

**St. Gregory's,
St. Lawrence, and
Trinity Episcopal Churches**

Easter to Pentecost

April 1 to May 17, 2024

Walking from Easter to Pentecost

It all broke apart during Holy Week. Cruelty, betrayal, suffering, injustice scattered the Jesus Movement. But precisely at the moment when evil seemed to triumph, the goodness of God burst out from the tomb.

Wonderful. So ... what do we do now?

That is the central question of the Easter Season: Now what? This is the time when broken pieces are put back together into something called the Church. It's a time for both exultant rejoicing and deep questioning. Who are we on the other side of Resurrection? What is our work? How shall we be the Body of the Risen Christ for the world? Who is our neighbor, and how shall we join with them?

The days after Jesus rose again must have been a time when the disciples felt like they were putting together a puzzle without a picture, or a Lego set without instructions. The first thing to do: gather back those broken pieces, and see how they can fit together.

They started trying to remember really hard what Jesus had said and taught and done. They tried to pay attention to what he was saying and doing when he mysteriously appeared to them now, out of nowhere. And they took a fresh look at their own most ancient scriptures, to see what new meaning now emerged from the old and familiar. They took these broken pieces, and saw how they might all fit back together again.

This devotional booklet is full of such pieces of memory. Let us read, reflect, pray, sing, see, and attend to these pieces. From what has been broken apart, let us build again the Church in our day.

Journeying with Jesus



Monday, April 1

First Week after Easter

3

An excerpt from Matthew 28:9-19

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

MUSIC:

"Wanting Memories"

Sweet Honey in the Rock

*"I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
To see the beauty in the world
through my own eyes"*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

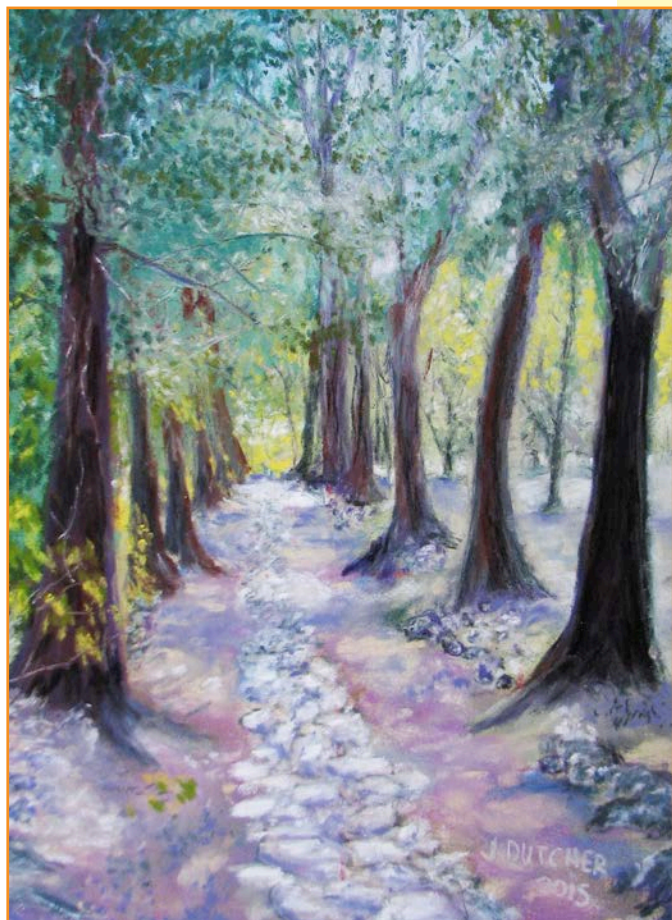
- Psalm 16:8-11
- Acts 2:14,22b-32
- Matthew 28:9-15

Reflection from Dan Puchalla, St. Gregory's:

This story always makes me laugh. It's such a silly, ridiculous thing for Jesus to say ... "Greetings!" I always hear it as Jesus saying, "Hey, dudes. 'Sup?" It's so casual, so relaxed – a stark juxtaposition to the terror and grief that the disciples just went through on Good Friday. And that's what makes it perfect. It's a cathartic release after the built up drama of Holy Week. It's the breath we finally let out once we realize we had been holding it in. It's the first laughter we allow ourselves over coffee and cookies after a funeral.

That moment – when we first know that we won't be sad for ever, that we won't be afraid for ever, that it does get better – that's the first glimmer of Resurrection.

Not only that, but we also realize the story has just started. What had been a moment of loss and ending now becomes the beginning of the rest of the story. The disciples, who had been following Jesus for years and for miles, are just starting their journey with Jesus. And so are we. Again. With every loss, with every memory, with every laughter: the journey begins.



"Hemingway's Path." Painting by Jon Dutcher, St. Gregory's, Deerfield.



Tuesday, April 2

First Week after Easter

Sharing the good news



Painting attributed to Jacopo Di Cione, 14th century Florentine painter.

MUSIC:

"Woman, Why Weepest Thou?"

by Rob Gardner

"Woman, why seekest thou the living among the dead?"

He is not here, for he is risen!"

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 33:18-22 or
- Psalm 118:19-24
- Acts 2:36-41
- John 20:11-18

An excerpt from John 20:17-20

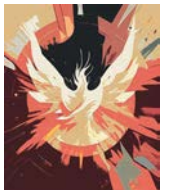
Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord;" and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection from Francesca Kelly, Trinity:

After all the attention given to the 12 male disciples, some of whom went on to write the Gospels, here we have something remarkable: Jesus first reveals his resurrection to a woman.

Jesus may have been closer to Mary Magdalene than to anyone else in his orbit. Scholars have learned not only that he loved her, but that she was an "influencer," on both Jesus himself and on others after his death – this, in the midst of a patriarchal society. And even to this day, patriarchies feel threatened by an outspoken and compassionate woman. Perhaps that's why, for centuries, Mary Magdalene was wrongly depicted as a sinner, even a prostitute. Christ's choice of Mary Magdalene spoke worlds: that the earth, as run by men, was a violent and unjust place, and that a woman of great faith was the right messenger to share God's wondrous good news of hope and love.

