



Our Shared Mission: We are saved by grace through faith to share the good news of the Gospel with all people and live God's love by our words and actions.



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SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2020

This Special Edition of our Monthly Newsletter covers information for the Congregations of both Gethsemane and St. Stephen's Lutheran Churches.

Northern Great Lakes Synod
www.nglsynod.org

Our Worship spaces will remain **CLOSED** for the entire month of April. We thank you for continuing to remain **OUT** of each building.



EASTER will be celebrated **TWICE** this year:

- (1) **ONLINE**, on Easter Sunday, April 12, and
- (2) **IN-PERSON**, once it is safe to gather.



Visit either Facebook Page to watch Holy Week / Easter / Sunday Services.

Info on how to sign-up inside Pr. Brenda's message.

[facebook.com/GethsemaneWallaceELCA](https://www.facebook.com/GethsemaneWallaceELCA)
[facebook.com/StStephensStephensonELCA](https://www.facebook.com/StStephensStephensonELCA)

ELCA
www.elca.org



- Jerry Rasner
- Keith Thoune
- Tracy Klatt
- Dean Gerue
- Shirley Wangerin
- Wayne Sundstrom
- Stephanie Walren
- Tammy Parrett
- Emily Christenson
- Evelyn Gewerth
- Christine Havelka
- Karen Raether
- Lewis Nicholson
- Robert Berzsenyi
- Macy Berszenyi
- Cheryl Bogdan
- Lorrie Stone
- Denise Marineau
- Dave Koski
- Lois Azelton
- Caitlin Christophersen
- David Kohrt
- Luann Q. Kiefer
- Michelle Bouchard
- Darcy Fournier
- Bob Slight
- Larry Pepin
- Julee Nordin
- Charlotte Brochhausen
- Tammy Veraghen
- Brian Raether
- Sheila Konkel
- Tom Wenger
- Jeremy Baumler
- Mike Lubore
- Coralee Mack
- Kevin Havelka
- Pattie Starzynski
- Deloris Erickson

THANK YOU FOR
HOLDING THE FRIENDS
AND FAMILY OF OUR
CONGREGANTS IN
YOUR DAILY PRAYERS.

~ * ~ * ~ * ~ * ~

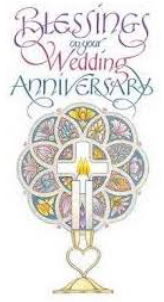
PLEASE KEEP THE
OFFICE INFORMED AS
TO THE STATUS OF
PEOPLE ON THIS LIST,
AND WHEN TO REMOVE
THEIR NAME.



- Jared Jurmu
- Brent Jurmu
- James Dutkavich
- Jay Chapple
- Thomas Dutkavich
- Julie Tanguay
- Trish Dams

Birthday Blessing

- 1 Kelly Francour (St)
- 2 Erik Panske (G)
- 4 Danny Baumler (St), Bryan Motto (St)
- 5 Bonnie Christophersen (G)
- 6 Morgan Bergquist (St)
- 11 Hazel Goddard Majkrzak
- 16 Zayne Kowalski (G)
- 17 Janice Sederquist
- 18 John Hoof (G), Stephanie Pfeiffer (St)
- 20 Christopher Beardsley (G)
- 24 Eva Schultz (G)
- 25 Kerri Mack
- 26 Tammy Parrett
- 27 Wendy Christophersen (G),
Sandra Baumler (S)
- 30 Frank Lesjack
- 25 Jim & Sue
Skowronski (G)



Corrections? Additions? Please contact the Church Office! Thanks!

Adding Someone to our Prayer Lists

Typically, notifications of bereavement, severe or sudden illness or tragedy, etc. would be given to Pastor Brenda or Denise/Angel in the Church Offices.



April 2020: However, seeing as how we are NOT in a “normal” time of our lives, **simply call or e-mail Pr. Brenda**, and she’ll include the news in our weekly prayers, and, if necessary, launch the Phone Tree Prayer Chain for both Congregations.



FORTUNE LAKE
A place of grace in Crystal Falls, MI

**138 Fortune Lake Camp Rd.
Crystal Falls, MI
www.fortunelake.org
(906) 214-2267**

Greetings, Fortune Lake congregations.

You remain in our prayers as we all seek to honor one another in this unknown territory. Your struggles are our struggles, yet we know that Christ is with us.

