



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH *of Lapeer*

# **At-Home Worship Guide**

**April 5–28**

# Welcome

## How to Use This Guide

Because we cannot meet in-person to share worship, we are sending worship out to you! We encourage you to use this packet you have in your hands to host worship over the phone with a friend or in your home with those who live with you.

Our Sunday worship guides feature a short Bible study and guided prayer. While you are welcome to ask Biblical questions and lift up prayers beyond what we provide here, we encourage everyone to do these things at minimum so we maintain a sense of churchwide unity on Sundays.

Our Tuesday worship guides are for use in a Tuesday meal of your choice and feature an “agape meal,” an ancient ritual that eventually became communion as we know it today. Anyone can share such sacred meals celebrating God’s love, and we hope this preserves a sense of our sacred connectedness to each other and the Lord, even if we cannot gather in-person.

## Devotionals via Conference Call

Alex & Carrie are hosting a half-hour conference call every Sunday through Thursday evening from 5pm to 5:30. In these conversations, we will either experience in this at-home worship guide together or enjoy a miniature Bible study about beloved or unusual passages of scripture.

To join the call via computer webcam, visit <https://zoom.us/j/773909444>, which will download Zoom and have you automatically enter the call. To join via smartphone or tablet, download Zoom from your app store and enter the meeting ID 773 909 444. To join by phone call, dial (312) 626-6799 and when prompted enter the meeting ID 773 909 444. Missed the event? We host audio recordings of past calls on our website.

We are also hosting a “coffee hour” conference call on Sunday mornings from 11:30am until 12pm. After watching 1st Presbyterian Church of Saginaw’s broadcast, join our fellowship time using the same conference call methods above. Either visit <https://zoom.us/j/149012561> or call (312) 626-6799, and enter the meeting ID 149 012 561. We hope you’ll join us!

## Other Ministries

Here are a few ways our church is keeping active, beyond what you’ll find in this packet of devotionals, even as in-person worship is suspended.

### Online Worship Broadcast:

We encourage everyone with internet access to watch 1st Presbyterian Church of Saginaw’s YouTube livestream worship service on Sundays at 10:25am. If you miss the broadcast, they also keep recordings of past services on their YouTube page. No account is needed to view this.

**Giving:** You can donate via our website by clicking “Give” in the upper right corner. Or you can slide a giving envelope under the secretary’s office door. Or you can put a giving envelope inside a standard envelope and mail it to the church.

### Soup Kitchen & Food Pantry:

We are shifting to takeout-style for these programs so people can get food while still avoiding infection. Volunteers and donations are appreciated.

**Needs:** If you or someone you know has a need that our church can help with, please contact Pastor Alex so our church can continue providing care to our community.

**Calls:** We encourage everyone to call their church friends often to maintain church community and look out for each other.

# Palm Sunday, April 5

## Call to Worship: *Psalm 118:1, 24-26, 29*

**Person 1: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. God's steadfast love endures forever!**

*Person 2: This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

**Person 1: Save us, we pray to you, O Lord. O Lord, we pray, give us victory!**

*Person 2: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

**Both: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. God's steadfast love endures forever!**

## Scripture: *Matthew 21:1-11*

Read today's scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Exploring God's Word

- 1) In ancient days, kings rode donkeys in parades, rather than warhorses, when they wanted to signal peace. What does it mean for Jesus to be a king of peace? How does that give us hope?
- 2) Karl Barth once remarked, "*A real donkey was permitted to carry Jesus to Jerusalem. If I have done anything in this life of mine, I have done it as a relative of the donkey that back then went its way carrying an important burden. The disciples had said to its owner: 'The Lord has need of it'. And so it seems to have pleased God to use me at this time, just as I was.... I just happened to be on the spot.*" With Barth's words in mind, what is the "donkey" outlook Christians should hold? How does speak to our relationship to Jesus? To other people?
- 3) In your own life experiences, what makes parades special? In our daily lives, what are big ways we can celebrate Jesus that are special or meaningful like a parade? Small ways? Other ways?

