

# KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor  
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor  
H. Ashely Hall, Associate Pastor  
Inba Inbarasu, Visitation Pastor

2650 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68131-3616  
402-341-7761  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

April 18, 2021

9:00 AM

THIRD SUNDAY of EASTER



*The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.*

# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

*Mark Jones, organ*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(stand)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son, Holy Spirit, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**C** Amen.

**P** God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we will confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C** Amen.

**P** Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**P** Gracious God,

**C** have mercy on us.

**We confess that we have turned from you  
and given ourselves into the power of sin.**

**We are truly sorry and humbly repent.**

**In your compassion forgive us our sins,**

**known and unknown,**

**things we have done**

**and things we have failed to do.**

**Turn us again to you,**

**and uphold us by your Spirit,**

**so that we may live and serve you in newness of life**

**through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**P** In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!  
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!  
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!  
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!**

*Refrain*

**Jesus is risen and we shall arise.  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

**2 Walking the way, Christ in the center  
telling the story to open our eyes;  
breaking our bread, giving us glory:  
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise.**

*Refrain*

**3 Jesus the vine, we are the branches;  
life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;  
heaven to earth, Christ to the people,  
gift of the future now flowing to me.**

*Refrain*

**4 Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent:  
death put asunder, and Easter is bright.  
Cherubim sing: O grave, be open!  
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light.**

*Refrain*

**5 City of God, Easter forever,  
golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,  
river of life, saints and archangels,  
sing with creation to God the I AM!**

*Refrain*

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926  
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

**EASTER GREETING**

**℟ Alleluia! Christ is risen.**

**℣ Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

**℟ The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

**℣ And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**℟ Holy and righteous God,**

**℣ you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

# WORD

(sit)

## FIRST READING

Acts 3:12-19

*After healing a man unable to walk, Peter preaches to the people, describing how God's promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus. Through the proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection, God is offering them forgiveness and restoration in Jesus' name.*

**P**eter addressed the people, “*You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?*”<sup>13</sup>*The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him.* <sup>14</sup>*But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you,* <sup>15</sup>*and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.* <sup>16</sup>*And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.*

<sup>17</sup>*“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.* <sup>18</sup>*In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer.* <sup>19</sup>*Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”*

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 4 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;  
you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

<sup>2</sup>**You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory;  
how long will you love illusions and seek after lies?”**

<sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful;  
the LORD will hear me when I call.

<sup>4</sup>**Tremble, then, and do not sin;  
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.**

<sup>5</sup>Offer the appointed sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>**Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?”  
Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>You have put gladness in my heart,  
more than when grain and wine abound.

<sup>8</sup>**In peace, I will lie down and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me rest secure.**

## SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-7

*God has loved us in order to make us children of God. Though we do not yet know the full details of our future existence, we trust that God will reveal it just as God revealed Jesus to take away our sins.*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

(stand)

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



## HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 24:36b-48

*In this account of an appearance after his resurrection, Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to understand him as Messiah. Jesus convinces them that he has been raised and sends them on a mission to proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness.*

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, “*Peace be with you.*”<sup>37</sup> They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost.<sup>38</sup> He said to them, “*Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?*”<sup>39</sup> *Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.*”<sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.<sup>41</sup> While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “*Have you anything here to eat?*”<sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish,<sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “*These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.*”<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,<sup>46</sup> and he said to them, “*Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,*<sup>47</sup> *and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*<sup>48</sup> *You are witnesses of these things.*”

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

## CHILDREN’S BLESSING

## SERMON

Pastor Duminy

(stand)

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*“Lord, You Give the Great Commission”*

**ELW 579**

**1 Lord, you give the great commission:  
"Heal the sick and preach the word."  
Lest the church neglect its mission,  
and the gospel go unheard,  
help us witness to your purpose  
with renewed integrity:**

*Refrain*

**With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us  
for the work of ministry.**

**2 Lord, you call us to your service:  
"In my name baptize and teach."  
That the world may trust your promise,  
life abundant meant for each,  
give us all new fervor, draw us  
closer in community: *Refrain***