I wanted to update you on how the recommendations to contain COVID-19 have affected the outdoor ministry of Fortune Lake, as well as what we're planning for the future.

- Rental groups that are smaller than 50 people are making decisions on a case-by-case basis. Many of those who are cancelling are using their deposits to secure alternative dates in the future.
- We are not serving food until further notice.
- Our annual meeting scheduled for May 3 will not be done in person. We will send congregational packets that contain the annual report and materials to vote for the new Board of Directors both via email and snail mail. We ask that congregations see that the information get to your delegates and that ballots be returned accordingly. Detailed information will be contained in the envelope/email. Stay tuned for some creative ways to engage with Fortune Lake remotely.
- Senior Day scheduled for May 11 has been cancelled.
- Victory Camp, our long-standing program for adults with developmental disabilities, will not take place in Summer 2020. It was scheduled to be the first camp of the summer (June 14-19), and we do not want to further compromise the health of these lovely campers. All of the Victory campers already registered will receive a full refund of fees paid to date.
- At this point, we are planning to proceed with all other summer camps as scheduled. This includes congregational day camps that have already contracted with us. We will continue to follow local, state, and national recommendations and will reevaluate our plans accordingly.
- We plan to proceed with our 90th anniversary celebration on August 8th.

Prior to the increased concern over COVID-19, summer registrations for Fortune Lake were perhaps the strongest they've ever been for that time of the year. My, how things have changed in a couple weeks! Fortune Lake remains in a healthy place, and with God's provision, we will weather this storm. You and your families may be concerned about registering/having registered for summer camp because there are so many unknowns. I want to assure you that our Cancellation Policy still fits this situation very well. In the event that a camper or family member is ill prior to camp, they will receive a full refund for their program. If Fortune Lake cancels the camp program, all campers enrolled will receive a full refund. You can read the details here: <http://fortunelake.org/registration/>. Our Early Bird registration deadline of April 1 remains in effect.

Just like you, I will be making decisions in the days ahead, with an emphasis on spreading the love of God while doing our part to slow the effects of COVID-19. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, insights, or prayer requests. We all need each other!

Grace & Peace,

Amanda Rasner, Camp Director

campdirector@fortunelake.org

This Easter Celebration

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2020

Aurelia

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

“The hymn writer and Presbyterian minister Carolyn Winfrey Gillette was taught in seminary to write sermons with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other.

She does the same when she composes her hymns, which have been sung by congregations around the world.

Some of them are uplifting songs of praise to God, but Gillette specializes in hymns that help the faithful address their feelings about the tragedies they see in the news every day—from hurricanes and the refugee crisis to the Orlando shooting.”

Visit
bit.ly/CWGHymns
to read more about
how she balances
hope and sadness.

1. This Eas - ter ce - le - bra - tion is not like ones we've known.
2. No gath-ered choirs are sing - ing; no ban-ners lead the way.
3. Our joy won't come from wor - ship that's in a crowd-ed room
4. In all the grief and suf-fering, may we re-mem-ber well:
5. We thank you that on Eas - ter, your church is blessed to be

We pray in i - so - la - tion, we sing the hymns a - lone.
O God of love and prom - ise, where's joy this Eas - ter Day?
but from the news of wom - en who saw the emp - ty tomb.
Christ suf - fered cru - ci - fix - ion and faced the powers of hell.
a scat - tered, faith - ful bo - dy that's do - ing mi - ni - stry.

We're dis-tant from our neigh - bors— from wor - ship lead - ers, too.
With sanc - tu - a - ries emp - ty, may homes be-come the place
Our joy comes from di - sci - ples who ran with haste to see—
Each Eas - ter bears the pro - mise: Christ rose that glo - rious day!
In homes and in the pla - ces of help and heal - ing, too,

No flo - wers grace the chan - cel to set a fes - tive mood.
we pon - der re - sur - rec - tion and ce - le - brate your grace.
who heard that Christ is ris - en, and then, by grace, be - lieved.
Now no - thing in cre - a - tion can keep your love a - way.
we live the Eas - ter mes - sage by glad - ly serv - ing you.

