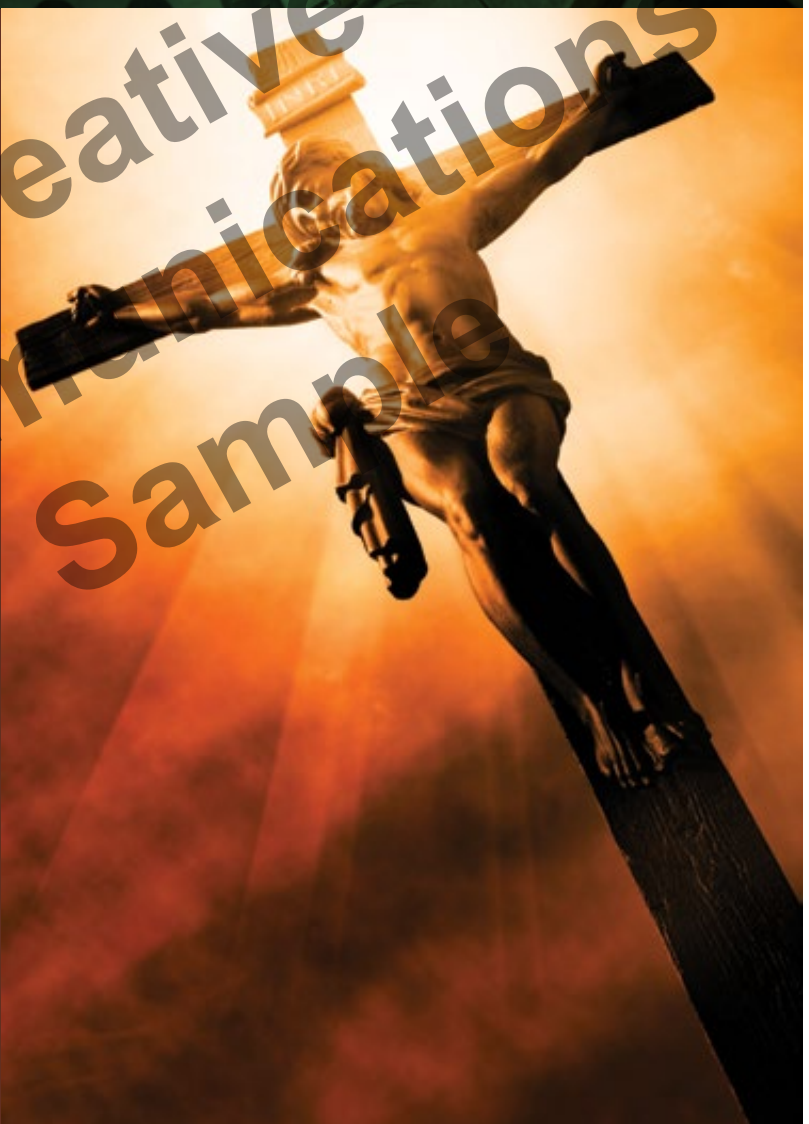


CHRIST ON TRIAL

A Series of
Services
for Lent,
Holy Week
& Easter



**Creative
Communications
Sample**

CHRIST ON TRIAL

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Lent, Holy Week & Easter

LEADER'S GUIDE

CHRIST ON TRIAL

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Lent, Holy Week & Easter

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CHRIST ON TRIAL

A Series of Services for
Lent, Holy Week & Easter

ABOUT THE SERIES

Christ most certainly WAS on trial. Two thousand years have come and gone since Caiaphas and Pilate passed judgment on Jesus in Jerusalem. And though the verdict passed down at that trial was a miscarriage of justice, the result fulfilled God's purpose: to save the world by sacrificing his Son.

Christ most certainly IS on trial. His saving act, his being in the world, his radical teachings all demand a reaction. Every human heart must wrestle with questions like: Who is this Christ? Is he who he claims to be? If so, what does he mean for me and my living? Christ demands a reply. Daily, Christ is on trial.

