

FEBRUARY 26, 2020
ASH WEDNESDAY



Return to the Lord.

ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ash Wednesday observance.

Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	A call to repentance
	Psalm 51:1-17	Have mercy on me, O God
	2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10	Messengers of Christ
	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	Giving, praying, and fasting

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. **Joel 2:12-13 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Ash Wednesday:

Dear God, create in us clean hearts, and put a new and right spirit within us for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 51:10)

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord God, whether we are eating food this day or being strengthened by your word, feed us with love and mercy in Jesus' name. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord have mercy on you and forgive you all your sins. (Psalm 51:1)



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FEBRUARY 26, 2020

HYMN FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Return to God



ASH WEDNESDAY 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 is something that makes you sad?
- The biblical term “return to the Lord” is a way of expressing regret for a broken relationship with God. When a relationship is broken, how does one seek forgiveness?
- What is it about the kind of God we have that frees us to return to the Lord?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17.

The Old Testament prophets held out little hope for public worship. Not Joel. He calls the people to hold a “solemn assembly” (v. 15) that brings all the people in, young and old alike, even newlyweds (v. 16). Repentance is often imagined as an individual act but not here. Joel does not mention what it is for which the people need to repent. It must be obvious. What are the obvious sins of our communities, even our nation and world? Ash Wednesday provides an opportunity for all God’s people to repent of our collective sins like racism, sexism, fear of people who are different, hatred that lashes out at others and with an indifference that attacks God’s creation itself. What would you name as the collective sins against God’s will? We are freed to come together and repent because we have the God who conquers divine justice with divine grace and mercy (v. 13). We need not fear the judgment of God. It leads us to God’s mercy. This Lent, how can we as God’s people gather for worship in homes and congregations and confess our collective misdeeds and lack of faith in God?

Pray: **Gracious and merciful God, bring us together that we may repent and receive the reconciliation only you can give, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE



In Psalm 51, the focus of our sin is that it is an act against God. The words from Psalm 51:4a seem harsh but are a reality in our lives, “Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight.” Be in prayer this week and ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness for the sins you have committed against God and others.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The church season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days. It ends the Saturday before Easter. Lent is a time to focus on our relationship with God. Draw a large cross or use a cross you may have hanging on the wall. Take your finger and trace around the shape of the cross while saying the Lord’s Prayer. Make this a daily practice throughout Lent this year.



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

MARCH 1, 2020
FIRST SUNDAY
IN LENT



Wanting to be like God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 4:1-11	Temptation of Jesus
Monday	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	First sin and its punishment
Tuesday	Romans 5:12-19	Adam and Christ
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Christ was raised to life
Thursday	1 Peter 4:7-11	Love wipes away many sins
Friday	Galatians 6:1-10	Bear one another's burdens
Saturday	Psalms 32	The joy of forgiveness
Sunday	John 3:1-17	For God so loved the world

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **Genesis 3:4-5 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, help us to trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, to know him as your Son, that we may live in the protection of your care, keeping us from all harm. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Lord, just as you freely fed Adam and Eve in the garden, we thank you for providing us with the fruit of the earth today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord be your hiding place; may God preserve you from all trouble and give you peace. (Psalm 32:7)



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MARCH 1, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

By Gracious Powers



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:

- Is it easy or difficult to talk about sin? Explain.
- Why do you think sin is not a popular word in today's culture?
- Sin is often seen as rebellion. It is also about being deceived. Give examples of how people deceive themselves in today's world.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7.

The snake, part of God's own creation, was the first to create the temptation to move away from a trusting relationship with God. The world of sin is greater than what is experienced by humans. The snake gave a half-truth. Adam and Eve would learn the difference between good and evil; they just couldn't choose the good. The story of the "fall" is less about a fall from perfection and grace and more about a rebellion that wants to be like God. At some level, we may all want to be like God and to know the difference between good and evil. We tend to turn to our own prejudices, the preferred thinking that makes us most comfortable and most empowered. There are a lot of half-truths in our conversations, both public and private. A half-truth can be worse than a flat-out lie. Because it has the appearance of truth, it is more deceptive. We need a Savior who can turn us from our half-truth worlds that deceive and destroy life and relationships. We need Jesus. Can you think of a time when you heard a half-truth that deceived you? Explain.