**3 Lord, you make the common holy:  
"This my body, this my blood."  
Let us all, for earth's true glory,  
daily lift life heavenward,  
asking that the world around us  
share your children's liberty: *Refrain***

**4 Lord, you show us love's true measure:  
"Father, what they do, forgive."  
Yet we hoard as private treasure  
all that you so freely give.  
May your care and mercy lead us  
to a just society: *Refrain***

**5 Lord, you bless with words assuring:  
"I am with you to the end."  
Faith and hope and love restoring,  
may we serve as you intend  
and, amid the cares that claim us,  
hold in mind eternity: *Refrain***

Text: Jeffery Rowthorn, b. 1934  
Text © 1978 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.  
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## **NICENE CREED**

**☒ We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

(stand)

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**Response:**    **P** Lord, in your mercy,  
                  **C** hear our prayer.

*(In our prayers today, during a time of silence, pray for those listed below and for others according to their needs)*

**Sympathy:** to the family and friends of Dena Bruha, niece/goddaughter of Melissa Osentowski and Dayle Johnson

**Illness:** Lois Andresen, Richard Bock, Kristin Boe, Don Burton, Mary Cook, great-aunt of Sarah Jewell, Carol Duncan, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Richard Holzer, Renee Johnson, Jason Klonglan, Marcie Lafleur, Ron Muchmore, Mary Olson, Dave Pafford, David Penning, Toby Rees, Gary Rodene, Al Schewe, Mark Sullivan, Helen Taylor, Donovan Thorell, Sheri Tipton, Dorothy Vancaster, John Waterman, Darlene White

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Wyatt Johnson, Josh Kropenske, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, Joel Woosley

**Other Prayers:** *Those serving in mission* – Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India; Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson, Tanzania; Rev. Rachel Ringlaben, Argentina; Meghan Brown Saavedra, Mexico; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators

**Other Prayers:** *Seminarians*—Adam Klinker, Katie Larson, Giselle Loucks, Justin Perkins

## WE SHARE GOD’S PEACE

**P** The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**C** And also with you.

*As we share the peace today – and you do so in your home – You are invited to contact a fellow member by phone, email or letter. You can do that today or any time during the week. Pick someone from the church directory. We could email each other or call each other during this time when we cannot meet. Then each week select another person to contact. Try to make it someone you don’t really know and get acquainted with them. Always be sure to leave your address, email, and phone number on your message in case they do not have a directory. Talk to people you know and get the names and addresses of those who might not have directories and try to contact them. By the time we meet again we will have made many new friends.*

# MEAL

(sit)

## THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

*Please Support the overall ministry of Kountze Memorial during these difficult times. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to participate in this portion of worship. If you would like, use the QR code scanner on your smart phone to give online. If you are able, please mail in your offering or donate on-line. Thank you!*



## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*“Easter”* Janet Campbell, *soloist*  
from *Five Mystical Songs* text: George Herbert, 1593-1633  
music: R. Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With him mayst rise:  
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art.  
The cross taught all wood to resound his name,  
Who bore the same.  
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song  
Pleasant and long:  
Or since all music is but three parts vied  
And multiplied;  
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

## THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

## OFFERTORY HYMN

*“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”*

ELW 184



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

## OFFERING PRAYER

- God of love,
- you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows a musical score for 'The Great Thanksgiving' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The melody is simple and homophonic, using quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

## PREFACE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

### SANCTUS

Ho - ly. ho - ly, ho - ly Lord. Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

The image shows a musical score for the 'Sanctus' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly. ho - ly, ho - ly Lord. Lord God of pow'r and might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.' The melody is more complex than the Thanksgiving, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

- ☐ Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us all to pray:
- ☑ **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

- ☐ The risen Christ invites us to this table.
- ☑ **Come, eat and be satisfied.**

