



VITAL WORSHIP

High and Holy Days for Your Local Flock

Now, to Abide

‘Abide’ might just be the saving word for this age of rupture. So much discarded duty. So many abandoned promises. To continue, to hang in, to last, to stick, to abide is rare.

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” – John 15:4 (NRSV)

Abide. Just about the only time you hear that word these days is in church. Hardly ever in daily speech. As Dean Lueking once observed, “Baseball announcers never sum up an inning by saying ‘A hit, a walk, and two men abiding on base.’ Motel signs don’t invite you to ‘Abide with us tonight.’” The word belongs to other times.

And yet “abide” might just be the saving word for this age of rupture. So much discarded duty, so many abandoned promises, human ties frayed tissue-thin. No one stays. It’s turn and walk away through the wreckage of lies. To continue, to hang in, to last, to stick, to abide is rare. No wonder the word has all but disappeared. Except on the lips of Jesus, where it remains, steady and resilient, promise and presence through thick and thin, faithful belonging through cross and grave. A precious word, abide, first risked on Judas, Peter, and the rest, at supper on that night. The night they betrayed, abandoned, and denied. The night they did not stay.

But he did. He remained, for them, with them, in them, no matter what. Early in the morning and late into the evening he sought them. A new world, a new day. Unhinged powers will always do their worst, but they won’t abide. They don’t last. Now, Jesus says. Now, to bear fruit. Now, to leaven the world with steadiness. Now, to abide.

Prayer

Living Christ, abide in us. May your abiding make ours possible. Help us to remain, to last and outlast wrong, until the fruit we bear by your grace repairs this broken world.

About the Author

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Goals for Today

- *Engage idea and meaning of worship.*
- *Forge new relationships and partnerships.*
- *Share resources/Ideas*
- *Imagine a new “holy day.”*
- *Leave with a plan/idea.*
- *Confirm check-in (proposed for 1/27)*
- *Others:*



WHY WORSHIP?

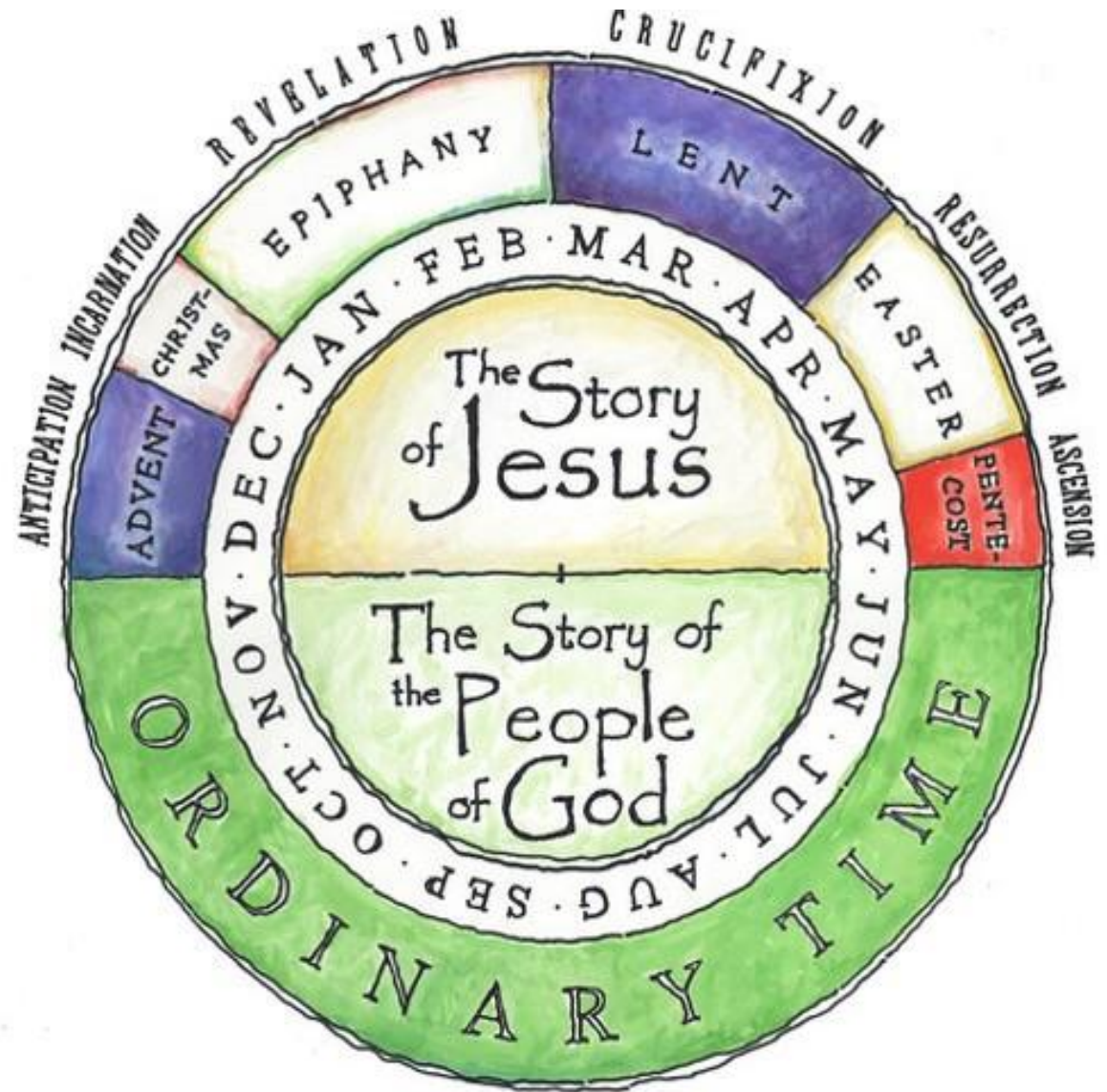
What is important about worship for you? For your congregation?

