesus died for you and for me. Yes, on Easter morning the tomb was empty, and Jesus conquered death. Yes, we have the amazing hope that death is not the end and we will spend eternity in the company of God. But as good as that message is, the totality of God's work and love found in the Scripture is even greater. And it calls us to a larger, ongoing response.

The Bible does not begin in Genesis 3 with the fall. It begins in Genesis 1, where God created the heavens and earth and called it "good." And then God continued to create by forming humanity, companions, created in God's own image, and called us "very good." Thankfully, God's story and activity in the world also does not end with Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb. At Pentecost, we were given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the church was born to continue Jesus' message and ministry continually illustrating the Kingdom of God. Yes, after fifty days, Jesus ascended; but God's presence and redeeming grace is still well at work.

"I am making all things new!" "God's dwelling place is among the people." John's vision in Revelation tells us that despite what the *Left Behind* series may tell us, God's plan isn't to one day just completely scrap the creation that was deemed "good" and have us spend eternity floating among the clouds. God's plan is ultimate redemption, and that work began with Jesus, and we've been invited to participate.

This is an important reminder on All Saints Sunday that the faithfulness and legacy of those who have gone before has not been in vain, but is part of God's plan and work in the redemption of creation. All Saints Sunday is a time to reflect and celebrate those who introduced us to Jesus, helped form our faith, and faithfully served our communities. But this passage and Sunday also serve as a reminder that the baton has been passed on to those of us who remain. *The Message* paraphrases verse 3 this way, "God has moved into the neighborhood," which means God is at work and will continue to be at work in the world, regardless of whether or not we choose to join. Yet, God invites us, equips us, and will send us into this work, if we simply have a willing spirit and open heart.

Questions to consider:

- How is your church celebrating and building on the legacy of the saints who have gone before?
- How are you currently looking for the Holy Spirit's movement and activity in your community?
- How are you listening to your neighbors to learn about the current places of pain and need in your community?
- What would be good news (unbinding the broken, chain-releasing) to your community today?

GRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

Articles and Resources

[O Lord, What a Vision: Call to Worship for All Saints Day](#)

[All Saints Day/All Hallows Eve Prayer with Libation](#)

[A Prayer Meditation for All Saints Day](#)

[THE GREAT THANKSGIVING FOR ALL SAINTS AND MEMORIAL OCCASIONS](#)

[These Lectionary Readings, Year B, 2015](#)

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Graphics Downloads

DWELLINGS
WEEK 2: VICTORY
Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
November 11, 2018

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Heather Heizman Lear, Director of Evangelism and our Preaching Notes writer for this season, asks questions that may guide your worship planning. How can your worship proclaim truly living into Jesus’ victory? You may decide to include a time of faith sharing during this service. If you go this route, consider speaking to members of your congregation ahead of time. Have two or three people prepare short statements and rehearse these statements ahead of time. Or consider focusing outward into your community. Is God dwelling in victory in your community? Can you see it? If not, can you see where God is calling your church to be a part of the coming Kingdom of God?

If Thanksgiving week is especially busy in your congregation, consider holding a community event this week, a week and a half ahead of Thanksgiving, to celebrate victory in faith, in God, and in God’s work. This may look like a classic church potluck open to your community. It may look different depending on your context.

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Music) songs to have come from the 1990s, Matt Redman's classic has been adapted across cultural lines and in different styles. We recommend this song of adoration as a possible theme song throughout the "Dwellings" series. Keep the rhythm of the accompaniment simple while the congregation sings the chorus, which resembles a rhythmic chant.

Soon and Very Soon

Source: *Songs of Zion*, 198; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 706; *Come, Let Us Worship*, 385

Recommended Key: F–G

Tempo: 64–76 bpm (half-note)

Instrumentation: Full band, rhythm section, piano, or organ

Notes: This well-known gospel song of the late twentieth century is another suggestion for a theme song for this series, especially considering the hope found throughout these scriptural narratives, beginning with All Saints and ending with the Reign of Christ. The wide tempo suggested is based upon the variety of contexts in which it can be used.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Dwell in Your House

Source: CCLI [3001637](#)

Recommended Key: A

Tempo: 92–100 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, or piano

Notes: Another suggested theme song, this work from Hillsong turns the image of "dwelling" into where we may dwell with God. Inviting the congregation to sing the entire song or just the chorus are both appropriate approaches to this modern worship song.