### DISTRIBUTION

*All baptized Christians who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and his Real Presence in, with and under the bread and wine, are welcome to the Lord's Supper. We believe that this is the Lord's table and is he who invites you. So you who are strong in faith, come with gratitude. You feel weak in faith, come to be strengthened. And you who feel you have no faith, come so that the God of steadfast love will touch your heart with hope and joy.*

*Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.*

(sit)

### AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**1 Let us talents and tongues employ,  
reaching out with a shout of joy:  
bread is broken, the wine is poured,  
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.**

*Refrain*

**Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!  
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**2 Christ is able to make us one,  
at the table he sets the tone,  
teaching people to live to bless,  
love in word and in deed express. *Refrain***

**3 Jesus calls us in, sends us out  
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share:  
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere! *Refrain***

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929  
Text © 1975 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.  
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“Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises”

ELW 535

*Refrain*

**Hallelujah! We sing your praises,  
all our hearts are filled with gladness.  
Hallelujah! We sing your praises,  
all our hearts are filled with gladness. *Repeat***

**1 Christ the Lord to us said:  
I am wine, I am bread,  
I am wine, I am bread,  
give to all who thirst and hunger.  
*Refrain***

**2 Now he sends us all out,  
strong in faith, free of doubt,  
strong in faith, free of doubt.  
Tell to all the joyful gospel.  
*Refrain***

Text: South African, tr. *Freedom Is Coming*, 1984  
English text © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp.

(stand)

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- ☐ Wellspring of joy,  
☑ through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love will bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# SENDING

## BLESSING

- ☞ May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN

## HYMN

*“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”*

ELW 547

**1 Sent forth by God's blessing,  
our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this  
dwelling take leave.  
The supper is ended.  
Oh, now be extended  
the fruits of this service  
in all who believe.  
The seed of Christ's teaching,  
receptive souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for  
God and for all.  
Your grace shall incite us,  
your love shall unite us  
to work for your kingdom  
and answer your call.**

**2 With praise and thanksgiving  
to God ever-living,  
the tasks of our ev'ryday  
life we will face—  
our faith ever sharing,  
in love ever caring,  
embracing God's children,  
the whole human race.  
With your feast you feed us,  
with your light now lead us;  
unite us as one in  
this life that we share.  
Then may all the living  
with praise and thanksgiving  
give honor to Christ and  
his name that we bear.**

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916-1997, alt.  
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## DISMISSAL

- ☞ Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
☛ **Christ is risen indeed Alleluia!**
- ☞ The worship has ended. The service begins.  
☛ **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

## POSTLUDE

*Mark Jones, organ*

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## Special Notice

If you plan to attend Worship in person, please call/e-mail the church office no later than noon on the Thursday before the Saturday or Sunday you want to attend. Please note that the plans set forth are subject to immediate change. You may still join us for Worship on Cox channel 13 or live streamed at <https://www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/>



# KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street  
402-341-7761

Omaha, NE 68131  
[www.kmlchurch.org](http://www.kmlchurch.org)

April 17 & 18, 2021

## Kountze Food Pantry Volunteers and Clothing Needed

**Mondays, 7:30 - 9:00 AM**  
**9:00 - 11:00 AM**  
**11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**  
**Fridays, 4:00 - 7:00 PM**

Have you ever bought what you needed at Kohl's or JC Penney, received either Kohl's Cash or a Penney's Reward, and then wondered "What should I use this for?" Use it to buy underwear, socks, hats and gloves! If you wait until the end of a season and buy on clearance, you can get a lot for your money. There is a need for everything in our community! Please put your donations in the Food Pantry Box in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you very much! If you are able to volunteer, please sign up by using the link below:  
<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

## Camp Carol Joy Holling and Sullivan Hills Summer positions available

Do you want to make a difference this summer? Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is inviting you to consider working at Camp Carol Joy Holling and Sullivan Hills. There are a variety of positions for 12 graders - College Age Adults looking for a summer job. Go to [nlom.org/smt](http://nlom.org/smt) to get started.