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com | New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

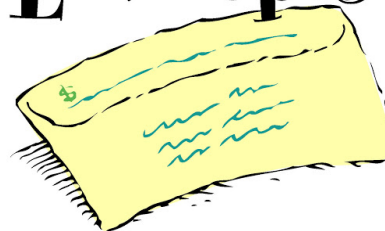


STEWARDSHIP: OUR TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURES

*During this time of "virtual worship," we will depend even more on the **generosity** of this community. We pray that you will continue to support Christ's mission here through **sending in** your weekly, Offering envelopes.*

Don't have the fancy envelopes on hand? No problem! A simple envelope from your home will do, as well. The mailing **address** for each Church is on the first page of this Newsletter, and all you'll need is a **stamp** to send these gifts by mail.

Offering Envelopes



The Financial Secretaries of each Church will check the PO Boxes at the end of **each week**, gathering, recording, and depositing your offerings to be used for ministry.

Let us do **all we can** to keep the flow of income strong, so that salaries and expenses can be met, until our normal rhythms of worship, serving, and learning can be resumed.

All that we are able to give flows directly from God's compassion and God's ever-abundant faithfulness. So, **thank you** in advance for all that you can do during these difficult days - through sharing generously and regularly throughout the crucial weeks to come, and by making a special gift of support if you are able.

And may God continue to bless and sustain us as we stand, boldly and gratefully, ready to share the good news of the Gospel with all people and live God's love by our words and actions!



THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR BRENDA

Grace and Peace to you, dear Church.

My prayers continue for ALL of you during this strange and challenging time.

I've spent the last three weeks working my way through the phone directory of both congregations, engaging in **delightful** conversations with you in your homes. It's been a fantastic way to check-in on folks, and I so have appreciated being spend more time with you than the usual, 15-second handshake and hello as you exit the Sanctuary.

There have also been a fair number of **concerns** and **distress** shared during these phone conversations, which is to be expected in this time of worry and wonder. Know that I'm here to listen if you're feeling anxious or lonely, need to unload, need a good laugh, or simply need to pray. Remember, we walk with a Savior who reached out to His Father in times of distress. Even Christ poured his heart out to God in the Garden of Gethsemane.

STAYING IN TOUCH: I am personally encouraging any of you who have not yet signed-up with **Facebook** to do so right away, as this is the best way to stay current on our ministries and programs of caring.

It's an easy way for us to connect via our homes in this time of physical distancing. In addition to the streaming of Sunday (and Holy Week) worship services, there is also access to Daily Devotionals, links to musical moments, and connections to inspirational messages of hope and faith.

(I recognize that the Facebook platform has gotten some bad press from time to time, but I still want to encourage all of us to join Facebook during the COVID-19 emergency period. It's easy to sign up, and free to participate. And, when the emergency is over, it's also easy to leave.)

EASTER 2020: No one could have predicted that we'd be spending Easter apart from one another. *Easter without flowers? Easter without singing the joyous songs all together?* And yet, I can't help but think of the **Disciples** during that first Easter: there were no flowers or bursts of song on that Easter morn – only amazement and wonder at what comes next. We know not what comes next in *this* world, but we DO know this: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ WILL come again!** Scattered though we may be as a congregation, let us scatter seeds of hope and faith as we continue to sing our glorious **Alleluias!**

I **miss you all** something terrible – heaven knows, this extrovert of a Pastor of yours cannot WAIT for the day we can safely and lovingly embrace each other once again. For the sake of our **health** and for the sake of our **neighbors**, we remain at a safe distance from one another...**for now**. Like the bread that is blessed, broken, and shared at Holy Communion, **BE** that nourishment of Christ to one another. Remember you are not alone, and remember that you are beloved, children of God.

Praying through this with you,

Pastor Brenda



BELOVED



DAILY DEVOTIONS

FROM THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Passion/Palm Sunday, Apr 5 Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16 (5), Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 26:14-27:66

Prayer of the Day: Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon Apr 6 Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 36:5-11, Hebrews 9:11-15, John 12:1-11

Tues Apr 7 Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 71:1-14, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, John 12:20-36

Wed Apr 8 Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 70, Hebrews 12:1-3, John 13:21-32

Maundy Thursday, Apr 9 Exodus 12:1-4, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday, Apr 10 Isaiah 52:13—53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25, John 18:1—19:42

Vigil of Easter, Sat Apr 11 **Creation:** Genesis 1:1—2:4a, **Flood:** Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18, 8:6-18, 9:8-13, **Abraham:** Genesis 22:1-18, **Red Sea:** Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21, **Salvation:** Isaiah 55:1-11, **Wisdom:** Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6, **New Heart and Spirit:** Ezekiel 36:24-28, **Dry Bones:** Ezekiel 37:1-14, **God's People:** Zephaniah 3:14-20, **Jonah:** Jonah 1:1—2:1, **Salvation:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 9-11, **Fiery Furnace:** Daniel 3:1-29, Romans 6:3-11, **Gospel:** John 20:1-18

Resurrection of Our Lord – Easter Sunday, Apr 12 - Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 28:1-10

Prayer of the Day: God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever! Amen!

