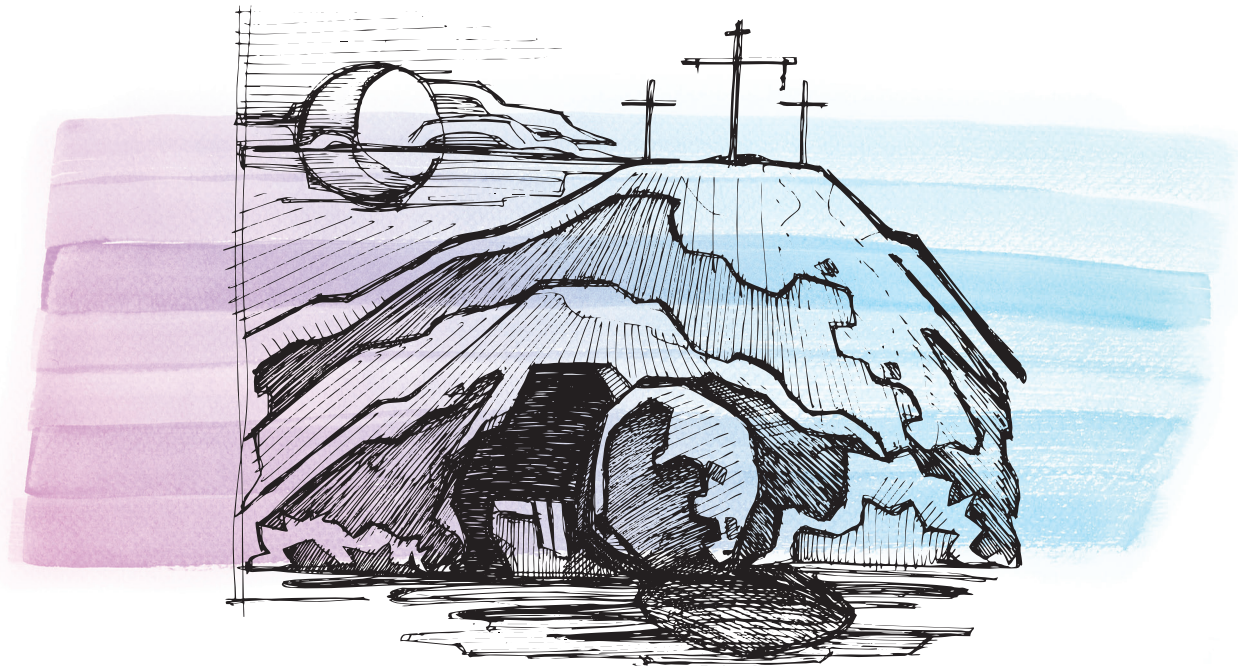




# Worship Resources | Winter 2017–18

LENT-EASTER 2018



## Between Me & You

**C**ovenants of various kinds are found throughout the Old and New Testaments, and are highlighted in the Lenten Scriptures of Lectionary Year B. Promises are made and broken, narrowed, expanded, and reimagined. The covenants that God makes with the people of God provide hints at the nature of the relationship intended between God and creation, as well as guidelines for how we are to relate to God and to one another. We start the Lenten journey discovering how vastly inclusive God's covenant is and that it is extended from generation to generation. As humans, though, we struggle with barriers getting in the way and are in need of guidelines and eventually a new covenant. As we approach Holy Week, we are invited to lay down the barrier of our preconceived understandings and expectations, and to realize the good news that in Jesus' death and resurrection there is no longer anything in between us and God.

The theme "Between Me & You" is multifaceted. It refers to the relationship between us and God; it also refers to the relationship between people, and the relationship between people and the rest of creation. Covenants are made between two parties, and things also come in between those parties. As humans, we may struggle with maintaining our relationships and commitments. We bind and blind ourselves with limitations and barriers. Like Mary standing at the empty tomb on Easter morning, we find ourselves confused and disoriented at the new reality of nothing between us.

