

Worship Resources
*Lent to
Easter*
2013



INTRODUCTION

Ashamed no more...

The biblical stories emerge from Eastern cultures where honor and shame are important—to a degree Westerners rarely understand. Personal, family, community, and national honor are of paramount concern. To be shamed, to be recognized as less than the image one has carefully crafted to bestow honor on one's family and community, destroys people psychologically and spiritually. Therefore, one may go to extreme lengths, such as lashing out violently against the instrument of shame, to restore one's honor. Concepts of honor and shame are clear in these examples from the biblical story of salvation:

- God's honor is offended by human behavior in the garden of Eden, so God shames humans, whose behavior does not live up to God's intentions for them.
- Abraham and Sarah are shamed by Sarah's barrenness, but God removes their shame.
- The Israelites are shamed by their long period of Egyptian enslavement but are redeemed by God's rescue in the exodus.
- The loving father is shamed by the prodigal son's behavior but takes that shame on himself as he runs to embrace him.
- Jesus takes our shame on himself to redeem us to our rightful place; our honor is restored so that we can become fully human.

Western cultures base their biblical understanding of salvation mainly on judgment and guilt, as illustrated by these examples:

- We sin by acting inappropriately in relation to God and our neighbors. Our sin condemns us and leads us to feel unworthy of relationship.
- A sense of being judged by God and others makes us fear impending punishment. This fear can serve to convert or immobilize us.
- Salvation is about having guilt removed through Jesus who died on the cross, thus restoring our

relationship to God. Jesus takes away our guilt, freeing us of the effects of sin.

However, honor and shame thinking is also part of a Western approach. For instance:

- When children leave home their parents tell them to remember who they are, where they come from, and what their family name is. They are reminded not to do anything that would be seen as inappropriate for the family.
- Political dynamics in the church are frequently rooted in issues of personal honor and saving face.
- We worry what people will think if they find out about a marital divorce in our stable family; or that a faithful church attendee has a brother who has converted to another religious faith; or has a sister with an alcohol problem; or has a son or daughter who is openly gay; or has a father who is involved in shady business deals. How will it reflect on us if the world finds out? Who are we, really?
- While the emerging postmodern generation carries a positive self-image, making appeals to guilt mostly pointless, they keenly feel a need to achieve and to complete themselves. Feelings of shame arise out of a failure to accomplish these things.

We need salvation from the disgrace we suffer and need to have our honor restored.

Which is the better motivator to change our ways; the approach of judgment and guilt *or* of honor and shame? Compare the effect on a misbehaving child when the parent says, "What you did is bad" versus "You should be ashamed of yourself." Both seem to have their place, especially when linked to an offer of forgiveness and a new beginning. In the parable of the prodigal son,

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Subscribers to *Leader* are welcome to photocopy worship materials in this section.

a key gospel text of this Lent–Easter season, we find that the prodigal son comes to his senses and makes a decision to return to the father not because he feels guilty but because he is ashamed of how he is living. As a Jew facing ruin and starvation, he is reduced to the level of tending pigs and desiring their food. However, his shame is overcome when the father takes the shame upon himself and restores the son to his original place.

This rich text was instrumental in leading the Saskatchewan writing team to the theme *Ashamed No More*. Old patterns of disgrace and shame are broken by what God has done in Jesus Christ. Christ’s shameful death by crucifixion is redeemed by the resurrection. Through Christ our shame is also taken away. God is doing a new thing, recognizing our true nature and making a way for us to become fully human again. Hallelujah!

SUGGESTED ORDER OF WORSHIP

Worship across the church is expressed in many different ways. God can be honored and worshiped well in a great variety of styles, on a continuum ranging from the liturgically formal to the more spontaneous, spirited styles of praise and worship. No matter where on this spectrum worship falls, gathered Christian worship finds full expression in acts of gathering and invoking God’s presence; praise and confession; proclaiming and responding to God’s word; and sending.

The Lent–Easter 2013 writing team offers these resources in hopes that all our congregations will find ways to adapt them to their particular worship style. Because songs help accomplish many of the acts of worship, the song suggestions are numerous. We have not offered many prayers, but have focused on elements that particularly mark the Lent–Easter season: prayers of invocation and words of confession and assurance. We trust that congregations will provide their own prayers for acts of offering and intercession as additional ways worshipers are invited to respond to God’s word.