Pray: **God of truth and grace, cleanse us from our sinful lives; give us glad hearts that know we have received grace upon grace, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he responded with words from Scripture, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'" (Matthew 4:10). One way of serving God is to care for your neighbor. How do you worship and serve God by caring for your neighbor?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

To establish a ritual during Lent, make a Lenten Candle Cross. Place six purple tea-light or votive candles in the shape of a cross, using a white seventh candle for the center. Each week, a candle will be lit during prayer time in your home. The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) will be introduced as a way to pray. This first week in Lent represents "A" for Adoration, meaning love, respect, and worship. [Light a purple candle]

Pray: **Dear God, we praise your name and worship you. I praise you for . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.**



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MARCH 8, 2020
SECOND SUNDAY
IN LENT



We are blessed to bless others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 3:1-17	For God so loved the world
Monday	Genesis 12:1-4a	The call of Abram
Tuesday	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	God keeps his promise
Wednesday	Jeremiah 17:7-8	Trust the Lord
Thursday	2 Corinthians 9:6-15	Generous giving
Friday	Numbers 6:22-27	Blessing for the people
Saturday	Psalms 121	Assurance of God's protection
Sunday	John 4:5-42	Jesus and the woman at the well

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 12:3 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, as you bless us each day in faith, help us to bless others through your never-failing love through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Loving God, you who watch over our going out and our coming in, we thank you for this food that nurtures us day by day, through Jesus Christ. Amen. (Psalm 121:8)

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord bless you with a living faith that you may be born anew each and every day. (John 3:3-8)



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MARCH 8, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Bless Now, O God,
the Journey*



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 does it mean to you to be blessed?
- Who has blessed you? How might you have blessed someone else?
- Abram and Sarai were called by God to bless all the families of the earth. How do you think this affected their faith in God and the way they lived?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Genesis 12:1-4a.

Abram and his wife Sarai (not mentioned in this text but part of the story) are sent on a faith quest. They look rather foolish to the world. They leave the security of a kinship community to go out and trust an unknown God while becoming foreigners in a strange land. The faith of Abram (and Sarai) in this passage is not defined by doctrines or clear convictions. Faith is a walk of life where people learn who their God is through a trusted relationship. This is true in the Gospel of John as well where faith is never a noun. It is always a verb, an action that trusts in a relationship that recognizes that one's entire existence is dependent upon God. This is what faith looks like. And it has consequences for others because faith is never a private affair: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). How would you describe your faith as a journey?

Pray: **Living God, you call us to ventures we cannot fully imagine. Help us to trust you and know you will lead us all the days of our lives, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Psalm 121 is an assurance of God's protection. "I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (vv. 1-2). The homeless, hungry, and sick need protection. There are organizations that help with housing, food, and finances. How can you help those in need to know and feel God's protection in their lives?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

During the second week in Lent, light two of the six purple candles on your Lenten Candle Cross. The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) is being introduced as a way to pray. This week represents "C", for Confession, meaning to confess one's sins and receive God's forgiveness.

Pray: **Dear God, I confess that I do not fully place my trust in you. Forgive me for . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.**



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MARCH 15, 2020
THIRD SUNDAY
IN LENT



Evangelism is relational.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 4:5-42	Jesus and the woman at the well
Monday	Exodus 17:1-7	The Lord gives water from a rock
Tuesday	Romans 5:1-11	Right with God
Wednesday	John 1:35-42	Come and see Jesus
Thursday	1 Thessalonians 2:5-12	Paul's relational ministry
Friday	Romans 12:9-21	Caring relationships
Saturday	Psalms 95	Call to worship
Sunday	John 9:1-41	The man born blind

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” **John 4:29 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, thank you for reaching out to me and to all your people with steadfast love and faithfulness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealttime Prayer:

Dear God, just as you fed the people in the wilderness, we thank you for feeding us today. In the name of Jesus our Savior, amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)



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MARCH 15, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*The Spirit Sends Us
Forth to Serve*



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:

- How would you introduce yourself to a stranger?
- Who has introduced you to (or taught you about) Jesus? How did this happen?
- The woman at the well introduced Jesus to her townspeople. Who can you introduce to Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 4:5-42.

Jesus meets with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. It's the place where Jacob met Rachel more than a millennium before. It is now the place where Jesus shows what it means that "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) by caring for a non-Jewish woman, someone who was alone and likely abandoned by her own people. The woman is so impressed by Jesus and their conversation that she goes to her townspeople and says, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (v. 29) The Samaritan woman does three things that are essential traits of evangelism: 1) she invites ("Come and see"); 2) she tells her own story of her encounter with Jesus ("I just met a man who . . ."); and 3) she wonders if this is the awaited Messiah (Her question in the original Greek suggests she really doesn't think so.). Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships. How do you have conversations with others about Jesus?