Lord Reign in Me

Source: CCLI [2490706](#)

Recommended Key: Bbc

Tempo: 92–96 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band or guitar with percussion

Notes: The final suggested theme song for this month, this text

brings together the images of God's dwelling place and the Reign of Christ into one song. The rhythmic, memorable chorus will "dwell" in your ear long after the sending forth is concluded. Using a percussion instrument with whatever is used for pitched accompaniment will help make the rhythmic syncopation throughout the song more accessible for the congregation.

I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2151
Recommended Key: G–Ab
Tempo: 72–78 bpm
Instrumentation: A cappella, organ, piano, or rhythm section
Notes: This spiritual is easily learned and sung, although the rhythm often varies from what is included in *The Faith We Sing*. The second measure, for instance, often contains a sixteenth note and a dotted eighth on the second beat, creating a more syncopated and rhythmic feel. Clap on beats two and four (not one and three!).

Resources: [Piano accompaniment \(McIntyre\)](#)

Hallelujah! What a Savior

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 165
Recommended Key: Bb
Tempo: 100–112 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: From the gospel-era pen of Philip P. Bliss (the composer of the tune VILLE DU HAVRE, which is paired with "It Is Well with My Soul," UMH 377), comes a hymn that addresses the atonement and the wonder at the gift of salvation. Sing with a sense of direction that always leads in intensity toward the last phrase of each stanza, "Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

My God, I Love Thee

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 470
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 88–96 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Known by many church musicians as the text to Jane

Marshall's "[My Eternal King](#)," this hymn represents a personal statement of love from the singer to God. It is written in a traditional chorale format, and it is accessible to both choirs and congregation. For choirs singing this in four parts, the bass part is the most challenging.

The Wonderful Cross

Source: CCLI [3148435](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 88 bpm
Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, or piano
Notes: Chris Tomlin, J. D. Walt, and Jesse Reeves have taken the hymn "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and written a chorus to be paired with it that focuses upon Christ's crucifixion and the atonement. Found on the [green list](#) of Discipleship Ministries' [CCLI Top 100 Vetting Project](#), this hymn appropriately addresses the atonement through the language of love and salvation, while making sacrifice and resurrection a current reality, not just a past event.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#) ("When I Survey the Wondrous Cross")

PREACHING NOTES

Week 2: Heb. 9:11-14, 24-28

This spring, I had the privilege of serving as a leader on a pilgrimage to Korea. Worship and prayer are central to the life of the church and Korean spirituality, and we started each morning by attending a 5:00 am prayer service. The service always began with us joyfully singing and clapping to two or three hymns (I think in an effort to wake everyone up). On several of the days, one of the chosen hymns was the southern gospel favorite, "Victory in Jesus." The fervor with which the 600 people gathered at 5:00 am sang Eugene M. Bartlett, Sr.'s most famous song was remarkable. The passion and deep belief in the words they were singing was quite evident.

The notion and proclamation of Christ's victory and "winning souls for Christ" is very common in many of the evangelism circles I run in, and it was common Christian language for decades. Over the years, however, we began to make assumptions about our members' formation; and I'm not sure that we've done a good job of helping our congregations (let alone those outside our churches) really understand what Christ's victory means and entails for our lives and for creation.

Chapter 9 of Hebrews ends by stating that Jesus will come again, not to take away sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. I think this verse poses the greatest challenge to many of our North American congregations today. We can blame conflicting

priorities, consumerism, and changing cultural values on why people aren't coming to our churches and choose other ways to spend their time and money. But I'm not sure it's their fault. How well have we shared the story of Jesus and offered a compelling reason for people to want to know more?

