

Opioid and Addiction Sunday Worship Resource

For the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA

October 14, 2018

This resource is provided for you by the Delaware-Maryland Synod Opioid and Addiction Team. There are far more options included here than can be used at once. You know your local context and setting the best, and therefore can pick and choose the pieces and parts that will be best for you. It loosely follows *Sundays and Seasons*, a familiar resource to many ELCA congregations.

Color

Green

Introduction

This Sunday was designated at the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly as part of a resolution in June 2018 as Opioid Crisis Sunday. October is National Substance Abuse Prevention Month. Worship today will invite the topic of addiction to be front and center throughout worship. This worship will be a time of singing, praying, and learning about this crisis in our communities. Our assemblies gather with invitation, hope and comfort for those who suffer and their families, both within our congregations and in the community. As communities that believe in the theology of the cross, we don't ignore the pain and brokenness of the world but enter fully into the midst of it as Jesus did for us.

Gathering Song

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me ELW 325

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven ELW 865

All Creatures, Worship God Most High (All creatures of our God and King) ELW 835

Morning Has Broken ELW 556

God of Grace and God of Glory ELW 705

Prayer of the Day/Call to Worship Options

Prayer of the Day

(in unison)

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,

Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
 Taking, as Jesus did,
 This sinful world as it is,
 Not as I would have it,
 Trusting that You will make all things right,
 If I surrender to Your will,
 So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
 And supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

Full Serenity Prayer from Reinhold Niebuhr

Call to Worship Option 1

Worship Leader: We gather together,

ALL: Reminded of our human frailty which causes us to stumble.

Worship Leader: We gather together

ALL: to reflect upon the people in our midst and in the world suffering from their pain and addiction.

Worship Leader: We gather together

ALL: to all be set free through Jesus Christ, our Savior who makes all things new.

AMEN.

Call to Worship Option 2

A quote from Rosalynn Carter:

People with [addictions] are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help, we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries for help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away. Because it will not go away, and because of our spiritual commitments, we are compelled to take action.¹

Confession and Forgiveness/Litany of Confession

Gracious God,

P: Your people are enslaved to various forms of addiction.

ALL: Forgive us.

P: No matter how far we have sunk.

ALL: Christ died for all.

P: Indeed, Christ died for all, taking the full punishment for all sins and brokenness, including addiction, to give us all abundant life. Most Merciful God, Look down with your grace and compassion. Walk alongside us, free us and make all things news. AMEN.

¹ <http://mhn-ucc.blogspot.com/p/about.html>)

Word

Choose a Track: Special Readings for the Day, Revised Common Lectionary or Narrative Lectionary.

Special Readings for the Day

2 Corinthians: 5:17

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Psalm 27: 4-6

*⁴ One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.*

*⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.*

*⁶ Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.*

Romans 6: 8-13

⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.

John 11:1-44

Raising of Lazarus

Revised Common Lectionary

First Reading	Alt First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Job 23:1-9, 16-17	Amos 5:6-7, 10-15	Psalm 90:12-17	Hebrews 4:12-16	Mark 10:17-31

Narrative Lectionary

Joshua Renews the Covenant

Joshua 24:1-15 [16-26]

Story of God's deliverance. Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Matt 4:8-10, Satan offers Jesus all kingdoms, but Jesus says "Worship God and serve only him")

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Blessed are the¹ poor in spirit,* for theirs is the king^ldom of heaven. *Alleluia* (Matthew 5:3)

Images in the Readings

Special Readings for the Day

2 Corinthians

Recovery and addiction. All things can be made new with a fresh and clean start.

Romans

Addiction can feel like it has dominion in our mortal bodies. The death and destruction of addiction no longer has ultimate power over us.

John

Those dealing with substance (mis)use disorder can feel like Lazarus. Read the article *Who is Lazarus?* By Marguerite Olson Fletcher Page 8 From *Addiction, Grace and Healing: Images for Healing*. Copyright 1991. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/addiction-grace-healing.pdf>

Revised Common Lectionary

Job

faithfulness even when things do not go our way, trust that God is still in charge. Working Preacher commentary

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3793

Amos

See the commentary at Working Preacher. The community was told they were doomed and still asked to repent. Recovery is possible

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3794

Hebrews

Two-edged sword. There is power in admitting one's powerlessness to illness and addiction and allowing God to guide our lives. Working Preacher