Pray: **Merciful God, just as Jesus stopped to talk to the woman at the well, help me to stop, listen, and talk to others and be an example of your love for them. Amen.**

SERVICE

The Daily Bible Reading for Friday this week is about caring relationships. "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers" (Romans 12:13). Think about what it feels like to be the new person on the block. Make a list of things you can do to extend a welcome to someone who is new in your community. Making a meal, giving rides, and introducing them to neighbors are a few ideas. What will you do to extend hospitality to a stranger this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

During the third week in Lent, light three of the six purple candles on your Lenten Candle Cross. The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) is being introduced as a way to pray. This week represents "T", for Thanksgiving, meaning to express thanks and gratitude to God.

Pray: **Dear God, I am thankful for all that you have given me. I thank you for . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.**



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

MARCH 22, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY
IN LENT



God does not judge as we judge.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 9:1-41	The man born blind
Monday	1 Samuel 16:1-13	David is anointed king
Tuesday	Ephesians 5:8-14	Living as people of light
Wednesday	James 4:11-12	Warning against judging others
Thursday	Isaiah 55:6-11	God's ways are not our ways
Friday	Matthew 7:1-5	Judging others
Saturday	Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Sunday	John 11:1-45	The raising of Lazarus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." **1 Samuel 16:7 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, help us to see as you see, not be judgmental, and to show mercy as you show us mercy, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God of abundance, thank you for providing us with this food, a sign of your overflowing love. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may God look on you with favor and give you peace.



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MARCH 22, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Lord of All Hopefulness



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:

- Tell or think about a time someone did something that really changed your understanding of that person.
- Why is it that we sometimes judge ourselves or others too harshly?
- God's judgment is about love and mercy. How does knowing this help you think about yourself and others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 9:1-41 out loud.

One person is narrator and other people speak the different voices in the story of the man born blind. In John 9 Jesus sees in the blind man a person who needs sight, not someone whose sin is greater than anyone else's (vv. 1-7). In 1 Samuel the prophet is to anoint a new king, but Samuel is not able to perceive or see what God sees. A scrawny, youngest son (David) who is originally not even considered, is chosen by God to be king. Thank God that our Lord sees and judges by a standard far from our own. May the light that God brings into the world help us to see ourselves and others with humility, hope, and compassion. Think of something that bothers you about your own life situation or that of someone you know. How might God see it differently and with more understanding and compassion?

Pray: **Almighty and merciful God, thank you for your ways that conquer human blindness with hope and new life. Amen.**

SERVICE

One characteristic of a Christian is to be available when needed. Being available to serve others nurtures the Christian faith and life through the power of the Holy Spirit. This takes us to areas of ministry far outside the walls of a local congregation to living our faith in daily life. In what ways do you reflect this characteristic in your daily life? Is there an organization or someone near you who would benefit from you being available to volunteer?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

During the fourth week in Lent, light four of the six purple candles on your Lenten Candle Cross. The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) is being introduced as a way to pray. This week represents "S", for Supplication, meaning to humbly ask God to provide something for yourself or on behalf of someone else.

Pray: **Dear God, just as you healed the blind man, I ask for your healing in the lives of those who are in need of your loving presence including . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.**



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

MARCH 29, 2020
FIFTH SUNDAY
IN LENT



The resurrection means new life now.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 11:1-45	The raising of Lazarus
Monday	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Valley of dry bones
Tuesday	Romans 8:6-11	Life in the Spirit
Wednesday	Romans 8:12-27	Wonderful future of God's people
Thursday	2 Corinthians 4:1-15	Treasure in clay jars
Friday	Colossians 3:12-17	New life in Christ
Saturday	Psalms 130	Trusting the Lord in times of trouble
Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11	Jesus enters Jerusalem

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God of life and hope, we thank you for the promise of the resurrection and the power it brings to us each day through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this meal we are strengthened to wait for you with faith and hope through Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of life free you from all burdens and give you peace.



