

Stewarding God's Story

Planning Scripture-based Worship throughout the Christian Year

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Background and Bio

Family & Florida



Brevard County "Space Coast"





Covenant Church

Palm Bay, Florida

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Unpacking the Title: Observations and Values

- Stewarding – We are not rock stars, but shepherds, pastors, servants.
- God’s Story – “Liturgy tells a story. We tell the gospel by the way we worship.”
- Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, pg. 19
- Planning – It requires weekly, intentional coordination of people and resources.
- Scripture-based – We don’t make it up.
- Worship – “Worship is a conversation between God and God’s chosen people.”
- Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, pg. 9
- Throughout – There is an annual rhythm to worship; it is a journey.
- Christian Year – the ancient means of telling God’s story

Definitions of Worship

“Corporate worship is what happens when the body of Christ assembles to hear with *one heart* and speak with *one voice* the words, praises, prayers, petitions, and thanks fitting to Christian worship.”

- Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, pg. 13.

“Worship is the work of acknowledging the greatness of our covenant Lord.”

- John Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, pg. 1.

Worship is our whole-life response to God’s self-revelation; it remembers God’s story through actions and expressions in sacred time, leads to our edification, and is formative, renewing our heart and mind.

The Formative Character of Worship

Lex orandi, lex credendi – the law of prayer is the law of belief

Ask, “How are we *forming* our people?”

Not, “How are we *wowing* our people?”

Worship Leadership

I believe a worship leader should be able to:

- (1) Think like a theologian
- (2) Labor like an artist
- (3) Shepherd like a pastor

Constance Cherry describes the “pastoral musician” in her book *The Music Architect*.

Content, Structure, and Style

CONTENT – the story of God; the gospel

STRUCTURE – the fourfold order (Gathering, Word, Response/Table, Sending)

STYLE – the way in which you carry out the substance of the conversation with God; arises from your culture and context

My Journey to Scripture-based Worship

The Challenge

- The significance of the number 52
- The challenge of planning creative, vibrant, God-honoring worship services Sunday after Sunday for 52 Sundays, year after year!

My Journey to Scripture-based Worship

The Need

- The need to steward God's story of redemption as worship planners
- The need for more Scripture to be woven throughout our worship services, letting its language, narrative, metaphors, themes, teachings, truths, and paradigms form and shape us, week after week

My Journey to Scripture-based Worship

The Inspiration

- Use of Lectionary-based resources in California and Florida
 - *Feasting on the Word*
 - *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*
- Inspiration from Bach - wrote a cantata a week based on the lectionary of his day
 - His goal: to create “a well-regulated church music to the glory of God.”
- Inspiration from F. Russell Mitman - wrote *Worship in the Shape of Scripture*
 - His paradigm: From lectionary to liturgy
 - His term: organic liturgy - flows from the themes and language of Scripture

What Is a Lectionary?