Seeing our neighbors



Wednesday, April 3

First Week after Easter

5

An excerpt from Acts 3:3-4

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us."

MUSIC:

"You Will Be Found"

from *Dear Evan Hansen*

*"Lift your head and look around:
You will be found."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 105:1-8 or
- Psalm 118:19-24
- Acts 3:1-10
- Luke 24:13-35

Bryan Cones being asperged in the playground of St. Gregory's, Deerfield.

Reflection from Bryan Cones, Trinity:

"Look at me! Look at me!" More than once I have seen one of our younger members entertaining us with something new they've learned, whether a cartwheel or how to make a paper airplane. (Those are cool!) Along with bringing us all joy, they remind us all of our hunger to really be seen by those around us, to be known in our uniqueness. That need is perhaps greater for those left out or ignored by society – like the man in the reading today. Too often our siblings in need are treated like problems to be solved, rather than the images of God they are. Peter and John, however, respond by really seeing the man who asks their help, and inviting him to return their gaze. Perhaps that's one way we encounter the Risen One in everyday life: by seeing, really seeing, each other – not as problems to be solved, but as fellow travelers in need of help and healing. Where might you look for the face of Christ today?





Terror and peace

An excerpt from Luke 24:36b-39a

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself."

MUSIC:

"Fear Not"

by John Ferguson

*"Fear not,
for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by name:
You are mine."*



Reflection from Rafael Orsi,

St. Gregory's: Given our predisposition to enjoy predictable outcomes in our daily lives, unexpected occurrences can be quite frightful and generate uneasiness, fear, and even terror.

I believe all of us have experienced a surprising occurrence and had to allow time to digest the situation to be able to see the beauty and peace that came with it... be it not having the right gear for a hike as weather changes, or not renting the right car for traveling across a snowy mountain range. At the moment you won't feel at ease, and will need to pray to God for patience and wisdom to see it through. Only then can you observe the peaceful and beautiful scenery.

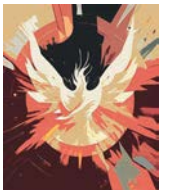
This picture was taken by me in December of 2017 in the Logrono region, north of Spain. It was taken after driving through the mountain range during a scary snowstorm, when I had rented a small car and hadn't driven in snow for over eight years...

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 8 or
- Psalm 114 or
- Psalm 118:19-24
- Acts 3:11-26
- Luke 24:36b-48

Salvation in Christ



Friday, April 5



Photograph by Brian Coninx, St. Lawrence. This photo is taken from the outside façade of St. Lawrence, Libertyville.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 116:1-8 or
- Psalm 118:19-24
- Acts 4:1-12
- John 21:1-14

An excerpt from Acts 4:11-12

This Jesus is

"the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone."

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

MUSIC:

"How Firm a Foundation"

arr. Nathan Drake

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word!"

Reflection from Brian Coninx,

St. Lawrence: As a person that has spent most of their professional career in construction, I am keenly aware of the importance of the cornerstone in the structural framework of any building. It lays the very foundation on which a magnificent structure can be brought to life.

This passage reminds us that faith in Jesus is the "cornerstone" upon which our faith is built. It is only through our faith in Him that we can build a better life for all those around us seeking salvation. Like the cornerstone, a keystone is critical to the structural integrity of an arch.

First Week after Easter

Second Week of Easter



O Splendor of the Father's light
that makes our daylight lucid, bright;
O Light of light and sun of day,
now shine on us your brightest ray.

True Sun, break out on earth and shine
in radiance with your light divine;
by dazzling of your Spirit's might,
oh, give our jaded senses light.

The Father sends his Son, our Lord,
to be his bright and shining Word;
come, Lord, ride out your gleaming course
and be our dawn, our light's true source.

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan

Born of the Spirit



Monday, April 8

Second Week after Easter 6

An excerpt from John 3:8

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

MUSIC:

"*Spiritus Sanctus*" by Thomas Grassi

*"Come in your power and reign supreme,
come as my teacher and fill my mind.
Holy Spirit, come."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalms 2:1–9 or
- Psalms 146:4–9
- Acts 4:23–31
- John 3:1–8

Reflection from Erin Armstrong,

St. Lawrence: For me, this verse speaks to the free and mysterious way the Spirit may operate in my life. It's beyond my understanding at times, and I can't see or predict it, but I can feel its effects. When I have gone through periods of great change, this verse provides comfort. It's a reminder to me that just as I can't control or fully understand the wind but still see its effects, so the Spirit may be working in my life in ways I can't fully yet grasp or understand. When I read it I feel encouraged to trust and remain open to the unseen and unpredictable ways God may be leading me.





Tuesday, April 9

Second Week after Easter

Reborn from above

An excerpt from 1 John 3:5-6,8

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Reflection from Mariah De La Fuente,

Trinity: Following the way of the Lord is a lifelong journey. We are "born of water" once we are baptized, but being "born of the Spirit" speaks of a constant responsibility. We are influenced by the world everyday, from the moment we are born. The way others act or speak influence our habits and tendencies. It's up to us, though, to commit our lives to asking ourselves if the habits we picked up are from God or from the world around us. For example, this Lent I committed to breaking the habit of swearing when I noticed it wasn't something I ever did until I was around people who thought it was "cool." Going forward, I'm excited to reflect on the Holy Spirit as a mysterious wind. A wind that never really leaves me, but is just softer or stronger at times when I need to be moved.

MUSIC:

"I Saw Waters Flowing"

by Christian Cosas

*"All to whom the waters came,
They were saved and shall proclaim
Alleluia!"*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalms 93
- Acts 4:32-37
- John 3:7-15



Photograph of a baptism at St. Lawrence, Libertyville.

Take refuge in God



Wednesday, April 10
Second Week after Easter
11

An excerpt from Psalm 34:7-8

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

MUSIC:

"Prayer"

music by Rene Clausen,
text by Mother Teresa

*"Penetrate and possess
my whole being so utterly
that my life may be only a radiance
of yours."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalms 34:1–8
- Acts 5:12–26
- John 3:16–21

Reflection from Alex Thomas,

St. Gregory's: All of us in our life at one time or another have felt vulnerable. Intrinsicly, we seek support from a higher power during these times. I would conjecture that even though sometimes it does not seem apparent that we have been created by the Lord, our soul knows this intrinsic truth and turns to him from whom we came. I believe the recognition that God exists and that God flows universally into all human souls.