*As he is again this Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Christ On Trial is a series of worship services in which court is in session to determine who Christ is. Each service comes with a pre-printed bulletin, a drama involving the lawyer alone or with a witness, a children's sermon, prayers, hymns (including a theme hymn set to the tune *Erhalt uns, Herr*), and other hymn suggestions. The pastor may add a commentary. Scriptural evidence is analyzed each service, and eye witnesses share accounts of their encounters with Jesus.*

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ASH WEDNESDAY:

OPENING STATEMENTS

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. On Ash Wednesday we hear a lawyer's opening statements as to who this Jesus is, and who will be on the witness stand in the coming weeks. Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

Listen in as we we hear a lawyer's opening statements as to who this Jesus is, and who will be on the witness stand in the coming weeks. Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

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WEEK 1:
MATTHEW

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. In Week 1 Matthew speaks of Jesus' scandalous association with the seedier side of society. Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Week 1 Matthew speaks of Jesus' scandalous association with the seedier side of society. Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

CHRIST ON TRIAL

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WEEK 2:
A WOMAN HEALED

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. In Week 2 a former cripple is, herself, evidence of Jesus' loose interpretation of Sabbath law. Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Week 2 a former cripple is, herself, evidence of Jesus' loose interpretation of Sabbath law. Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

CHRIST ON TRIAL

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WEEK 3:
NICODEMUS

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. In Week 3 prominent Jewish leader Nicodemus weighs in: Is Jesus, a disturber of the peace? Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict:
Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Week 3 prominent Jewish leader Nicodemus weighs in: Is Jesus, a disturber of the peace? Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

CHRIST ON TRIAL

A Series of Services for
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WEEK 4:
AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. In Week 4 evidence that Jesus is a self-elected "Judge and Jury" is offered by a woman caught in adultery. Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Week 4 evidence that Jesus is a self-elected "Judge and Jury" is offered by a woman caught in adultery. Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

CHRIST ON TRIAL

A Series of Services for
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WEEK 5:

JOHN

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. In Week 5 a young man named John is called to the stand to answer the question: "Are charges of cannibalism true?" Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Week 5 a young man named John is called to the stand to answer the question: "Are charges of cannibalism true?" Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

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PALM SUNDAY:
MARY MAGDALENE

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a special series of services called Christ on Trial. In this 10-service series we will listen in each week as court is in session to determine who Christ is. On Palm Sunday Mary Magdalene is a witness to Jesus' activities, especially in his last week. Examine evidence in this series that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

BULLETIN NOTICE

In this service for Palm Sunday Mary Magdalene is a witness to Jesus' activities, especially in his last week. Examine evidence in this service that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus ... for you?

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PALM SUNDAY:
MARY MAGDALENE

DRAMATIC SERMON

- The **Dramatic Sermon**, “Witness: Mary Magdalene,” is delivered by the pastor (P), playing the role of the Prosecutor, and another reader (R), playing the part of Mary Magdalene:

P The court calls Mary of Magdala. Do you swear to tell the truth

R *I do.*

P Now, Mary, just to get some background information, as we understand it, you came from the town of Magdala. This was a thriving rural community on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, between Capernaum and Tiberia. Is that correct?

R *Yes.*

P Also, as we understand it, you enjoyed some degree of wealth. At least, you weren't one of those

peasant types always worrying where your next meal was coming from and attracted to a miracle worker who could supply a free lunch. Is that correct?

