

The Gospel According to Isaiah Communion Devotional and Sermon Topics

Below I am providing a guide to my upcoming sermon series on Isaiah. There are many wonderful passages in this book, and to include as many as possible, both our communion devotionals and sermons will be based on texts from Isaiah. My desire is to use passages focussed on **Jesus** to be the basis for our communion devotionals. I am using passages focussed on **God and the greater community of faith** as the basis for my sermons. I have tried to align communion topics with the topics on which I will be preaching each week. In this way, we can use two readings from Isaiah each week instead of one, to provide our congregation with the most possible exposure to the book. **As part of your communion devotional, please do read the assigned passage out loud, which will also be printed on the front of the bulletin, along with the sermon's Scripture reading.**

Please stay true to the passage you've been assigned and see my suggestions for how you might craft a devotional around the topic. Remember: communion devotionals are not sermons, and are only scheduled to last around 2 minutes in our worship services. It is a good idea to prepare your words in advance, print them out, and limit your comments to about 200-250 words.

I am excited for how this coordinated effort might enrich the experience of our worshipers, and I appreciate your help in bringing this to reality.

Mark Adams

January 14

Communion: Isaiah 1:16-20

Presiding: Joe Shaw

Focus on how though our sins had been as scarlet, in Christ they are able to be made as white as snow.

Sermon: Lines and Circles

Reading: Isaiah 5:18-23

Song Suggestion: Break My Heart

Introduction to the book of Isaiah, how prophets functioned, and what it means for their to be both progress and repetition within our individual and communal journeys with God. Though Israel was progressing in a direction, they often reverted to bad behaviors and had to be called again back to a more faithful path.

January 21

Communion: Isaiah 61:1-3

Presiding: Ralph Stephens

Focus on Jesus' use of this passage to announce the purpose of his ministry. That he would bring good news to all who are broken and oppressed. You might tie in to the Beatitudes, how many of these people groups, Jesus promises will be "blessed."

Sermon: Send Me

Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

Song Suggestion: There's A Stirring

Will focus on the prophet's call and how even though all of us are unworthy of the call, God uses us to be conduits of his grace and carriers of his good news to the world.

January 28

Communion: Isaiah 27:1

Presiding: Shawn Hall

Focus on God as a conqueror who, in this passage, is slaying a great serpent. This is in reference to ancient mythology, where Leviathan was a mythological, embodied form of chaos. No need to dive too much into that, but you can tie into Genesis 3:15, where God promises man will crush the serpent's head, even if the serpent strikes his heel. Or, you could tie into Revelation 12, where Satan, the great serpent, meets his ultimate defeat.

Don't be intimidated by this passage, because the bottom line is clear: Whatever our personal monsters are, Jesus is stronger, and Jesus can deliver us from them.

Sermon: No Other God

Reading: Isaiah 44:6-8

Song Suggestion: O God, You Are My God; Nobody Fills My Heart Like Jesus

I will talk about how God contrasts to the worthless idols after which so many people chase. Isaiah often speaks of how God is superior to any other option we might consider. He is the true God, Creator, Redeemer and Deliverer.

February 4

Communion: Isaiah 9:2-7

Presiding: Joe Alley

Focus on any part of this passage you'd like, but the descriptive statements about Jesus as a Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Everlasting Father would be worthy of reflection.

Sermon: A Consuming Fire

Reading: Isaiah 33:10-16

Song Suggestion: Light the Fire

One of the themes throughout Isaiah is that God is a consuming fire. It's an uncomfortable idea, but it stems from God's holiness. As the presence of fire will burn away all that is not made to withstand it, our deeds will be tested by the fire of God's presence. Those that won't stand are burned away, while those worthy of our calling will endure.

February 11

Communion: Isaiah 42:1-4

Presiding: Deon Maharaj

This is a passage about Jesus as the Servant of the Lord. You will find plenty here to reflect on, but I will be going the direction in my sermon of Jesus as a light to the nations.

Sermon: Light for the Nations

Reading: Isaiah 56:3-8

Song Suggestion: Shine, Jesus, Shine

Many passages in Isaiah are missions passages, where God greatly desires to see many of the nations Israel would consider enemies come into knowledge of him, also to be part of his people.

February 18

Communion: Isaiah 7:13-14

Presiding: David Douglas

Focus on Jesus being born as a child, and how as a child, he became Immanuel: God with us. You might tie in to John 1 or Philippians 2. Jesus became one of us. He put on flesh and dwelt among us.

Sermon: Rooted in God

Reading: Isaiah 11:10-12

Song Suggestion: My Life is in You, Lord; Trust and Obey

I will look at some of the imagery in Isaiah about how even if we are only a small remnant, we are still rooted in God, and grow in him, like a shoot from a stump. It isn't a question of our size, but our source.

February 25

Communion: Isaiah 11:1-5

Presiding: Jordan Alexander

Focus on how Christ provides us with a unique source of wisdom, counsel, and strength. He will judge us fairly, not by worldly standards.

Sermon: The Mountain of God

Reading: Isaiah 2:1-4

Song Suggestion: On Zion's Glorious Summit Stood; Holy Ground Medley

Note to self: Draw ideas also from 30:25-30

Isaiah contrasts the everlasting mountain of the Lord, providing hope to those even at great distances, with all other strongholds of people, which will one day be flattened.

March 4

Communion: Isaiah 40:3-5

Presiding: Barrett Fines

Focus on “making straight” the way of the Lord. Communion is a time of self-examination, and we want to be sure in our own life, as well as in the lives of others, we are trying to make a straight path that leads to God.

Sermon: A God of Comfort

Reading: Isaiah 40:27-31

Song Suggestion: When The Night Is Over; I Come To The Garden Alone

This will also be based in Isaiah 40. God provides us with help when we are discouraged, comfort when we are sad, and nourishment when we are hungry.

March 11

Communion: Isaiah 52:13-15

Presiding: Peyton Copeland

Focus on how God used someone so utterly unimpressive in the world’s eyes to be the one before whom all people will one day bow; even the kings and rulers of this world.

Sermon: Kings of Earth

Reading: Isaiah 37:14-20

Song Suggestion: Let Them Praises Give Jehovah

I will contrast two of Judah’s kings in Isaiah: Ahaz, the negative example, and Hezekiah, the positive example. As human beings, we are all “kings of earth” who exercise dominion over creation. Hezekiah provides us with a good path for how to honor God with our uses of power.

March 18

Communion: Isaiah 53:1-5

Presiding: Stephen Johnston

(Note: Next week will come from the passage after this one, so please don’t expand too much on your assigned passage) Focus on how we are healed by the wounds of Jesus.

Sermon: A Peaceful City

Reading: Isaiah 60:1-5

Song Suggestion: Peace, Perfect Peace; Angry Words

Note to self: Consult mirror passage within the chiasmus.

I will draw on some of the themes in Isaiah regarding the ideal Kingdom, where there is peace between people and justice for all. The church is to be an embodiment of this kingdom now.

March 25

Communion: Isaiah 53:6-9

Presiding: Gene McCain

Focus on the contrasting sheep. There are the sheep which represent humanity. All of us have gone astray. In contrast is Jesus, the faithful Lamb of God, who went to be slaughtered on our behalf so that we could be saved.

Sermon: All Things New

Reading: Isaiah 65:16-20

Song Suggestion: Your Kingdom Until Then, This is My Father's World

Note to self: See also 43:18-19.

Jesus speaks of the corruption that burdens the world, and of the hope of a new Heavens and a new Earth, where all can live in the presence of God.