

APRIL 1, 2018
EASTER SUNDAY



We are witnesses to the resurrection.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 16:1-8	The tomb is empty
Monday	John 20:1-18	Jesus is risen!
Tuesday	Isaiah 25:6-9	God wipes away all tears
Wednesday	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Witnesses to the resurrection
Thursday	Acts 10:34-43	The gospel is for all
Friday	John 11:1-27	Jesus is the resurrection and the life
Saturday	Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24	A song of victory
Sunday	John 20:19-31	Jesus appears to the disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.”

Acts 10:40-41 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, by the power and witness of the resurrection, you are our strength and our might; you Lord Jesus, have become my salvation. Amen. (Psalm 118:14)

Mealtime Prayer:

Risen Lord Jesus, come to us this day. Bless our food, share our table, and accept our thanks. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the good news of Jesus' resurrection fill you with love, joy, peace, hope, and good courage.



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 1, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Halle, Halle, Halle



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell the story of a favorite event you experienced or witnessed.
- What do you think it was like to be one of the first witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection?
- A witness is one who has a story to tell. How are you a witness to God's saving work in the world? What story do you like to tell about how God and the resurrection of Jesus are real to you?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Mark 16:1-8.

This account of the resurrection is quite surprising. It ends by noting that the women “went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (v. 8). The Gospel of Mark does not end with a spirit of triumph but one of fear. Some faithful Christians have been so shocked by the ending that they added more verses to the original ending of the Gospel (vv. 9-20). With either ending, it is clear that silence was not the final word, even though the women were terrified. God's message of forgiveness and resurrection must get out to the world. How does the ending of Mark help you with your fears as a witness to God's work in the world? Close by praying:

Pray: **Almighty God, we thank you for your mercy and kindness present in our lives and world. Give us courage to tell the story of hope that is ours through Christ's death and resurrection. Amen.**

SERVICE



Plan to bring Easter resurrection cheer to someone who is working on Easter Sunday in a hospital, nursing home, police station, or fire station. Prepare an Easter basket to deliver to them as a gift from your home.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Have an Easter egg hunt and begin the festivity with the following words:

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made. *All:* **Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Leader: Christ is risen! *All:* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Leader: Lord, you give us new life. *All:* **Alleluia!**

Leader: Lord, you give us your creation and all that is in it. *All:* **Alleluia!**

Leader: Lord, you give us hope and the story of the resurrection to witness to others. *All:* **Alleluia!**

Leader: Christ is risen!. *All:* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Leader: Let us pray. Dear God, we thank you for this day and for these Easter eggs, a sign of new life and a symbol of the resurrection. May our joy and laughter reflect the power of new life through Jesus Christ our Lord. *All:* **Amen.**



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

APRIL 8, 2018
SECOND SUNDAY
OF EASTER



The risen Jesus gives us peace.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 20:19-31	Jesus appears to the disciples
Monday	Acts 4:32-35	The sharing of goods
Tuesday	1 John 1:1–2:2	The word of life
Wednesday	John 14:23-31	Jesus speaks of peace
Thursday	Romans 5:1-11	We have peace with God
Friday	Philippians 4:4-9	The God of peace be with you
Saturday	Psalms 133	The blessing of unity
Sunday	Luke 24:36b-48	Jesus appears to his disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” **John 20:21 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear Risen Christ, replace our worries with peace, our fears with courage, and our unbelief with faith. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Risen Lord Jesus, you give us food for the body and peace for the soul. May faith be our way and love be our goal. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through believing that you have life in his name. (John 20:31)



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 8, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Peace I Leave With
You My Friends*



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Do most of us awake each day to a sense of peace or worry? Why do you think that is? How do you generally begin each day?
- Martin Luther said that the judgement of the law is the “constant guest” in our lives. How do we overcome that sense of self-doubt and judgement?
- How does the resurrection make a difference in your life?

DEVOTIONS



Read: 1 John 1:1–2:2.