From John 14:21-23, we can understand that those who keep the Lord's commandments are in the Lord and love the Lord. To take refuge in the Lord, therefore, is to live according to his teaching. To such, the Lord is always with them. To be with the Lord is to also be in communion with the blessedness, joy, and happiness that flow from him perpetually. The only spiritual fear such experience would be is in temptations – a fear of

losing the Lord when compelled or persuaded to do things that are in opposition to his teaching.

All the Lord's commandments relate to loving our neighbor – and doing good. According to the Lord's words just quoted, people like this love God and God loves them. Love for God and love for our neighbor are connected in this way.



Photograph of Easter Vigil at
St. Gregory's, Deerfield.



The human authorities

Thursday, April 11
Second Week after Easter



An excerpt from Acts 5:29-31

Peter and the apostles answered the high priest, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

MUSIC:

"Praise to the Lord the Almighty"

arr. Mack Wilberg

*"Praise to the Lord,
over all things he gloriously reigneth
Borne as on eagle wings,
safely his saints he sustaineth."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalms 34:15–22
- Acts 5:27–33
- John 3:31–36

Reflection from Bruce Moore, St. Gregory's:

We have many "authorities" throughout our life. We have parents, teachers, mentors, and clergy. For good or for ill, they teach us what they think we should know. We take on these teachings and carry them with us. However, we sometimes find ourselves at a point in our lives where the teachings of the "authorities" are challenged. We find a higher authority that sits better with our soul. Peter and the apostles find themselves in such a situation. The "authorities" whom they had been taught to fear and obey, without question, were giving them direct orders to obey. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the power of prayer, Peter and the apostles found the strength to look beyond their earthly "authorities" to a high calling. A calling not to strict teaching and rules – but to a calling of love, compassion, generosity, and joy.

Jesus, the Bread of Life



Friday, April 12

Second Week after Easter

13

An excerpt from John 6:11

Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

Reflection from Kristin Saylor,

St. Lawrence: The first church I served was across the street from a large commercial bakery. The church had several feeding programs and the bakery was generous with their stock. Between those two things, the building was almost always filled – quite literally – with bread. Stacks of bagels atop the copier, piles of baguettes in stairwells, perilously wobbly towers of sandwich bread atop every available table...absolutely ridiculous quantities of bread, everywhere you looked. Needless to say, this experience changed how I read this story of the loaves and the fishes that is shared by all four Gospels. When it comes to contemplating divine abundance, we often struggle with an impoverished imagination. What would it be like to imagine an abundance so profound, it's almost comical? What would it feel like to imagine ourselves tripping over abundance, so surrounded by the Bread of Life that we cannot avoid it, no matter how hard we try?

MUSIC: "Let Us Break Bread Together"

by William Lawrence,
sung by Robert McFerrin

"Let us praise God together on our knees...

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,

Oh Lord, have mercy on me."

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 27:1–9
- Acts 5:34–42
- John 6:1–15



Photograph by Kristin Saylor,
St Lawrence, Libertyville.

Third Week after Easter



Because of sin
you would not enter into your glory
in the way your truth had intended.
Your garden was locked up,
and so we could not receive your fruits.
This is why you made the Word,
your only-begotten Son,
a gatekeeper.

O gentle gatekeeper!
O humble lamb!
You are the gardener,
and once you have opened the gate of the heavenly
garden,
paradise,
you offer us the flowers
and the fruits
of the eternal Godhead.

St. Catherine of Siena

The power of belief



Monday, April 15

Third Week after Easter

15

An excerpt from John 6:28

Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.'

MUSIC:

"Holy Radiant Light"

by A. Gretchaninoff

*"Son of God, thou art Radiant Light,
All the world doth praise thee evermore."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 27:10–18
- Acts 6:8–15
- John 6:22–29

Reflection from Dave Jones,

St. Lawrence: How do I know if I believe in Jesus? Because I am certain that I am part of something much bigger than I am (GOD), because of my faith that GOD is always there for me/us, and because of my belief in the Trinity, with Jesus as the incarnation of GOD. My faith and beliefs are affirmed in the story of Jesus's life, and as I see evidence of GOD's love in my life and the lives of others. Finally, I witness my belief in Jesus by aspiring to live my life according to principles set out in His teachings, in service to GOD's will and to other people. Some days are better than others!

Photograph by Dave Jones, St. Lawrence, Libertyville.





The earth sings praises to God

Tuesday, April 16

Third Week after Easter

16



*Photograph by Kathryn Kinjo Duncan,
St. Gregory's, Deerfield.*

An excerpt from Psalm 66:4

All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name.

MUSIC:

"The Earth is Risen"

by Gwyneth Walker

"Life has triumphed over death,
and beauty rises, sings on every
breath!"

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 31:1–5
- Acts 7:51–8:1a
- John 6:30–35

Reflection from Kathryn Kinjo Duncan, St. Gregory's:

No matter where I am in my faith journey, I've always been able to connect with something greater than myself when I'm out in nature. Whether it's overlooking the sharp crags of the Rocky Mountains or peering beneath the ocean waves at a coral reef teeming with marine life, I feel tiny and insignificant in a way that brings me the deepest comfort.

I feel particularly connected to God at the turning of the seasons. Among the dull grays of winter, suddenly the vibrant green of spring makes itself known, peeking out from between dead leaves and on the very tips of tree branches. I love that Easter falls at this time of year, so we are celebrating the warmth of new spring sunshine at the same time we are celebrating the Risen Christ. It reminds me that even when I'm in the winter of my own life, when things feel dull and gray and like I'll never be warm again... spring is always just around the corner.

Come and see what God has done



Wednesday, April 17

Third Week after Easter

17

An excerpt from Psalm 66:5-7

Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals. He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There we rejoiced in him, who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—let the rebellious not exalt themselves.

