

# PREACHING MASTERCLASS

Designing Special Worship Services

# The Basics:

- The time to design the service isn't the Monday before...it's weeks ahead of time!
- These are the services that people remember time and time again – pull out all the “stops”
- Make them experiential
- Design for all the senses: sight, sound, even touch smell, and taste

# The Basics:

- You don't have to spend a lot of money
- Carefully designing these services will – over time – create culture where congregation wants to invite people from sphere of influence
- Less preaching and more music
- When it comes to picking music: familiar is better

# The Basics:

- Use a white board & list all required components of service: sermon, offering, etc. – then begin to fill in the blank with creative elements

# Baptism of the Lord Sunday:

- Creative way to remember baptism
- Offer chance for spontaneous baptisms
- Can use Wesleyan Covenant Service and pray Wesley's Covenant Prayer
- Excellent way to start off year
- Perhaps have breakfast – can invite folks on Christmas Eve

# Ash Wednesday:

- Keep sanctuary with low light
- Remind people of mortality
- Impose ashes
- Use service to preach first sermon in Lent series – tell people will miss if don't come
- Offer simple dinner before
- Use videos & interactive props (rend garments – sackcloth)

# Lent:

- Great time for series that builds to Holy Week & Easter: 24 hrs, 7 Last Words, Final Week, Final Words
- Change décor in sanctuary – take out all shiny things and replace with burlap and wood
- Find a service component
- Great time to issue a challenge/take special offering

# Maundy/Holy Thursday

- Find a creative way to serve Holy Communion
- Sing familiar songs
- Another opportunity for tactile components and experiential parts of worship
- If do footwashing, don't announce in advance
- If focus on Last Supper one year, focus on Gethsemane the next



# Good Friday:

- Make sanctuary dark and imposing
- Including stripping of the sanctuary
- Include time for people to come up and touch cross and pray
- Use props, candles, and experiential ideas
- End in silence

# Easter:

- Should be a complete celebration start to finish
- All the shiny worship objects should return
- Use videos and special music
- Great time for guest musicians/bands
- End with a bang!
- Find way to involve congregation
- Advertise next series

# Mother's Day & Father's Day:

- Instead of giving gifts/trinkets find way to celebrate women and men
- Mother's Day Chocolate Buffet
- Father's Day Manly Man Food Buffet
- Have kids sing – especially if have a preschool

# Pentecost:

- Consider having confirmation on Pentecost
- Can find creative ways to use fire during worship service
- Great day for a church lunch or picnic
- Go all out with red including encouraging people to wear it

# Patriotic Holidays:

- Have Ministry In Which People Can Participate:
  - Operation Worship
  - Wounded Warriors
  - K-9s for Vets
- Be sure to pray for country and military
- If singing patriotic songs makes you uncomfortable – The Battle Hymn of the Republic is a good choice

# All Saints Sunday:

- Be sure to read the names of all who have passed in the past 12 months – have people stand and consider ringing a bell
- Sing For All The Saints
- Creative Ways to Remember Loved Ones: Invite folks to bring pictures – Launch Sky Lanterns – Slide Show

# Sunday Before Thanksgiving:

- Sing *We Gather Together* and *Now Thank We All Our God*
- Have aesthetics team decorate chancel – doesn't have to be cornucopias – lots of other options
- Make sermon lighthearted – use humor – a stressful week is about to start for folks

# Advent:

- Stop worrying about theology and start singing Christmas music!!!!
- Reduce your sermons by at least 1/3 and add more Christmas music
- Decorate thematically to series
- Great time to issue congregational challenge/special offering/give away offering



# Blue Christmas Service:

- Make it cozy and intimate
- Good service for liturgy
- Allow people to interact (ornaments for loved ones)
- Okay to make it a more poignant service – doesn't need to be upbeat and cheerful
- Worship = therapy

# Christmas Eve:

- The Super Bowl of Worship Services
- Pull out all the stops
- Make sermon shorter & include an invitation to follow Jesus
- Sing traditional songs
- Include humor
- Give a gift to folks & advertise next series