Instead of age-specific children’s stories, we offer suggestions for *Storytelling* with an intergenerational focus. For specifically child-focused resources we recommend that you create opportunities to “wonder” with the children about the visuals, in a worshipful manner, after settling into an awareness of being held in the heart of God or lap of Jesus. Conclude the children’s times with simple, age-appropriate prayers of thanks. For additional help in this area see the *Lent at Home Booklet: Ashamed No More* at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1796.

The act of *Sending* serves to help the church make tangible connections between what is experienced in worship and the church’s call to engage in the mission

of God in daily life. The sending action, *Becoming the answer to our prayers*, offers pragmatic points of connection between the prayers offered in worship and the lived prayer of life, and reflects the prairie spirituality of the Saskatchewan writing team. We trust you will be able to adapt this as well as our other offerings to your setting and particular worship style.

VISUALS

The visuals created for this Lent–Easter series explore the themes of honor and shame and encourage us to expand our understanding of how God is working. Artist Val Wiebe offers an evocative image for each week reflecting a part of the larger story of God’s love and compassion through space and time. The simple pointillist style and fluid lines express the way God is constantly moving and shaping creation. The artistic images can be developed into banners or projected onto a screen to a size appropriate to your worship space. They are available for download at www.leaderonline.org. An alternative approach would be to create a three-dimensional display using the actual items suggested in each image along with flowing lengths of colored fabric.

Lent 1: “Milk and Honey,” inspired by Deuteronomy 26:9, reflects the theme *Ashamed No More: God Will Show Us Salvation* and presents God’s abundant love being poured out for all.

Lent 2: “Numbered as the Stars,” inspired by Genesis 15:5 and the theme *Ashamed No More: We Will Take Courage and Wait on the Lord*, shows stars as a symbol of removing our shame, covering the moonlike image of a barren, empty egg.

Lent 3: “The Fig Tree,” inspired by Luke 13:5-9 and the theme *Ashamed No More: We Will Seek the Lord and Be Fruitful*, invites us to reflect on the many spiritual associations we have with trees and God’s endless patience with God’s people.

Lent 4: “The Father’s Robe,” inspired by Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 and the theme *Ashamed No More: God Will Remove Our Disgrace*, draws our attention to the incredible lengths God is willing to go in order to redeem and restore us, with the symbol of the robe abandoned as the father rushes out to embrace the lost son.

A *Leader* subscriber may download these documents at www.leaderonline.org, click on the desired quarter, enter the username *Lent13* and the password (pkc3496). They are both case sensitive.

Lent 5: “At His Feet,” inspired by John 12:1-8 and the theme *Ashamed No More: Christ Jesus Has Made Us His Own*, draws our focus to the poignant encounter with Mary at the feet of Jesus, the aroma of her perfume like a tender embrace.

Lent 6: “Riding on a Donkey,” inspired by Luke 19:28-40 and the theme *Ashamed No More: The Blessed One Comes in the Name of the Lord*, with the humble donkey as the central image, heralding Jesus as the Prince of Peace.

Easter: “He Is Not Here,” inspired by John 20:1-18 and Luke 24:1-12 and the theme *Ashamed No More: This Is the Lord’s Doing!*, presents the empty tomb from the vantage point of the tomb’s interior, looking out into the light of a bright Easter morning, and the new life made possible through Jesus’ resurrection.



Worship planners from Mennonite Church Saskatchewan: *left–right: Harry Harder, Elsie Rempel, Val Wiebe, Bruce Jantzen, Dave Bergen, Garth Ewert-Fisher.*

Ashamed No More

Music & lyrics: Valerie Wiebe, 2012

Rocking Gospel rythm ♩ = 80

F

F7

B \flat

Far from home and at a lone, lost my honor, lost my
knees at His feet, with my shame on my

F

F/E

Dm

G

C

hope. cheeks, When I cried to of my God save my soul.
and the scorn of the world in my ears.

C7

F

F7

B \flat

Then the Lord heard my plea, raised me up and res-cued
Laid His hand on my head, brought to life what was

F

F/E

Dm

Gm

C

F

me. dead, Re - deemed me and made me whole.
and wiped all my tears a - way.