Early in my tenure at Discipleship Ministries, during the height of the Vital Congregations and Vital Signs dashboards initiative in the denomination, I wondered if we were really measuring the ministry and transformation we thought we were measuring. How are congregations living out the mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," and what practices need to be in place for the mission to be fulfilled? In studying congregations of various sizes, ages, and geographic locations (most of which were considered "vital" by the dashboards), I found the same realities in most congregations. Most of the church leaders I interviewed could talk about the wonderful ministry and programs of their congregation, but had difficulty connecting the ministry to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They also struggled to articulate what difference having a relationship with Jesus would have in someone's life.

In a period of deep division and brokenness in our country, what difference does and could Jesus make? Where does the good news speak into the places that seem hopeless and lost? Do we live as if the weight and power of sin has already been taken away and that Jesus' sacrifice and love is available and intended for all people?

Questions to consider:

- Does your congregation have a practice of faith sharing? Could most of the congregation articulate their faith story and the difference Jesus has made in their lives? Does the congregation know your faith story? Consider including part of your story in the sermon, or at least sharing it soon.
- How is your congregation sharing and embodying the good news to your community?
- How are you intentionally linking the good works of your church (mission/outreach) to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus? Many in my study could not differentiate the good done between a church and a civic organization.
- How are you inviting people to not just be good church members, but to live as disciples of Jesus?
- What would "victory" look like in the lives of people in your community? What transformation do you think God desires and how are you actively looking for signs?

GRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

Articles and Resources

21st Century Africana Liturgy, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/21st-century-africana-liturgy-for-twenty-fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-B>

[These Lectionary Readings, Year B, 2015](#)

Seasonal/Secular

[Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday](#)

[National Donor Sabbath](#)

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

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Graphics Downloads

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Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
November 18, 2018

PLANNING NOTES
Reading Notes

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January 20 [Ecumenical Sunday](#)

Planning for This Series

For the month of November, we constructed a series by combining the All Saints Readings from November 1 with regular readings for the rest of the month. This series begins with All Saints Day and ends with Christ the King Sunday, with readings from Revelation. In the two middle weeks, we look at the readings from Hebrews. In this series, we ask the questions: “Where does God dwell? Where do we dwell?”

The title for this week is “Confidence”, pulled from Heb. 10:19. We can dwell in confidence by the grace of Jesus Christ. Rev. Heizman Lear taps into the idea that is only by embracing authenticity and overcoming shame that we can truly dwell in confidence. How would it look for your congregation to move into the Advent season by embracing confidence in Christ? This is an especially good place to connect your worship with your Sunday school or small groups using our parallel resources.

Next week, depending on your context, might be light if people are traveling for the Thanksgiving holiday, but begin to think about how you are going to proclaim Christ the King Sunday, in preparation for the Advent season.

MUSIC NOTES

The following selections are congregational songs (most of which are chosen from this week’s Hymn Suggestions) with notes on key, tempo, and instrumentation, along with some practical and creative considerations in singing.

Better Is One Day

Source: CCLI [1097451](#)
Recommended Key: E
Tempo: 72-76 bpm
Instrumentation: Full band, piano, or guitar
Notes: One of the most popular CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) songs to have come from the 1990s, Matt Redman’s classic has been adapted across cultural lines and in different styles. We recommend this song of adoration as a possible theme song throughout the “Dwellings” series. Keep the rhythm of the accompaniment simple while the

congregation sings the chorus, which resembles a rhythmic chant.

Soon and Very Soon

Source: *Songs of Zion*, 198; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 706; *Come, Let Us Worship*, 385

Recommended Key: F–G

Tempo: 64–76 bpm (half-note)

Instrumentation: Full band, rhythm section, piano, or organ

Notes: This well-known gospel song of the late twentieth century is another suggestion for a theme song for this series, especially considering the hope found throughout these scriptural narratives, beginning with All Saints and ending with the Reign of Christ. The wide tempo suggested is based upon the variety of contexts in which it can be used.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Dwell in Your House

Source: CCLI [3001637](#)

Recommended Key: A

Tempo: 92–100 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, or piano

Notes: Another suggested theme song, this work from Hillsong turns the image of “dwelling” into where we may dwell with God. Inviting the congregation to sing the entire song or just the chorus are both appropriate approaches to this modern worship song.