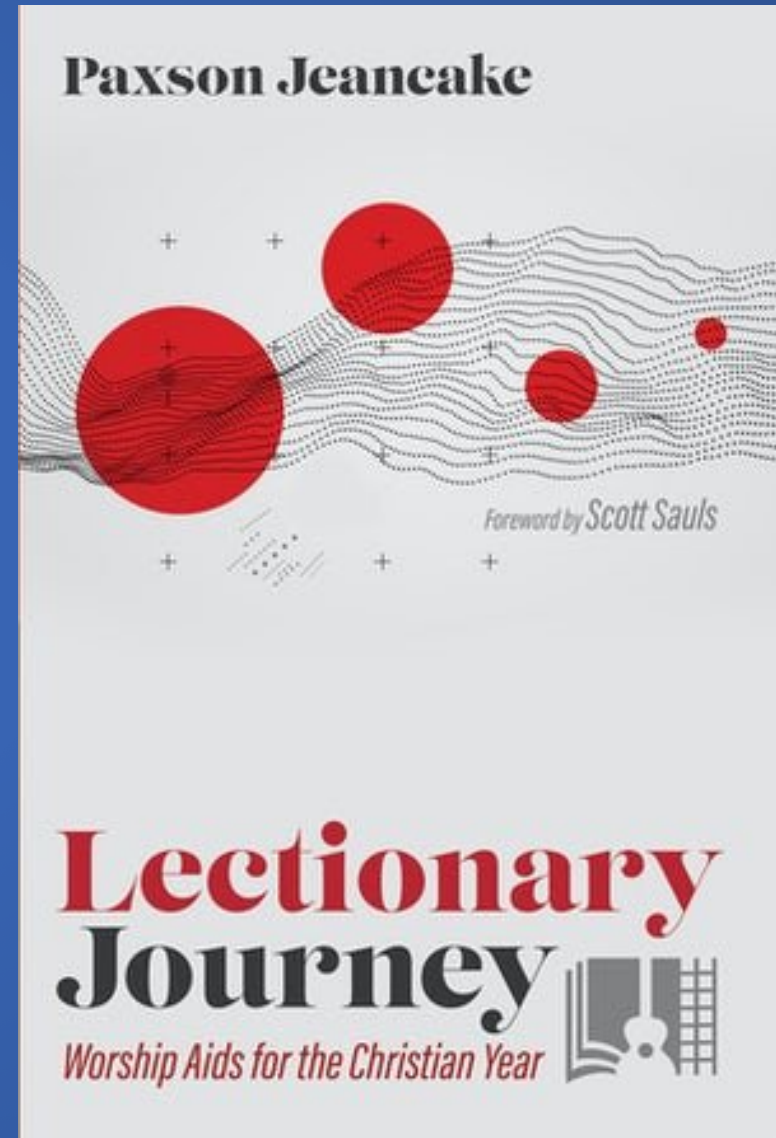
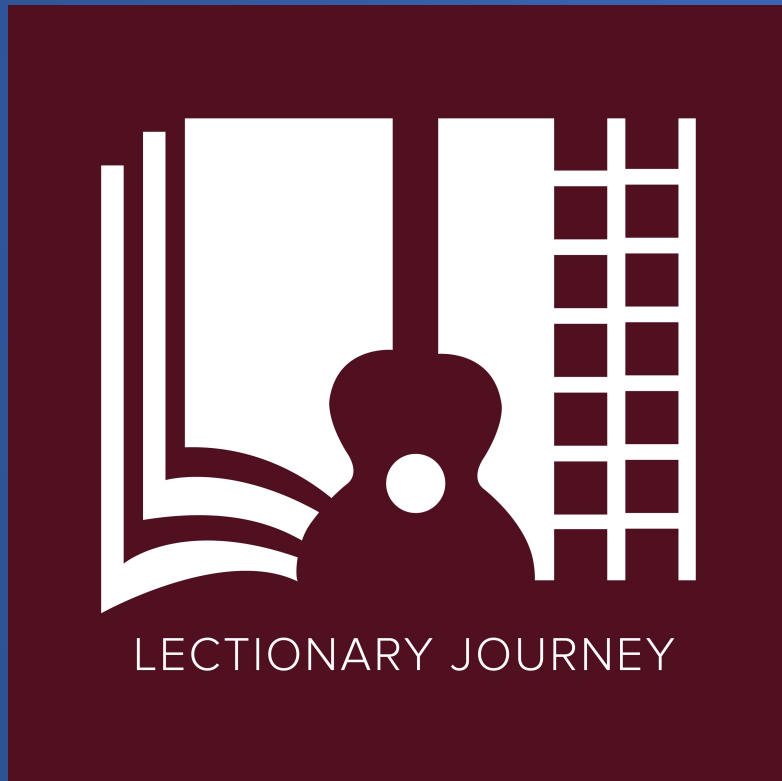
- A collection of readings or selections from the Scriptures, arranged and intended for proclamation during the worship of the people of God.
- What is the Revised Common Lectionary?

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)

- The RCL was first published in 1992 and contains readings for the Sundays and major festivals over a three-year cycle (Years A, B, and C).
- For each Sunday and for special days in the Christian Year, the RCL assigns a group of four readings: an Old Testament reading (first reading), a Psalm, an Epistle (second reading), and a Gospel reading. The three-year cycle centers Year A in Matthew, Year B in Mark, and Year C in Luke. The Gospel of John is woven throughout the three-year cycle.
- The Gospel reading is the primary or governing text; it is the “hermeneutical key” to understanding the relationship of the other readings.
- The RCL offers a steady diet of Scripture from the Old and New Testaments, follows the cycles and seasons of the Christian Year, and forms us spiritually as we feast on God’s Word.

Lectionary Journey

A comprehensive project that includes worship aids, songs, and devotions for each Sunday in the Christian year over the three-year lectionary cycle.