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3796

Mark

1. The rich man humbled himself before God – focus on Step 7 on humility!
2. When is enough enough (of anything)?
3. The rich man said, "I've done all the right things but there still something missing. I'm not whole." Jesus said "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid." The young ruler was handed the keys to the kingdom and he walked away because what he had, meant more to him than what he was offered. Sometimes the brokenness we know is better than the journey to something better that we don't know. We get comfortable in our brokenness. Our broken lives are more comfortable than the journey to find wholeness.
4. Two powerful emotions that motivate people to make dramatic changes in their lives: inspiration and desperation. A person often finds their greatest inspiration in the most desperate of situations – their rock bottom. God's word is full of examples of men and women who hit rock bottom, like the Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-31; There are 6 lessons that we need to learn from Biblical examples of hitting rock bottom:
 - #1. different people have different rock bottoms.
 - #2. do not judge others when they find God at their rock bottom.
 - #3. rock bottom is a place where God can begin to build.
 - #4. do not protect or prevent others from hitting rock bottom.
 - #5. finding God at rock bottom does not remove the consequences of your actions.
 - #6. never forget your rock bottom(s).

Narrative Lectionary

The second (came to believe in a power greater than ourselves) and third (return will and self to God's care) steps of the 12-Step Program may apply to this passage from Joshua. Joshua reviewed the history of blessings that the people had received, even those people who may have seemed like outsiders.

Joshua's generation has the opportunity to review their blessings and to choose who/what they will worship/serve. Many of us turn to false idols and things that cannot heal rather than turning to God. For some the idol or false healer is alcohol, opioids or other addicting

substances. Most of us have chosen something other than the Lord to worship for a while and things rarely turn out well.

The good news is that we can return to the Lord, commit ourselves and receive God's forgiveness and welcome. Other themes include being a new creation, a new person in faith, and one beloved of a God whose compassion knows no bounds. The covenant can be renewed as often as we need because God is always faithful. We can link this to AA messages like one day at a time to stress the human need to seek God always and to show grace to oneself and others as the Lord would.

Ideas for the Day

Illustrations

Life and death decisions based on the story of Patrick Henry from Christianity Today:

<https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2005/august/011.html>

The power of choices in recovery/ making good choices in recovery from the Addiction Center:

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/community/making-positive-choices-in-addiction-recovery/>

Being chosen or finding our path from Preaching Today:

<https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2000/january/12197.html>

Our Identity is Beloved Child of God (one in a covenant relationship with the One whose love is steadfast)/losing our identity to addiction: <https://www.addiction.com/expert-blogs/addiction-steals-identity-how-to-get-it-back/>

Reclaiming one's identity from mental illness:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3551288/>

Sermon Videos

If this topic is difficult for you to preach on, and/or your worship space has technology capabilities available you might consider using one of these videos

Carson McCullar Day 4 Mass Gathering speaker from 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVsxxBgPbNQ>.

Please note there is some questionable terminology of "being cured" from the presenter.

Anne Lamott is a well-known author who is in recovery. Here she shares some of her own story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kjyuposD78>

Show the music video Chain Breaker as an introduction to sermon time.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cd_xxmXdQz4

Interactive Sermon Activity

A visual reminder of the severity of this crisis can be a powerful tool for awareness. Use round sticker dots from an office supply store or use a marker to create a code. You can put them directly on the bulletin or you can also use 3x5 index cards and hand them out randomly to worshippers. You will need to add a small black mark on a few of the blue dots.

Here are the statistics based on average size of congregations. You can adjust the statistics to match your average worship attendance. Depending on the size of your congregation, some may need more than one sticker. The statistics are rounded up to whole numbers.

Congregation Size	50	75	100	150	200	250
Blue	6	10	13	19	26	32
Blue Dot with Black Mark	1	1	1	2	3	4
Yellow	1	2	2	3	4	5
Green	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4
Red	ALL	ALL	ALL	115	115	115

Follow this script:

- Blue** If you have any type of blue dot, please stand up. You represent the 1 in 7 Americans who will face a substance addiction. If you have a blue dot with a black dot inside of it, please remain standing. This is the 10% of those addicted who will receive treatment.² Thank you. You may be seated.
- Yellow** If you have a yellow dot please stand up. Drug overdose is the leading cause of death for people under 50.³ Last year, overdoses killed more people of all ages than guns or car accidents. 1 in 50 deaths were drug related.⁴ Thank you. You may be seated.
- Green** If you have a green dot, please stand up. An American dies every 19 minutes from an opioid or heroin overdose.⁵ That means in the course of this 60-minute worship service 3 people will die. (if your worship service runs 75 minutes, that is 4 people) Thank you. You may be seated.
- Red** If you have a red dot please stand up. Every day in the United States, 115 deaths are related to opioids.⁶ Thank you. You may be seated.