## Closing Prayer

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer between each sentence:

*"Jesus, you are the good shepherd and king of kings! May the branches swaying on trees outside remind us of your triumphant parade into Jerusalem long ago. May they remind us that you are our prince of peace. May they remind us that Christ the king conquered death and now reigns eternally in life. Though the cheers of life's parade crowds are loud, we pray that you silence in us every voice but your own, that we might hear the call of Jesus for our lives. As Christ lead the parade on Palm Sunday, lead us through this life of faith. Trusting in Christ, we now recite the prayer he taught us, as we say together... [recite the Lord's Prayer in unison]"*

# Tuesday, April 7

## Call to Worship

**Person 1: A table is set before us. A feast is prepared for us.**

*Person 2: The Lord calls us to a supper of remembrance.*

**Person 1: The Lord calls us to serve and to be served.**

*Person 2: As we break this bread and share this cup, our understanding may fail us.*

**Both: But we will never forget Christ's example. We will never forget the extent of His love.**

## Scripture: John 13:1-17, 31-35

Read the scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Sharing an Agape Meal

Enjoy your meal as usual with all gathered to share this devotional with you, whether in-person or over the phone and whether it be breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack. Agape meals are meant to be times of sacred togetherness, so we encourage you to talk about the scripture for today, to share prayer joys and concerns with each other, to talk about how you've seen God at work in your life or the world in the last week, your own Christian journey over the years, or anything else you desire. The focus of agape meals is to celebrate God's love, as revealed in scripture, in the world, and our lives, so whatever you talk about, we hope it draws you nearer to God and each other.

## Closing Prayer

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer between each sentence:

*"God of grace, we give you thanks for the feast of redemption we have shared tonight. We thank you for the final meal Christ shared with his disciples, when our Lord made ordinary bread and wine into a blessing and revelation. Bread is made from many grains yet becomes one loaf. Wine comes from many vines but becomes one cup. In the same way, we your people come from many walks of life and histories, yet we are united by your grace across distance and time. This meal we have shared tonight has nourished our bodies, and our souls have been nourished by conversation. But this week, with Easter on the horizon, we most of all thank you for nourishing us with your love. Strengthened by your grace, enable our lives to proclaim your great love to the world in all that we say, do, and are. Hear all these prayers, those spoken as well as those quietly held in our hearts, as we now say together the prayer Christ taught us, saying... [recite the Lord's Prayer in unison]"*

# Easter, April 12

## Call to Worship

**Person 1: Christ is risen!**

*Person 2: He is risen indeed!*

**Person 1: Christ is risen!**

*Person 2: He is risen indeed!*

**Both: So let us worship the Lord of Love, the Prince of Peace, our Risen King!**

## Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Read today's scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Exploring God's Word

- 1) How do you imagine Mary Magdalene and the other Mary felt as they walked towards the tomb? When they saw the angel? As they left the tomb? When they finally met Jesus? Do you relate to any of those feelings in particular today? How does this scripture speak to that?
- 2) Some Christians emphasize Easter as God defeating death and granting eternal life. Others focus on it as the best example of self-giving love. Others stress how Easter paid the debts of our sins. Some highlight how Easter unites God's justice and mercy. And there are many other explanations of Easter's importance! Which part of Easter's good news do you most need at this moment? How is it good news for you, both eternally and in your Christian living today?
- 3) When the two Marys meet the angel and then Jesus, both times the one who gives them good news sends them on to tell other people. How does that pattern speak to your own spiritual journey? How does that pattern speak to your week-to-week living as a Christian?

## Closing Prayer

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer after each "..."

*"God of life, we rejoice in the resurrection of your Son, his defeat over death, and his gift of new life. And so this day we praise you for the reflections of that new life..."*

*in creation...*

*in the ministry of the church universal...*

*in nations and governments around the world...*

*in our local church community...*

*in our families and neighborhoods...*

*in our new life in Christ...*

*And you as the giver of new life and renewed hope, we bring our prayers...*

*for creation and its care...*

*for the church universal...*

*for the nations and leaders of the world...*

*for our local church in its ministry..*

*for our Lapeer communities and our families...*

*for persons with particular needs...*

*We pray all this in your name, Jesus our risen messiah, as we pray together the Lord's Prayer..."*

# Tuesday, April 14

## **Call to Worship: Psalm 116:1-2, 5, 8**

**Person 1:** I love the Lord, because God has heard my voice and my petitions.

*Person 2: Because God inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on the Lord as long as I live.*