Lord Reign in Me

Source: CCLI [2490706](#)

Recommended Key: Bbc

Tempo: 92–96 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band or guitar with percussion

Notes: The final suggested theme song for this month, this text brings together the images of God’s dwelling place and the Reign of Christ into one song. The rhythmic, memorable chorus will “dwell” in your ear long after the sending forth is concluded. Using a percussion instrument with whatever is used for pitched accompaniment will help make the rhythmic

syncopation throughout the song more accessible for the congregation.

Fix Me, Jesus

Source: *Songs of Zion*, 122; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 655
Recommended Key: Eb–F
Tempo: 60–64 bpm
Instrumentation: A cappella, organ or piano if needed
Notes: This spiritual is set in the same style as “Were You There” and is best sung slowly, with as much space needed to make long, lyrical phrases. The vocal setting in *Songs of Zion* is simpler, especially on the antiphonal verses. Consult both sources and sing the setting that would work best in your context. As with other spirituals, a cappella singing is preferred to embrace the authenticity of performance practice.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

I Am Thine, O Lord

Source: *Mil Voces Para Celebrar*, 218; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 419
Recommended Key: Ab
Tempo: 88–96 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or American folk ensemble
Notes: This hymn is often sung in a traditional approach—with organ or piano accompaniment—but would also work well with a bluegrass or other American folk-styled ensemble. If an ensemble with guitar is used, the key of G would also offer a good key for congregational singing. I would encourage holding the fermata on the word “Lord” (in the refrain) for three full beats before proceeding.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Living for Jesus

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2149
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 116–124 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: This older hymn has quite a sentimental quality to it, but I

find the most useable part of it to be the refrain, which can be used as a prayer response within the liturgy. It can easily serve as a song of commitment, offered in thanksgiving for Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Victim Divine

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2259
Recommended Key: Ab
Tempo: 62–68 bpm (half note)
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Charles Wesley obviously had our lectionary passage of Hebrews 10 in mind when writing this hymn, which speaks of the connection between the sacrifices of priests and the sacrifice of Jesus, the High Priest. The final stanza bridges the gap between Scripture and the present, in which we encounter Jesus here and now (“We need not go up to heaven, to bring the long-sought Savior down”).

Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 605
Recommended Key: F
Tempo: 70–76 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: BEACH SPRING is one of the most sung shape-note tunes in United Methodist collections, and it is a magnificent pairing with this text by Ruth Duck. This hymn includes some of Duck's signature imagery, which presents an expansive view of the nature of God. Typically associated with baptism, this hymn can be used to claim the name of Christ any time during the church year.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Perfect Us in Love

Source: Discipleship Ministries [Website](#)
Recommended Key: D
Tempo: 82–90 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or guitar
Notes: This Charles Wesley text has its roots in the *Hymns and*

Sacred Poems (1742), but the opening stanza of this setting by Taylor Burton-Edwards has often been overlooked in hymnals because of a syllabic issue in the fourth line related to the word “perfect.” We have found a way to work through this and present it to you here as a lead sheet, with a choice of either using the tune ST. AGNES (without the refrain composed by Taylor) or the new tune PERFECT US. This hymn can serve as a wonderful prayer related to sanctification and the journey toward Christian perfection. Accompany with a piano, guitar, or small instrumental ensemble. Be sure not to make the accompaniment too complex, or the gracefulness found in its simplicity will be muddled. The refrain alone would also make a great prayer response for your church, regardless of style of worship.

Resources:

[Hymn \(in Sibelius or PDF\)](#)

PREACHING NOTES

Week 3: Heb. 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25

About ten years ago, Barna released, *unChristian*, a book unpacking years of interviews and research with 16 to 29-year-old non-believers. Through their research, Barna hoped to learn about what perceptions this group had of Christians and the church; and the results were pretty staggering. Two of the overwhelming perceptions held by this group were that Christians are judgmental and hypocritical, not practicing the love and grace that Jesus modeled.