² <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/11/17/surgeon-general-1-7-us-face-substance-addiction/93993474/>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/03/health/deaths-drug-overdose-cdc.html>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/03/upshot/opioid-drug-overdose-epidemic.html>

⁵ <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2016/09/24/when-insurers-deny-treatment-drug-addiction/86176136/>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>

Personal Story during the Sermon

Are there members of your congregation who could share their faith story of how God was at work in the midst of addiction and/or recovery? As a person dealing with a substance (mis)use disorder? A person in long term recovery? Or as a spouse? As a parent or family member? Do you have members who work professionally as a police officer, counselor, nurse etc. and could share about their vocation as it relates to faith and their daily work? Ask them to share for 5-7 minutes.

Additional Background Readings

Resurrection and Addiction: A New Paradigm By the Rev. Carl Malin. Journal of Lutheran Ethics May 1, 2003. <https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/870>

Mercy and Addiction by Wendy Healy Living Lutheran Mary 11, 2018
<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2018/05/mercy-and-addiction/>

Let the Children Come/Children's Message

Supplies needed:

2 glass pitchers filled with the same amount of water

Two empty clear glasses

Pebbles/Rocks enough to fill one glass, but set aside

Today we will learn about resilience. Say to the children, "the problems and stresses of the world can really pile up". Name a few as you put rocks into one of the glasses. Some people try to deal with the problems and stresses with a band-aid of drugs and alcohol and end up becoming addicted where the drugs or alcohol take control over and ruin their lives or even kill them.

We come to worship to fill ourselves up with the goodness and wisdom of God to be resilient against the stuff of life and addiction. When we start each week with worship we fill ourselves with lots of hope, joy, love, strength and goodness of God, like the glass filled all with of water. (Fill the glass full of water). This is resilience.

But when we let the problems and stresses enter our lives first there is not as much room for the resilience we find here when we gather for worship. Pour enough water in to the top of the rocks. Notice with the children how much more water (hope, joy, love, strength, resilience) is in the glass when we start with that instead of trying to add it later after the rocks.

Remind the children that today you will be talking about addiction to drugs and alcohol and that God loves all, even those who are addicted. Church is a safe place to bring troubles and worries and ask for help and guidance, and even forgiveness.

Pray with them. Dear God, help me to be filled up with your hope, joy, love and resilience. Help me to lean on you and be resilient to make good choices when I am faced with opportunities to use drugs and alcohol. AMEN.

Hymn of the Day

There is a Balm in Gilead ELW 614

Healer of Our Every Ill ELW 612

Day by Day ELW 790

The King of Love My Shepherd Is ELW 502

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling ELW 631

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less ELW 596, 597

Prayers of Intercession

For those in the midst of addiction this very moment, that they may surrender, seek recovery and be restored to good health, we pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are working on being clean – strengthen them in the hard times and fill them with reassurance that their fight is worth it, and they're loved by you.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who relapse and use again, guide them back, one day at a time, and renew their hope in you.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For families crippled by grief over the loss of their precious child or loved one who has overdosed, and for all who have lost dear friends.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For families and friends of those struggling with addiction or on the path of recovery, that they may have the serenity to accept the things they cannot change, the courage to change the things they can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For addicted newborns, for those who care for them, for frightened parents who fear losing them, for foster providers, and for those who must decide for these babies' welfare.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For police, EMTs, those in clinics, hospital emergency rooms and others who save the lives of those close to death, for those who have been unable to save someone, and for those who decide about the availability of Narcan.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those in acute or chronic pain and for their physicians and families making choices about pain management.

Lord hear our prayer.

For educators in many settings – schools, health care facilities, law enforcement systems and social service agencies – that they may have the will, insight, training and resources to capably serve persons immersed in this opioid epidemic.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For us and all your people, especially those of our Delaware-Maryland Synod, that we would follow our Lord in seeking the lost, safeguarding the vulnerable, and embracing the marginalized. Increase in us the gifts of the spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord that we of all people not shun or shrink from this crisis.

Lord, hear our prayer.

In the Name of our servant Lord. **Amen.**

Additional Prayer Activities

Intercessory Prayer Candles

Offer a time during prayers or as part of coming forward for communion to light for self or someone you know facing addiction.

Prayer Labyrinth

If your congregation has a labyrinth walk it with the opioid crisis and all addictions in mind. Or print out hand labyrinths to use quietly in their seats.