Four Meaningful Ways to Use the Lectionary

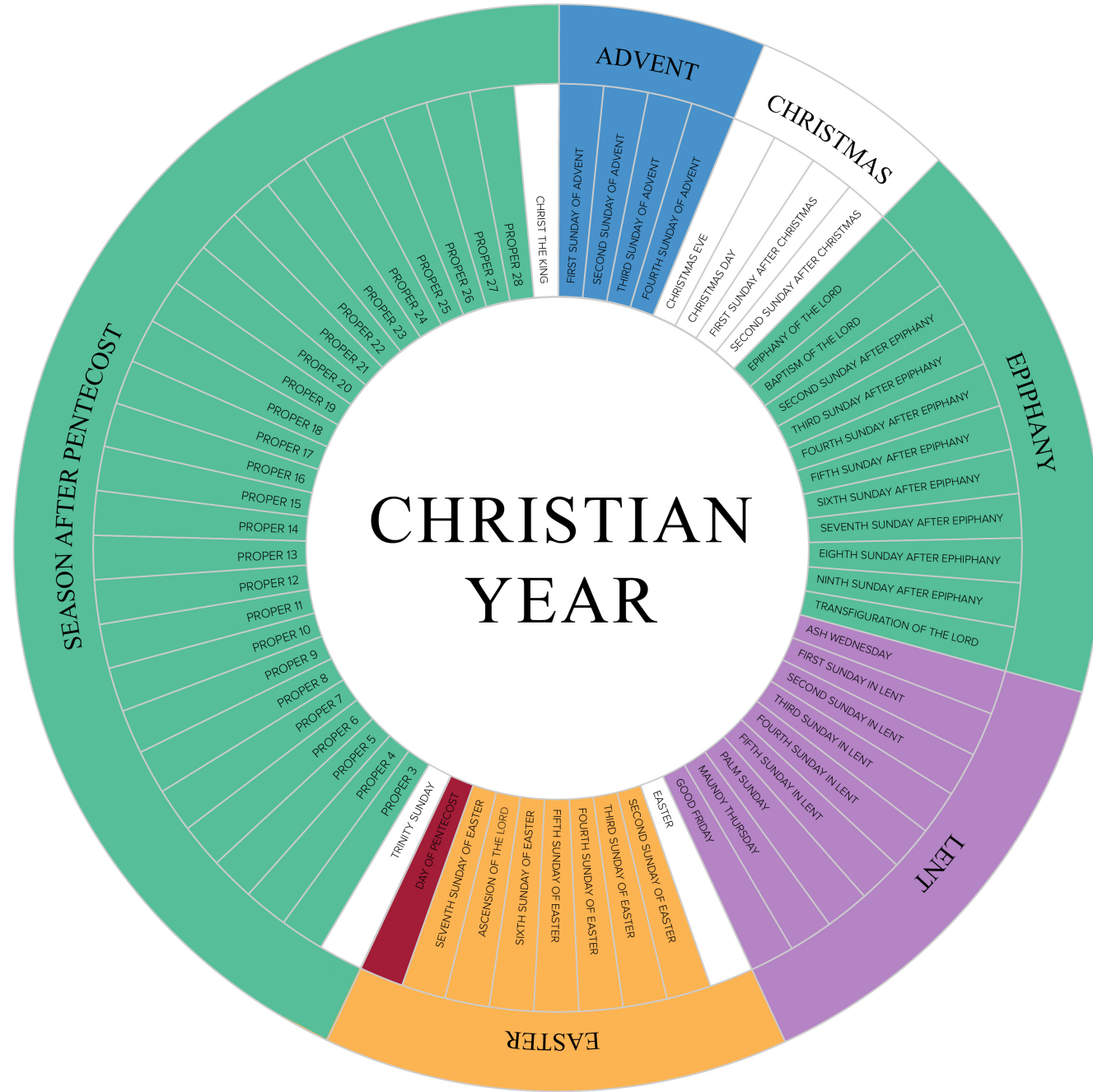
- An annual guide for stewarding God's story
- A weekly guide for planning corporate worship
- A steady rhythm for spiritual growth and formation
- An ecumenical resource that fosters community within the body of Christ

*The lectionary can be of great value
even if you do not follow it in your preaching!*

An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

“As worship planners, we are called to steward God's story. Jesus is at the heart of this story: his birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Holy Spirit, and future return. In worship, we remember, recall, and appropriate these events and realities. We do this, in part, by following the cycles and seasons of the Christian Year.”