### PERMISSION TO PHOTOCOPY

Subscribers to *Leader* are welcome to photocopy worship materials in this section.

### DOWNLOAD

Subscribers may download the quarterly worship resources at [www.leaderonline.org/worship](http://www.leaderonline.org/worship). The username is **Lent18** and the password is **6385snt**. They are both case sensitive.



### Between Me & You enactment

A center point of the worship materials is an enactment that illustrates the theme of “Between Me & You.” Instructions are provided each week for how to demonstrate an aspect of covenant or relationship using the simple materials of scarves and sheets. This may serve as the children’s feature, as some weeks require volunteers to participate in the enactment. Wondering reflection questions help to guide new understanding and insight, and a short response song, “For Me, For You,” summarizes and closes the lesson each week. Pictures of the scarves, as well as sheet music and song recordings, are available on the *Leader* website at [www.leaderonline.org](http://www.leaderonline.org).

### Confession and words of assurance

The season of Lent is a time for self-examination. As we explore the nature of covenants and relationships, we invite you to include a time of confession in your service each week. Confessions may be prayed by the worship leader or prayed out loud by everyone communally. It may be helpful to give the congregation a minute of silence and invite them to read through the confession before it is prayed, asking them to examine their hearts to see if this is a prayer that they feel they can pray. God’s grace is always offered after a confession through words of assurance, spoken by the worship leader. The words of assurance throughout this Lenten series come directly from the lectionary texts for the week, offering us a truth from Scripture that we can take with us.

### Visuals

Visual elements of this worship series are simple. An open Bible on the center of a communion table grounds us in the Word and reminds us of the covenants that God has made with God’s people and that we know of through the Scripture texts. A candle may also be centered on the table. The scarves, sheets, or blankets that will be used in the enactments each week may be draped on the table in a visually appealing way or kept in a basket on the table or nearby.

### Music

A variety of song suggestions are provided each week that support the particular theme for the week. The songs may be found in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *Sing the Journey*, and *Sing the Story*; sheet music and recordings of the two songs by Bryan Moyer Suderman are available on the *Leader* website at [www.leaderonline.org](http://www.leaderonline.org). Bryan has also composed a theme song titled “Between Me and You.” The tune is simple and easy to learn. One verse of the song is sung through a couple of times each week; it is not intended that all seven verses of the song be sung all at once. “Between Me and You” may be used as a song of response after the sermon, may be sung as a benediction, or may be incorporated into any other



part of the service as you see fit. A professional recording of the song is also available online ([www.leaderonline.org](http://www.leaderonline.org)) for use by song leaders who are learning the song; the recording may even be played as a part of worship if that fits into your context.

### Benediction

The benediction is the same each week and is intended to be echoed. Invite everyone to stand and face the center of the sanctuary so that everyone is facing one another and the words of the benediction may be spoken to one another. Each line of the benediction is spoken by the worship leader and then repeated by the congregation. Echoing the same words spoken by the worship leader each week, rather than reading in unison, helps people to see each other and allows most ages and abilities the opportunity to participate in sending each other.



The Lent–Easter resources were written by a team from Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada of Mennonite Church Canada. (Left to right) Joshua Penfold, Alicia Buhler, Michelle Jantzi Dueck, Bryan Moyer Suderman. Photos by Alicia Buhler.



# Lent 1

## Me & You & the Creatures Too

February 18, 2018

**Scripture:** Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

**Focus statement:** An everlasting covenant is made between God (Me), the people (You), and every living creature. God's intention for relationship with the earth is inclusive and expansive, yet in our narrow-mindedness, we often exclude. How are we invited to expand our understanding to realize that all are included in God's covenant?

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You and all the creatures, God's promise and God's love grow wider.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 42** All People That on Earth Do Dwell  
**HWB 43** Christ Is Our Cornerstone  
**HWB 46** I Sing the Mighty Power of God  
**HWB 48** All Creatures of Our God and King  
**HWB 496** Like Noah's Weary Dove

**STJ 24** Creation Is a Song  
**STS 36** Jesus, Tempted in the Desert  
God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman  
I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you,  
and every creature, a covenant new,  
a gift, a promise I'm giving to you,  
I choose to be there with you.