MUSIC:

"i thank You God for most this amazing day"

by Eric Whitacre

"i thank You God for most this amazing day for the leaping greenly spirits of trees...and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is Yes."

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 66:1–8
- Acts 8:1b–8
- John 6:35–40

Reflection from Alexandra Ranieri,

Trinity: I find this passage to be wonderfully comforting and joyful. It invites reflection on how God helps us through even the most seemingly impassable times. It invites me to meditate not only on the stories of God's help through the ages, but also on the smallest awes of the world around me; in nature and in other people. It invites me to gratitude, joy, and thanksgiving, which comprise the nectar of awareness. Even in the last warning I find comfort; especially in our time, when we so often see the powerful run rough-shod over their fellow creatures, I find comfort in this admonishment that men should not strive to be like God, and dictate to others as though they possessed infinite power and knowledge.

Finding joy at the St. Gregory's labyrinth.





Thursday, April 18

Third Week after Easter

18

Flesh for the life of the world



MUSIC:

"Eat this Bread"

taize by Jacques Berthier

*"Eat this bread, drink this cup,
Come to him and never be hungry.
Eat this bread, drink this cup,
Trust in him and you will not thirst."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalms 66:14–18
- Acts 8:26–40
- John 6:44–51

An excerpt from John 6:50-51

Jesus said, "This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Reflection from Cheryl Trevithick, St. Gregory's:

When I reflect on this passage, I am mainly drawn to the symbolism of bread and the parallels to Jesus's teachings. Bread is a source of nourishment that can sustain us in this world. When Jesus refers to himself as the Living Bread, I believe he is saying that if we put our trust in him as our Savior, he will serve as food for our souls.

A second concept is the transformation and many shapes bread can take. When Jesus spoke this passage, he was ridiculed because people's preconceived ideas of what a Messiah should be didn't match what they saw or heard. Sometimes our body clouds our acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit.

One final image is the sharing of bread at the Last Supper. When we celebrate Holy Communion together, we remember our union with each other and with God. I believe that Jesus wants us to share in his love and gift with everyone we meet.

Easter faith changes us



Friday, April 19

Third Week after Easter

19

An excerpt from Acts 9:3-5

Now as Saul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

MUSIC:

"I Sing the Mighty Power of God"

arr. Richard Nichols

*"I see all God's mighty wonders
Where'er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground or gaze upon the
sky."*

*"Fort Sheridan at Sunset." Photograph by
Brian Loshbough, Trinity, Highland Park.*



Reflection from Brian Loshbough,

Trinity: As Saul came to believe in Christ, Jesus' answer when Saul asked "Who are you, Lord?" on the road to Damascus changed everything for Saul. He came to faith and reoriented his passion from being against Jesus, to sharing Jesus with others. Plus, the insight that the believers whom he was persecuting were one with Jesus, prepared him to teach about the church being the body of Christ.

Each person who is a follower of Christ is a part, a member, of Jesus' body. These Christians were not members of a club or organization. Each of them was organically and vitally connected to Jesus, as a body part with Jesus as the head of this body.

The words "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting!" never left Paul's heart. They humbled him, but they also helped him see how precious each follower of Jesus genuinely is!

O Father, forgive me when I write off those in my Christian family who irritate, wound, and disappoint me. Father, pour your love for my brothers and sisters into my heart through the Spirit. Open my eyes to see how precious and vital they are to Jesus. Not only did he die to save them, but he made them a living part of his body. Give me patience, O Lord, so I love them as I should. In Jesus' name, I ask for this grace. Amen. (derived from Heartlight.org)

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 117
- Acts 9:1–20
- John 6:52–59

Fourth Week of Easter



By this light I shall come to know that you, eternal Trinity,
are table and food and waiter for us.
You, eternal Father, are the table
that offers us as food
the Lamb, your only-begotten Son.
He is the most exquisite of foods for us,
both in his teaching,
which nourishes us in your will, and in the sacrament
that we receive in holy communion,
which feeds and strengthens us
while we are pilgrim travelers in this life.
And the Holy Spirit is indeed a waiter for us,
for he serves us this teaching
by enlightening our mind's eyes with it
and inspiring us to follow it.
And he serves us charity for our neighbors
and hunger to have as our food souls
and the salvation of the whole world
for the Father's honor.

St. Catherine of Siena

Recognizing the voice of our God



Monday, April 22

Fourth Week after Easter

21

An excerpt from John 10:3-4

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.

MUSIC:

"The Lamb"

by John Taverner, sung by VOCES8

*"Little lamb, who made thee? ...
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 96:1-9
- Acts 11:1-18
- John 10:1-10

Reflection from Cecelia Secor,

St. Lawrence: Often God's words come through loud and clear to me. Other times they are clouded by the issues of the world – politics, conflict, and meanness to name a few. The feelings of depression and inadequacy also sometimes trip me up...and they keep me trapped as if inside a wall. Bishop Michael Curry says, "If it is not about love, it is not about God." This means I need to stay focused on the love. Recently at church we sang "you are the gate of all deliverance, we are sightless; lead us now" (Wonder, Love and Praise #746). It called me back to this passage. I need the Shepherd's words of love to continually free me, lest I become trapped again in the place of darkness and isolation. Oh! Listen! I hear the Shepherd calling with words of love! Alleluia.

Photograph by Elizabeth Downey.

