

Church of the Apostles

Eastertide 2021



**A guidebook
to help us practice
resurrection
together.**

Table of Contents



Easter, Season of Celebration

Introduction

Week 1: Resurrection

Week 2: Believe

Week 3: Emmaus

Week 4: Good Shepherd

Week 5: Way, Truth, and Life

Week 6: Rogation Sunday

Week 7: Ascension of Christ

Pentecost

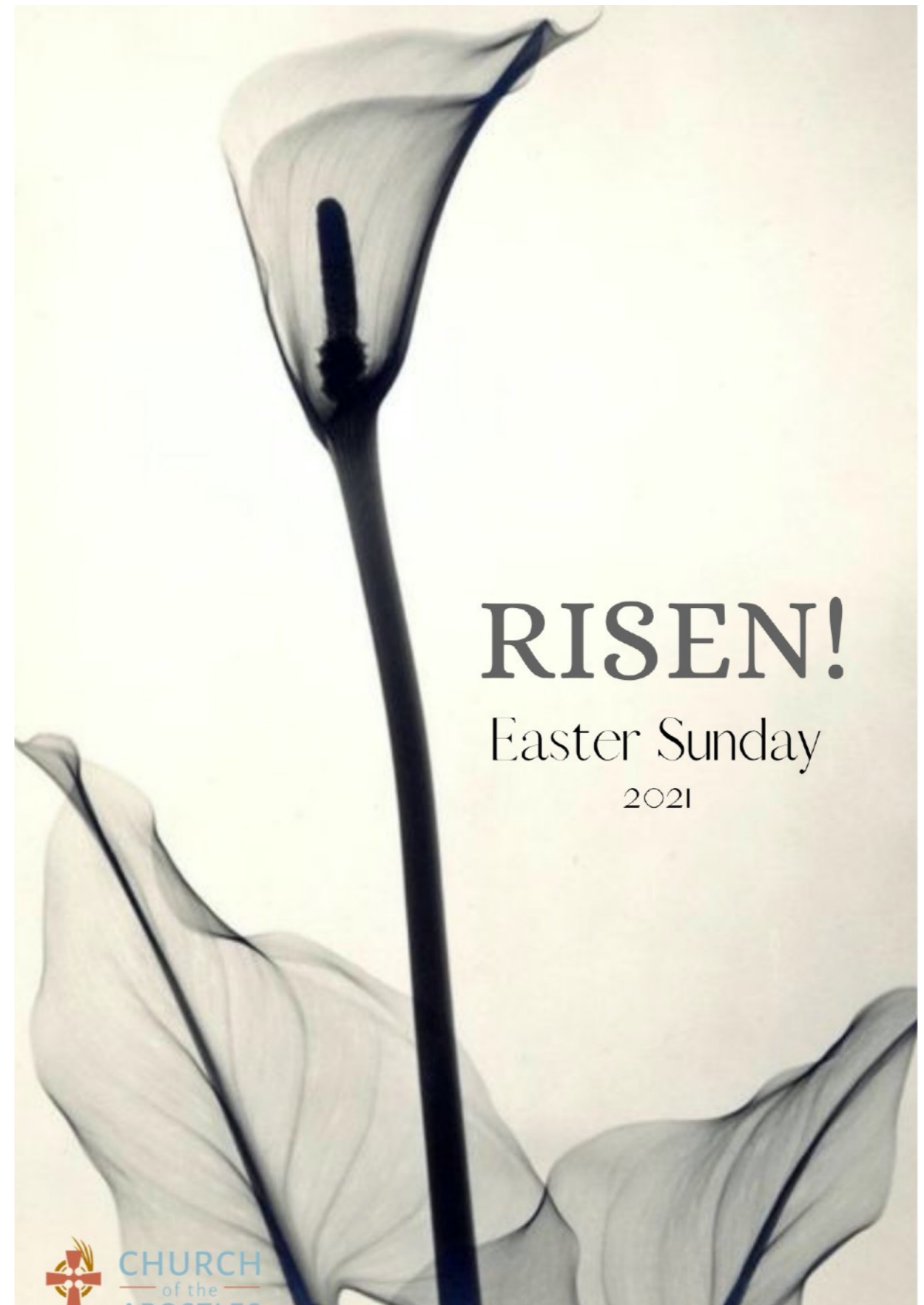
Easter, Season of Celebration

"The practice of resurrection is an intentional, deliberate decision to believe and participate in resurrection life, life out of death, life that trumps death, life that is the last word, Jesus life."