Offering Songs

Come, thou Fount of every blessing ELW 807
Beneath the cross of Jesus
Lord, make us servants of your peace

Offertory Prayer

Lord, we thank you for giving us everything. We offer you a portion of our blessings in thanks for all the ways you have already healed your people and the ways you continue to use us as instruments of healing and peace. As we leave these gifts at your table we also ask for the courage to continue to daily honor you with our time, talents, and treasures. Accept this offering as worship and praise. AMEN

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord is with us

C: And with everyone who suffers with substance misuse or addiction

P: Lift up your hearts

C: We lift them to the Lord, our source of healing and mercy

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God
 C: We humbly offer our thanks and praise

It is right to offer our thanks and praise to the Father, who created us and formed us in the image of God. We give thanks to the Son, who was fully human and knew the pain of suffering and loss, and who rose to new life and freedom. We give thanks to the Holy Spirit, who moves in, with and through us as we approach the table of grace and as we leave the table, nourished and eager to share your love with everyone who seeks healing and wholeness. Blessings, honor, and praise to you, O Christ. [Hear us as we sing...]

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord, as we drink this wine,
 We remember that you are the giver of life.
 You are forgiveness, You bring deep peace to our souls and Your love flows within us.

As we pour out this wine, we see Your sacrifice poured out for us.
 We notice the depth of Your goodness, and the pain You suffered for us.
 We dwell upon the intricacy of human life, and the price You paid to set humanity free.

Yet just as the tombstone rolled away to unleash the Risen Lord, Your light shines in our hearts now, extinguishing all darkness to release Heavens blessings upon us.
 Thank you, Lord. Amen.⁷

Invitation to the Table

May you love God so much that you love nothing else too much;
 May you fear God enough that you need fear nothing else at all.
 Come, all you who hunger and thirst for the living God.
 Come to the table to eat and drink.⁸

Communion

If it is not your practice to offer grape juice at communion for those who might need it, this is a good week to introduce this practice. There should be no barriers to receiving God's grace at the table, least of all addiction. This can be a place of great anxiety for persons in recovery. Include clear written directions in your bulletin or oral instructions for communion that grape juice is offered and where it will be located for those who need it.

Communion Songs

Take o Take me As I am ELW 814
 Jesus Remember me ELW 616

⁷ http://www.prayerscapes.com/prayers/occasions/communion_prayers.html#ixzz5O7SwUT1D

⁸ From Elizabet Kaeton An 12-Step Ecumenical Communion Service <http://telling-secrets.blogspot.com/2009/03/12-step-ecumenical-communion-service.html>

Post Communion Prayer

The bread has been broken, the cup has been poured, the meal has been shared. Gracious God, we give thanks for bread for the journey, for your wisdom guiding us along the way. May there be friends to share the road as we dare to dream of creation renewed, and hope in the promise of justice for all. Amen.⁹

Sending Song

Lord of All Hopefulness ELW 765
 Amazing Grace ELW 779
 Every Time I Feel the Spirit
 Guide My Feet
 Joyful, joyful we adore thee ELW 836
 Now thank we all our God ELW 839,840
 Lift high the cross ELW 660

Additional Assembly and Praise Songs to be Used Throughout Worship

Tomlin, Chris “Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)” from CCLI
 Smith, Jonathan/Mia Fieldes/Zach Williams “Chain Breaker” from CCLI
 West, Matthew “Hello My Name Is” from CCLI
 Leonard, David/Jason Ingram/Leah Jordan, “I Surrender” from CCLI
 Rend Collective. “Build Your Kingdom Here” from CCLI
 Kaan, Fred “Help Us Accept Each Other” from CCLI
 Maher, Matt “Your Grace is Enough” from CCLI
 Figueroa, Andres/Maria McManus “You Are Mine” from CCLI
 Jesus Loves Me
 Breathe on me, o Breath of God

Blessing

All: Let me be at peace within myself. Let me accept that I am profoundly loved and need never be afraid. Let me be aware of the Source of Being that is common to us all and to all living creatures. Let me be filled with the presence of the Great Compassion towards myself and towards all living beings. Let me always be an instrument of liberation and not oppression. Let me see the face of Jesus in others; let me be the face of Jesus for others. Let me be at peace within myself. Amen.¹⁰

⁹ From Rev. Gord <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.com/2012/03/communion-prayer.html>

¹⁰ From Elizabeth Kaeton An 12-Step Ecumenical Communion Service <http://telling-secrets.blogspot.com/2009/03/12-step-ecumenical-communion-service.html>

Dismissal

Go in Peace. Remember people with substance (mis)use disorder, those in recovery and their families.

Thanks be to God.