

SERIES OVERVIEW



TURNING

LENT 2022 / THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR NARRATIVE LECTIONARY



by Holly Welch



INTRODUCTION TO TURNING

Poring over the Lenten texts from John's Gospel, we are dizzied by all of the turning: God turning toward humanity's pain as Jesus weeps at raw and unbearable grief; Jesus turning the stench of Lazarus' death into something confusingly hopeful; Jesus turning into a servant, stooping to wash feet, turning clear water brown with the disciples gathered dust, turning them toward loving and serving their neighbor.

Then humanity's turning away: Peter turning his back on his best friend; Pilate turning and twisting the truth for political gain; The fickle and riled up crowds turning from "hosanna" to "crucify." Then the turning of the earth as grave becomes garden, death turns to life, mourning to dancing.

John's Gospel invites us into a season of intentional turning. Our hearts turn with compassion for those who grieve. Our lives turn toward our neighbor in acts of solidarity and service. Our eyes turn toward the cross and we see Jesus turning the world upside down with love.

We offer this worship series, complete with commentary, liturgy, artwork, prayers, music, and our hope that it will lighten your load and give a faithful and memorable framework to the Lenten journey as you faithfully lead God's people in worship.

Lent One March 6	Word turns Flesh: Jesus Raises Lazarus John 11:1-44, Psalm 104:27-30
Lent Two March 13	Master turns Servant: Jesus Washes Feet John 13:1-17, Psalm 51:7-12
Lent Three March 20	Disciple turns Denier: Peter's Betrayal John 18: 12-27, Psalm 17:1-7
Lent Four March 27	Hero turns Criminal: Jesus and Pilate John 18:28-40, Psalm 145:10-13
Lent Five April 3	Praising turns to Taunting: Jesus is Condemned John 19:1-16a, Psalm 146
Palm / Passion Sunday April 10	Hosanna turns to Crucify: The Crucified Messiah John 19:16b-22 (Optional reading: John 12:12-27)



PRAYERS AND MUSIC

NOTE: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) and *All Creation Sings* (ACS) are published by Augsburg Fortress Press. You will need to obtain permission from them to use the music listed. The other song suggestions are most likely covered by your CCLI license, if you have one. You will need to check your license to make sure the music is approved for your use. Thank you!

LENT ONE – MARCH 6, 2022

Word turns Flesh: Jesus Raises Lazarus

John 11:1-44, Psalm 104:27-30

Prayer of the Day:

When you raised Lazarus from the dead, you turned death to life and despair to hope. Help us see and believe that you join the pain and grief of our lives as well as our deepest joys, and are still at work turning the world around. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 485 I Am the Bread of Life
ELW 699 In Deepest Night
ACS 945 When You Send Forth Your Spirit
ACS 996 Watch, O Lord
ACS 1030 Death Be Never Last
ACS 1034 When It Seems the Day Will End
Chris Tomlin I Will Rise
Matt Redman It Is Well With My Soul
Gungor Beautiful Things
David Crowder Band How He Loves

LENT TWO – MARCH 13, 2022

Master turns Servant: Jesus Washes Feet

John 13:1-17, Psalm 51:7-12

Prayer of the Day:

When Jesus washed his disciples' feet, turning master to servant, you showed us your heart of service and love. Turn our hearts toward one another, that we may be servants and messengers of love in this world. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 333	Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land
ELW 358	Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here
ELW 360	Love Consecrates the Humblest Act
ELW 708	Jesu, Jesu, Fill us With Your Love
ELW 801	Change My Heart, O God
ACS 939	Touch that Soothes and Heals
Michael W. Smith	Open The Eyes Of My Heart
Hillsong	Arms Open Wide
Christ Tomlin	Give Us Clean Hands

LENT THREE – MARCH 20, 2022

Disciple turns Denier: Peter's Betrayal

John 18: 12-27, Psalm 17:1-7

Prayer of the Day:

Merciful God, your closest friend turned his back on you, causing the searing pain that betrayal leaves in its wake. When we experience the turning of friendships, hold us up, and help us to trust in the power of your healing grace. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 334	Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (Lent 1)
ELW 670	Build Us Up, Lord
ACS 1006	By Grace We Have Been Saved
Chris Tomlin	Your Grace Is Enough
Hillsong	Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace)
Hillsong	Cornerstone

LENT FOUR – MARCH 27, 2022

Hero turns Criminal: Jesus and Pilate

John 18:28-40, Psalm 145:10-13

Prayer of the Day:

God of truth, your words were twisted and manipulated by Pilate, turning murky the truth that you are the Son of God, full of grace and truth. When truth in our world seems hard to find, point us back to you, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 260	The King Shall Come
ELW 655	Son of God, Eternal Savior
ACS 1085	Hope of the World
Kari Jobe	No Sweeter Name
Chris Tomlin	Light Of The World
Charlie Hall	Center