— Eugene Peterson

The Easter season begins with a celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter morning and lasts until the celebration of Pentecost seven weeks later -- a fifty day period paralleling the 50 days Christ spent on earth after his resurrection. It is a time of celebration for the new life and salvation we find in Christ. During this season, the church is adorned in white symbolizing Christ's purity and our sanctification as believers and is marked with feasting and celebration.

During Lent we walk with Jesus toward the cross. During Easter we walk with the first disciples away from the grave and toward the realization that death has had its last day and that the resurrection power of Jesus reigns.



RISEN!

Easter Sunday

2021

Introduction

Celebrate all 50 days!

a note from Tamara

One year, after attending Good Friday service together, my daughters and I talked honestly about how sometimes Eastertide can feel like a let-down. It seems to be easier to understand fasting better than feasting. We thought that might be, in part, because our world is generally obsessed with feasting, and whatever we try to do to mark Eastertide feels like the stuff we're normally trying to do every day anyway.

I wonder, too, if sometimes feasting shows more plainly how far away from God we still live. When I can be satisfied in just the right amount of wine or chocolate, that is feasting. When I can't stop either one, that turns into gluttony which is no longer true feasting. In some ways, fasting is easier, yes?

Put another way: feasting is a discipline, too. We take in the good with gratitude and contentment without making an idol of the gifts. This requires us to depend on the Creator as much (maybe more so) as any other spiritual exercise. This year the discipline may seem more difficult as we live into the truth of resurrection even as a global pandemic spreads its rumors of death.

For the next seven weeks - from now until Pentecost on May 23 - we're curating bits of beauty and encouragement alongside regular Scripture reading and prayer to help us celebrate acts of resurrection in our everyday, emerging-from-isolation-slowly-but-surely lives. We encourage you to participate as much as you're able, but whatever you do, *do it with gusto!*

With Amy Willers' help, we've intentionally curated each page of this guidebook to be usable by all ages. You could use the guidebook alone or with a group of friends or family members.

We hope you'll share with all of us what you've enjoyed! Each week a new packet will arrive in your mailbox. You'll also be able to access the pdf on the church website.

Take a lot of photos! Send them to info@apostlesct.org, and share your photos on social media with the hashtag: [#ChurchoftheApostlesCT](https://twitter.com/ChurchoftheApostlesCT).

Photos may be used in the church's promotional materials, so be sure to only send the ones that you don't mind us sharing.

Week 1: Resurrection

April 4-10, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalms 118:14-15, 22-24

Acts 10:34-43

Mark 16:1-8

Collect for Resurrection Sunday

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may, by your life-giving Spirit, be delivered from sin and raised from death; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



The Myrrh-Bearers, Dr. He Qi

Worship

Celebrate

Feast!

Read this meditation by A.W. Tozer called “Celebrating Our Oddness” aloud. Then work through the suggestions below and shape your own weekly celebration that’s unique to your home.

*A real Christian is an odd number anyway.
He feels supreme love for one whom he has never seen.
He talks familiarly everyday to someone he cannot see,
Expects to go to heaven on the virtue of another,
Empties himself in order that he might be full,
Admits he is wrong so he can be declared right,
Goes down in order to get up.
He is strongest when he is weakest,
Richest when he is poorest,
And happiest when he feels worst.
He dies so he can live,
Forsakes in order to have,
Gives away so he can keep,
Sees the invisible,
Hears the inaudible,
And knows that which passeth knowledge.*



Shape the Celebration. Answer the following questions:

- What is special about your home? What makes you “odd?”
- How has God been good to you?
- Is there a unique blessing God has given your home?
- Name your weekly Celebration based on the above questions. (e.g., “The Murphy Comfy, Cozy Celebration”)

Choose one day a week. Maybe you already have a day that is special. It doesn’t matter what day, it’s just good to choose one that is consistent. Once you’ve named and chosen the day for your home’s weekly Celebration feast, here’s a preparation checklist:

- Break out the party hats and the good dishes.
- Make it mandatory for every house member to attend.
- Set the agenda. No serious talk, only fun. Be creative with video conferencing to include others who can’t be with you in person. Try things like dancing, or board games, sing songs (karaoke is hilarious - try it), and eat, eat, eat.
- Include a toast: Each week take turns on who gets to write the toast and lead it. Start with the youngest member.

