

April 2024 Worship Guide

CHERRYVALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 709 CHERRY HILL DR, STAUNTON VA - 540 885 0098

This booklet contains the outline for each worship service during the month of April 2024.

As of the time of going to print, Sunday worship is in person, online and broadcast on the radio (you can listen in your car on FM 87.9, in the church parking lot). If you are not able to attend in person, you can watch online on our website and YouTube channel. Even if we are not worshipping in the same building, we are still one body, one family, we are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Look up the scriptures referenced in the following pages; pray the words, and claim the promises for you and your family. - Pastor Jonathan

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Think again of what it would have been like for those first disciples, gathered together in the upper room that first Easter evening, which is when John 20:19-31 begins. Think of what they witnessed in the days leading up to Easter: There was that emotional Thursday evening, when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, and shared a last supper with them. There was his agony in the garden, when those same disciples fell asleep as Jesus prayed. There was the betrayal by one of their own, Judas, and Jesus' arrest. The denial by Peter, the crowds shouting for Jesus to be crucified. His trial, his torture, and then, finally, his crucifixion. His burial in the tomb.

And now, two days later, these stories from the woman who went to visit the tomb, that the tomb was empty, and Jesus was raised from the dead. Just imagine the swirl of emotions those disciples must have been feeling when Jesus came and stood among them that evening! They felt joy, of course. But also sadness over what Jesus went through. And confusion over what his resurrection meant. And fear; we know that they were very afraid. They probably felt guilt, too, over deserting Jesus, in his hour of need. And in response to all of that joy and sadness and confusion and fear and guilt, Jesus simply said: "Peace be with you."

What Jesus did on that first Easter evening was to show those frightened disciples the same grace and mercy and forgiveness and love that he always showed. He came and stood among them and simply said, "Peace be with you." And then, to ease their doubts, he showed them his hands and his side. No wonder the disciples rejoiced to see him! Not only was Jesus alive and among them, he had also forgiven them for all that they had done – and not done – over these last dramatic days.

We often read this scripture and focus on Thomas, the doubting disciple who needed to put his finger in the marks of the nails before he would believe. But this story is really about all of those fear-filled disciples, trembling behind that locked door, and wondering what it all means. This story is really about each and every one of us: trying to live a life worthy of our Lord and Savior; struggling with doubt, weighed down with fear, and constantly falling short of what we know that he expects from us.

And this story is also about how Jesus comes to us, in the midst of our doubts and fears and sin and guilt, to offer each and every one of us that simple word of grace, and mercy, and forgiveness. "Peace be with you," says our risen Lord to us all. John 20: 19-31 is really about the peace which surpasses all understanding; the peace which the world cannot give; the peace that can only come from our crucified and risen Lord; and the peace that comes when we most need it.

John 20: 19-31 is also about the ways in which we are called to share that peace and that joy, with a world so filled with doubt and fear. Jesus did not join his disciples in the upper room simply to celebrate his resurrection with them. He also joined them there to give them the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to send them to the world to continue his mission. "As the Father has sent me," Jesus said to them and to us, "so I send you."

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April Worship

April 7, 2024

Scriptures to read and meditate on

Acts 4:32-35; Ps 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

Call to Worship

We gather not by our might, but by God's grace We worship God with open hearts. We gather so that we may be witnesses of Jesus Christ to the world . We worship God with open minds. We gather not behind locked doors, but in the peace of Christ. We worship God with open doors

Prayer of Confession

Resurrected God, even though we have hide ourselves in a locked room and huddle together as ones who build barriers, you send your Living Word through our locked doors and into our guarded hearts. Forgive us for not living into the peace that you give to us. Forgive us for the divisions we live into of the world. Forgive us and free us, that we might be witnesses of your grace and messengers of your goodness. By the power of your Holy Spirit, grant us the trust to believe the Gospel, not because we see it, but because we have been seen by it and transformed through it.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love, and we are strengthened by your presence. Thank you for bursting into our lives with your presence and bringing peace. Bless what we have offered to you this day, so that your Kingdom may spread to the ends of the earth. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit as we are sent forth to live your life, share your joy, and give your peace, as we give ourselves for others. For Christ is Risen as our Lord and Savior, Alleluia! Amen.

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**April 14, 2024**

**Scriptures to read and meditate on**

Acts 3:12-19; Ps 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

## **Call to Worship**

We have been called here by a Holy God. God is love! Let us leave sin and evil behind. God is love! Let us worship and allow God to transform our hearts. God is love, Alleluia!