Mon Apr 13 Daniel 12:1-3, Psalm 16:8-11, Acts 2:14, 22b-32, Matthew 28:9-15a

Tue Apr 14 Exodus 15:1-18, Colossians 3:12-1, Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

Wed Apr 15 Joshua 3:1-17, Matthew 28:1-10, Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

Thu Apr 16 Song of Solomon 2:8-15, Colossians 4:2-5, Psalm 16

Fri Apr 17 Song of Solomon 5:9—6:31, Corinthians 15:1-11, Psalm 16

Sat Apr 18 Song of Solomon 8:6-7, John 20:11-20, Psalm 16



Sun Apr 19- Second Sunday of Easter: Acts 2:14a, 22-32, Psalm 16 (11), 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

Prayer of the Day: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon Apr 20 Judges 6:36-40, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Psalm 114

Tue Apr 21 Jonah 1:1-17, 1 Corinthians 15:19-28, Psalm 114

Wed Apr 22 Jonah 2:1-10, Matthew 12:38-42, Psalm 114

Thu Apr 23 Isaiah 25:1-5, 1 Peter 1:8-12, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

Fri Apr 24 Isaiah 26:1-4, 1 Peter 1:13-16, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

Sat Apr 25 Isaiah 25:6-9, Luke 14:12-14, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

Sun Apr 26- Third Sunday of Easter: Acts 2:14a, 36-41, Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 (13), 1 Peter 1:17-23, Luke 24:13-35

Prayer of the Day: O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon Apr 27 Genesis 18:1-14, 1 Peter 1:23-25, Psalm 134

Tue Apr 28 Proverbs 8:32—9:6, 1 Peter 2:1-3, Psalm 134

Wed Apr 29 Exodus 24:1-11, John 21:1-14, Psalm 134

Thu Apr 30 Exodus 2:15b-25, 1 Peter 2:9-12, Psalm 23

APRIL 5, 2020
PALM/PASSION
SUNDAY



taking+ faith home

God shows divine love through humiliation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11	Jesus enters Jerusalem
Monday	Matthew 26:14—27:66	Jesus' trial and crucifixion
Tuesday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	The servant's humiliation
Wednesday	Philippians 2:5-11	Christ shows us true humility
Thursday	John 13:1-35	Jesus washes disciples' feet
Friday	John 18:1—19:42	Jesus suffers and dies
Saturday	Psalms 31:9-16	Prayer for protection
Sunday	Matthew 28:1-10	Christ's resurrection

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[B]ut [Jesus Christ] emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. **Philippians 2:7-8 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Merciful God, free us to trust that the humiliation Jesus experienced from the cross is the path to hope for the world and the source of true power, true faith, and true love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of each day and for this food. May we enjoy the day with courage, faith, and love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the face of God shine on you and save you through Christ's steadfast love. (Psalm 31:16)



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APRIL 5, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK
*Ride On, Ride On in
Majesty!*



taking+ faith home

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.



WEEKLY MILESTONES

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How do you show others that you care for them?
- How have others shown care for you?
- Jesus died on a cross. How is this act of God a sign of love?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Matthew 26:14–27:66.

Many theories have been put forward in the history of the church to state why Jesus had to die to our Savior. However, one point is clear in the Bible: Jesus' death shows the depth of God's love, a love that is willing to experience a form of slavery, humiliation, and excruciating death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Crosses have become forms of jewelry and part of other art forms that point to Jesus' death. However, neither the jewelry nor other art come close to the pain and humiliation that God in Christ endured to indicate the character of who God is for us. Jesus is not only Emmanuel, God with us, in humiliation and death. Jesus also joins our human existence by making our deepest prayer his prayer: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). God in Christ Jesus joins our life experience and from the cross stretches out his arms to say, "I love you this much." When you see someone wearing a cross, what does it mean to you?