♩

C7

F

C

Dm

Dm/C

I am a - shamed no more. I will lift up my

B \flat

G

C

C7

F

face. I will not be a - fraid. For I am a - shamed

C Dm Dm/C B \flat Gm C

no more. For Christ bore the shame for my

B \flat 1.,2. B \flat /A B \flat /G F 3. B \flat B \flat /A B \flat /G F

soul. On my soul. Bore the

C C7 F F/E Dm Dm/C

shame for me, bore the blame for me. In my hour of

B \flat Gm C C7 F

need He was there for me. Now I stand in His

F7 B \flat F F/E Dm Gm C F D.S.

grace, with the light up-on my face. Praise God, I am not a - shamed.

4. F F/E Dm Gm C B \flat B \flat /A B \flat /G F

soul. For Christ bore the shame for my soul.

Ashamed No More ~ February 17, 2013 ~ Lent 1

God Will Show Us Salvation

Texts: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 37 *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*
HWB 81 *Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing*
HWB 114 *In thee is gladness*
HWB 165 *A mighty fortress is our God*

HWB 567 *How firm a foundation*
SS 113 *I will stand in the congregation*
SJ 19 *I will call upon the Lord*
Paul Baloche *Our God Saves*

Confessing

SS 2 *Maranatha, come*
SJ 92 *Just as I am, without one plea*

Stuart Townend *Your Love (Pour over Me)*

Proclaiming

HWB 532 *I am leaning on the Lord*
HWB 547 *My dear Redeemer and my Lord*

SS 36 *Jesus, tempted in the desert*

Responding

HWB 430 *God be with you*
HWB 576 *If you but trust in God*

SS 57 *Go, my friends, in grace*

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we come from our work, our homes, and social networks.

People: **We come to worship you.**

Leader: We know you have worked powerfully among us.

People: **Lord, we come in gratitude for your care.**

Leader: We need your salvation anew.

People: **Lord, lead us for these times.
Create in us a new thing.**

Confession

Gracious God, we remember:
how you cared for us when we were disgraced,
rescued us when we were oppressed,
and protected us when we were in danger.
You showed us clearly you are the one to be trusted.
And yet we focus on our own wealth, image, and power
instead of your loving kindness.



Assurance

I will open your eyes to see the salvation I am working among you.
Know that no one who believes in God will be put to shame.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Speak with someone beyond your inner circle of friends and family. Ask that person how the events of life have shaped his or her ultimate values. Honor that person in their humanity and their pilgrimage.

Sermon starter

“No Christian escapes a taste of the wilderness on the way to the promised land.” —Evelyn Underhill

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

God provides a safe journey. With the dazzling lights of Egypt and empire behind them, the bedraggled slaves stumble through the wilderness toward the land of milk and honey. Israel's confession of faith reminds them of their former low status and God's mighty deliverance. Israel's story reminds us that no time, place, or circumstance puts us beyond God's care. Gratitude and generosity can be our only response!

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

God also provides a safe place. Israel's shame is ended. Now she can begin to be God's light to the nations. God's salvation is not merely for Israel's well being but for the benefit of the world! God's salvation is meant to be a door-opening exercise that welcomes the lonely, the lost, and the least. There is bounty enough for all.

Romans 10:8b-13

Paul speaks of being saved through calling on the name of the Lord. There is no shame in that. Rather, it saves us from being put to shame. True confession originates in the heart and is confessed with our lips.

Luke 4:1-13

Like Job, Jesus is put in the way of the devil to test Jesus' faith. While both the devil and Jesus use scripture, one does so to further his own agenda and the other to point to God and God's way. Note that Jesus resists the common human trap of depending on his own strength. More important, he does not flee from the confrontation but uses it as preparation for ministry.

Storytelling

Talk about a time when you experienced a very real confrontation with evil. How did you emerge from that time of testing? Were you discouraged or did you emerge with a stronger faith? How was your identity and sense of purpose shaped by that confrontation?

Ashamed No More ~ February 24, 2013 ~ Lent 2

We Will Take Courage and Wait on the Lord

Texts: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 11 *Sweet hour of prayer*
HWB 19 *Open now thy gates of beauty*
HWB 36 *God of our strength*
SS 9 *As the pauper waits for plenty*

SJ 54 *Longing for light*
SJ 97 *The Lord is my light*
Brenton Brown, Ken Riley *Everlasting God*
John Waller *While I'm Waiting*

Confessing

HWB 586 *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*
SS 70 *For God alone*

Cheryl Bear *Faithful*

Proclaiming

HWB 584 *They that wait upon the Lord*
SJ 98 *All will be well*

Kathryn Scott *Hungry*

Responding

HWB 502 *Spirit of God! descend*
HWB 504 *Have thine own way*

HWB 517 *Open my eyes, that I may see*

Call to Worship

Leader: We come to worship and wait.