- *Lectionary Journey*



An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

ADVENT - a time of preparation; a season to remember Christ's first coming and to anticipate his return.

CHRISTMAS – a time to remember and celebrate the incarnation; to retell and reorient ourselves around the reality that God put on flesh and walked among us.

EPIPHANY - a season to remember Christ's manifestation to the world. We recall the Magi who came to see him, his baptism in the Jordan River, his miracle at Cana, and his transfiguration.

An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

LENT – a season of preparation and repentance; forty days (not counting Sundays) to intentionally examine our lives and consider the idols of our hearts. Holy Week is the culmination of the Lenten season in which we remember Christ's triumphal entry (Palm Sunday), his institution of the Lord's Supper (Maundy Thursday), and his death on the cross (Good Friday).

EASTER- a time to celebrate our risen Lord and spend fifty days (Eastertide) remembering his post-resurrection appearances leading up to his return to the Father (Ascension) and his sending of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost).

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST - a long season that includes Trinity Sunday and culminates on Christ the King (the last Sunday of the Christian Year).

An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

- Scriptures that speak into remembering and telling the Story
 - Old Testament Shema – immersion in God's Story (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
 - King Josiah's reforms – they had lost the Story in one generation (2 Kings 23)
 - The psalmists – they functioned as covenant storytellers (Psalm 145:4)
 - Jesus – he used the narratives and truths of Scripture (Matt. 4:4; Luke 24:27)
 - Paul's exhortations to churches (e.g., Colossians 3:16)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”

An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

- Why is remembering and celebrating these events so important?
 - Celebrating the Christian Year ensures that we tell the *whole* gospel story
 - Celebrating the Christian Year inspires artists
 - Celebrating the Christian Year helps us teach the next generation

An Annual Guide for Stewarding God's Story

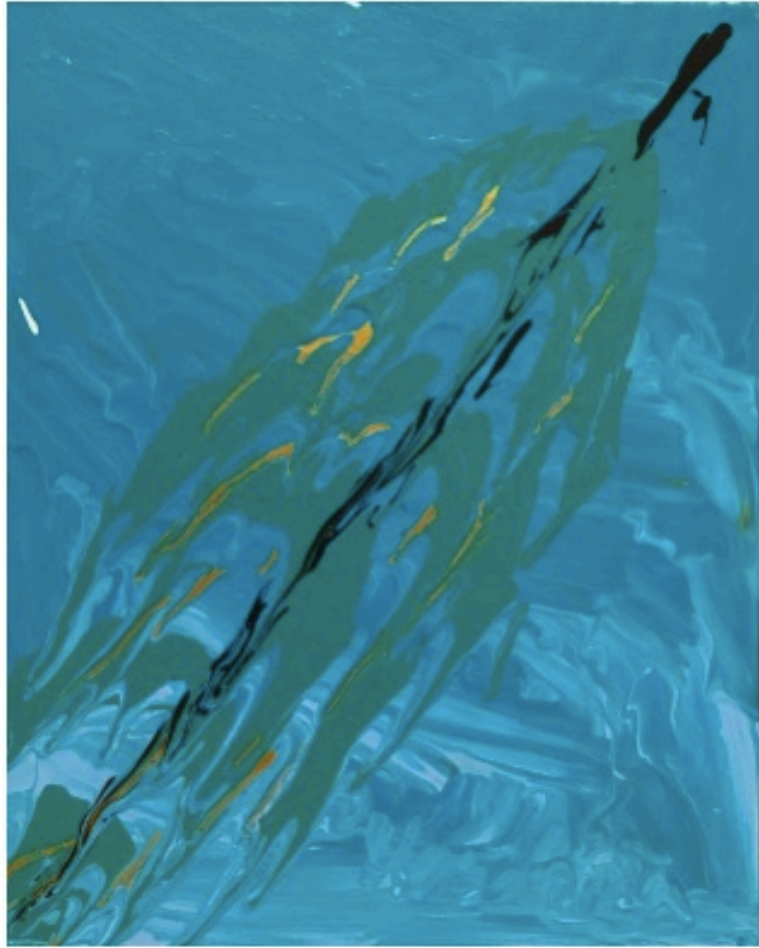
The Ascension

“This is that festival which confirms the grace of all the festivals together, without which the profitableness of every festival would have perished. For unless the Savior had ascended into heaven, His Nativity would have come to nothing... His Passion would have borne no fruit for us, and His most holy Resurrection would have been useless.”

- Augustine

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