**Person 1:** Gracious is the Lord, and righteous! Our God is merciful!

*Person 2: For God has delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.*

**Both:** Let us praise the Lord who loves and saves us forevermore!

## **Scripture: Luke 24:13-35**

Read the scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## **Sharing an Agape Meal**

Enjoy your meal as usual with all gathered to share this devotional with you, whether in-person or over the phone and whether it be breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack. Agape meals are meant to be times of sacred togetherness, so we encourage you to talk about the scripture for today, to share prayer joys and concerns with each other, to talk about how you've seen God at work in your life or the world in the last week, your own Christian journey over the years, or anything else you desire. The focus of agape meals is to celebrate God's love, as revealed in scripture, in the world, and our lives, so whatever you talk about, we hope it draws you nearer to God and each other.

## **Closing Prayer**

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer between each sentence:

*You, O Christ, are Lord of all creation. You are exalted above all. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that you are Lord! We join with all creation and sing of your glory: 'Alleluia, Amen!' By your death and resurrection you conquered evil. So sustain us in our struggle with the powers of evil. By your resurrection you lead us from death to life. So unite us to you, and help us turn away from sin and toward life everlasting. By your resurrection you evoked worship from astonished guards and gave your disciples joy and peace that surpass understanding. So help us to live our lives in resurrection-shaped gratitude, joy, and peace. God of grace and glory, whether we are weak or strong, old or young, struggling or flourishing, help us to see Jesus, our risen Lord. Give us joy in the knowledge that your Spirit unites us with Jesus, helps us cross over from death to life, and strengthens us to live an Easter life both now and forever. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as we say together the prayer he taught us, saying... [recite the Lord's Prayer together]"*

# Sunday, April 19

## Call to Worship: Psalm 16:7-11

**Person 1:** I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

*Person 2: I keep the LORD always before me. With God at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

**Person 1:** Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

*Person 2: For you do not give me up to the underworld, or let your faithful one see the pit.*

**Both:** God shows us the path of life! In God's presence there is fullness of joy! In God's right hand is joy forevermore! Let's worship the Lord!

## Scripture: John 20:19-31

Read today's scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Exploring God's Word

- 1) Thomas hears about the resurrection but does not believe until he sees it. Are there times where it is hard for you to believe, whether because of difficulties, doubts, discouragement, or anything else? What does this scripture seem to say to us in times such as those?
- 2) In verses 29-31, Jesus and the author of John speak directly to us. How does it feel to know Jesus foresaw John writing and years later you reading this very scripture? What does that say about the work of God? The nature of the Church? Your role in God's mission for the world?
- 3) In verses 20-23, Jesus gives his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit, empowers them to forgive sins in his name, and sends them out into the world, just as God sent Jesus into the world at the start of John's gospel. These promises are for you too. What do these promises mean for you today? How do they speak to our attitudes and actions as Christians?

## Closing Prayer

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer between each sentence:

*"You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, whom you sent to save us. He came with healing in his touch but was wounded for our sins. He came with mercy in his voice but was mocked as one despised. He came with peace in his heart but met with violence and death. Yet by your power he broke free from the prison of the tomb, and at his command the gates of hell were opened. The one who was dead now lives. The one who humbled himself is raised to rule over all creation, the Lamb upon the throne. The one ascended on high is with us always, as he promised. As Christ burst forth from the tomb, may new life burst forth from us and show itself in acts of love and healing to a hurting world. May that same Christ, who lives forever and is the source of our new life, keep our hearts rejoicing and give us peace, this day and always. Trusting in Christ, we lift up these prayers as we say together... [recite the Lord's Prayer]"*

# Tuesday, April 21

## Call to Worship: *Psalm 139:7-10, 13-14*

**Person 1:** Where can we go from God's Spirit? Where could we flee God's presence?

*Person 2:* If we rise to the heavens, God is there. If we make our beds in the depths, God is there.

**Person 1:** If I ascend on wings of the dawn or settle on the far side of the sea, even then God's hand will guide me and God's right hand will hold me tight.

*Person 2:* For God created our inmost beings and knit us together in the womb.