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MARCH 29, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*I Heard the Voice of
Jesus Say*



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:

- Tell or think about something you are looking forward to doing in the future.
- How does thinking about a future moment impact your life today?
- Both Ezekiel 37 and Jesus in John 11 talk about God's power to give life. How does the promise of the resurrection and God's power to give life influence you today?

DEVOTIONS



Read: John 11:1-45.

With the story of the raising of Lazarus we have Jesus making clear that Jesus is not only the source of "the resurrection on the last day" (v. 24), but the source of life now. Jesus does not just say he is the resurrection. He says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). In this story we gain understanding of what it means that Jesus is the "Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world" (v. 27). The future hope of the resurrections is so important and so real that it changes our life in the present. Even though Jesus weeps with his friends (v. 35), grief does not control his—or our—life. Our lives are to be freed from the daily powers of sin and death. "Unbind him and let him go" (v. 44) is the message for us, too. Jesus comes to us when our burdens are great to unbind us and set us free. Jesus says, "[E]veryone who lives and believes in me will never die" (v. 26). How does Jesus' resurrection make a difference in your life today? How does faith in Jesus impact your priorities, your values, your relationships?

Pray: **God of resurrection promise, remind us of the new life we are given each day through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE



Knowing one is nearing the end of their life is difficult for the person and for family and loved ones. As one draws closer to death we can be comforted to know of the resurrection and new life. This does not mean it will be easy. Jesus gives all who believe in him the promise of eternal life. Do you know of someone who has a loved one in the final stages of life? Is there a way you can support them through listening, prayer, meals, or household help?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



During the fifth week in Lent, light five of the six purple candles on your Lenten Candle Cross. The acronym **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) has been introduced as a way to pray. This week use this acronym as a guide for prayer.

Pray: **Dear God, I praise you for . . . , Forgive me for . . . , I thank you for . . . , I pray for (name of people or situations) . . . , in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.**



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APRIL 9-11, 2020
MAUNDY THURSDAY
GOOD FRIDAY
HOLY SATURDAY



Jesus died that we may have eternal life.

HOLY WEEK BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Holy Week observances.

Thursday **John 13:1-17, 31b-35** **Jesus gives a new commandment**
Friday **John 18:1–19:42** **The suffering and death of Jesus**
Saturday **Matthew 27:57-66** **The burial of Jesus**

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR HOLY WEEK

Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them [the soldiers], “Whom are you looking for?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground. **John 18:4-6 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Holy Week:

Almighty God, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, you stretched out your arms in love for us. Through your suffering we are healed. Open our hearts to receive your love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Merciful God, through suffering and death you heal us. Through this food you restore us daily. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the crucified Christ shine his face upon you and save you through his steadfast love. (Psalm 31:16)



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APRIL 9-11, 2020

HYMN FOR HOLY WEEK

Go to Dark Gethsemane



HOLY WEEK 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:

- Describe feelings a person has when a pet or a loved one dies.
- If you saw something dangerous happening, how would you respond?
- Why was Jesus' death at the hands of human powers necessary?

DEVOTIONS



Read: John 18:1–19:42.

Read the passage from the Bible or use a storybook Bible to tell the story of Jesus' death. Jesus' death was no accident. Jesus knew what was to happen to him, but the powerful nature of the event was in God's hands, not human hands. When Jesus said "I am he," that is, I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one the soldiers wanted to arrest, they—not Jesus—fell. It has always been hard for us to grasp that God in Christ suffered a painful and humiliating death, one reserved for the most despised by those in power. Yet, true power, the power to forgive and to give eternal life remains God's greatest gift to humanity. Nothing stops God's purposes for life, reconciliation, and eternal life. Jesus' concern for the sacredness of daily life is even shown from the cross when he tells his mother that she will not be abandoned but be given one of the disciples (likely John) as a new son to care for her (John 19:26-27). What are some ways that God blesses your life today?

Pray: **Holy and gracious God, we thank you for suffering and dying for us that we may receive eternal life through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus gave his followers an example of how to live and how to love when he washed their feet before the last supper. This was the act of a servant. In what ways are you a servant?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Light the six purple candles on the Lenten Candle Cross on Maundy Thursday. Tell the story about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples and the last supper in your own words. When you finish telling the story, blow each candle out and say this prayer: **Dear Lord Jesus, help us to honor your commandment to love one another as you have loved us. We ask this in your precious name, amen.**

On Good Friday cover the Lenten Candle Cross with a black cloth and be silent for a moment.



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APRIL 12, 2020
EASTER SUNDAY



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