

CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

Lectionary Readings for the Weekend of April 14, 2024 – The Third Sunday of Easter, Year B



Instruction: Small Groups are encouraged to read each text and use the discussion questions for further conversation and growth.

The Collect

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The First Reading | Acts 3:12-19

Peter addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

The Psalm | Psalm 4

¹ Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;

you set me free when I am hard-pressed; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

² “You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory;

how long will you worship dumb idols and run after false gods?”

³ Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

⁴ Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

⁵ Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord.

⁶ Many are saying, “Oh, that we might see better times!” Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

⁸ I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

The Second Reading | 1 John 3:1-7

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

The Gospel | Luke 24:36-48

Jesus himself stood among the disciples 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. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “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.

Discuss:

1. **The Collect:** Jesus makes himself “known to his disciples in the breaking of bread.” We see this in Luke, where Jesus eats with his disciples following his resurrection, and it is during the meal that they recognize him as Jesus their Lord. This collect gestures to one way we know and receive Christ, in our breaking of bread: Holy Eucharist. Is Holy Eucharist an important spiritual discipline of yours? Is it a place where you feel the presence of Christ and his healing grace? What’s one moment where you made your Holy Communion that you will always remember?
2. **The First Reading:** Just prior to this story, Peter heals a man lame from birth, saying, “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.” The healing is important, but that the healing comes through the name of Jesus is what we must note. When you or a loved one is ill, what do your prayers look like? Who do you pray to? Have you ever experienced miraculous healing in the name of Jesus Christ?
3. **The Second Reading:** What does it mean to you to be a child of God? Do you relate to God as parent? What kind of love does God share with God’s children?
4. **The Gospel:** Jesus comes to his disciples and interprets the scriptures to them, that he is the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures. From this time on, his followers are to proclaim his gospel of repentance and forgiveness of sins. How do you participate in this sharing of Good News? What can you do to tell someone of the forgiveness found in Jesus Christ? Who can you bring to church?

CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

Lectionary Readings for the Weekend of April 21, 2024 – The Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year B



Instruction: Small Groups are encouraged to read each text and use the discussion questions for further conversation and growth.

The Collect

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The First Reading | Acts 4:5-12

The rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. 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.”

The Psalm | Psalm 23

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
- ² He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.
- ³ He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his Name’s sake.
- ⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- ⁵ You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Second Reading | 1 John 3:16-24

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

The Gospel | John 10:11-18

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf

snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 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. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Discuss:

1. **The Collect:** “Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads.” Where and when have you heard the voice of Christ, our great shepherd? Share a moment from your life when you heard Jesus calling you to a new direction? Was it easy to hear his voice? What did you do to follow his lead?
2. **The Psalm:** Here is one of the most beloved and known pieces of scripture. Psalm 23 is often prayed by the sick, the lost, and those at the time of death. What is your relationship to this psalm? Does it resonate with you? Would you want it to be read at your funeral? What does it mean to have a shepherd who comforts us in times of trouble? What’s a challenging time you’ve experienced where you found comfort in your faith?
3. **The Second Reading:** The lesson from the first epistle of John encourages the listener to consider how we are to participate in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. Share an experience where you’ve received selfless, sacrificial love. What did that experience feel like? Was this person showing you a glimpse of God’s love? How can these experiences (and the experience of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for us) encourage us to live our own life of sacrificial love? What’s one way you can show selfless love to someone today?
4. **The Gospel:** Jesus is the good shepherd because he lays down his life for his sheep. In Jesus’ day, shepherds were poor nomads who constantly faced threat from wildlife and humans alike. Jesus says he is willing to sacrifice himself for us, his sheep, his beloved. How do you relate to this passage? Does it bring you comfort? Do you feel free and secure knowing that the Lord guards over you? If we are his sheep, how can we better listen to his voice and commands?

CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

Lectionary Readings for the Weekend of April 28, 2024 – The Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year B



Instruction: Small Groups are encouraged to read each text and use the discussion questions for further conversation and growth.

The Collect

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The First Reading | Acts 8:26-40

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The Psalm | Psalm 22:24-30

- ²⁴ My praise is of him in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.
²⁵ The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: “May your heart live for ever!”
²⁶ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
²⁷ For kingship belongs to the Lord; he rules over the nations.
²⁸ To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust fall before him.
²⁹ My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; they shall be known as the Lord’s for ever.
³⁰ They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn the saving deeds that he has done.

The Second Reading | 1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this

we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The Gospel | John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

Discuss:

1. **The Collect:** We pray for insight and obedience to "follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life." In the earliest years after Jesus' death, his followers were known as people on "The Way." Christianity, therefore, is understood as an active practice. There is a "way" to live, and Jesus' life is the model for us to follow. How do we follow in his way? Where does the path of Jesus lead? Which steps of Jesus do you find hardest to follow?
2. **The First Reading:** Here is the beloved story of the disciple Philip baptizing the Ethiopian court eunuch. So much is happening here! Boundaries and barriers to community are transgressed through the interpretation of scripture and the waters of holy baptism. How does holy baptism bring us together? Have you ever led someone to be baptized? If you're a parent, recall what it was like to have your children baptized. If you can remember your baptism, share what you recall from that holy experience.
3. **The Second Reading:** Love is God, and God is love. So much of our modern theology (what we say about God) comes from that scripture. Where have you felt the love of God? What ways do you draw near to God's love? We love because God loved us. Because we love God, we must love our brothers and sisters also. Is this difficult? Do you find it easier to love God or to love the people in your life?
4. **The Gospel:** How do we abide in God? Through prayer? Through worship? Through loving service? When we love each other as he loved us? As branches on the vine, we are to bear fruit. What is a fruit you can bear as a follower of Jesus? What is one practice you can take on this week to help you bear fruit in the name of Jesus Christ?