While we would like to think that things have changed over the past ten years, and we’ve learned from some of this research, I think we still have a vulnerability and authenticity problem. Last week, I shared some of my research around needed practices for the fulfillment of our denominational mission statement of “Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” One major barrier in most of the congregations was the inability to freely share struggles and be vulnerable to share stories of brokenness. Through private, online surveys, even those who had been quite active in the church for years, revealed their hesitancy to share aspects of their past or current temptations. If shame and fear of judgement is real among leaders in our church, how can we expect those outside our congregations to be willing to bring all of themselves to our faith communities?

While presiding at Communion over the years, my two favorite lines of the liturgy to pronounce are, “Once we were no people, but now we are your people,” and “Free us for joyful obedience through Jesus Christ.” Verse 22 tells us that because of Jesus, we can be certain that our sins are washed away and our conscience can be clean. Why is this so hard to believe? What inhibits us from fully feeling free?

[Brene Brown](#)'s research on shame and vulnerability can be quite helpful in shifting this culture that prevents us from overcoming our negative stereotypes and realities and living as witnesses to the power of Jesus. Shame is an epidemic in our culture that corrodes that part of us that believes we can change. Shame undermines our intrinsic worth and value by telling us that those things we regret and eat us up define us. It wasn't the actions that were bad. We are bad. And so we do everything we can to hide who we think we are. For women, shame is grounded in the inability to meet all of the competing, conflicting expectations we feel. We try to be all things to all people, but can't. For men, shame manifests from the fear of being seen as weak. As I think about politics, the latest newsfeed, and social media, most of what makes airspace and cyberspace is a result of trying to overcome Brown's definitions of shame.

Jesus came to free us from the chains of shame and created the church as a place for us to be vulnerable and challenge one another in love. Regularly, we all still sin and fall short of who God desires us to be; but through vulnerability and accountability, we can hold the things we've done up to who we want to be without letting those things define or paralyze us.

One congregation in my study was an outlier regarding vulnerability and authenticity. It's a newer, urban congregation, comprised of Gen Xers and millennials. Sharing testimony and how Jesus has made a difference in their lives is a regular part of worship. All the members are also assigned to small groups, where each week they share their struggles and failures, and pray for one another. Hmm...small-group accountability...I think this might be a part of our Wesleyan DNA. Vulnerability and authenticity seeks and leads to connection. There's a reason why the "authentic" and "real" theologians and pastors have such a following. In our culture riddled with loneliness, the church grounded in Jesus Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit is the greatest hope.

Questions to consider:

- How are you creating a culture of authenticity and vulnerability in your congregation?
- Do the people sitting before you each Sunday morning come wearing their "Sunday faces," or are there places and spaces to wrestle with all that life threw at them the previous week?
- How does your congregation engage in Wesleyan discipleship?
- How are you helping your children and youth to avoid the trappings of shame and claim their primary worth as children of God?
- What would it mean for the congregation to be "freed for joyful obedience"?

GRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

Articles and Resources

These Lectionary Readings [Year B, 2015](#)

21st Century Worship Resources Based on the Lectionary Readings,

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/21st-century-worship-resources-for-pentecost-25b>

Seasonal/Secular

[Bible Sunday](#)

Thanksgiving Resources

[Thanksgiving Day: Readings, Sermon Ideas](#)

[Creative Ideas for Celebrating Thanksgiving](#)

[Thanksgiving Celebrations for the Home](#)

[Hymns for Thanksgiving Day](#)

[Planning an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in Your Community](#)

[Thanksgiving Day with Children and Families](#)

Extended Advent (Our series is not doing extended Advent)

[Extended Advent Webinar](#) (to learn more about how to implement Extended Advent)

[Planning for Advent and Christmas, Year C](#)

Offertory Prayer

Graphics Downloads

DWELLINGS
WEEK 4: LOVE
Last Sunday after Pentecost, Year B
November 25, 2018

PLANNING NOTES
Reading Notes

See full texts, artwork, and *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* for this Sunday at [Vanderbilt Divinity Library](#).

Leccionario en Español, [Leccionario Común Revisado: Consulta Sobre Textos Comunes](#).
Para obtener más recursos leccionario, [Estudios Exegéticos: Homiléticos](#).