## **Prayer of Confession**

God of mercy, we see your love poured out for us in all the world as you call us your children. But too often we trample your love as we are guilty of breaking your Law of life. We don't always do what is right and good. We allow our hearts to become filled with evil thoughts and we sin against you and our neighbor. Forgive us merciful God. Teach us to live together as one community human and beyond-human, creature and created to your glory, so that your love is known among all the living.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Loving Creator, we give you thanks for calling us your children. In that calling, you have transformed the evil in our hearts into your love. Help us recognize that our generosity and stewardship of the resources you've entrusted to us, are a sign of our commitment to this holy transformation. May these offerings we bring today be a reflection of our love for you and our desire to be faithful stewards of your blessings. Bless our giving and guide us in using these gifts wisely. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

# April Worship

April 21, 2024

**Scriptures to read and meditate on**

Acts 4:5-12; Ps 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

## **Call to Worship**

We gather together to worship God. The Shepherd of our souls. Jesus says, I am the Good Shepherd. We are the sheep of Jesus' flock. Let us listen closely today as we worship. Speak to us Lord, we know your voice.

## **Prayer of Confession**

Gentle Shepherd, You guide us in right paths, You lead us in the ways of righteousness, but we have allowed our anger, our rage, our greed, and at times even hate, to direct our paths. We have overreacted, we have taken more than our share, we have despised others that seem to have it all. Forgive us, God, for not following Your ways. Forgive us for not remembering that we are Your sheep, and You are our Shepherd. Forgive us when we have not listened for Your voice and instead have acted in the ways of the world. Guide us back to Your path, to loving You and loving our neighbors. Help us to unclench our fists and lend out our hands in hope and healing, forgiveness, and love. In the name of Christ our Shepherd we pray.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Ever-present God who speaks in thunder and earthquakes and in the softest whisper: we long to hear your voice over all the noise of the world this day. In a world so divided and polarized, we need to hear not only the voice of the Shepherd but the cries of other sheep who are being marginalized, forgotten, and abandoned. May the gifts we offer today be our response to hearing the one who speaks in the language of love and compassion. In the name of our Good Shepherd, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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April 28, 2024 -

Scriptures to read and meditate on

Acts 8:26-40; Ps 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8

Call to Worship

God is the True Vine, and we are the branches. Connected to Jesus. Connected to bear fruit! Connected to Jesus. Or we wither away. We come to worship God, who is the True Vine. God, teach us how to remain connected so that we might bear good fruit!

Prayer of Confession

We thank you, gracious God, for Jesus Christ the true vine, with his roots eternally grounded in you. We rejoice that by grace we have been grafted into him, to be branches on a vine which bears the loveliest of all the fruits of earth. Yet we confess that all is not well with the way we live. Sometimes we are lazy and indifferent to the fruit that we bear. Sometimes we focus only on the fruit. Sometimes we neglect the very vine that gives life. Forgive us and help us to abide in you as you abide in us through all the changing seasons of life.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God, as we offer our gifts today, we reflect on the wisdom and truth in the words of Jesus. In this imagery, we recognize our role as branches, connected to you, the source of our strength and vitality. Help us to stay rooted in your love, producing fruit that brings glory to your name. May these gifts we offer now, show our commitment to abide in your teachings and work, joyfully in response to your love. In the name of Jesus, our true vine, we pray. Amen.

John 20: 24-29 Word Search

Just for fun, or use as a teaching aide with your younger family members.

S Q M I U S P Y S L M H A D D D K I T R V I S D L F G H Y M
M O Q Z Q V D T V T I R S H F X R W O W K I I H C M F K A Y
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H X N A I D W G P P O X X Y Y W S I R W U E H J U R K D M L
M E L R S O T F J E G W C C U C H C W O S N A V O F L F S V
C A Z O N G P V B A D Q M X E E N O V V L J N O H I X U W U
X H V D O Y Y Q L C U C T N J W K R C E H E O T L N B X R C
V F F P R M Y S K E J A B E P Q R O Z R G V H O M G H C Y F
D K T L L Y Z O Q E F G A W D J U G B D L Q Y T J E A O Z M
X R K L F R K K S Q T R R H G P S K K P C F A S N R A G B B
A V O M J X S U G A K U A C O G X O Q A Q Z K G A E C V W I
H I K L E A S L Y X O T F D O O R S W E R E S H U T E R K F
P H H U Y K U S M F F Q W W A X L R T U G N C N M G H S M G
I U I W B M I X H F M T I C R P E V I Z L I N R Z P R F H J

Find the **27 bold** words or phrases from John 20: 24-29

But **Thomas** (who was called the **Twin**), one of the **twelve**, was not with them when **Jesus** came. So the other **disciples** told him, “We have **seen the Lord**.” But he said to them, “**Unless** I see **the mark** of the **nails** in his **hands** and put my **finger** in the mark of the nails and my hand in **his side**, I will **not believe**.”

A **week later** his disciples were again in the **house**, and Thomas was with them.

Although the **doors were shut**, Jesus came and **stood among them** and said, “**Peace** be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and **see my hands**. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. **Do not doubt** but believe.” Thomas answered him, “**My Lord and my God!**” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have **seen me**?”

Blessed are those who have **not seen** and yet have **come to believe**.”

Continued from front cover ...