### Call to worship

**Leader:** The time has come; the kingdom of God draws near.  
Repent and believe the good news.

**People:** **We have come.**  
**We are here.**  
**We worship God together.**

### Confession

God of creation and salvation, too often we fear there is not enough,  
and we want to keep what there is for ourselves,  
including your love,  
so we build barriers.  
We want to decide who's in or out.  
We fail to see the impact of our selfishness.  
Help us to value all of your creation—  
the earth, air, water, and all living creatures,  
both the tame and the wild—the way you do.  
Help us to preserve and not destroy them.  
Forgive us for making your love too small.  
Teach us to act with humility, grace, and mercy  
as we seek to make things right.





## Words of assurance

All the Lord's paths are loving and faithful  
for those who keep God's covenant and laws.

## Between Me & You enactment (children's feature)

**Supplies:** a large scarf, flat sheet, or blanket (*optional:* with pictures of animals on it)

### Action and noticing

- Begin with the scarf folded lengthwise several times so that it is long and narrow.
- Have a volunteer help you so that each of you are holding one end of the scarf and it is stretched out between you.
- Ask: Do you see how the scarf is stretched out between me and you?
- Unfold the first fold of the scarf and invite others to notice that it is bigger (wider) and that it covers a bigger area.
- Keep unfolding the scarf, bit by bit, until it is its full size.
- At each stage, notice how big the scarf is.

### Wondering

- Were you surprised by how wide the scarf is?
- Imagine if you could keep unfolding the scarf forever. Imagine that it just went on and on.
- God's love is like that! God's promises are like that! Even bigger than we can imagine!
- God's love and God's promises are so big that they include everyone. The Bible tells us that even the animals and the earth are included in God's promises!

### Responding through song: "For Me, For You"

God's promises are for me, for you, and all the creatures too!  
God's love is for me, for you, and all the creatures too!

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Covenant* between God and Noah and all living creatures (Genesis 9:8-17)

- Covenant is an important theme, and is the Old Testament focus for several weeks of Lent, but it is not a word we use every day. Explore the concept of covenant. What images or language can be used to aid our understanding? (Contract, marriage covenant, promise, etc.) Who is included in God's covenant making?
- What implications are there when God includes all the creatures in the covenant with Noah? What does this tell us about our relationship with animals, with creation, creation care, and environmentalism? How does this inform our involvement in environmental conversations?

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God's love  
to extend God's love  
and live God's promise.



## Lent 2

February 25, 2018

# Me & You & the Generations after You

**Scripture:** Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

**Focus statement:** God's covenants and promises are not just for our ancestors, or for us, but also for our descendants. Although God is able to fulfill what has been promised, our human ways sometimes get in the way. What might be coming between Me (God) and You (the people), or between you and your descendants?

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You and generation after generation, God's promise and God's love grow longer.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 20** Come and See

**HWB 162** The God of Abraham Praise

**HWB 616** Children of the Heavenly Father

**STJ 2** Hamba nathi (Come, Walk with Us)

**STJ 29** You Are All We Have

**STJ 44** The Love of God

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you,  
and generations to come after you,  
I have established a covenant true,  
I choose to be there with you.

## Call to worship

**Leader:** Come, sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah, nations born of barren lands,  
you who stand here because of promises fulfilled, come and worship your God.

**People:** **We were born through the faith of our ancestors, just as our faith will give life to future generations;  
even as we hope against hope, we come to worship our God.**

**Leader:** Welcome home, children of God. Welcome to this house of God.

## Confession

God of our ancestors and our descendants,  
promising Abraham and Sarah children at their age just seems mean.  
For them to believe that promise sounds foolish—  
almost as foolish as expecting that same faithfulness from us.  
That was then, this is now.

We are not used to waiting.  
If something we want takes too long, we itch to move on to the next thing, even when waiting is important.