People: **We wait for the Lord.**

Leader: We wait in silence.
We wait in song.
We wait in prayer.

People: **We listen, straining to hear God's voice in the darkness.**

Leader: God said, "Jesus is my Son, my Chosen."

People: "Listen to him."

Confession

Our fast-paced lives demand rapid response—
We make deals when the price is right,
fix problems quickly to avoid further damage.
Figure things out. Bring closure. Evaluate.
Many situations defy our quick fixes . . . and yet we try.
We wonder: Why does it take so long, Lord?

Lord, you have waited for us for generations.
Help us to wait for you.



Assurance

I will give you patience;
help you make space for my goodness to grow.
I will give you shelter if you wait on me.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Do something where the benefit will take years to show: Plant a tree. Sponsor the education of a child in need. Volunteer in an agency that deals with seemingly intractable social problems and learn from the people you serve without needing to pass judgment on the situation.

Sermon starter

"If this is not a place where tears are understood, then where can I go to cry?" —Ken Medema

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27

Wait on the Lord? The childless couple waits in pain and shamed loneliness.

Wait on the Lord? The abused spouse waits in fear for liberation.

Wait on the Lord? The angry young man waits for justice to be done.

Barrenness, adversity, patience, and trust dominate these readings.

Where will we find the courage to wait on God, who is sometimes silent, whose silence seem to mock the extravagant promises of Scripture? With the psalmist, and in the company of trusting Abram and laughing Sarah, we are invited to "believe that we shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Paul compares our physical bodies with those we will be given in heaven. Our present shame is compared to the future glory we wait for; now we are weak, then we will be strong. Paul has the courage to invite others to imitate him and points out that all followers of Christ are to be worthy of imitation. Can we live up to this expectation?

Luke 9:28-36

Stress the responses of the disciples to the transfiguration. While Peter is the only one who speaks, they were all sleepy, all saw Moses and Elijah, and all were terrified by the cloud that overshadowed them. "To overshadow" has several meanings that could be explored. Consider the cloud as a sign of God's presence and compare the disciples' responses with our responses to signs of God's activity in our lives. Do words of blessing emerge out of terror for us?

Luke 13:31-35

One wonders why the Pharisees, normally portrayed as Jesus' enemies, here warn Jesus of Herod's evil plans. Jesus responds by comparing the wiliness of the fox (Herod) to the protection provided by the hen (Jesus), who will give her life for her chicks. This comparison highlights the passionate, waiting, and courageous love of Jesus for the "children of Jerusalem," as does his warning lament that refusal to accept God's Son will result in destruction.

Storytelling

How do you wait on and respond to the presence of God in your life? How aware are you of God's presence, and what signs of that presence have you received? How does God provide you with the courage you need to live faithfully through trying times?

Ashamed No More ~ March 3, 2013 ~ Lent 3

We Will Seek the Lord and Be Fruitful

Texts: Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 1	<i>What is this place</i>	HWB 70	<i>Immortal, invisible, God only wise</i>
HWB 32	<i>Our Father God, thy name we praise</i>	HWB 149	<i>Great God of wonders</i>
HWB 46	<i>I sing the mighty power of God</i>	SJ 40	<i>As rain from the clouds</i>
HWB 50	<i>Praise the Lord, sing hallelujah</i>	Reuben Morgan	<i>I will give you my heart</i>

Confessing

HWB 575	<i>Precious Lord, take my hand</i>	Martin Nystrom	<i>As the deer</i>
HWB 585	<i>In your sickness</i>		

Proclaiming

HWB 495	<i>O let all who thirst</i>	SS 116	<i>I saw a tree by the riverside</i>
HWB 506	<i>I sought the Lord</i>		

Responding

HWB 427	<i>You shall go out with joy</i>	SS 100	<i>O blessed spring</i>
HWB 509	<i>The tree of life</i>		

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we come to this place to worship you.