-adapted from “[How to Party Like a Christian](#)” by Lacy Finn Borgo



Easter Table,

Nikolay Bogdanov-
Belsky

Music: *Handel's Messiah, Parts 2 & 3*

We're familiar with Handel's *Messiah* at Christmastime, but two-thirds of the oratorio - including the beloved *Hallelujah Chorus* are dedicated to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. We recommend the Robert Shaw Orchestra version, but there are so many beautiful performances! What's your favorite?

[Listen on YouTube](#) | [Listen on Spotify](#)

Wonder

Poem: *Easter Communion*

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Pure fasted faces draw unto this feast:
God comes all sweetness to your Lenten lips.
You striped in secret with breath-taking whips,
Those crooked rough-scored chequers may be pieced
To crosses meant for Jesu's.; you whom the East
With draught of thin and pursuant cold so nips
Breathe Easter now; you serged fellowships,
You vigil-keepers with low flames decreased,

God shall o'er-brim the measures you have spent
With oil of gladness, for sackcloth and frieze
And the ever-fretting shirt of punishment
Give myrrhy-threaded golden folds of ease.
Your scarce-sheathed bones are weary of being bent:
Lo, God shall strengthen all the feeble knees.

[Read more about the poet here.](#)

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Sketch or journal what you see.

Take a field trip outside your own back door

When's the last time you strolled through your backyard (or closest green space) and really enjoyed what's growing and living there?

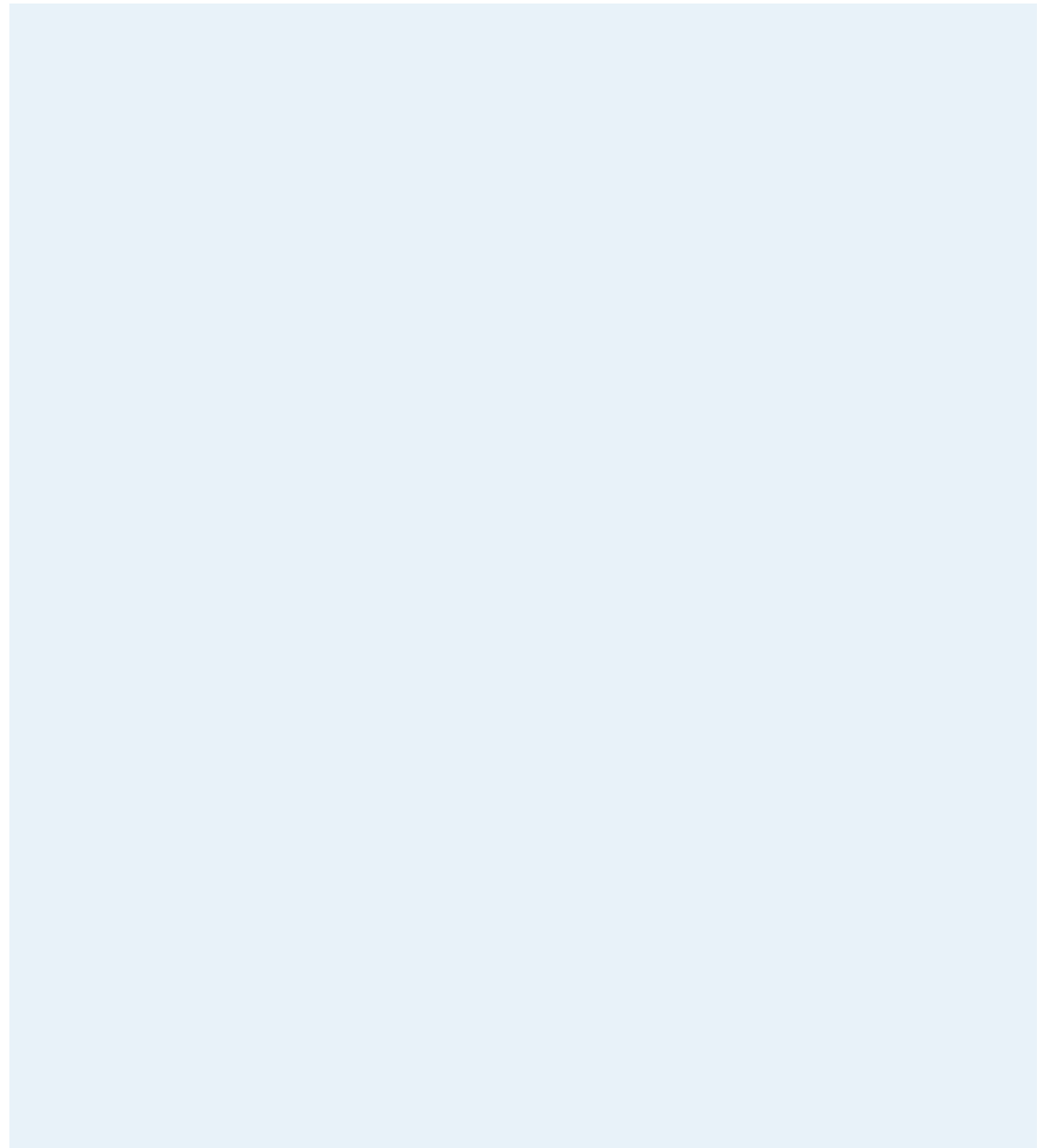
Spend 15-30 minutes walking the borders of your yard or nearest green space. Pay attention to the various shades of green and brown.