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

Calendar Notes

November

November 1 [All Saints Day](#)

November 4 [All Saints Sunday](#)

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

[Dwellings \(2018 Resources Forthcoming\)](#)

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

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

[Veterans 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 \(offering\)](#)

December

December 1 [World Aids Day \(GBCS resources, Discipleship Ministries Resources\)](#)

December 21 [Longest Night/Blue Christmas](#)

December 24 [Christmas Eve](#)

December 25 [Christmas Day](#)

December 31 [Watch Night/ New Year's Eve/ Holy Name of Jesus](#)

January

January 1 [New Year's Eve/ Holy Name of Jesus](#)

January 6 [Epiphany Sunday/Epiphany](#)

January 13 [Baptism of the Lord](#)

January 11 [Human Trafficking Awareness Day](#)
January 20 [Human Relations Day](#)
January 21 [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)
January 18-25 [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#)
January 20 [Ecumenical Sunday](#)

Planning for This Series

For the month of November, we constructed a series by combining the All Saints Readings from November 1 with regular readings for the rest of the month. This series begins with All Saints Day and ends with Christ the King Sunday, with readings from Revelation. In the two middle weeks, we look at the readings from Hebrews. In this series, we ask the questions: “Where does God dwell? Where do we dwell?”

For the final week, we return to the Revelation reading. This reading comes from John’s greeting to the churches in Asia. He opens in the name of Jesus Christ, who loves and frees us from our sins. This week, we focus on dwelling in love. Rev. Heizman Lear shines a light on the laity who love one another through trial and tragedy because they make up the majority of the body of the church. This week as you plan worship, consider lifting up the ministry of your laity, as each person serves Christ the King. In 2015, Taylor Burton-Edwards wrote this about planning worship for this bookend Sunday.

...You will want to do two things. First, do pull out all the stops in the closing of that season and its work (in worship and in daily life) of sending out disciples into accountable mission, again remembering to celebrate all you have seen, done, and learned along the way. And second, you will want to make the segue, today, into the celebration of Advent you will begin next week.

Go forth into Advent, securely dwelling in hope, victory, confidence and love, as you await the coming of the Christ child.

MUSIC NOTES

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Notes: One of the most popular CCM (Contemporary Christian

Music) songs to have come from the 1990s, Matt Redman's classic has been adapted across cultural lines and in different styles. We recommend this song of adoration as a possible theme song throughout the "Dwellings" series. Keep the rhythm of the accompaniment simple while the congregation sings the chorus, which resembles a rhythmic chant.

Soon and Very Soon

Source: *Songs of Zion*, 198; *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 706; *Come, Let Us Worship*, 385

Recommended Key: F–G

Tempo: 64–76 bpm (half-note)

Instrumentation: Full band, rhythm section, piano, or organ

Notes: This well-known gospel song of the late twentieth century is another suggestion for a theme song for this series, especially considering the hope found throughout these scriptural narratives, beginning with All Saints and ending with the Reign of Christ. The wide tempo suggested is based upon the variety of contexts in which it can be used.

Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Dwell in Your House

Source: CCLI [3001637](#)

Recommended Key: A

Tempo: 92–100 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band, guitar, or piano

Notes: Another suggested theme song, this work from Hillsong turns the image of "dwelling" into where we may dwell with God. Inviting the congregation to sing the entire song or just the chorus are both appropriate approaches to this modern worship song.

Lord Reign in Me

Source: CCLI [2490706](#)

Recommended Key: Bbc

Tempo: 92–96 bpm

Instrumentation: Full band or guitar with percussion

Notes: The final suggested theme song for this month, this text

brings together the images of God’s dwelling place and the Reign of Christ into one song. The rhythmic, memorable chorus will “dwell” in your ear long after the sending forth is concluded. Using a percussion instrument with whatever is used for pitched accompaniment will help make the rhythmic syncopation throughout the song more accessible for the congregation.