**Both:** Let us worship God, because we are fearfully and wonderfully made!

## Scripture: *Romans 8:18-39*

Read the scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Sharing an Agape Meal

Enjoy your meal as usual with all gathered to share this devotional with you, whether in-person or over the phone and whether it be breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack. Agape meals are meant to be times of sacred togetherness, so we encourage you to talk about the scripture for today, to share prayer joys and concerns with each other, to talk about how you've seen God at work in your life or the world in the last week, your own Christian journey over the years, or anything else you desire. The focus of agape meals is to celebrate God's love, as revealed in scripture, in the world, and our lives, so whatever you talk about, we hope it draws you nearer to God and each other.

## Closing Prayer

Read the following prayer aloud, with pauses for silent prayer between each sentence:

*"God of all creation and compassion, we praise you for loving us first and loving us always. In these days of distancing and isolation, help us remember that you are never far from us. Help us to remember that nothing—no distance, no hurt, no illness, no evil—can separate us from your love. For the overworked carrying out essential tasks amid crisis, we pray you grant them strength and rest for their weary souls and bodies. For all who are financially insecure in this time, we pray you give them courage, hope and their daily bread, that they may walk their earthly way confident that you are with them wherever they go. For families isolating together, give them mutual peace and understanding. For those living alone, remind them daily that we are never truly alone, for Jesus your Son unites us all. For nations and leaders seeking to lead us through this crisis, give them wisdom and compassion, that they may bring greater healing and peace to this world. Remind us all of your love every day. We lift up all these prayers, spoken and unspoken, trusting in the name of Jesus, who taught us to say... [recite the Lord's Prayer together in unison]"*

# Sunday, April 26

## Call to Worship: *Psalm 19:1, 7-9, 14*

**Person 1:** The heavens tell the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

*Person 2: The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.*

**Person 1:** The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.

*Person 2: The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*

**Both:** So let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer, as we gather in worship today.

## Scripture: *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

Read today's scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Exploring God's Word

- 1) 1 Corinthians compares Christian unity to how body parts are tied together. Yet the Church is so diverse: we live in different times and places, speak different languages, each have our own unique experiences of God. So what does it mean for Christians to be united, even across our differences? How does this spiritual link to others, despite all divides, mean for you in this time of social distancing? How can you honor this spiritual connectedness even while apart?
- 2) Body parts rely on each other in different ways but work towards a common purpose. 1 Corinthians says the Church is similar: we were made to rely on each other. In your journey of faith, when have you had to rely on others? How have your gifts helped you strengthen others in turn? What does this body metaphor say about giving or receiving help as a Christian?
- 3) 1 Corinthians says we are united to each other through our union with Christ. Consider a few important relationships in your life. How does Christ see those people? How does that change how you see them? What does it mean for Christ to be the glue of our relationships?

## Closing Prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together in unison. Then pray through it again, going line by line, alternating speakers after each line and leaving at least twenty seconds between each line for personal prayer and meditation. During those pauses, think about how the words just read speak to your own life and needs at this moment, and make those words your own prayer. Once you have prayed through the Lord's Prayer in this way, repeat it a third and final time in unison once more.

# Tuesday, April 28

## Call to Worship: *Philippians 4:4-7*

**Person 1: Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say: rejoice!**

*Person 2: Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near!*

**Person 1: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition and with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

*Person 2: And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Both: Let us worship the Lord, who is our rock and redeemer, our comforter and friend!**

## Scripture: *John 14:1-20*

Read the scripture out of your home Bible, taking turns reading each verse of the passage.

## Sharing an Agape Meal

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## Closing Prayer

Prayer models are helpful ways to organize your thoughts and words to God. Today we invite you to try the ACTS model, where each letter is meant to inspire a specific line of prayerful thought.

**A—Adoration:** begin by praising God, listing any of God's qualities that are especially relevant or meaningful to you today.

**C—Confession:** confess any sins or regrets to God, trusting in God's mercy

**T—Thanksgiving:** give thanks that God does indeed forgive our sins and hear our prayers

**S—Supplication:** having been touched by grace, lift up your needs or requests to the Lord

Close this time of prayer by lifting up any remaining thoughts or concerns and then end by reciting the Lord's Prayer together in unison.

**Next Week:** *Our church will have made a decision whether to continue at-home worship or resume in-person worship by this week. Please call the church if you have questions (810-664-8565).*