- R** *Yes, I came from a home with most of the comforts of life. But there are many kinds of hunger. You may note that my name is Mary. Today that name is associated with serenity and giftedness, but the true meaning of my name is "bitter, grieved." And bitter and grieved I was until I met Jesus. You see, I was possessed by seven demons. That is a way of saying I was severely afflicted. I had multiple problems. My life was a living hell. And all the wealth my family had could find no cure. Then I met Jesus. He was just beginning His ministry. He took pity on me and cured me. It was wonderful—to be healed, free at last. Why, you just...*
- P** *(cutting her off)* Yes, well, we've already heard about Jesus' healing powers and how appreciated they were. The court is more interested in what happened after you were healed—the relationship between you and Jesus. We understand that you literally became one of His followers, one of the "camp women" who ... um ... saw to His and the disciples' needs.
- R** *Yes, I became one of Jesus' followers. But it was all very proper. Jesus preached love for one another, but it was a higher form of love, not a carnal one—a love like God has for each of us. Along with several other women—Joanna, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Salome, Suzanna, and others—we saw to Jesus' needs; cooking, and the like. Those of us who could, supported Him financially. We were privileged to learn from Him and share His teachings with others, often other women. We were disciples every bit as much as the men.*
- P** A female disciple ... hmm. We note that, among the women, you were always mentioned first. So you were the leader of the women and had a special relationship with Jesus?
- R** *I did coordinate our part of the work. And since I was one of Jesus' first healings, and a major one at that, I did have a certain status among the women. As to a relationship with Jesus, after what he did for me I would have given my life for Him.*
- P** Yes, now that gets us to the point in our inquiry tonight. You were there when Jesus was crucified and died. Is that true?
- R** *Yes, the soldiers kept most of the people at some distance. I guess they feared that the disciples might start a riot or try to save Jesus, but they allowed some of the women to come closer. It was terrible to see His suffering, but we wanted to offer what comfort we could. As it turned out, though, we were comforted and inspired.*
- P** Comforted and inspired? Watching a man beg for his life, curse his tormentors? (aside to jury) We warned you that this witness' mental balance might be fragile. It may be she was not completely cured in the first place. Surely no one in their right mind could find the trials of a criminal at the point of execution inspiring.

- R** *But that's just it. Jesus, who was innocent and had more right than any to curse, spoke words of comfort and blessing. Why, His very first words were a prayer for forgiveness to those who were doing this to Him. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."*
- P** Well, it has been known that some criminals facing execution speak kindly to their executioners, even slip them bribes in hopes of being treated with some mercy ... even if it's just a swifter death.
- R** *But Jesus wasn't just praying for the soldiers. He was asking God to forgive all who made His suffering necessary. Even you and me. It is our sin as much as theirs that required Christ to make this sacrifice. That is why His next words were so important—the ones He spoke to the thief. You see, Jesus was crucified between two bandits. The one taunted Jesus. But the other thief acknowledged his sin, recognizing Jesus' innocence and divine origins. He asked Christ to intervene for him with God. He sought forgiveness and was promised eternal life. This is what the whole story of salvation is about. Christ came to die for our sins, whether criminal acts or everyday sins we're not aware of. It's God's gift to us so that we can live and die in peace—knowing we will always be with Christ and He with us. We need only accept the gift.*
- P** Yes, well, that's very nice ... but let's get back to the facts and the testimony of what you heard. By the way, are there any corroborating witnesses, or were you the only one who heard Jesus speak?
- R** *Oh, yes, there were others nearby. In fact, Jesus' next words were to His mother and to His beloved disciple, John, I believe. He loved and cared for His mother right to the end. He gave her into the care of the disciple. They were to be family for each other. And thus, Christ set an example for us all. We are each to be fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers ... to each other. We are to take Jesus' place in caring for, comforting, and supporting each other.*
- P** This really isn't the appropriate time or place for a sermon on Christian fellowship. Could we please get back to what you saw and heard?
- R** *Well, there wasn't much more. It became dark like night, even though it was midday, and that lasted for 3 hours. Jesus suffered in silence for awhile and then He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He must have felt abandoned even by God. But that separation is what Jesus saved us from.*
- P** You can't feel more alone than being abandoned by God. Was that all?
- R** *Almost. When Jesus knew the end was at hand, he said, "I thirst." A soldier got a sponge on a stick, dipped it in some cheap common wine, almost like vinegar, and let Him suck some of it. Then He said, "It is finished," and commended Himself into God's hands.*
- P** I'm sure you were all glad to see that Jesus' suffering was over. Of course, all your dreams and plans were over as well.

R *Some might have seen it that way, but Jesus and those who believed in Him knew that what was finished was not just Jesus' suffering. Much more importantly, God's plan of salvation was completed. Jesus had fulfilled God's righteousness, lived a holy life as none of us could, and taken the weight of our sins upon Himself. He could then give Himself over into God's care. Thanks to Him, we can too.*

P Well, the point is it was finished. He died and that was the end of it. I think the jury has heard enough now. Thank you. You are dismissed.