Christianity is often described—and challenged—as primarily a set of beliefs, but in John 20:30-31 the focus is on a way of life, “that you may have life in his name.” In 1 John 1 there is a wonderful openness to an honest look at our lives; we all sin. That is not a dark view of the world. It presents a freedom not to be afraid or ashamed of our lives but to see beyond our brokenness to the power of forgiveness that creates us anew each day to start again in peace. How does that sense of Christianity and the power of the resurrection change everything? For those who don’t have this faith or hope, what are they missing? After a time for reflection, recite the following: (1 John 1:8-9) **“if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Pray: **Dear Risen Christ, replace our worries with peace, our fears with courage, and our unbelief with faith. Amen.**

SERVICE



In Acts 4:32-35, life in the community that trusts the power of the resurrection has a changed understanding of property and how we care for each other. Finally, everything is God’s more than it is “mine” to use for my own pleasure. This is not an endorsement of an economic system. It is a confession of faith and a commitment to love the neighbor as oneself. Rethink everything you own as a loan from God to love others. How might that influence your actions today?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



In what ways can you share the peace with others and in your home or when visiting friends? It can be a handshake, hug, or a high five. There is a long history of Christians sharing a sign of peace with one another in public worship as a physical expression of the peace God gives to us through Jesus. It connects directly to Jesus greeting his disciples in the resurrection. That public greeting also extends to personal greetings. Share the sign of peace: **“The peace of the Lord Jesus be with you.”**



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

APRIL 15, 2018
THIRD SUNDAY
OF EASTER



The risen Jesus sends us out to witness.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 24:36b-48	Jesus appears to his disciples
Monday	Acts 3:12-19	Peter speaks in the temple
Tuesday	1 John 3:1-7	Children of God
Wednesday	Acts 1:1-11	You will be my witnesses
Thursday	Acts 10:34-43	The witness of the apostles
Friday	Isaiah 35:3-9	God changes everything
Saturday	Psalms 4	An evening prayer
Sunday	John 10:11-18	The Good Shepherd

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” **Luke 24:46-48 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, open our minds to understand the Scriptures and our mouths to speak of you. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God bless our food, God guide our ways, God give us strength to declare your praise. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the light of God’s face shine on you and be gracious to you. (Psalm 4:1,6)



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 15, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Thine Is the Glory



CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell about an amazing event you saw or heard about.
- Who first told you about Jesus? Who and what has helped you learn about him?
- Jesus said that his disciples would be “witnesses” for him (Luke 24:48). In what ways are you a witness for Jesus to others?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Luke 24:36b-48.

When his followers saw the risen Lord, they were filled with joy but also disbelief and still questioned how this could be (v. 41). Jesus called these joyful and questioning followers to be his witnesses and to tell others of the power of repentance and forgiveness in Jesus’ name (v. 47). Even those who are followers need support and encouragement in their faith in the risen Lord Jesus. Talk with others about how the resurrection of Jesus creates a new way of life for us, one that is renewed daily through God’s forgiveness. In your prayers this week, pray for others that they may come to know the risen Jesus or that their faith may be strengthened to deal with disbelief and questions of faith.

Pray: The Lord’s Prayer.

SERVICE



The Great Commandment to love God and to love your neighbor relates directly to the Great Commission to tell the good news of Jesus to others. Being a witness of Jesus’ saving work is an essential act of love of the body of Christ, the church. Be open to how the Holy Spirit can use you as a witness to others. This week pray for opportunities to be a witness to Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Psalm 4:8 states, “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.” The end of the day is a good time to slow down, reflect on the day, and focus on God’s place at the center of our lives. Rituals that help us do this can have a powerful “witnessing” influence in our home lives. Consider incorporating these ideas into your bedtime routine: Read a Bible passage or a storybook Bible. Give a blessing to someone. Take time for prayer and meditation, including sitting in silence. Sing or pray a hymn. Review the day to wonder how God was present in your up and down moments.



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

APRIL 22, 2018
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



Faith is formed through personal, trusted relationships.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 10:11-18	The Good Shepherd
Monday	Acts 4:5-12	Peter and John before the council
Tuesday	1 John 3:16-24	Love one another
Wednesday	Genesis 48:8-21	God has been my shepherd
Thursday	Ezekiel 34:11-24	God will look after God's sheep
Friday	Mark 6:30-34	Jesus, the compassionate shepherd
Saturday	Psalm 23	The divine shepherd
Sunday	John 15:1-8	Jesus the true vine

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. **John 10:14-15 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, thank you for being with us, especially when we are going through difficult times. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, thank you for feeding us, protecting us, and loving us. May we always listen to you and follow you. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's kindness and love be with you each day of your life, and may you live forever with the Lord. (Psalm 23:6)



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 22, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

The Lord's My Shepherd



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- What is it about someone that makes you want to trust that person?
- Who do you listen to in a trusting way? Who listens to you and trusts you? Why is this so?
- Jesus says that he lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:14-15). How does Jesus lay down his life for you? How does that help you trust in him and our heavenly Father?

