

A Post by

Pastor Amy Yoder McGloughlin

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In worship, our texts are not picked arbitrarily. Most of the time we follow something called a lectionary. A lectionary is a list of texts used for different times in the church year.

The Jewish community has a common lectionary every year to aid them in getting through the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) in a year. And in the Christian tradition, there are a few different lectionary options:



Revised Common Lectionary: The RCL offers text options from the Hebrew Bible, Psalms, Gospel and Epistle every week. Some churches choose to use all four texts every week, while others, like Frazer Mennonite Church, might just use one or two of them at a time. The texts are sometimes sequential but sometimes not. The RCL is a three year cycle.

Narrative Lectionary: The NL starts at Genesis in September and works sequentially through the text—Hebrew Bible until Christmas, Gospels through Easter, then Epistles through Pentecost. In the NL, we have one or sometimes two texts from which we work every week. There are flexible summer options to work with a particular book of the bible, or choose some themes, like we did with the Justice theme this summer. The NL is a four year cycle.

This fall, we are beginning our second year of the Narrative Lectionary. I've been intrigued by the texts, and the ways that it forces us to work with a text, even if it's not one we would have otherwise chosen. We must deal with the texts that challenge us or make us uncomfortable. That helps us to clarify our understanding in deeper ways.

This fall, many of the texts we'll be looking at in the Hebrew Bible share a theme: God saw...and took initiative. From the creation narrative, to God saving the people from enslavement, we hear in the text that God looked at humanity with compassion, and intervened. I'm personally intrigued by this idea of a God that intervenes, and I'm also a little uncomfortable with it. I can think of many times in my life where I wished God would have intervened, and yet, my circumstances did not change. So I can't help but ask, "God, why them and not me?"

And as I've sat with that discomfort, I also wonder if God's intervention was sending loving, caring people my way in my most challenging moments. My life's circumstances didn't change, but I always knew that I was being loved and cared for by a community, and that was God's intervention in my life.

If you are feeling challenged by that theme, know that I am too. And we can sit in that discomfort together this fall, as we hear and reflect on the texts from the Hebrew bible together. Many of these stories are not ones I'd probably choose to preach on, if given other choices (like we have in the RCL), but that means that there is much to explore in these texts together. I'm looking forward to journeying through the Bible with you this year!