Pray: **Loving God, you stop at nothing to show us your divine character and the depths of your love. Help us to know and to trust the power of your love for us through Christ. Amen.**

SERVICE



"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). To have a mind like Jesus means to be humble and not selfish but selfless. Such humility opens our lives to care for others. In what ways are you a servant to others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



If you received palms during worship, take them home. As we begin Holy Week, say the ACTS prayer of giving praise to God (Adoration), asking God's forgiveness (Confession), giving thanks to God (Thanksgiving), and asking God's help for those in need (Supplication) as you light all six purple candles on the Lenten Candle Cross. After lighting the candles, hold a palm and wave it in your hand as you say, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Matthew 21:9b)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

APRIL 12, 2020
EASTER SUNDAY

taking+ faith home

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 28:1-10	Christ's resurrection
Monday	Acts 10:34-43	Peter speaks of faith in Jesus
Tuesday	John 20:1-18	The resurrection of Jesus
Wednesday	Jeremiah 31:1-6	Israel will return to God
Thursday	Colossians 3:1-4	New life in Christ
Friday	Isaiah 25:6-9	The Lord has saved us
Saturday	Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24	The Lord is always merciful
Sunday	John 20:19-31	Thomas sees and believes

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"So they [Mary Magdalene and the other Mary] left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him." **Matthew 28:8-9 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, help us to live each day knowing and trusting that Jesus' resurrection changes everything we experience around us. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, just as our Lord Jesus Christ ate with Peter and the other disciples after he rose from the dead, be with us now in this meal. Amen. (Acts 10:41)

A Blessing to Give:

May the risen Lord Jesus Christ be your strength and the power of your salvation now and always. (Psalm 118:14)



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APRIL 12, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Jesus Christ is Risen Today



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What happens during an earthquake? Have you experienced one? If so, tell about it.
- Tell or think about a time in your life when something happened that "shook" you up.
- How do you think Jesus' resurrection shakes up the way God cares for us and all people?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 28:1-10.

Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" go to the empty tomb. The second Mary is likely Jesus' mother (see Matthew 13:55 and 27:56 where Jesus' mother is described as the mother of James and Joseph). It is surprising that this second Mary is not named as the mother of Jesus. It appears that the emphasis is not on her biological relationship to Jesus but Mary as a follower of Jesus. She is now a disciple. Jesus' resurrection changes and shakes up everything, including our relationships to others. This is something suggested by the earthquake and the angel of the Lord that descends and whose appearance is like lightning (28:2-3). The resurrection of Jesus connects heaven and earth in a way that shakes up everything for the followers of Jesus and for all of creation itself. How does Jesus' resurrection change everything? How does it change you?

Pray: **Risen Lord Jesus, come into my life this day that I may be changed to live for you. Amen.**

SERVICE

Natural disasters occur regularly around the world. The aftermath of floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes or typhoons change people's lives drastically. There are many organizations that provide help for these victims. Have you ever helped during a recovery? How might you support this work?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Write the numbers one through ten on separate pieces of small paper. Fold each number and place them in ten different colored plastic eggs along with a sweet treat. Hide the eggs and have a hunt. After they are found, open each egg and take the contents out. Ask who has number one and then read Matthew 28:1. Continue the numbers in order as verses 2-10 from Matthew 28 are read. When finished say together: **Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!** (say three times, each time getting louder)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

APRIL 19, 2020
SECOND SUNDAY
OF EASTER

taking+ faith home

Faith in Jesus includes a relationship with Jesus.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 20:19-31	Thomas sees and believes
Monday	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	Peter addresses the crowd
Tuesday	1 Peter 1:3-9	A living hope
Wednesday	Mark 10:46-52	The healing of blind Bartimaeus
Thursday	John 4:1-30	Woman at the well with Jesus
Friday	John 4:46-54	Jesus heals an official's son
Saturday	Psalms 16	Song of trust in God
Sunday	Luke 24:13-35	Road to Emmaus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." **John 20:28-29 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Everlasting God, strengthen us in faith; give us the desire to know you more day by day that we may live with love and hope through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Meatime Prayer:

Dear God, may we receive this food with joy, knowing that all good gifts come from you. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God show you the path of life and give you joy through Christ our Lord. (Psalm 16:11)



MILESTONES
MINISTRY

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APRIL 19, 2020
HYMN OF THE WEEK
We Walk by Faith

taking+ faith home

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Who is someone you wish you knew or knew better?
- How does having a personal, trusted relationship with someone impact your life?
- How do you grow in your relationship with Jesus as your Savior and Lord?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 20:19-31.