People: **We come to seek your face and your counsel.**

Leader: We come, with our hearts full of the things that do not satisfy.

People: **We come, longing for the food that will fill our empty souls.**

Leader: Because your steadfast love is better than life, our lips will praise you.

People: **We will bless you as long as we live; we will lift up our hands and call on your name.**

Confession

O Great Gardener, our fields are barren.
Our flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
The weight of our sin holds us down.

We confess that our lives
have not produced the fruits of love, mercy, and kindness.
We have turned away from your bounty to feed our own ambition.
We hoard our time, our money, and our love.



Assurance

I will prune away the things
that keep you from being my true children
and bring you to flower and fruitfulness once more.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Spend some time each day this week doing something kind for someone else. Mow an elderly neighbor's lawn; let several people go ahead of you in a grocery checkout line; have tea with a child; talk to a homeless person.

Sermon starter

"Spirituality is what we do with our desires." —Ronald Rolheiser

Isaiah 55:1-9

This is an invitation. When dreams are dry and fears take root, when trouble strikes and enemies boast, when complacency dulls our hope, we are invited to turn to God, who offers us food that delights, mercy that pardons, and a way home. Whose bread and wine will we choose: the bread of empire that leads to death or the bread of YHWH that leads to life and joyous homecoming? God alone can slake our deepest thirst.

Psalms 63:1-8

This psalm is also about thirst; a thirst for God. When we encounter this God of steadfast love, our thirst is met and we are satisfied, in worship, at home, in the sometimes long night.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Paul reminds us of the Israelites in the wilderness during the exodus from Egypt. He lists their shameful failings and the punishments earned, stressing that although all the people experienced the same events, some reacted differently. What made the difference? All of this is listed for our benefit so we can learn to resist becoming proud in our own strength, Paul says. God allows testing that takes us to our limits to help us learn to depend on God.

Luke 13:1-9

This text provides instructive warning as Jesus recalls John the Baptist's invitation to repentance. The teaching concludes with a difficult parable in which a barren tree is condemned for not producing fruit. Even though the gardener does not appreciate the waste of space and resources the tree represents, additional time and nutrients are offered. The end of the parable warns that fruitlessness will eventually result in destruction. Wonder about the expected fruit. How does this parable apply to our context?

Storytelling

How have you been "watered and tilled" to produce fruit? How would you describe the fruit your life is expected to bear? What fruit do you see in the lives of others in your faith community? Is there evidence of fruitlessness? What kind of "seeking the Lord" will encourage fruitfulness?

Ashamed No More ~ March 10, 2013 ~ Lent 4

God Will Remove Our Disgrace

Texts: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 19 *Open now thy gates of beauty*
HWB 37 *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*
HWB 48 *All creatures of our God and King*
HWB 65 *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven!*

HWB 87 *Great is the Lord*
HWB 521 *Come, thou fount*
SJ 42 *Listen, God is calling*
Chris Tomlin *Praise the Father, Praise the Son*

Confessing

HWB 491 *Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling*
SS 58 *O God, how we have wandered*

SS 62 *Create in me a clean heart*
Chris Tomlin *Praise the Father, Praise the Son*

Proclaiming

HWB 143 *Amazing grace!*
Chris Collins/Edwin O. Excell/John Newton/Todd Agnew *Grace Like Rain*

Chris Tomlin *Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)*

Responding

HWB 499 *Lord, speak to me*
HWB 514 *Lord, I am fondly, earnestly*

HWB 533 *Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all*

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we come to offer up our praise.

People: **You have wiped our slate clean.**

Leader: We come to express our joy and thanksgiving.

People: **You have rolled away our disgrace.**

Leader: We come to celebrate a God whose steadfast love surrounds us.

People: **Sing together everyone, shout for joy.**

Confession

Parenting God, we have wandered so far from your loving embrace.
We have taken what you have given us—
our lives, our world, our inheritance—
and squandered it on selfish pursuits.

We confess that we consume extravagantly what is not ours to consume.
We spend the moments of our lives as if they were ours to spend.
We have sinned against heaven and before you.
We yearn to return to the shelter of your presence.



Assurance

Come, sit again at my table. I will restore you as my children once more.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Share God's love extravagantly: throw a dinner party for people you do not know very well; talk to an elderly person about her or his best memories of being a parent; tell your own parents about something for which you are thankful.