### Attendance and Giving

**Saturday Attendance:** 29  
**Sunday Attendance: 9:00:** 114  
**Total:** 143  
**Streaming Attendance:** 103  
**Cox Cable Attendance:** 363 (Easter Sunday)  
**Pantry Guests Served:** 753  
**Medical Clinic Guests Served:** 30  
**Offering:**  
\$19,212.14 (Regular)      \$6,610.70 (Specials)  
\$1,529.50 (Debt Reduction)

## Home Devotion on Generosity for the 7 Weeks of Easter

During the Easter Season, the Live it Out resource from the Nebraska Synod and the ELCA Generosity Project, have provided a faith formation at home resource for you to use. It is provided to help in Growing God's Generous Generations. For seven weeks, a resource for you to work through on your own or with others in your home, will be provided. It centers our attention on God's generosity to us and our response to God's graciousness. Go to <https://www.elca.org/generosityproject> for more information.

## Today at Kountze

**Eternal Candle** is given to the glory of God in honor of Jim Smejkal for helping everyone all the time and with a smile given in gratitude by everyone he has assisted

## Youth Forum

**In-Person & Zoom on Sundays, 10:15 - 11:00 AM**

All 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Graders are invited to join us!

We will meet in person in the Youth Room and on Zoom each week

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Bible Ponderings
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: High School Hang Out
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Serving in the World
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Host Middle School Hangout
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Adventures (if on Zoom, we will carry you along with us.)

Contact Pastor Shari (402-341-7761 or [shari@kmlchurch.org](mailto:shari@kmlchurch.org) if you need the Zoom Link info. We will continue to be masked and physically distanced for all meetings in person at the church.

*Jesus opens our minds to understand the scriptures.*

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

Sunday	Luke 24:36b-48	Jesus appears to the disciples
Monday	Acts 3:12-19	Peter speaks in the temple
Tuesday	1 John 3:1-7	Children of God
Wednesday	Joshua 1:1-9	God's commission to Joshua
Thursday	2 Timothy 3:14-17	Paul's last instructions to Timothy
Friday	Nehemiah 8:1-8	Ezra summons the people
Saturday	Psalms 4	An evening prayer
Sunday	John 10:11-18	The Good Shepherd



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*Then [Jesus] opened [the disciples] minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name." Luke 24:45-47a (NRSV)*

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty and merciful God, help us to be aware of your grace that we may daily repent of our sins and turn to you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we give you thanks for the food that nourishes the body and for your word that nourishes the soul. Amen.

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the Lord keep you safe and grant that you lie down in peace. (Psalm 4:8)

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

- What is something you want to learn more about?
- What questions do you have about Jesus and the Christian faith?
- Who or where do you turn to when you want to know more about the Christian faith?

*Read:* Luke 24:36b-48.

It is clear that the first followers of Jesus were drawn to the Hebrew Scriptures to understand what happened to Jesus and what that meant for them as his followers. Jesus himself opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament, since the New Testament had not yet been written. There is a continuity between the Old and New Testaments that Christians can easily overlook. Easter is a good time to commit to reading the Bible—Old and New Testaments—to seek a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what his reign means for the world and the church of today. How can reading the Bible strengthen your faith and encourage you to share the message of Jesus in word and deed?

*Pray:* **Dear resurrected Savior and Lord, give us the desire to read the Bible, learn more about you, and share your message of forgiveness with those we meet. Amen.**

April 22 is observed as Earth Day around the world. Psalm 4 uses the image of an abundance of grain and wine to show the joy of knowing God. As we acknowledge that God is the creator of all things, it is good for us to care for what God has made. It is a source of joy. In what way can you experience the joy of God's creation this week through caring for the earth?

The end of the day is a good time to slow down, reflect on the day, and focus on God's place at the center of our lives. Take time before going to bed each day this week to think or talk about mountain highs and valley lows for the day and then read and reflect on this verse from Psalm 4:8, *"I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety."*

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23  
1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18