Premises

- Worship is central to our life together.
- To focus on worship is an act of faith appropriate for churches at all places on our theological/ecclesial spectrum.
- Worship as both praise and transformation and as both local/particular and global/universal.
- An act of joy, inspiration, and launching for all parties.
- Additional thoughts:

High and Holy Days

- What is the day of worship most “important”, “celebrated”, or “looked forward to in your congregation.
- Why?
- Connections to God?
 - Connections to neighbor?
 - Connections to community/world.
- What/How does it send people forth to be God's people?
- What is special about that worship?



Some Voices

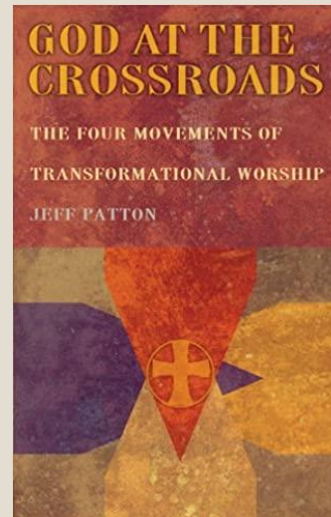


Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art (Nora Tubbs Tisdale)

Both attention to context of Gospel and local context, faithfulness to Gospel of Jesus Christ and “fittingness” to a particular gathering of hearers

Everywhere You Look
(Tim Sorens)

A central question for congregations is to ask why or what for? Why do we gather? To what end? He poses the idea that church has been and must be connected to community.



Jeff Patton

He asserts that vital worship can take place in a variety of settings. It, though, is most transformative when it takes place at the intersection of the lived world, the self, the void, and the holy.

CREATING A NEW HOLY DAY

What is the local context of your congregation?

What are the needs or opportunities in your community to lift in worship to God and in calling to serve?

How might worship bring your flock to the intersection of the lived world, self, void & holy?





Blessing the Runners-

OSC

The church of the finish line is known to runners not just for the end of the journey but for the blessing they receive the day before they run.

This service is an excellent example of aligning with a communal event.

It has taken on extra significance since the bombing.

Christmas in November

This service was held on our monthly “inter-generational worship” date. It leveraged our longstanding relationships with two local agencies who respond to the needs of the homeless and the refugee.

We told the stories of the stable and flight to Egypt to bring those themes to life, to share information and encourage participation in those organizations, and to re-frame how we experience Advent.

The service included special music, bells and all the trappings of a holy day. The kids loved it, the adults responded by volunteering and engaging. Advent was different.



Phillis Wheatley Sunday OSC

Phillis was an emancipated slave, member of OSC and the first published African – American poet. She also died penniless and is buried in an unknown grave.

The service involves great hats, a procession to her monument, and a time of celebration there. Both a remembrance and a calling.

Break Time

As you think about instituting a new holy day...consider:

What cherished values, relationships, needs or opportunities are strong right now in your congregation?

Are there particular events or movements in your community that might be drawn into worship?

How will you evoke the emotion of those Holy Days (whether grand and glorious or small and intimate).

What is your Holy Day? How do you imagine it?

Worksheet

1. What is a central love or value of your flock?
2. What opportunities or needs exist in the community that you could respond to?
3. Is there a time in the year where you could use a boost or where such a day could contribute in significant ways?
4. What is your holy day?
5. How will you make that day special?
6. What resources might you need?
7. What do you hope that service will do to being disciples of Christ in this time?
8. Other...



NEXT STEPS

Thank You!

From Last Time