Forgive us.  
Forgive our impatience and refusal to believe in what we cannot see.  
Build in us the willingness to hope against hope.  
Help us to value and contribute to a future yet unseen.  
Instill in us a faith to inspire future generations.



## Words of assurance

I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants,  
because I am your God and their God.

## Between Me & You enactment (children's feature)

**Supplies:** several scarves

### Action and noticing

- As in week 1, stretch out a scarf between you and a volunteer, with each of you holding one end of the scarf.
- Ask: Do you see how the scarf is stretched out between me and you?
- Notice how long it is.
- Tie another scarf to the end of the first scarf. Notice the new length.
- Keep tying on more scarves to make a very long string of scarves, involving more volunteers to hold the now much longer scarf chain.
- Notice how long it is now!

### Wondering

- I wonder how long we could make this chain of scarves.
- Imagine if this chain of scarves just went on and on and on.
- Do you remember how big the scarf was last week (and we imagined it even bigger)? We talked about how God's love is *so* big—for me, for you, and all the creatures too.
- Now look at how *loooooong* the scarf is. God's love is like that! God's promises are like that! They are for a *loooooong* time! For me, and you, and future generations too! They are for your children, and their children, and their children—and all children!

### Responding through song: "For Me, For You"

God's promises are for me, for you, your children's children too!

God's love is for me, for you, your children's children too!

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Covenant* between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16)

*Peter/Satan* between Jesus and his mission (Mark 8:31-38)

*Self* between us and following Jesus

- Although God's vast, inclusive covenant with Noah remains, this week's covenant with Abraham narrows in focus to one family in order to flesh out how and through whom it will unfold. The covenant extends from generation to generation.
- The Romans text declares Abraham the father of all of us who share in Abraham's faith. God's covenant is radically inclusive, and through faith anyone can find themselves a son or daughter of the "father of many nations."
- Peter tries to get between Jesus and his peculiar good news of dying. When do we get in the way of Jesus' good news or try to bypass the challenging reality of suffering being part of that good news?

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God's love  
to extend God's love  
and live God's promise.



## Lent 3

March 4, 2018

# Me & You & Working It Through

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

**Focus statement:** We are in relationship with a God whose foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. We need relational guidelines to guide the *between*, although rigidly adhering to rules has the potential to come in between. How might we seek God each day and tend to the space between (for example, between relationship), rather than focus solely on the rules?

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You and in all we go through, God's promise and God's love grow stitch by stitch.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 138** Let God, Who Called the Worlds

**HWB 487** Teach Me, O Lord

**HWB 543** I Long for Your Commandments

**HWB 548** Teach Me Thy Truth

**STJ 52** Jesus, Help Us Live in Peace

**STS 65** Abre mis ojos (Open My Eyes)

**STS 71** Gentle God, When We Are Driven

**STS 72** We Are Often Tossed and Driven

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you,  
in all the times you are struggling through,  
I will never turn my back on you,  
I choose to be there with you.

## Call to worship

**Leader:** Come rule makers, rule breakers, and you who are still finding your way. Come. Whether you speak with wise words or with wisecracks, you are made in the image of God. Come into God's house. Hear God's Word. Prepare to meet your Maker and your match. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is greater than human strength.

**People:** **Some of us like certainty and structure. Some of us don't. We come by different roads, yet we are here together. We want to know God, and to be known by God. We are here to worship the Lord.**

**Leader:** Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there." We are here and Christ Jesus is here. We join our hearts in worship.

## Confession

God, we call you ruler of all, but sometimes we make excuses.  
We try to avoid applying your rules to our actions and interests.  
At other times, we hold so tightly to rules that we break relationships.  
It is easier to imagine that you are like us than it is for us to be like you.  
We judge ourselves by success; you judge us by how we treat others.  
Help us to face our truth.  
Forgive us when we fail.  
Give us the courage to keep trying to live as you love.



## Words of assurance

The Lord's rules can be trusted.  
They make plain people wise.