R *But, but, that wasn't the end. (getting excited) Yes, He died, but that wasn't the end. Let me just tell you the rest of the story.*

P This was what we feared. The stress has unhinged poor Mary. Ah, Mary, our time is up for today. Perhaps, we will recall you at another session to the court. For now, you are dismissed. You may go. Thank you for your testimony. Poor Mary, she's so sunk in her delusions. Next, I guess she would be telling us Jesus, this very human carpenter turned rabbi, rose from the dead, and if we believe in Him we will rise also. It's amazing what people are willing to believe.

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GOOD FRIDAY:
CLOSING ARGUMENTS

MUSIC GUIDE

Rhosymedre 6666 888	382-383
Herzliebster Jesu 11 11 11 5	384-385
Erhalt Uns, Herr LM	386-387
Hamburg LM	388-389
Rhosymedre 6666 888	390-391
Contemporary Music Song Suggestions	392

Tune..... Rhosymedre 6666 888

- The **Come to Order** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation with verses sung by the congregation to the tune Rhosymedre 6666 888 or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

My song is love unknow, my Savior's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take frail flesh and die?
My Lord should take frail flesh and die?

P Pilate said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

C **By a perversion of justice he was taken away. He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities.**

He came from his blest throne, salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none the longed-for Christ would know.
But, oh, my friend, my friend indeed,
Who at my need his life did spend;
Who at my need his life did spend!

P Then Pilate summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews? What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world."

C **By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.**

Sometimes they strew his way and his sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
And for his death they thirst and cry.
And for his death they thirst and cry.

P Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" But Jesus gave him no answer, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

C **Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.**

Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight.
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,
That he his foes from thence might free.
That he his foes from thence might free.

P The high priest said to him, "Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death."

C **By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. Out of his anguish he shall see light. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.**

In life, no house, no home my Lord on earth might have;
In death, no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was his home;
But mine the tomb wherein he lay.
But mine the tomb wherein he lay.

Tune.....Herzliebster Jesu 11 11 11 5

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a measure rest marked '1'. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, also beginning with a measure rest marked '1'. The music is primarily composed of chords and dyads.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It begins with a measure rest marked '6'. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, also beginning with a measure rest marked '6'. The music continues with chords and dyads.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It begins with a measure rest marked '11'. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, also beginning with a measure rest marked '11'. The music concludes with chords and dyads.

- **Psalm 22:1-15** is spoken by the pastor with verses sung by the congregation to the tune Herzliebster Jesu 11 11 11 5, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

*(In this styling, phrases of the hymn interrupt the reading of the Psalm.
The final chord of each phrase is held softly over the spoken words.)*

- ☐ I have cried for help, but still it does not come. During the day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. I call at night, but get no rest. Our ancestors put their trust in you; they trusted you, and you saved them. They called to you and escaped from danger; they trusted you and were not disappointed.

My God, my God, why must I be forsaken?
Look from your throne, and let your pity waken.

- ☐ I am a worm and no longer human, despised and scorned by everyone! All who see me make fun of me; they stick out their tongues and shake their heads. "You relied on the Lord," they say. "Why doesn't he save you? If the Lord likes you, why doesn't he help you?"

Lord God eternal, in your mercy hear me.
Haste to draw near me!

- ☐ It was you who brought me safely through birth, and when I was a baby, you kept me safe. I have relied on you since the day I was born, and you have always been my God. Many enemies surround me like bulls; they are all around me, like fierce bulls from the land of Bashan. They open their mouths like lions, roaring and tearing at me.

My God, my God, why must I be forsaken?
Look from your throne, and let your pity waken.

- ☐ My strength is gone, like water spilled on the ground. All my bones are out of joint; my heart is like melted wax. My throat is as dry as dust, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have left me for dead in the dust.

Lord God eternal, in your mercy hear me.
Haste to draw near me!