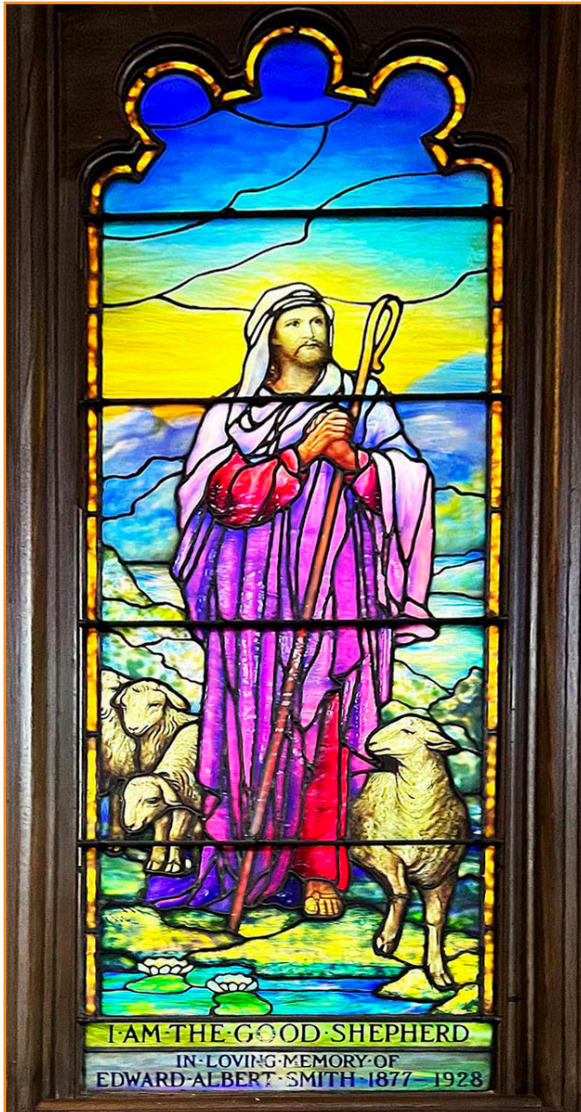




Sheltered by the Good Shepherd

Tuesday, April 23

Fourth Week after Easter



Stained glass window at Trinity, Highland Park.

MUSIC:
"All We Like Sheep"
from Handel's Messiah

Note: It is often said that Handel must have been familiar with sheep, as he wrote the vocal lines of this piece in a way that perfectly mimic the meandering routes to which sheep are prone when left to their own devices.

An excerpt from John 10:27-28

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand."

Reflection from Annette Johnston,

Trinity: This saying comes from Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem, after the officials there ask him if he is the Messiah. He tells them that they have not been listening.

Sheep are often pretty dumb, and their actions are often ruled by fear. Because they know they will be safe, they always follow and listen to the Shepherd. So the key seems to be how not to be a dumb sheep that follows the wrong shepherd. Jesus offers a clue: listen, and develop a relationship. Only someone you know will have credibility to say what to do next – like the advice from a trusted friend. This is different from taking advice from a well-known authority.

Daily prayer is not just to ask for forgiveness and maybe some other stuff in a long litany: it is also to ask what to do next. After clearing the past with forgiveness, then it is important to spend time listening for what to do next. The answer comes without real sound – more like a safe surety from a "still, small voice."

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 87
- Acts 11:19–26
- John 10:22–30

Set apart for the work



Wednesday, April 24

Fourth Week after Easter

23

An excerpt from Acts 13:2

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

MUSIC:

"Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God"

arr. Lloyd Larson

*"Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
breathe new life into my willing soul
Bring the presence of the risen Lord
to renew my heart and make me whole."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 67
- Acts 12:24–13:5a
- John 12:44–50

Reflection from Victor Przysiezny,

Trinity: In the middle of their worship, a door opened, a head peeked in, and it calmly said, "when you're done, it would be good if Barnabas and Saul would...." The door closed and they continued worshipping and fasting. Straws were not drawn, no one seemed surprised, no one tried to get out of it. Somehow they understood. And when they were done, the two called were blessed and sent off.

How can we hear the Holy Spirit? Can we possibly live our faith journey the way these early believers did? Difficult questions, but very reasonable. And important. On our journey together, let us question, listen, and hear.

*Photograph by Victor Przysiezny, Trinity,
Highland Park.*





Receiving whom God sends

Thursday, April 25

Fourth Week after Easter



An excerpt from John 13:20

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

MUSIC:

"Deep is the Love of the Lord"

by Joseph M. Martin

*"Come to the water, the ocean of grace...
rejoice in the depths of His wonderful
peace,
deep is the love of the Lord."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 89:20–29
- Acts 13:13–25
- John 13:16–20

Christmas boxes for NICASA at St. Gregory's, Deerfield.

Reflection from Tina, Tyler, and Emily Calub, St. Gregory's: We believe that God finds many ways to connect with us. One way that he does this is by providing us with opportunities to serve one another. Even when it is difficult, or when we feel like it is a burden, we must trust that God has a plan for us. Through service to others, we can experience God's love for all of us. This scripture also reminds us of Matthew 24:40 – whatever you do for the least of you, you do for me. So, by serving others, we serve God, who gave his only Son for our eternal life.

Dwelling in Christ's presence



Friday, April 26

Fourth Week after Easter

25

An excerpt from John 14:1-3

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."

MUSIC:

"Pilgrim's Hymn"

by Stephen Paulus

*"Even with darkness sealing us in,
We breathe your name."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 2:6–13
- Acts 13:26–33
- John 14:1–6

Reflection from Jack Alix, Trinity: As our Lord looked at these men, he knew what was going on in their minds and hearts, how disturbed and upset they were, and how their faith was being put to the test. Perhaps many of us are suffering from the same affliction as these disciples – troubled, fearful, upset, disturbed, and agitated because of our human condition. Our Lord knew that these men were afraid of what was coming, that they might be executed with Jesus. They knew they were in danger, and so their hearts were deeply perturbed.

But more than that physical danger to themselves, they were aware of Jesus' words about leaving them. They were afraid that even though they might survive, they would have to go on living without him. They could bear to die with him; they could not bear to live or die without him. So, as he gathers with them, he gives these reassuring words: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

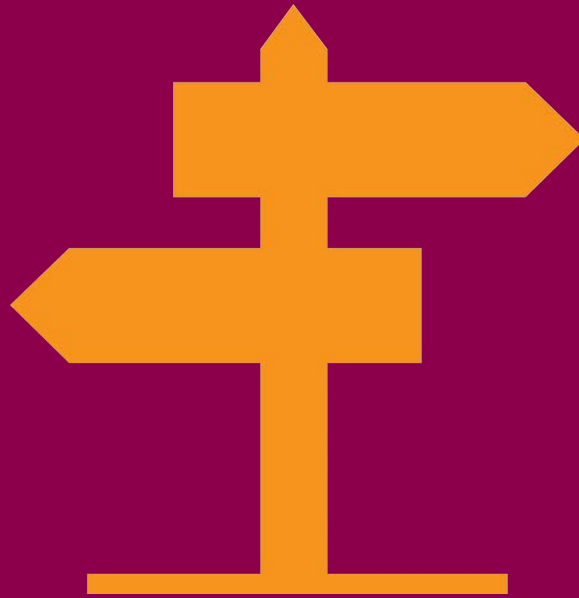
Jesus wants us to trust him. He reassures us that even though he has gone before us, whoever follows him will have a place in his kingdom. He wants us to trust God who is in control, that

he knows what he is doing, and who is capable of exercising infinite wisdom, power, and infinite love.