LENT FIVE – APRIL 3, 2022

Praising turns to Taunting: Jesus is Condemned

John 19:1-16a, Psalm 146

Prayer of the Day:

Suffering God, you were turned into a criminal - condemned despite your innocence. When people in our world face unjust systems, help us to stand against injustice, bring truth to light, and demand dignity and justice for all people. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 705 God of Grace and God of Glory
ACS 1008 For Your People/Perdona a tu pueblo
ACS 1052 When Our World is Rent by Violence
Meredith Andrews Open Up The Heavens
Kari Jobe Revelation Song
All Songs and Daughters Called Me Higher

PALM / PASSION SUNDAY – APRIL 10, 2022

Hosanna turns to Crucify: The Crucified Messiah

John 19:16b-22

(Optional reading: John 12:12-27)

Prayer of the Day:

O God, as we enter into this holiest of weeks, turn our hearts toward you that in your suffering, we might understand the consequences of injustice; In your dying, we might know the depths of your love; and in your rising, the earth-turning promise you share with all of creation. Amen.

Song Suggestions:

ELW 344 All Glory, Laud and Honor
ACS 928 Pave the Way with Branches
ACS 929 Blessed Is the One
ACS 1089 Holy, Holy, Holy
Paul Baloche Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)
Matt Maher Lord I Need You
Hillsong Oceans



SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Each week includes a brief commentary on the primary reading from John's gospel as well as the appointed psalm. Our commentaries are not intended as comprehensive treatments of these texts, but as aids to preachers who are seeking alternative perspectives that are theologically informed and grounded in biblical scholarship. We'll also include a contemporary story that picks up on the themes or insights of the commentary. Most of all we want to help you connect meaningfully and thoughtfully with these living words and help your hearers do the same. We want to help these ancient texts bring new life to you and your communities. In this we're taking our cue from the final words of John 20:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that, believing, you may have life in his name.

We think it's worth noting that belief in Jesus's awesome identity isn't the ultimate goal of John's gospel, even though our beloved evangelist trumpets that identity with gusto in the twenty chapters that precede this closing verse. The author of John isn't preaching us towards an intellectual confession or purely emotional conversion. Those are small potatoes: seeds intended to produce something more like a feast or a forest. John (or Joanna) wants us to actually experience the new creation that got Paul so jazzed up in Second Corinthians (5:17). The goal of this gospel is the amazingly opened life that bursts forth from believing that Jesus is who he says he is—a life that is characterized by love and experienced in community, sustained by the advocacy and activity of God's holy Spirit and bathed in the fullness of God's abiding word of grace made flesh. In the gospel, this life is likened to (among other things) the experience of seeing after a lifetime of being blind, of being born completely anew, and of being raised from death.

Even as they were written and gathered in a vastly different context and over a much longer span of time than the gospel of John, the psalms offer a similar vision. We can find in these ancient songs a fairly comprehensive list of lived human experience: joy, grief, fear, loneliness, betrayal, peace, anxiety, anger, relief, illness, gratitude, and awe. This universality has given the psalms a privileged place in the heart of worship for thousands of years.

Psalms were created to be used, both as individual prayers and as community expressions, addressed directly to God. So use them! Sing them! Read them! Speak them! In the Prayers of the Church within this liturgy, you will find petitions that are succinct paraphrases of the psalm for each Sunday. As you are able, explore other songs, hymns, psalm tones, and responses that bring these ancient and yet utterly contemporary prayers, poems, songs and liturgies to life within your community.

For this series, the John commentaries were written by Marc Olson, the contemporary connection stories were written by Kristen Capel, and the psalm commentaries were written by Sara Birkeland.

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MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN

Teaching the Gospel to our youngest listeners in worship can be absolutely revelatory, and can also be extremely difficult. There are those children's "sermons" where all those who hear it (including the grown-ups in the room) nod in awe and take a bit of what they've heard into their hearts. There are also those times when everyone who hears it is completely bored, or utterly confused, or just kind of . . . meh.

There is no secret sauce that can be sprinkled onto a children's message guaranteeing that it will "work." But there are a few things that can help:

Let the kids talk

Yep, that means you have no idea what they are going to say . . . keep a sense of humor, and just never hand them the mic; you won't get it back!

Ask them questions

And actually care about their answers, even if they're super weird.

Don't use children's messages to really talk to the adults

This is just going to annoy everybody; talk directly to the kiddos, and only the kiddos.

Don't treat this time as a warm up for the "real" sermon

Our children deserve the best we've got; prepare just like you would for the grown-ups.

Base it on the reading for the day, but remember your audience

We preach on some pretty complicated theological concepts; it's often not cool to bring this all down on the littlest heads in the room. Having said that, don't be afraid if these young preachers manage to glean the theological insights from what you're saying none-the-less. Just go with it.

So, read each week's resource, written by Sara Birkeland, to find some ideas for children's messages during Lent. Use them, tweak them, make them your own, and recognize the honor of being a part of these young lives.