Sermon starter

"God loves us not because we are loveable but because He is love, not because God needs to receive but because He delights to give." —C. S. Lewis

Joshua 5:9-12

From where does joy come? In the Joshua story, joy comes as the disgrace of slavery gives way to a new freedom and a new diet. Out with the manna, and in with the produce of Canaan. Israel is closer to the dream than they once were, but it is still to be fully realized.

Psalms 32

In this psalm, joy comes from being forgiven. The psalmist is a realist about sin but he is also a person of robust faith. Joy comes from vibrant prayer, attending to God's instruction, and trust in God's steadfast love. This deep joy transcends circumstances; indeed it transforms our circumstances. This joy, a gift of God, orients us toward the promise and fulfillment that Easter offers.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Paul stresses how our relationship to God has changed through the actions of Jesus, who has removed our disgrace. All things have become new; the old is gone. It is God, rather than humankind, who did and continues to do the work of reconciliation. We become renewed and useful to God through the reconciling act of Jesus. Since we have been renewed, we need not act in our old ways.

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Luke tells the familiar story of the extravagant father and his two lost sons. *Prodigal* means prodigious, as in generous or wasteful, extravagant, and could be listed as a quality of the father as well as of the younger son. The father runs to shield the younger son from shame and goes out to talk to the older son to hide that son's shame. He essentially out-shames both of them with his actions. Both sons had seriously affronted their father, who did what he could to protect his wayward children from the shame they brought upon themselves. Where and how does God continue to out-shame us?

Storytelling

Link your story with this parable, which is central to this year's Lent–Easter texts. Which decisions of yours have led to being shamed? How have such decisions affected you, your relationship with others, and your relationship with God? If you have been reconciled to God, as the younger son is to the father, what newness has manifested itself in your life?

Ashamed No More ~ March 17, 2013 ~ Lent 5

Christ Jesus Has Made Us His Own

Texts: Isaiah 46:16-21; Psalm 126 and 119:9-16; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 2 *In thy holy place we bow*

HWB 14 *Come, we that love the Lord*

HWB 16 *God is here among us*

HWB 40 *Jesus Christ, God's only Son*

HWB 63 *Praise, my soul, the God of heaven!*

HWB 69 *The Lord is king*

HWB 397 *God loves all his many people*

Fernando Ortega *Children of the living God*

Confessing

HWB 142 *Brothers and sisters of mine*

SS 49 *I will come to you in the silence*

Kathryn Scott *Child of God*

Proclaiming

HWB 510 *O Christ, in thee my soul*

HWB 616 *Children of the heavenly Father*

Geoff Bullock *The Power of Your Love*

Responding

SJ 62 *Christ's is the world*

SS 31 *Jesus, be the center*

SS 114 *God has chosen me*

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we come as your children to worship.

People: **We come from our toil, which is often tedious.**

Leader: Lord, we see what you do with things that appear to be lifeless.

People: **You bring life and sustenance and hope!**

Leader: You send us out with joy, filling our mouths with laughter!

People: **For you have made us your very own!**

Confession

Giving God, we are humbled by your extravagance; which offers us much more than we could possibly need.

We are shamed by our greed and wasteful desires, shamed that we fear to trust your provision.

We confess the folly of trusting our own wisdom, of grasping and holding on to what is not even ours.

Open our eyes to see. Open our hearts and hands to give.

Assurance

I will free your hearts and hands so you may do your part to make my extravagant generosity visible to all.



Becoming the answer to our prayers

Take your family for a drive through your town or community, noting its wealth and poverty. Wonder about the reasons for the differences between people and neighborhoods. Then, spend some money you have been saving for a personal purchase on someone who cannot or would not respond in kind but would benefit from your gift. Tell that person you are seeking to imitate God's extravagant nature.

Sermon starter

"Free! Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we're free at last." —Martin Luther King Jr.

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126

"The Lord has done great things for us." The Old Testament readings give witness to this God who will not abandon God's people. Whether in Egypt or in exile in Babylon, YHWH is the one who creates a new future.

YHWH is an accomplishing God, whose covenant promises are no empty echo, going out and coming back without having accomplished anything. No! YHWH's will succeeds. Nor are YHWH's words merely idle religious chatter or fantasy. These are words that will bring Israel home. Long marginalized, Israel comes home "with shouts of joy."

Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul speaks of his own life and how it changed after Jesus made him his own on the road to Damascus. Similarly, the things we value—our skills, our wealth, our situation, whatever we think makes us useful and valuable to God—may be considered worthless when compared to the value of knowing and depending on Christ. We cannot earn our salvation, but knowing Christ compels us to embrace the hard work of reaching for "the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

John 12:1-8

John tells the story of Mary shamelessly wiping Jesus' feet with her hair, scandalizing everyone present. Was Lazarus embarrassed, or had his encounter with death given him a new perspective? The text focuses on the disciples' discomfort. They consider Mary's actions wasteful and shameful, both for her and for Jesus. Jesus' reprimand warns them not to judge what they do not understand. How does being made Jesus' own free us to serve shamelessly?

Storytelling

Share a story of being unfairly judged and looked down upon because of it. Were you redeemed or shamed by the church? Or reflect on how you view and judge the actions of others and how Jesus would judge those same actions.

Ashamed No More ~ March 24, 2013 ~ Lent 6 (Palm/Passion Sunday)

The Blessed One Comes in the Name of the Lord

Texts:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Luke 19:28-40; Isaiah 50:4a-9; Philippians 2:5-11 (blended from Palm and Passion Sunday selections)

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 71 *Joyful, joyful, we adore thee*
HWB 80 *O bless the Lord, my soul*
HWB 237 *All glory, laud, and honor*
HWB 239 *Ride on, ride on in majesty*

SS 74 *Hosanna! Hosanna!*
SS 75 *Heri ni jina (Blessed be the name)*
Andy Park *Blessed be the name of the Lord*
Tim Hughes *Here I Am to Worship*

Confessing

HWB 146 *O Lamb of God all holy*
HWB 240 *Go to dark Gethsemane*

HWB 252 *O sacred Head, now wounded*

Proclaiming

HWB 259 *When I survey the wondrous cross*
SJ 45 *In the morning, when I rise*

Stuart Townend *How deep the Father's love*

Responding

HWB 505 *I am thine, O Lord*
HWB 571 *'Tis not with eyes of flesh we see*

SS 78 *Lord Jesus, as the shadows long*

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we worship you because you are good!

People: **You teach us to sustain the weary with a word.**

Leader: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

People: **This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

Leader: Lord, we give you thanks, for your love is never ending.

People: **Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

Confession

Awesome God, we take pride in our accomplishments,
thinking we have achieved them by our own authority and power.
Teach us to know the source of true authority,
what obedience looks like, and why it is worth its cost.
As people who falter, we wait blindly, impatiently,
for signs of your activity, wondering if you act or care;
Forgive us.



Assurance

Because of my great love for you
I took on your shame through Jesus,
I took on the form of a slave,
 was obedient to the point of death,
 and am now exalted,
 all because of love—for you.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Ask someone with an older vehicle if your family can wash their car for them, by hand. Let them watch and if they ask why you would do such a thing, tell them you are doing it in the spirit of Jesus, and to honor them. Share your coffee with them, and bring baked squares.

Or—

Go to a coffee shop and sit with someone you don't know. Ask about that person, where she works, how he got into that line of work. Pay for their coffee.

Sermon starter

"I pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ, and to God's kingdom for which he died—one Spirit-led people the world over, indivisible, with love and justice for all." —June Alliman Yoder & Nelson Kraybill

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Isaiah 50:4-9

Who will speak a word for the weary, the downtrodden, the searching? It is the Suffering Servant, who is empowered by God for his mission. Four times the text stresses the action of the "Lord God." The Lord God has given me; the Lord God has opened; the Lord God helps; the Lord God helps.

The Servant will not swerve from his mission, even in the face of adversity, for the God who sends him is to be utterly trusted. This Servant, who is affirmed in the psalm, points to the Christ of the Gospels, the one who sustains us even as he sustained the weary people of Galilee with words and deeds of salvation and healing. Like the Servant, this Jesus, the rejected one, is the one we praise; for he has come to remove our shame, to forgive, and to save us.

Philippians 2:5-11

There is a delightful interplay of shame and honor in this text. Paul describes Jesus' choice of shameful obedience over the place he could rightfully claim. In return God gave Jesus the place above all else. Shame is replaced with triumph and glory. The obedience that appeared to bring shame brought great blessing and honor.