*Photograph by
Brian Loshbough, Trinity,
Highland Park.*



Fifth Week after Easter



O thou whose pow'r o'er moving worlds presides,
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides,
On darkling man in pure effulgence shine,
And clear the clouded mind with light divine.
'Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast
With silent confidence and holy rest:
From thee, great God, we spring, to thee we tend,
Path, motive, guide, original, and end.

Boethius

The coming of the Holy Spirit



Monday, April 29

Fifth Week after Easter

27

An excerpt from John 14:25-26

'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

MUSIC:

"Veni Creator Spiritus"

by Michael John Trotta

*Translation: "Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful,
and ignite them with your love."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 115:1–13
- Acts 14:5–18
- John 14:21–26

Reflection from Kyle Oliver,

St. Lawrence: When asked what I do for a living, I often reply, "I teach priests how to teach." But there's one key difference between my job and that of my colleagues in secular teacher education. Perhaps I should start saying, "I teach priests how to let the Holy Spirit teach."

These verses contain a pretty big promise on Jesus's part. I sometimes wish he had said, "The Holy Spirit will teach you everything, if you let her." Still, it's Good News because it means Christ will be present with us in our hardest struggles, our dearest victories, and all the puzzle-solving in between. Can we remember that?

The Spirit is sometimes our teacher in the present moment, guiding us along a sacred tightrope – we know not how. The rest of the time, she's helping us discern the way forward by learning from what's happened along the way.





The power of Christ's peace

Tuesday, April 30

Fifth Week after Easter



A place of quiet at Trinity, Highland Park.

An excerpt from John 14:27

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

MUSIC:

"Deep Peace"

by Elaine Hagenberg

*"Deep peace of the gentle night to you.
Moon and stars pour their healing light
on you.
Deep peace of Christ,
the light of the world to you."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 145:9–14
- Acts 14:19–28
- John 14:27–31a

Reflection from Nanci Patterson, Trinity:

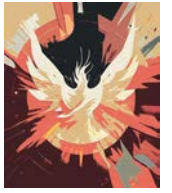
Lent was the perfect time for me to examine my relationship with God and to work on feeling closer to the Divine. I have struggled with truly feeling God's presence in my life. I recently had a short conversation with my priest who suggested the ancient Ignatian practice of *Examen*, a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us.

I have since implemented some of the *Examen* spiritual exercises in my daily life and found them centering. I have gratefully become much more aware of God's presence in my life.

I was struggling to find peace and then was invited to reflect on this passage from John. What a gift it was! New prayer habits and the results have shown me that Christ's peace is attainable with little effort, it is a comforting other-worldly peace I could not have imagined.

My prayer today is that others find comfort in truly knowing that the Lord's peace and Presence is with us and accessible always. Fear not.

Christ is the true vine



Wednesday, May 1

Fifth Week after Easter

29

An excerpt from John 15:1-2

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

Reflection from Pam Green, Trinity:

Jesus says "I am the true vine" – not just a vine, but the True Vine. Then tells us "my Father is the vine-grower." I believe there are times when we are being pruned by God with sharp tools, and we are not interested in the pain that it causes – yet it is an essential part of being a branch of the vine. We cannot fully exist apart from Christ, just like the branch can not thrive removed and apart from the vine. God prunes us, and guides us in the molding of our ways to help us to bear more fruit. I always think of the fruits of the spirit, that these things are what God is trying to cultivate within all of us, to strengthen the body of the church with love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These fruits give us the strength to do his work and to be the light of Christ in our world.

MUSIC:

"Christ is the Vine"

by James Biery

"The branch which God is tending is bursting with new life, Its reach is never-ending while pruned with sharpest knife."

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 122
- Acts 15:1–6
- John 15:1–8



"In the Vineyard" by Jean Francois Millet from the Vanderbilt Divinity Library.



Abide in love

Thursday, May 2

Fifth Week after Easter



MUSIC:

"Shake It Off"

by Taylor Swift

"Players gonna play...
haters gonna hate...
I'm just gonna shake it off!"

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 96:1–10
- Acts 15:7–21
- John 15:9–11

An excerpt from John 15:9–11

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

Reflection from Melissa Orsi,

St. Gregory's: This Easter, I find solace in Jesus' words from John 15:9-11. Warm and inviting, they offer a comforting paradigm of love – an intimate love that Jesus extends to us, mirroring God's love for Him. As I meditate on

his words, I realize the joy of abiding in Jesus' love. By striving to keep his commandments, we link ourselves into this great chain of divine love.

These words carry a profound promise – the promise of joy, his joy, completing us. It's not superficial happiness, but a deeply etched joy that holds steady amid life's ups and downs. This Easter, as we remember his sacrifice, let's reciprocate his love by living his teachings. We all have the opportunity to extend this kind of love (and thereby joy!) that not only fulfills, but transforms us.

This is a picture I took from last summer's Taylor Swift concert at Soldier Field - she embodies spreading joy and love. May we all spread just a little bit of that same joy this Easter season!

God chooses us



Friday, May 3

An excerpt from John 15:15-17

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 57:6–11
- Acts 15:22–31
- John 15:12–17

Members of St Gregory's serving at Christ Church in Waukegan.

Reflection Matthew Regalado,

St. Gregory's: When I read this scripture, it makes me think of God as an all-powerful genie who grants wishes like in Aladdin. This is not true though. Jesus says, "And I appointed you to go and bear fruit." This means that God gives us gifts so that we can help and love other people. One way we do this as parishioners is to serve monthly meals at Christ Church Waukegan to those in need. Jesus chose us to sustain his ministry of love. Another important thing is Jesus is calling himself our friend. We aren't his servants, but he is just like us and wants to help us by showing us how to love each other.

