

Bible reading - further notes

This will take place at several points across the front of the church.

Point A - ladder (King David) will be on the lectern side (Peter Muller) *headmic*

Point B - where Uriah sleeps - and dies - on steps between table and lectern (Colin)

Point C - chair placed between table and musicians for Bathsheba (Rose)

Point D - pedestal with water bowl between top of aisle and table (Nathan/Peter Muller)

Point E - Nathan (Noel) will stand between bowl and ladder to address David up the ladder *headmic*

The servant (Graham) will go in between other characters as per the script.

(+ handheld mic for incidental talk)

Narrator: Today, our Bible reading is from the second book of Samuel. You may not be fully acquainted with it, so a quick visit to the story with a few friends. You remember David. He's the boy with the sling-shot who slayed the giant Goliath. Well, he's not a boy anymore. He's a king, only the second one appointed. *David throws away slingshot, and puts on crown and velvet cape, and climbs to the top of the ladder, waves to the adoring crowds.*

Narrator: The people were warned that kings bring their own problems and we're about to see a big problem. David was all powerful. He could do what he wanted. Get what he wanted. *(David gesticulates, points etc)* One spring, when kings go out to battle, David decided to stay home.

David: *(waving goodbye to troops)* Stay safe!

Bathsheba walks to chair, her back to the congregation, removes her dressing gown, and places it on the back of a chair and sits down, back to the congregation.

Narrator: One afternoon, after his siesta, he looked down from his vantage point in his palatial residence and saw a very beautiful woman, bathing. David made someone go to enquire about this *(servant shuffles over and then back)* and found the woman was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was one of the soldiers fighting David's war. Well, David didn't hesitate to call the woman over *(servant goes over and invites her back; David 'descends' from his lofty position to meet her; they retreat to the western chapel)*, and you know, one thing led to another... *(Bathsheba and David re-emerge and she goes back to her chair)*. Soon enough the woman found out she was pregnant and sent word to David. *(servant goes back and forth again)*

David *(reads note)*: She's pregnant?! What a dilemma!!

Narrator: David thought, and thought, and devised a solution. He'd bring Bathsheba's husband Uriah home to be with Bathsheba, so everyone would think the child was his. Uriah came back from the war front *(Uriah enters and goes over to David)*. David asked about the war and other idle chit chat.

David: How's the war going?

Uriah: Oh you know. You win some. You lose some.

Narrator: Then David told Uriah to go to his own home

David: Go home, Uriah! *(Uriah leaves - 'sleeps' on steps to podium)*

Narrator: He had a cunning plan!

David: I have a cunning plan!

Narrator: But Uriah didn't go home. He slept at the entrance of the king's house. He was a loyal man, who felt he had no right to eat and drink and be with his wife when his fellow soldiers were out on the battlefields. So, David had to think again. He came up with another cunning plan.

David: Ah, I have another cunning plan! *('descends' to join Uriah at the table)*

Narrator: David invited Uriah to eat and drink in his presence *(bottle and glasses on table)*, and made Uriah drunk. But still Uriah did not return to his house.

(Uriah sleeps on the steps to the podium)

Narrator: Finally, David wrote a letter, asking that Uriah be returned to the battle.

Servant shuffles from David with letter to where Uriah is sleeping and points over to the side where Uriah needs to go (exit into side chapel)

Narrator: David insisted that Uriah be sent to the front where the hardest fighting was happening. David insisted that Uriah be left there alone, so that he would be struck down and die.

David folds arms, nods head, looking contented with his brilliant plan.

Uriah stumbles in with bloodied shirt and dramatically dies.

Narrator: When Bathsheba heard the news, she wept.

Bathsheba weeps dramatically and places black cloth around herself.

Narrator: After the period of mourning was over, David sent for her, brought her over to his house and married her.

Bathsheba removes black cloth and leaves it behind. She dons a white veil/cloth and goes to where David is.

She gave birth to his son.

Servant passes baby wrapped in cloth to a surprised Bathsheba.

Bathsheba: (shrugs) that was easier than I thought it was going to be!

Narrator: All good so far.

Uriah (*pops up*): it's not good for me!

Narrator: God wasn't pleased - and sent Nathan to David.

(Bathsheba and servant move into side chapel while Nathan speaks).

Nathan goes over to David

Nathan: David! Do I have your attention? Let me tell you a story!

David: Entertain me, Nathan the prophet!

Nathan: "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. "Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

Narrator: David was angry, indignant.

David: As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die. He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.

Nathan: **You are that man!** God anointed you king over Israel, and delivered you from the hand of Saul. You were given your master's house, your master's wives and all Israel and Judah. Why did you despise the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah with the sword and took his wife to be your own.

David (*expresses remorse/regret*): I have sinned against the Lord.

Climbs down from ladder, wipes 'tears' down his face from the bowl and then washes his face.

He reads selected verses from Psalm 51 (Peter, adapt as feels right - you don't have to read it all)

Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

Wash me completely clean of my guilt; purify me from my sin!

Because I know my wrongdoings, my sin is always right in front of me.

I've sinned against you - you alone. I've committed evil in your sight.

You want truth in the most hidden places;

you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.

Wash me and I will be whiter than snow.

Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!

Please don't throw me out of your presence;

please don't take your holy spirit away from me.

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Characters take off their 'costumes' and place in position:

David - crown and cloak on ladder

Uriah - blood stained shirt on back of chair (tomato sauce?)

Bathsheba - dressing gown on back of chair

Nathan - sprig of rosemary (*sprinkles front rows with water as he exits?*)

Actors return to their seats. Video of Psalm 51 (The Work of the People), followed by the witness.