1-1-2004

PR 750 Preaching for Special Occasions

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Recommended Citation
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This course celebrates the fact that a parish pastor may preach/speak as often each year for special events and occasions as on Sunday mornings. These occasions often provide a pastor with extraordinary opportunities for ministry and for evangelism. Also, a number of Sundays are “special days” in the church calendar, and sometimes in the secular calendar, too.

Course work will begin with weddings and funerals, then continue through the calendar both sacred and secular (e.g., Ash Wednesday, Independence Day), including even “First Sunday in a New Pulpit.” The course will conclude with insights on preaching sermon series.

Textbooks:
1. James F. Kay, Seasons of Grace
2. J. Ellsworth Kalas, Preaching the Calendar
3. Long and McCarter, Preaching In and Out of Season
4. Fleming Rutledge, Help My Unbelief

Course Requirements:
1. Faithful attendance in class sessions, and involvement in discussion and critiquing.
2. Reading of assigned materials.
3. Oral work:
   1) 4 – 5 minute wedding homily, delivered in class, without mss or notes.
   2) 8 – 10 minute communion homily/meditation/sermon
   3) 13 – 16 minute talk for a secular group, delivered in class. Specifics of this talk will be assigned later.
4. Written work:
   1) Due October 5: Two to three page review/interaction with “Seasons of Grace.” I want your reactions to this book, rather than a summary of its contents.
   2) Due November 8: Five to six page paper responding to six or seven sermons from the Rutledge book – being careful to select sermons that represent different special days or seasons from the church calendar. Especially, consider these questions: Did the sermon do justice to the occasion, revealing its importance and its spiritual significance; would
it appeal to an occasional church goer, the sort of person who attends church only on Easter, Christmas, or Mother’s Day.

3) Due December 7: A paper of five to seven pages, developing either a Lenten or an Advent series; four sermons if for Advent, seven if for Lent, (including Easter).
   Each sermon should include a title, a Scripture lesson, and a brief summary of how you would expect to develop the idea into a full sermon.

Basis of grading:

   50% -- Written work
   45% -- Oral presentations
   5% -- Attendance and participation