The word “Apostle” literally means one who is sent. The word “Disciple,” on the other hand, literally means one who learns. The disciples have learned from Jesus many things. By his words and his example, he has taught them about the Kingdom of God, and about our Heavenly Father’s purpose for them and for the world. Now, these disciples are becoming apostles. Disciples who are sent into the world. Jesus sends those first disciples out into the world to be his apostles. And he sends us out into the world in the same way. We are all apostles, members of the apostolic church. We are the sent-out people of God, with a mission that comes straight from our crucified and risen Messiah.

But Jesus doesn’t just tell us to do this. He helps us to do this. That, too, is the miracle of the resurrection. After he said to those first apostles, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” Jesus breathed on those apostles, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

When Jesus breathed on them, you can almost imagine those disciples thinking back to the creation story in Genesis: when God took dust from the ground, formed Adam from the dust, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. As the Father did at the beginning, so the Son did to those first disciples. And so the Spirit does to us in our baptisms: When we are made new creations in Christ; No longer merely dust which will return to dust when we die. We are now brothers and sisters in Christ, who will live forever with our crucified and risen Lord. You see, it is not enough for Jesus that he conquered death through the great triumph of Resurrection. Now he wants to breathe this new life into us; he wants to share that new life with us. And then? Then he wants us to go out and share that new life with others. To share that new life with a world that is suffocated by anxiety and fear. He wants to breathe new life into this world through us. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Jesus wants us to go into a world in the grip of death, and breathe into it new life. And our world needs that new life, doesn’t it? And if we wonder where it will come from, it will come from us. We are the ones continuing Jesus’ mission. We are now the body of Christ in the world. We are God’s plan to bring new life into a dying world, until the day that God’s son returns again. Our words, our deeds, our hope, our faith, our love, our witness in our daily lives, our acts of love to others; all of this done in Jesus’ name with the help of the Holy Spirit; all this is how the world catches a glimpse of our risen Lord. That is what it means to be an apostle, and that is what we are.

So that’s what those first apostles did, right? They ran out and shared their joy with the world, right? Well, not exactly, not right away. A week after this story takes place, the first Sunday after Easter, we find those disciples back in the upper room; the door locked again. Has anything changed? Jesus shows up again, and first thing he says when he shows up this time is – surprise, surprise – “Peace be with you.” Then, he turns to Thomas. Now, Thomas was not there a week ago, when Jesus first appeared to the other disciples. We are not sure why, but, when the others told Thomas that they had seen the Lord, Thomas famously said, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

So, what does Jesus do when he appears to Thomas? Again, Jesus shows patience and forgiveness and mercy. He said to Thomas, “Put your fingers here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” What patience Jesus has – not only with Thomas, but with all the disciples! What patience he has with us.

Again and again, in the midst of our doubts and fears, and in the midst of our sin and failings, our crucified and risen Lord and Savior comes to us and says: “Peace be with you.” Again and again, he comes to us and says, “Do not doubt, but believe.” Again and again, Jesus forgives us, breathes new life into us, and offers us the gift of new life in Christ, and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Again and again, our risen Lord reminds us of our mission; to go and share the peace and the joy and the hope of this new life, with our world that struggles to find peace, joy or hope. Again and again, the risen Jesus comes to us. To give us peace, to give us new life, to forgive our sin, and to gently remind us not to doubt but to believe. And again and again, he invites us to go. To go in peace, to serve our risen Lord.



FAMILY GAME NIGHT

APRIL 13TH
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Collecting for the Food Pantry in April Mac 'N' Cheese

EVERY MONTH, WE ARE COLLECTING TISSUES AND DISINFECTING WIPES FOR THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AT WARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

drop off Sunday morning,
or note your donation
'school wipes'

wipes must be
ready to use
not spray bottles

name brand
and
store brand
accepted



Rise

AGAINST HUNGER

Meal Packing Event
April 27, 2024
\$4000 Goal
10,000 meals

They may look like simple bags of rice and soy, but Rise Against Hunger meals represent the hopes and dreams of people worldwide. The Rise Against Hunger Experience events provide a fun, educational way for groups to literally lend a hand to people facing hunger across the globe. We combine an assembly line process with an educational experience to make a huge impact worldwide.

This year, to raise funds towards our \$4000 goal, we are partnering with Tidal Wave Car Wash. You can purchase a \$30 top of the line car wash for just \$10. For every ticket you purchase, \$5 goes towards our Rise Against Hunger fundraising goal. Car wash tickets are valid until April 2025 and make perfect gifts, thank-yous or just a way to keep your own car clean for 1/3 of the price.

Contact the office for details on how to purchase your car wash tickets.



SHOP NOW

Cherryvale Fundraiser

INDOOR YARD SALE

YARD SALE

AUGUST 24TH - 8AM TO NOON

SPRING CLEANING?

DONATE QUALITY NEW AND USED ITEMS TO OUR SALE