What other colors do you see?

How many species of animal life can you spot?

Can you name the various trees, shrubs, and flowers in your yard? How many did you find?

**TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR FIELD TRIP
AND SHARE IT WITH US AT
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Create



Week 2: Believe

April 11-17, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 3:12-15, 17-26

Psalm 111

1 John 5:1-5

John 20:19-31

Collect for Second Sunday of Easter

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Worship



The Doubt of Thomas (2014), Dr. He Qi

Celebrate

Dance!

a note from Tamara

Some of my best memories feature spontaneous dance parties - with my parents and siblings during the middle of a blizzard, with our extended family on hot summer nights on a back patio, or learning the Texas Two-Step via YouTube when we lived in Austin. A decade or so ago, during a multi-generational family reunion at Thanksgiving, an ambitious relative cleared the far side of the fire hall for a dance floor. One by one a few cousins, especially the littlest ones in the fourth generation, an uncle, and an aunt began to sway and spin. Without much coaxing, Grandpa and Grandma took their turn on the floor. The fox trot never looked so good! Before this November afternoon I'd never seen my grandparents dance. Standing along the wall, my mother whispered to me, "All these years, they thought they weren't supposed to dance." It's one of the saddest epigraphs I can imagine.

In Eastertide, we celebrate the Lord of the Dance. This week we **double-dog dare** you to DANCE! Roll up the rug, move the living room furniture, head out to the back porch when it's dark, do whatever you need to do, but, for the love of God, let's dance. Let's stamp out grief like Jesus dancing on His tombstone, and let the soles of our feet recall that the Risen Lord's family is a dancing family.

If you feel the need for guidance, YouTube is full of instructional videos. Better yet, video chat with an older relative and ask them to demonstrate a few steps like my grandparents did for us years ago.



Celebration is a life of “walking and leaping and praising God” ([Acts 3:8](#)).

God loves to celebrate and loves even more when we, as his people, join him in celebrating all the wonderful things he has done for us. Joy that is exhibited in celebration keeps everything else going, produces energy and makes us strong. This genuine and sustaining joy is achieved through obedience to God. Celebration manifests in endless ways: singing, dancing, laughing, as well as taking advantage of celebrating festivals, holidays, and the milestones of life.

Celebration comes when the common ventures of life are redeemed.

- *“Spiritual Disciplines, A Practical Strategy”*

Music: *Lord of the Dance*, Sydney Carter

Before it was the title of an internationally acclaimed Irish musical and dance production, “Lord of the Dance” was an English folk song written by Sydney Carter, adapted from the nineteenth-century American Shaker tune “Simple Gifts” by Joseph Brackett. We’re especially fond of version recorded by The Dubliners!

Listen on YouTube | Listen on Listen on Spotify

- Thanks to Victoria Emily Jones at artandtheology.org
for this excellent recommendation!



Harriet Tubman Series, 1939-40, Panel #4, Jacob Lawrence

[Read More About This Painting](#)

Wonder

Poem: *The Dawning*

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Awake, sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns;

Take up thine eyes, which feed on earth;

Unfold thy forehead, gathered into frowns;

Thy Saviour comes, and with him mirth:

Awake, awake,

And with a thankful heart his comforts take.

But thou dost still lament, and pine, and cry,

And feel his death, but not his victory.