MUSIC:

"This is My Commandment"

by Larry Shackley

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I loved you."



Fifth Week after Easter

Sixth Week after Easter



The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit and always green:
the trees of nature fruitless be
compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
by faith I know, but ne'er can tell,
the glory which I now can see
in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
and pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
here I will sit and rest a while:
under the shadow I will be,
of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
it keeps my dying faith alive;
which makes my soul in haste to be
with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

God's delight in us



Monday, May 6

Sixth Week after Easter

33

An excerpt from Psalm 149:3-4

Let them praise his name with dancing,
making melody to him with tambourine
and lyre.

For the Lord takes pleasure in his
people; he adorns the humble with victory.

Reflection from Lesley Windle Cullis,

St. Lawrence: Traditionally Lent is a somber occasion. My three year old daughter hasn't learned this yet. She spent part of the Ash Wednesday service using the kneeler positioned at the front of the church for the distribution of ashes as a house for stuffed animals. In our church, which is welcoming of the delights of childhood, my kids often behave in a way that can feel... irreverent. But I am called by this passage to remember that just as I delight in the delight of my children, so too does God delight in our delight. And in a world where there is often much to grieve, my children's irrepressible joy feels like a divine gift. The joy that bubbles over for them, that can feel disruptive at times, might actually be God's favorite type of worship and praise. I hope this Easter season can bring us all something to giggle about.

MUSIC:

"O Be Joyful"

by John Rutter

"O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands!"

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 149
- Acts 16:11–15
- John 15:26–16:4a

Photograph taken of The Rev. Kristin Saylor after a child handed her a beanie baby in the middle of announcements.





The coming of the Spirit

Tuesday, May 7



Winter Solstice 2021. Photograph by Brian Loshbough, Trinity, Highland Park.

An excerpt from John 16:8-11

"And when the Advocate comes, she will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned."

MUSIC:

"Veni Sancte Spiritus"

by W.A. Mozart

Translation: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful!"

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 138
- Acts 16:16–34
- John 16:5–11

Reflection from Whit Shepard, Trinity:

The Holy Spirit is many things and takes many forms. Writing two centuries after Jesus' death, John now understands who she is and why she is so essential to our faith. It is John who makes the connection between the Holy Spirit and the Advocate or "Paraclete": the witness who testifies on our behalf before our Judge.

The Holy Spirit can be Comforter, Counselor, Mediator, and Advocate. Jesus has promised her in all her forms to us, forever. To borrow from the Jerusalem Bible translation, "She shows the world how wrong it was about sin (which has never been about breaking laws but truly believing in Christ, the Son of God); about who was right about Jesus, the Son of God; and about the world itself, which stands condemned and from which we are now released. God knows we need Her more than ever." *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

Sixth Week after Easter

The Spirit guides us into all truth



Wednesday, May 8

Sixth Week after Easter

37

An excerpt from John 16:12–15

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

MUSIC: "Exultet"

arr. John Repulski

"May Christ the Morning Star who knows no setting find it [the paschal candle] ever-burning, he who gives his light to all creation..."

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 148:1–2, 11–14
- Acts 17:15, 22–18:1
- John 16:12–15

Reflection from Jennifer Ould, Trinity: God is still speaking.

Let that sink in.

God is still speaking.

God is speaking through the Bible and the church-universal, yes. But God is also speaking through your life and stories – through all of our lives and stories. The Spirit is in us and in all of creation, and will not waste a moment if we are listening.

And that is key – listening. Did you realize you can pray without saying a thing? Prayer is a conversation, and sometimes we need to just stop and listen. Listen for the "still, small voice," but also listen to your life. Listen to what fellow-journeymen are telling you about their lives. Because God is in all of our lives, and God is still speaking.

Photograph by Bill Foltz, St. Gregory's, Deerfield.





The Ascension

Thursday, May 9

Sixth Week after Easter

36



Photograph of by Casey Kremer. St. Gregory's, Deerfield.

An excerpt from Acts 1:9-11a

As they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?"

MUSIC:

"Jesus on the Mountain Peak"

arr. Michael Burkhardt

*"Jesus on the mountain peak
stands alone in glory blazing!
Let us, if we dare to speak,
Join the saints and angels,
praising alleluia!"*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

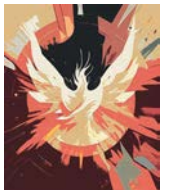
- Psalm 47
- Acts 1:1-11
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Luke 24:44-53

Reflection from Steve Truckenbrod, St. Gregory's:

One thing many people find hard is saying goodbye to others that they know, love, and respect. I would imagine that the Apostles were filled with very mixed emotions as they witnessed Jesus' ascension into heaven. After following Jesus for 40 days since his death to just see him suddenly ascend into the heavens had to be shocking to say the least.

Perhaps almost equally shocking was the sudden appearance of two men dressed in white. Yet the words of these two men had to be reassuring as they told the Apostles that Jesus would surely return in the same manner that he had just left. I must imagine that this appearance and exchange must have changed their initial shock into great hope, as a reminder of Jesus' promise to return and take them into their place in heaven.

Your hearts will rejoice



Friday, May 10

Sixth Week after Easter

37

An excerpt from John 16:22

So you have pain now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

MUSIC:

"Calypso"

by John Denver

*"For though we are strangers in
your silent world
To live on the land, we must learn
from the sea
To be true as the tide and free
as the wind-swell
Joyful and loving in letting it be."*

Reflection from Sarah Kettlewell,

St. Gregory's: It's like a biblical emotional roller coaster. Pain now, rejoice later.

The promise of endless joy to come. I'm struck by how I feel like I've experienced this cycle many times in my life, and honestly how I sometimes forget to hold on to my joy. I want my pain to fade, physically and emotionally. I want my joy to stay in full, bright color all the time.