DEVOTIONS



Read: John 10:11-18 or read about Jesus as the Good Shepherd in a storybook Bible.

Talk about what it means to listen to Jesus' voice and to follow him as sheep of the Good Shepherd. Play a game of "Follow the Leader." Blindfold all the followers and have the leader guide them using only his or her voice. Jesus says that other sheep will be added to his flock and they will listen to his voice. Reflect on how you listen to Jesus' voice today.

Pray: Jesus, our Good Shepherd, thank you for being with us, especially when we are going through difficult times. Amen.

SERVICE



Psalm 23 points out how difficult times (walking through the "darkest valley") is an important time to experience a trusted relationship with God ("I fear no evil; for you are with me"). Be a servant of God's presence by reaching out to someone going through a difficult time. Visit that person, listen to him or her, and offer a prayer that expresses trust in the Good Shepherd who walks with us through our darkest valleys.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Psalm 23 is one of the most familiar passages in the Bible. It speaks to people in all times and in all places. Memorize or recite Psalm 23 and make it part of your routine of prayer and meditation. Psalm 23:1 is a good verse to go to sleep each night, by breathing in and thinking, "The Lord is my shepherd." As you exhale, then recall the words, "I shall not want."



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

APRIL 29, 2018
FIFTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



God's love is the power that enables human love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	John 15:1-8	Jesus the true vine
Monday	Acts 8:26-40	Philip and the eunuch
Tuesday	1 John 4:7-21	God is love
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 10:12-19	What the Lord wants
Thursday	Mark 12:28-34	The first commandment
Friday	Galatians 3:23-29	Purpose of the law
Saturday	Psalms 22:25-31	A vow of thanksgiving
Sunday	John 15:9-17	Love one another

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. **1 John 4:10 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, just as you reached out to the Ethiopian eunuch and claimed him as your own in baptism, help your church to share your love throughout the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; so thank you Lord, for all you give, this food and drink and love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you, live in you, and be perfected in you. (1 John 4:12)



© 2017 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

APRIL 29, 2018

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Gather Us In



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell a story about how you have been loved by others.
- How is God's love for us shown through Jesus?
- Why is it important to know that God's love for us comes before we can love God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Acts 8:26-40 or the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in a storybook Bible.

The eunuch could not have a child and was a social and religious outcast. When the eunuch asks, "What is to prevent me from being baptized?", there were clear human standards that could prevent this religious act. However, the eunuch's baptism is not about human standards of performance, but God's. The story begins and ends with the role of the Spirit of God (vv. 26, 29, and 39). If baptism is a human act, the eunuch would be prevented from baptism, but in the New Testament, the Christian baptism is God's act, not a human act. That is why entire families—people of all ages—were baptized (Acts 16:15, 33). In baptism God comes and breaks down barriers that separate us from the love of God by claiming us as God's children. God comes to us and loves us before we can ever come to God and love God (John 15:5 and 1 John 4:10, 19). If that were not the case, the danger would be that we will never know for sure if our approach to God was pure enough or faithful enough. Thanks be to God, our relationship to God is not based on our pure heart but God's. Reflect on God's love as the power that enables our love for God and for others.

Pray: The Lord's Prayer.

SERVICE

The Easter joy began with women at the empty tomb being sent out with a message that Jesus has been raised (Mark 16:6). We, like the women are sent out into the world with the good news of Jesus Christ's victory over sin and death. It was the same for Philip who met the Ethiopian eunuch on a wilderness road (Acts 8:26). As you meet people in your daily activities, find ways through your words and actions to communicate God's love to them. Whose life can you touch today with the freedom of the gospel that has conquered sin and death? Pray for Christian outreach throughout the world.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Christianity in Ethiopia dates back to the first century and is likely the first nation to accept Christianity. In honor of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch and the long history of Christianity in Ethiopia, consider having an Easter meal traditional to Ethiopia, one that includes a sour dough bread (*injera*) and a lamb stew (*beg wot*). Make it more festive by inviting family and friends. Include *A Prayer of the Week* and the *Mealtime Prayer* with the Ethiopian meal.



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