## Between Me & You enactment (children's feature)

**Supplies:** a knit, crocheted, or woven scarf with visible stitching details, possibly handmade by a member of the congregation

### Action and noticing

- As in weeks 1 and 2, take a scarf and have a volunteer hold one end while you hold the other end so that the scarf may be stretched out between the two of you, between me and you.
- Notice what kind of scarf it is. What it is made of? Point out the pattern and the detail of individual stitches that are all connected and work together to make a scarf that is functional and beautiful.

### Wondering

- I wonder who made this scarf? I wonder how long it would take to learn how to make a scarf like this? (*If the scarf was made by someone in your congregation, you may ask them to reply.*) I'm sure glad someone knows how to pay attention to the details of how to make a scarf like this. It looks simple, but there's more to it than I thought.
- If someone gave me a ball of yarn and knitting needles, I wouldn't have a clue what to do or where to start. I would need someone to teach me, and I would probably need to use a pattern so that I would know what stitches to use to make scarf. A pattern would give me some guidelines.
- Making a scarf is like making a healthy community. We need someone to teach us a pattern. As families and as communities, we need guidelines or rules to help us know how to treat one another, especially when we're having trouble getting along (for example, when we're angry with each other, when we have different ideas of what we should do, and so on). It's worth paying attention to the details of how we live together.

- What are the rules and guidelines that we follow? How do we know what to do to be a healthy community that works together and takes care of one another?
- Not all knit scarves look the same in terms of color, length, or width, and not all follow the exact same pattern. But they all have rules and purpose and beauty. Communities are like that too.
- God offers us guidance and help to know how to treat each other in different situations so that, like the stitches of this scarf, we can all work together to create something functional and beautiful.

### Responding through song: "For Me, For You"

God's promises are for me, for you, in all that we go through.

God's love is for me, for you, in all that we go through.

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Covenant* between God and people (Exodus 20:1-17)

*Guidelines* for healthy relationships between God and people, and between the people (Exodus 20:1-17)

- The commandments of Exodus 20 show God's people what a relationship between them and God should look like, as well as how to treat one another. Relational guidelines are necessary but have the potential to get in the way if we forget the purpose of those rules (for example, to help us respect one another rather than keep each other in line). Explore the concept of the letter of the law versus spirit of the law. This may be one way that we might seek God's will rather than rigidly apply rules.
- In Psalm 19, David delights in God's law. It is not a heavy, burdensome, challenging set of rules to maintain, but a lovely, life-giving, sweet and sure word from God. How might David's orientation toward Scripture inform your congregation's reading of Scripture and God's law?

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God's love  
to extend God's love  
and live God's promise.





## Lent 4

March 11, 2018

# Me & You & Darkness in View

**Scripture:** Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

**Focus statement:** Allowing darkness and negativity to come in between people or in between people and God is sometimes easier than the vulnerability and humility of being exposed to the light. What are the things that we don't want to see that may be standing between you and me?

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You, even in darkness, God's promise and God's love grow all around us.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 13** Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

**HWB 163** Obey My Voice

**HWB 372** O Healing River

**HWB 401** This Little Light of Mine

**HWB 557** O God, in Restless Living

**HWB 570** We Walk by Faith

**STJ 45** In the Morning When I Rise

**STJ 54** Longing for Light

**STJ 95** I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you, with pain and darkness clouding your view,  
I'll give you courage to face what is true,  
I choose to be there with you.

## Call to worship

**Leader:** Who comes in the name of God? Step into the light and be known.

**People:** **We are coming, through darkness and fear. We come into the light by the power of God.**

**Leader:** People of God, God has heard your cries and is opening a way for you.

**People:** **We are here, through darkness and fear. We come into the light of this day by the power of God.**

**Leader:** You are here, and God is here. What will you do?

**People:** **Together we will worship our God.**

## Confession

God of compassion and consequence, some days it's hard to face who we are.

We like to be in control, to know where we are going.

Relying on someone else, even you, is hard.

We get impatient and find things to criticize.

Some of us even like to complain.