Luke 19:28-40

Luke's story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem focuses on the differing responses of people. Riding on the colt, the foal of a donkey, is a humble but not a shameful ride; it denotes a king coming in peace. The cries of the people are right on, because Jesus is the true king. His victory will usher in the kingdom of God. The Pharisees resent Jesus because he usurps their assumed role of defending the honor of God. Their resentment blinds them from recognizing Jesus as king. Enjoy the witness of the crying stones that reveal creation's greater knowledge of the truth.

Storytelling

Share stories of seeing God around you—in your neighbor, in your families, even in someone you don't like. How do you respond, knowing God is within each and every one? Or reflect on what it means to hear the stones shouting. What would that sound like or look like? How does creation speak God's truth to us today?

Ashamed No More ~ March 31, 2013 ~ Easter Sunday

This Is the Lord's Doing!

Texts: Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18; Luke 24:1-12

Song suggestions

Gathering

HWB 273 *Low in the grave he lay*
HWB 276 *This joyful Eastertide*
HWB 280 *Christ the Lord is risen today*
HWB 283 *Christ who left his home in glory*

SS 95 *Jesus has done so much for me*
Lenny LeBlanc/Paul Baloche *Above All*
Melody Green-Sievrigh *There is a Redeemer*
Dennis Jernigan *You are my all in all*

Confessing

HWB 137 *Forgive our sins as we forgive*
HWB 147 *Oh, how wondrous the grace*

HWB 150 *Wonderful grace of Jesus*

Proclaiming

HWB 522 *My Jesus, I love thee*
Stuart Townend, Keith Getty *In Christ Alone*

Billy Foote *You Are My King (Amazing Love)*

Responding

HWB 396 *The work is thine, O Christ*
HWB 403 *The church of Christ, in every age*

SS 89 *Christ is alive*

Call to Worship

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
People: God's steadfast love endures forever!
Leader: The Lord is our strength and our salvation.
People: God's steadfast love endures forever!
Leader: The stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
People: This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
Leader: This is the day the Lord has made;
People: Let us be glad and rejoice in it!

Affirming faith

On this day of resurrection joy we invite you to join the wide family of God by affirming your faith with the Apostles' Creed, in *HWB 712*.

Becoming the answer to our prayers

Go to the busiest crossroads you know and try to notice everything; all the people, the bicycles, the cars, the buses, the pedestrians, the sounds, the sky. Notice people's faces. Notice the joy, the anxiety, the



impatience that is there. Now picture a garden and a lonely, distraught woman meeting a man named Jesus. Understand the resurrection as God beginning a new creation in the midst of all the messy, ordinary, and surprising moments of life. Share the good news this week with someone who needs to hear good news.

Sermon starter

“Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God.” —Abraham Heschel

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Isaiah 65:17-25

Though few preachers will venture to use an Old Testament text for an Easter Sunday sermon, these texts can certainly inform our imaginations in preparing a sermon from one of the Gospel texts. The poet/prophet of Isaiah 65 is an exuberant troubadour of shalom. All that has been sordid and compromised will be made new. The poet paints a picture of what shalom in the city looks like.

The city at peace is a place where violence ceases and the cry of distress is not heard. It is a place of long and productive life. It ensures adequate resources so that no infant need die prematurely, and no adult need live neglected. It is a vibrant community of economic health and stability, a place where land, work, and family will anchor a community of health and wholeness. But the poet cannot stop with the peace of the city. He sees beyond to the healing of all of creation. Old animosities, violence, and vulnerabilities will no longer have currency in that new age. So . . . “sing a new song to the One who has said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’”

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Paul reminds us that death is no longer something to be feared; it is no longer even an obstacle to overcome. Through Jesus, death is destroyed; we have no more cause to fear. What is death after all but the absence of life? And believers have life eternal.

John 20:1-18

John’s narration of the resurrection story illustrates the fear, doubt, and sorrow of Jesus’ closest friends. They cannot believe, even when they see with their own eyes. Their own visions of reality have blocked the reality Jesus has been trying to teach them. Only after they see and experience the risen Christ can they finally believe and be transformed by the gospel, the good news. How does their transformation impact our faith today?

Storytelling

Tell a story of something you found hard to believe or others found hard to believe from you. Why was it so hard to believe? What convinced you or them? How does this experience compare to believing what you read in the Bible about God?