Alpha and Omega

Source: *The Africana Hymnal*, 4029
Recommended Key: Db or D
Tempo: 72–80 bpm
Instrumentation: A cappella, organ, piano, or full band
Notes: It is important to note that the focus of this song is for praise to God, the Alpha and Omega, and therefore should be approached in a tempo slow enough to embody reverence, even in the climax (“We give you all the glory”). If your choir sings in four-part harmony, make the most of this, but don’t allow the long notes to become static. They always need to move and grow as they are sustained. This song would be ideal as the closing song of an opening worship set, or even as a song of dedication as a response following the proclamation.

All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, Nos. 154, 155; *Mil Voces Para Celebrar*, 60
Recommended Key: F (CORONATION); A (DIADEM)
Tempo: 96–106 bpm (either tune)
Instrumentation: Organ or piano
Notes: Both tunes for this hymn are widely known throughout the church, and one recommendation is to consult *The United Methodist Hymnal Music Supplement* and sing all six stanzas, with a modulation (printed in the supplement) between the printed keys of the tunes. This allows the congregation to sing both tunes (e.g., stanzas 1-3 with CORONATION and stanzas 4-6 with DIADEM), which are both energetic and rousing choruses.
Resources: [History of Hymns](#)

Cristo Vive, Fuera el Llanto

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 313
Recommended Key: E minor
Tempo: 82–90 bpm
Instrumentation: Organ, piano, or guitar
Notes: Pablo Sosa has created an energetic tune to be paired with this text, which speaks of Christ’s resurrection and power to overcome “death and darkness.” The singing of this hymn should be bold, with eighth notes slightly separated and quarter notes accented. Incorporating percussion instruments (hand drums, tambourines, etc.) can also add energy to the melody.

Days of Elijah

Source: *Worship & Song*, 3186
Recommended Key: G or Ab
Tempo: 88–94 bpm
Instrumentation: Band, guitar, or piano
Notes: The part of this song recommended for use in worship is the refrain only, which contains imagery of Jesus “coming with the clouds” from Revelation 1:7. This refrain could be used as a brief response within the liturgy—even a sung response to the reading of Scripture for the day. However, I do not recommend singing the entire song because of the strongly negative binary created in the stanzas between “darkness” and “white.”
Resources: [Hymn Study](#)

Freedom Is Coming

Source: *The Faith We Sing*, 2192
Recommended Key: G
Tempo: 96–100 bpm
Instrumentation: A cappella with percussion
Notes: Any time “Freedom Is Coming” is included as a congregational song, it is vital to share the context from which this song arose—a freedom song of the apartheid era of South Africa in the twentieth century. Singing this song must be done sensitively, as should all songs that have arisen as a voice in the midst of oppression. If we sing this song without acknowledging the role it has played in global

history, we are participating in cultural appropriation—taking a cultural expression that is a part of the identity of a people and making it our own. Incorporate the song as a voice to stand in solidarity with those who are persecuted. If your choir can sing in four parts, engage them to do so with djembes and shakers accompanying. If your choir would like to sing in four parts but hasn't previously, this is a great song to begin that journey. If possible, teach by rote.

Resources:

[History of Hymns](#)

King of Kings

Source: *The Faith We Sing, 2075*

Recommended Key: E minor

Tempo: 120 bpm (first time); 136 bpm (second time) 152 bpm (third time)

Instrumentation: Guitar, piano, percussion, flute, violin, or clarinet

Notes: Written in somewhat of a *klezmer* style, this short, simple canon is easily singable by most any congregation. It is possible to sing this short song as is without singing the canon. If your church is up to the challenge, however, divide the congregation in two parts—left and right, women and men, bass and treble voices, etc.—and do the same with the choir if that is a resource you have in worship. Each time you repeat the song, increase the tempo. The children will especially love the increased excitement each time!

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Source: *The United Methodist Hymnal, 718*

Recommended Key: G

Tempo: 62–68 bpm

Instrumentation: Organ or piano

Notes: Charles Wesley's classic text contains vivid imagery associated with the coming of Jesus in Revelation 1. HELMSLEY is a regal tune to pair with this text and is most appropriate for Christ the King Sunday. A vocal descant of the tune can be found in *The United Methodist Hymnal Music Supplement*. If this tune is unfamiliar with your congregation, the text can also be paired with 87.87.87 tunes such as CWM RHONDDA, PICARDY, or REGENT SQUARE. If using these tunes, the last two lines (beginning

with “Hallelujah”) need to be manipulated to fit the tune. This can be done by eliminating the text in the first two measures at the top of the second page of the hymn (for instance, only using the following text: “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God appears on earth to reign.”). With the CWM RHONDDA tune, it would also be necessary to repeat the last phrase of text within each stanza.