Glossing over past hardships is easier than admitting that we needed your help, and still do.

We don't want to see how our attitudes and actions make things worse.

We are sorry.

Forgive our ingratitude.

Grant us the courage to face the truth.



## Words of assurance

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.

## Between Me & You enactment (children's feature)

**Supplies:** two large sheets, scarves, or blankets

### Action and noticing

- Drape a large sheet over a group of volunteers.
- Ask the volunteers: Can you see well? Can you see anyone outside the sheet? How well can you see the others who are under the sheet?
- Consider adding another layer to make it darker. Ask: Now how well can you see? What would it take to help you see better?
- Remove the sheet.

### Wondering

- Sometimes it's fun to hide in a tent or fort, or to be in the dark. Sometimes the dark feels safe, and sometimes it is scary. God is with us even when we are in a dark place or are having a difficult time. But we don't have to stay in the dark forever. Jesus calls us to come out of the darkness and be people of the light.
- Like this sheet, sometimes we have barriers in our lives that make it hard to know God's love or understand what God is up to. I wonder, what are some things in our lives that block our view of God's love for us? What are some things in our lives that make it hard to know and understand what God is up to?
- It can take courage to remove the barriers and step into the light, so we may need to pray and ask God for help removing the things that come in between us and God.

### Responding through song: "For Me, For You"

God's promises are for me, for you, and in the darkness too.  
God's love is for me, for you, and in the darkness too.

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Moses* mediates between God and people (Numbers 21:4-9)

*Sin/darkness* between God and people (Numbers 21:4-9;  
John 3:14-21)

*Jesus* lifted up between God and world (John 3:14-21;  
Ephesians 2:1-10)

- God commands Moses to make a serpent to save the people from the serpents that are killing them. The thing that is killing them becomes their source of salvation. How might God also use the very things in our lives that are killing us to bring us into new life? God does not respond to the people's prayer by taking the serpents away. Rather, God brings healing when they confront their sin, look upon the source of their wounds raised up, and face their own darkness. When has God answered our prayers and brought about new life, but perhaps not in the way we had imagined?
- There are times when we may feel more comfortable dwelling in the dark for fear of what will be exposed in the light. It takes courage and vulnerability to bring our dark places to light. While painful, confronting the darkness leads us to the healing light. This is the invitation to healing and transformation. When has facing the source of our wounds brought about healing? What parts of ourselves or our experience are being invited out of the darkness and into the light?

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God's love  
to extend God's love  
and live God's promise.



# Lent 5

## Me & You & Covenant New

March 18, 2018

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

**Focus statement:** In the new covenant there are no betweens and no go-betweens. We no longer have need of a go-between mediator; however, like the disciples, we may serve as go-betweens by pointing people directly to Christ. The promise is extended beyond the direct descendants, drawing all people to a relationship between Me (God) and You (the people).

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You, in a new covenant, God's promise and God's love grow in our hearts.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 389** Take My Life

**HWB 407** We Are People of God's Peace

**HWB 483** O God, Who Gives Us Life

**STJ 3** Jesus Calls Us Here to Meet Him

**STJ 81** Take, O Take Me as I Am

**STS 60** Come to Me, Come to Us

**STS 63** Herr, füll mich neu (God, Fill Me Now)

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you,  
the days are coming when here's what I'll do:  
I'm going to plant my words within you,  
I choose to be there with you.

### Call to worship

**Leader:** I see you, familiar faces, visitors, and guests. What brings you here?

**People:** **We want to see Jesus.**

**Leader:** I see you, all who are here for the first time, and all who have returned. What brings you here?

**People:** **We want to see Jesus.**

**Leader:** I see you and know that each one of you has been invited by God to this house of worship. Thank you for coming. Open your eyes and your hearts, for together we are here with Jesus. Praise the Lord.

### Confession

Beloved Protector and Teacher, we need guidance, and sometimes we remember to ask for it.

But even as we reach for your hand, we rush off in our own direction.

We barely listen to the rules we break.