Why can't it? Why do we let the joy fade too? Why do I forget? Today I shall work on putting my energy into coloring in the joy of life.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 98:1–4
- Acts 18:1–8
- John 16:20–23a

*"The joy of Dole whips."
Photograph by
Sarah Kettlewell,
St. Gregory's, Deerfield.*



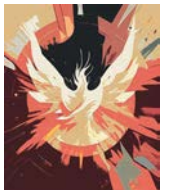
Seventh Week after Easter



You are a fire always burning but never consuming; you are a fire consuming in your heat all the soul's selfish love; you are a fire lifting all chill and giving light. In your light you have made me know your truth. You are that light beyond all light who gives the mind's eye supernatural light in such fullness and perfection that you bring clarity even to the light of faith. In that faith I see that my soul has life, and in that light receives you who are Light.

St. Catherine of Siena

Courage in Christ



Monday, May 13

Seventh Week after Easter 85

An excerpt from John 16:33

In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!

MUSIC:

"O Love"

by Elaine Hagenberg

*"O love that will not let me go,
I give thee back the life I owe,
and in thy ocean depths
its flow shall richer, fuller be."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 68:1–8
- Acts 19:1–8
- John 16:28–33

Reflection from Kristin Saylor,

St. Lawrence: Already and not yet. These words are central to what it means to be a Christian, especially in this season of Easter. Christ is already Risen – and the world is not yet fully redeemed. What does it mean to say that Christ has conquered the world when children continue to go hungry and people die from violence every day? How are we to have courage in a world like this? Perhaps it comes back to this: God does not define victory in the same way that we do. Christ does not conquer by military might, or domination, but by sacrificial love. To say that Christ has conquered the world means that there is no part of this world that has not been touched by Christ's transforming love – a love that, the Resurrection reminds us, is stronger than death. What would it mean for us to draw our courage from this kind of love?





Tuesday, May 14

Seventh Week after Easter

The gift of eternal life

An excerpt from John 17:1b-3

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."



MUSIC: **"Jesu, the Very Thought of Thee"** arr. Paul Halley

*"But what to those who find?
Ah, this, no tongue nor pen can show
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his loved ones know."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

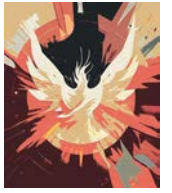
For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 68:9-10,17-20
- Acts 20:17-27
- John 17:1-11a

Reflection from Jennifer Ould, Trinity:

The word translated "eternal" in this passage (and others) is not a word about a length of time, or time at all. The Greek word *aiónios* might better be translated as "divine." So this is divine life, that we may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom God has sent. To truly know God, who is Love, is to love God. And to love God is to be becoming like God, as Jesus showed us. So this is eternal – divine – life, to love and become like God. May it be so in our lives today and every day.

Giving and receiving



Wednesday, May 15 Seventh Week after Easter 41

An excerpt from Acts 20:34-35

You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

MUSIC:

"Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace"

music by Craig Courtney,
words by St. Francis of Assisi

*"O Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 68:28–36
- Acts 20:28–38
- John 17:11b–19

Reflection from Bryan Cones, Trinity:

St. Paul, who is speaking in today's passage, was known for insisting that he preached the gospel "free of charge" – in other words, he took no money for his preaching. Instead he learned to make tents to support himself and his ministry. Here he suggests his everyday work is also part of his ministry, an example of how to "support the weak" who could not work for themselves. How can we see our own everyday work – whether paid or unpaid, in our families or in our workplaces – as a ministry of service to others inspired by our faith in the resurrection? How might we make that connection, so that, like Paul, our work can also be a way to "support the weak"?

The Rose window above the choir loft in the Trinity, Highland Park.





Completely one

**An excerpt from
John 17:2-26**

Jesus prayed, "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

*Photograph by Tony Trevithick,
St. Gregory's, Deerfield.*



MUSIC:
"Jesus Christ the Apple Tree"
arr. John Rutter

*"The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit and always green;
but trees of nature fruitless be,
compared with Christ the apple tree."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 16:5-11
- Acts 22:30;23:6-11
- John 17:20-26

**Reflection from Tony Trevithick,
St. Gregory's:** It seems, to me, we are all like leaves on a magnificent tree. Although, sometimes, we may think we are alone on a single branch, all branches flourish from one single root. Continually nourished by the hand of God, we sometimes forget that we are all connected to the same loving source. Then, even as we wither, die, and fall to the earth, we are all drawn back into God's loving hands.

Do you love me?



Friday, May 17

An excerpt from John 21:17

Jesus said to Simon Peter the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.

MUSIC:

"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

arr. Jeremy Bakken

*"And so through all the length of days,
Your goodness fails me never!
Good Shepherd, may I sing your praise
within your house forever."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 103:1–2,19–22
- Acts 25:13–21
- John 21:15–19

Reflection from Val Evans,

St. Gregory's: Sheep farmers need to ensure that their flocks are fed. Some of the year there will be plenty of grass in the fields; when it gets colder additional feed is needed. Some days it rains, sometimes fog, freezing temperatures, or snow – but 365 days a year the farmer ensures the sheep are fed because he cares about their welfare.

Jesus' sheep are his followers who need feeding with the encouragement they need to continue in the faith. Peter feels hurt by Jesus' persistence in asking the same thing three times, but Jesus wants to stress the importance of the task. Jesus knows he will soon be gone, and he wants Peter to continue his work, not just once or twice when it's easy. He needs Peter to continue caring for his flock when it's hard to do, as well as when it's easy.

Two thousand years later his sheep still need feeding.

Photograph by Val Evans, St. Gregory's, of her son feeding their 5 rams (with Penny the dog).



Seventh Week after Easter 43



St. Gregory's Episcopal Church

815 Wilmot Road
Deerfield, Illinois 60015
847.945.1678
www.StGschurch.org
parish@stgregoryschurch.org



St. Lawrence Episcopal Church

125 West Church Street
Libertyville, Illinois 60048
847.362.2110
www.stlawrencechurch.org
office@stlawrencechurch.org



Trinity Episcopal Church

425 Laurel Avenue
Highland Park, Illinois 60035
847.432.6653
www.trinitychurchhp.org
office@trinitychurchhp.org