

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH



daily devotions
FOR DISTANCED DISCIPLES

Wednesday April 29—Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Dear Distanced Disciples of St. Mark's,

Another week, another opportunity to grow in faith! I invite you to dive deeply into scripture and devotional time as individuals or families. Consider finding a predictable time of day to do this D4 devotion—over morning coffee, before a meal, something else you do each day. Finding a pattern for prayer is important, but can be of great comfort in days where nothing else is quite normal.

In this document you will find a weeks worth of scripture lessons, reflection questions, activities, and internet resources based on the lectionary texts from the upcoming Sunday. The internet resources contain clickable links to easily access worship services, fellowship opportunities, and other material. **Families with kids—see page 5 for information about an At Home Sunday School video!**

In Easter joy,

Deacon Katie



Wednesday, April 29



Scripture

Acts 2:42-47

The baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



Reflect

"Awe came upon everyone, because many wonderful and signs were being done by the apostles."

Have you seen the work of God's people lately? How have you been awed at God's activity through the body of Christ this week. How can you help supply the needs of someone today?



Prayer

Almighty God, we are filled with awe at your mighty works. Help us to recognize your activity in our world today, and open our hearts to do you work so that our service might be signs to the world of your great love for all creation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Activity

Consider shopping or adding items to your shopping list for the food pantry at Living Waters today. Drop off your items at St. Mark's on Saturday (10am-12pm) or Monday (9am-12pm).



Internet Resources

Join your St. Mark's family for Evening Prayer tonight on Facebook!

[Click here](#) to worship with us at 7:00pm



Thursday, April 30



Scripture Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;
For you are with me; your rod and you staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.



Reflect

Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved passages in scripture, and rightfully so. It is full of comfort, often being used at the bedside of those who are dying, or at the celebration of life at a Christian funeral.



What comfort do you hear today in Psalm 23? In what valleys is God present with you today?

Prayer

O God, you are our Good Shepherd. You protect and care for us, walking with us no matter what valleys of darkness we encounter. Grant comfort today to anyone who is sick, lonely, or afraid, and remind all your children of your steadfast love and mercy. Amen.



Activity

Write a letter or card to someone who needs to hear words of comfort. Remind them of Psalm 23 and God's promises to us.

For kids: Learn about sheep and shepherds! There are some great videos on YouTube – [click here](#) for a place to start!



Internet Resources

Faith and Fellowship—tonight on Zoom at 6pm. Join us for a time of conversation and prayer.

[Click here](#) at 6pm to join the Zoom meeting.

Friday, May 1



Scripture

John 14: 8-14

Philip and James, Apostles

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.



Reflect

Today the Church remembers the apostles Philip and James. Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and called Nathanael to "come and see." He later responded to an Ethiopian official's request for teaching and baptism. Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus, called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

Our reading today has a request from Philip to Jesus to show them the Father. If you were in Jesus presence like the first disciples, what would you ask Jesus?



Prayer

Almighty God, you gave to your apostles Philip and James grace and strength to bear witness to your Son. Grant that we, remembering their victory of faith, may glorify in life and death the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.



Activity

As disciples of Jesus, we follow Jesus, but also teach, share, and love like our Teacher Jesus. Teach or share something new to someone this week. Whether a skill, helping with homework, or about faith, practice being a disciple, like Philip and James, who share what they have learned from their Teacher.



Internet Resources

Every Friday at 10:00am, St. Mark's kids gather on Zoom to sing, talk, and pray! [Click here](#) to join the Zoom meeting. Today, be sure to have paper and crayons/markers ready for an activity!



Saturday, May 2



Scripture

1 Peter 2: 19-25

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.



Reflect

How are you "living for righteousness?"

How can you point to God in a world full of suffering?



Prayer

O God, you sent your Son to free us from our sin that we might live for righteousness. Help us to work for justice and peace in the world, knowing that you have called us to speak your truth and love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Internet Resources

For kids: Family Sunday School from Sparkhouse! [Click here](#) for an awesome video Sunday School based on this week's lectionary readings.



Sunday, May 3

Scripture

Luke 10: 1-10

Jesus said: "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."



Reflect

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

How has being part of God's flock given you abundant life? How can invite people to experience the new life you have given?



Prayer

O God our Shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safely through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Activity

For kids: Build a "gate" and pretend to be sheep! Take two chairs , back to back with a little space in between, and drape a blanket over the top. Give you best "Baaaaa" and crawl on through. What other animals can go through your gate?



Internet Resources

Worship with St. Mark's on Facebook today at 10:00am. [Click here](#) to access the streamed worship service, beginning with prelude music around 9:50.

Adult Faith Formation takes place at 9:00am on Zoom. [Click here](#) to join Pastor Matt has he leads a class about the Holy Lands.

Monday, May 3



Scripture

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.
Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.



Reflect

Psalm 100 calls us to make a joyful noise to the Lord. What's your favorite hymn?
How do you "enter God's gates with thanksgiving" this day?



Prayer

O God, you are faithful to every generation. Help us to make a joyful noise today in all we say and do. In all things, help us to proclaim your goodness now and always. Amen.



Activity

Sing for joy today! Revisit yesterday's bulletin for some liturgy or a hymn, or something you might have committed to memory. When in doubt, "Jesus Loves Me" is a simple, beautiful reminder of God's love for you, a love that is from generation to generation!



Internet Resources

Faith and Fellowship—this morning at 10:00am on Zoom. Join us for a time of conversation and prayer. [Click here](#) to join the meeting.



Tuesday, May 4



Scripture

Hebrews 13: 20-21

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.



Reflect

God has “made you complete in everything good so that you may do God’s will.” Reflect upon the gifts that God has given you to share the Good News.



Prayer

O God of Peace, grant healing and wholeness to us today as we seek to do your will. Give us strength and courage, faith and understanding of your goodness. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



Activity

Today’s reading from Hebrews is a Benediction, an blessing and ending of a letter. Write your own benediction today on a letter to a loved one. Share God’s peace and love for them, and encourage them in their journey in faith.

For kids: Today’s reading is a benediction, or holy goodbye or blessing. Learn how to say goodbye in a new language today! Can you find out what languages these are?

Adiós

Auf Wiedersehen

Au revoir

Annyeong



Wednesday, May 5



Scripture

Acts 7:55-60

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.



Reflect

In today's scripture reading we hear the martyrdom of Stephen. Have you every been treated differently because of your faith? Have you been put in a position to speak up and confess God's goodness in the face of opposition? How do you treat people who believe and practice a different faith?



Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for the witness of those who have been martyred, including St. Stephen. Bless all those who are persecuted for their faith today, and forgive those who oppress others. Give us strength like Stephen to have faith in times of great trial. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Activity

As we remember Stephen, and all those who have died in the faith, consider listening to a Requiem today. Requiems have texts that celebrate and honor the dead, and speak to the new life we have in Christ. Here are a few of Deacon Katie's favorites!

[Faure Requiem](#)

[Mozart Requiem](#)

[Brahms Requiem](#)



Internet Resources

Join your St. Mark's family for Evening Prayer tonight on Facebook!

[Click here](#) to worship with us at 7:00pm