We like to remind ourselves, wherever we are, that you are with us.

We forget the proper response: that to serve you, we must follow you.

We put conditions on your love,

because we don't want to go to the uncomfortable places where we see ourselves in the other.

Forgive us.

Hold us close and teach us again to truly live as you love.



## Words of assurance

Thus says the Lord God, “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

## Between Me & You enactment (children’s feature)

**Supplies:** a large scarf, sheet, or blanket that can be used to divide the group in two

### Action and noticing

- Have two volunteers hold up a scarf, sheet, or blanket so that the group is divided in two, and have each half face the scarf.
- Ask the group: What do you notice? How well can you see each other?
- Then ask: What would help you to see better?
- Remove the barriers.

### Wondering

- What are some of the barriers that can come between me and you? What are some things that come between people and make it difficult to get along or to see each other’s point of view? What are some barriers that come between us and God?
- I wonder how we can deal with some of these barriers. I wonder who could help us.
- The text from Jeremiah says that God will write God’s words on our hearts, and will have a relationship with us without any barriers that divide us from God. In fact, God gave us a new covenant so that we can be confident in approaching God without barriers standing in our way.

### Responding through song: “For Me, For You”

God’s promises are for me, for you, a covenant that’s new!  
God’s love is for me, for you, a covenant that’s new!

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Philip and Andrew* serve as a go-between between the Greeks and Jesus (John 12:20-33)

*Anticipated shift* between old and new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33; Hebrews 5:5-10)

- Throughout Lent we have explored the importance of covenants. This week a new covenant is foretold that will fulfill God’s work with humanity, a covenant that will sustain where previous ones did not.
- This week recognizes a change, something new, the approach of some work God is doing. Jesus acknowledges the role of death in bringing about this new covenant.
- In the same way Philip and Andrew function as a go-between between the Greeks and Jesus, we as disciples are also called to make a way for those who wish to see Jesus.

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God’s love  
to extend God’s love  
and live God’s promise.





## Lent 6

March 25, 2018

# Me & You & an Alternative View

**Scripture:** Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; John 12:12-16

**Focus statement:** The crowds, as informed by Scriptural teaching, have certain expectations of the coming Messiah that come between their understanding and Jesus' lived experience, which defies their expectations. What does our reading of Scripture lead us to believe, and how might our encounters with Jesus challenge our expectations?

**Summary statement for bulletin:** Between Me & You and all we lay down, God's promise and God's love grow in surprising ways.

### Song suggestions

**HWB 43** Christ Is Our Cornerstone

**HWB 238** Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

**HWB 239** Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

**STJ 23** Slowly Turning, Ever Turning

**STJ 104** God Moves in a Mysterious Way

**STS 73** Jesus Is Coming

**STS 74** Hosanna! Hosanna!

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you, the words of Scripture providing a clue; the stone, rejected, surprising for you,  
I choose to be there with you.

## Call to worship

**Leader:** Come, people of God, this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day  
Jesus enters Jerusalem.

**People:** **Open the gates of righteousness so that we can enter and give thanks to the Lord.**

**Leader:** The gates are open, come on in. Give thanks, for God is good!

## Confession

Jesus, Messiah. The crowds around you can be thrilling, or frightening.  
One moment they are clay in your hands, ready to be shaped.  
The next they are squeezing you, like putty in a clenched fist, demanding that you conform.  
Is that what we do?

When we count the cost of your words for us, it hurts.  
We get it, why the masses turned and your disciples faded away.  
Do you?

The time is ripe for change, then and now. Why can't you lead that change in a way we understand?  
How is it that you define success so differently? It scares us to question you.  
It's worse if we don't.

Forgive us for holding in questions so long that we can't bear the answers.  
Forgive us for fearing the crowds, and the consequences.  
Open our eyes and hearts to receive your teaching.  
Show us again this new way of living. Help us to love like you.



## Words of assurance

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.  
Believe in God, believe also in me.”