Resources:

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

PREACHING NOTES

Week 4: Rev. 1:4b-8

I write this week’s notes on the heels of a fairly sleepless night. Yesterday, dear friends lost their daughter during childbirth. As I’ve tried to love and support them as a friend who happens to be a pastor (but not their pastor), I have not only struggled with finding the best way to serve as Christ’s presence to them and their other children, but how to deal with attempts to provide answers about why this happened and deep theological questions from friends and acquaintances circulating texts and social media. “Why did God do this?” “God must have needed another angel.” These and similar refrains kept popping up as people shared the news and asked for prayer.

I understand how uncomfortable and difficult it is to find words in tragic situations like this one. We have a need to feel like there is some logical explanation or reason for bad things that happen, because the implications of our life (and death) being out of our control do not fit in with our need for order and can be too much to bear. Yet, these questions and statements are deeply troubling because they make claims about God’s character and nature that are not consistent with who Jesus teaches and demonstrates God to be.

On this final Sunday of the church year, Christ the King Sunday, take the time to remind your congregation of what it means to have a crucified King who isn’t merely seeking allegiance with our lips, but desires a fundamentally different way of us being in relationship with God and with one another. We worship a God who could forgive his executioners and minister to the thief on the cross next to him, while suffering his own unimaginable death on a cross. So the notion that this same God would cause an innocent baby to die and parents to experience the agony of this loss is just plain wrong. Sometimes, terrible things just happen. Yet, Christ our King is right there with us and has committed to be in solidarity with and in our suffering.

Twice in this passage, statements conclude with the pronouncement of, “Amen,” which translated means, “so be it.” So may it be that we live into the freedom that Christ provides us to love and serve our neighbors. So may it be, that despite the current divisions and vitriol that constantly flow through our news and social media feeds, we embody the kingdom values Jesus espoused in Luke 4. So may it be that Jesus Christ is King and Lord of our lives, rather than a

political party's ideals, our career ladder, our children's achievements, or the pressure to portray ourselves as having everything together.

We have a God and King whose primary characteristic and value is love. We have a King who created humankind in God's image and called us "very good." We have a King who knows our pain, walked in our shoes, and showed us how to really love and be part of God's kingdom, even when it's really hard and unpopular. We have a King who walks with us now and promised to one day wipe away every tear, make all things new, and restore and redeem all of Creation.

I've been appointed beyond the local church for five years now, and being an invested parent in my son's activities and having far more connections to my community than I ever had time for as a pastor, has opened my eyes to the importance of empowering laity to be partners with God in kingdom work. The laity regularly go to work, sit on the bleachers, attend PTO meetings, work out at the gym, hang out at local establishments, and walk their neighborhoods, constantly building relationships and journeying with people that we would never meet as pastors. Empower your people to be the body of Christ and representatives of God's love and Kingdom when they receive the text containing tragic news or are dealing with a difficult situation. Help them to be Christ's presence and to articulate the goodness of God and their own faith stories. As much as we may try as pastors to connect with our neighbors and communities, it is the laity who have been there and will continue to be Christ's witnesses when we're gone. So may it be.

GRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

Articles and Resources

[Christ the King Sunday](#)

[Call to Worship for Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday](#)

[Prayer for Christ the King Sunday](#)

[Confession and Pardon for Christ the King Sunday](#)

He's Coming Back Again: 21st Century Resource,

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/hes-coming-back-again>

Festival of Christ the King, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/festival-of-christ-the-king>

[Christ the King Sunday, Year B 2015](#)

Seasonal/Secular

[United Methodist Student Day](#)

National Bible Week

Offertory Prayer

Graphics Downloads