It is hard to read this text and not be influenced by the title "doubting Thomas." However, it is only Thomas in the whole Gospel of John who makes the confession of faith that Jesus is God and more specifically, "My God" (v. 28). In this passage at least two important points about the Christian faith are revealed: 1) faith is relational (Thomas personalizes Jesus as "My God"), and 2) faith is a lifelong journey. Jesus blessed those who "come to believe." The Greek text denotes a continuous process, not just believing at a certain point in time, but continuing to believe. And, isn't that what is needed to have a real relationship to someone: an ongoing development—even being challenged by—that relationship. What Jesus means for us and to us will continue to develop for a lifetime. As we age and as we have new experiences and challenges, the meaning of Jesus for our lives and our world evolves, even as we evolve and "have life in his name" (v. 31). Our relationship with Jesus grows and develops over time. Describe your relationship with Jesus.
Pray: Come, Lord Jesus, into my life this day, that I may confess you as my God and have life through you each and every day. Amen.

SERVICE

Thomas had to see Jesus to believe. Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (John 20:29). It is through our service that the world "sees" Jesus. We are his voice, hands, and feet in the world. List ways others have seen Jesus and his love through your actions and words.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, he said, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19b). This has become a traditional greeting among Christians as a reminder of Christ's presence. Practice greeting friends and family in your home using these words this week.



MILESTONES
MINISTRY

In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

APRIL 26, 2020
THIRD SUNDAY
OF EASTER

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Our eyes have been opened to see the Lord.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 24:13-35	Road to Emmaus
Monday	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	The first converts
Tuesday	1 Peter 1:17-23	A call to holy living
Wednesday	Matthew 8:5-13	Jesus heals a centurion servant
Thursday	Matthew 9:2-7	Jesus heals a paralytic
Friday	Matthew 14:13-21	Feeding the five thousand
Saturday	Psalms 116:1-4, 12-19	Thanksgiving for illness recovery
Sunday	Matthew 3:1-12	Christ the shepherd

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" **Luke 24:32 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Holy God, may your word and the community of faith open our eyes and our hearts to your living presence within us and among us through the risen Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus had their eyes opened to you through the breaking of bread, open our eyes now with thankful hearts for this meal. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of hope open your eyes to the presence of the risen Lord and fill you with joy.



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APRIL 26, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Open the Eyes of My Heart



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WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When and where have you felt God's presence?
- Have you ever had an experience where you didn't recognize the impact until later? Explain.
- What Bible story or Bible verse or song helps you feel the presence of God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 24:13-35.

We have within us the desire for the divine in our lives. As Christians, we want to see Jesus as Lord. We want to have our hearts burning within us. That may have happened weeks ago on Easter Sunday in worship with all the pageantry, song, and community gathered together to "break bread" (v. 35). Interestingly, for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, even though they had the risen Lord with them and he was teaching them the Scriptures, it was not until the breaking of the bread that he was revealed to them and they acknowledged that their hearts had been burning within them. Perhaps the sense of the divine in our lives is best recalled in retrospect. We are not in control of the divine in our lives. God is. The Holy Spirit uses human stories, the Bible, and the breaking of bread in community to create the burning in our hearts that we want to recall and talk about again and again. This is what happened to the disciples on the road to Emmaus: When has your heart burned with the sense of God's presence in your life?

Pray: Creator God, give us eyes to see and hearts that burn for the joy of your presence through Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SERVICE



Peter tells the first converts to "Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38a). Baptism is not something we often talk about in our daily lives. If you know of someone who has been thirsting to know about baptism, be willing to have that conversation and seek out the help of others, if needed.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) was introduced during Lent as a way to experience prayer in our daily lives. Add a little extra movement to your prayers this week and make the shape of each letter as you pray: **(A)** I praise God for..., **(C)** forgive me for..., **(T)** I thank you for..., **(S)** I pray for ..., and finish with amen.

Church Online
NOT CANCELED

Quiet Time With God
NOT CANCELED

Praying For The Sick
NOT CANCELED

Checking On A Friend
NOT CANCELED

Helping Others
NOT CANCELED

Being The Church
NOW MORE THAN EVER

SPECIAL EDITION
NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2020

*This Special Edition of our
Monthly Newsletter covers
information for the Congregations
of both Gethsemane + St. Stephen's
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