## Between Me & You enactment (children’s feature)

*Note: You may choose to incorporate this enactment into a Palm Sunday processional.*

**Supplies:** multiple scarves

### Action and noticing

- Divide the group into pairs, with a scarf stretched between each pair (illustrating between me and you).
- Tell the Palm Sunday story, and invite the pairs to lay down their scarves like the people laid their cloaks and branches on the road as Jesus passed by.

### Wondering

- People in Jesus’ time had many different ideas and disagreed with each other about many things. Does that sound familiar? Do you think we have different ideas and disagreements today?
- We have been using these scarves to remind us of our theme—“Between Me & You.” We’ve been reminded about how *big* God’s love is (God’s promises for me, and you, and all the creatures too!). We’ve been reminded about how *long* God’s love is (lasting from generation to generation, to your children and children’s children and children’s children’s children too!). We’ve noticed that there can be many things come between us—conflicts and problems and disagreements of many kinds.
- Maybe today, on Palm Sunday, we’re invited to take our scarves—whatever has come between us—and lay them down in front of Jesus. The people were surprised by Jesus and what he said and what he did. Maybe Jesus will surprise us too!

### Responding through song: “For Me, For You”

God’s promises are for me, for you, full of surprises too!  
God’s love is for me, for you, full of surprises too!

## Sermon seeds

### Between

*Different understanding* comes between the crowds and Jesus’ lived experience (John 12:12-16)

*Time* comes between us and a new understanding

- The crowds who sing Psalm 118 as Jesus enters Jerusalem are proclaiming Jesus’ identity as an ancestor of David, and that Jesus is King. Jesus presents an alternative view of the role and purpose of the Messiah King proclaimed in the Scriptures, an understanding different from the people’s. How might an encounter with Jesus today challenge our understanding of Scripture?
- The disciples look back at the events of John 12 and understand them differently. Throughout history, the church has needed to look back, remember, and gain new understanding of the Scriptures, God, and ourselves. How do we feel about new understandings or reinterpretations of Scripture? What are the challenges, gifts, dangers, and blessings that come with reexamining our understanding of Scripture, God, and ourselves?

## Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.  
We go in God’s love  
to extend God’s love  
and live God’s promise.



# Easter

## Nothing between Us

April 1, 2018

**Scripture:** Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18

**Focus statement:** Like Mary, we are so used to having something in between me and you that when the stone is rolled away, our expectations keep us from seeing the risen Christ. In his death and resurrection, Jesus has become the *between* so that there are no more *betweens*. This *nothing between* is for all!

**Summary statement for bulletin:** God's promise and God's love have broken the barriers; there is nothing between us!

### Song suggestions

**HWB 46** I Sing the Mighty Power of God

**HWB 50** Praise the Lord, Sing Hallelujah

**HWB 276** This Joyful Eastertide

**HWB 280** Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

**STJ 14** Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

**STS 88** That Easter Morn, at Break of Day

**STS 89** Christ Is Alive

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

### Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you, the temple curtain is torn now in two, stone rolled away, no barrier in view.

I choose to be there with you,

I will be right there with you,

I choose to be here with you.

### Call to worship

**Leader:** To all who weep, and to all who smile, whether with joy or sorrow, welcome. Welcome home to this house of God. Welcome in the embrace of Christ. Hear and believe the good news, for he is risen!

**People:** **He is risen indeed!**

**Leader:** Praise the Lord, our Jesus lives!

**People:** **Yes, praise the Lord! We will worship God together.**

### Confession

God of life, in you, death has no power.

Because of you, this life is not our final end.

Thank you.

It feels good to celebrate new life, yours and ours.

It's spring.

We long to throw off the heavy blankets of winter and bask in the sun.

We confess that, just as some folks would like to skip winter,

there are times when we want to skip the whole crucifixion story and jump straight to the resurrection.

And yet there are other times when death feels more real than life.

When we see an empty tomb, it is easy to despair, and it seems futile to hope.

We hear stories of people who claim to have seen you alive; we want to believe, but struggle.

Forgive us for not recognizing you, for doubting our fellow believers, and for trying to hold you back.