Arise, sad heart; if thou dost not withstand,

Christ's resurrection thine may be;

Do not by hanging down break from the hand

Which, as it riseth, raiseth thee:

Arise, arise,

And with his burial linen dry thine eyes.

Christ left his grave clothes, that we might, when grief

Draws tears or blood, not want a handkerchief.

- This poem was originally published in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* by George Herbert (1633).

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

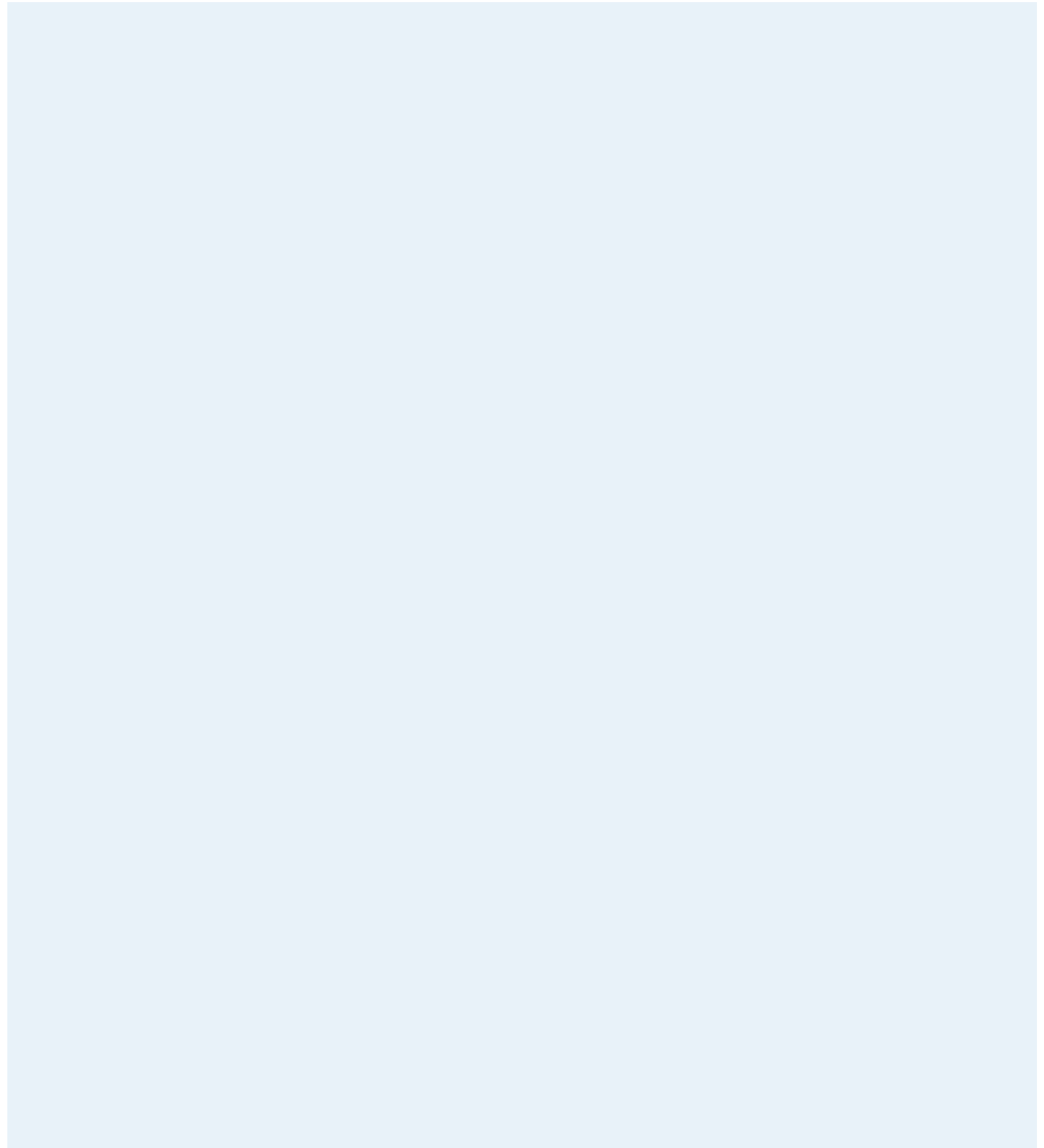
Explore

Spring is an exciting time for tree study!

Go to your yard or nearest open green space. Observe the different trees. Adopt a tree to be your special tree for the rest of Eastertide (all year is even better). Take time to look very closely at your tree.

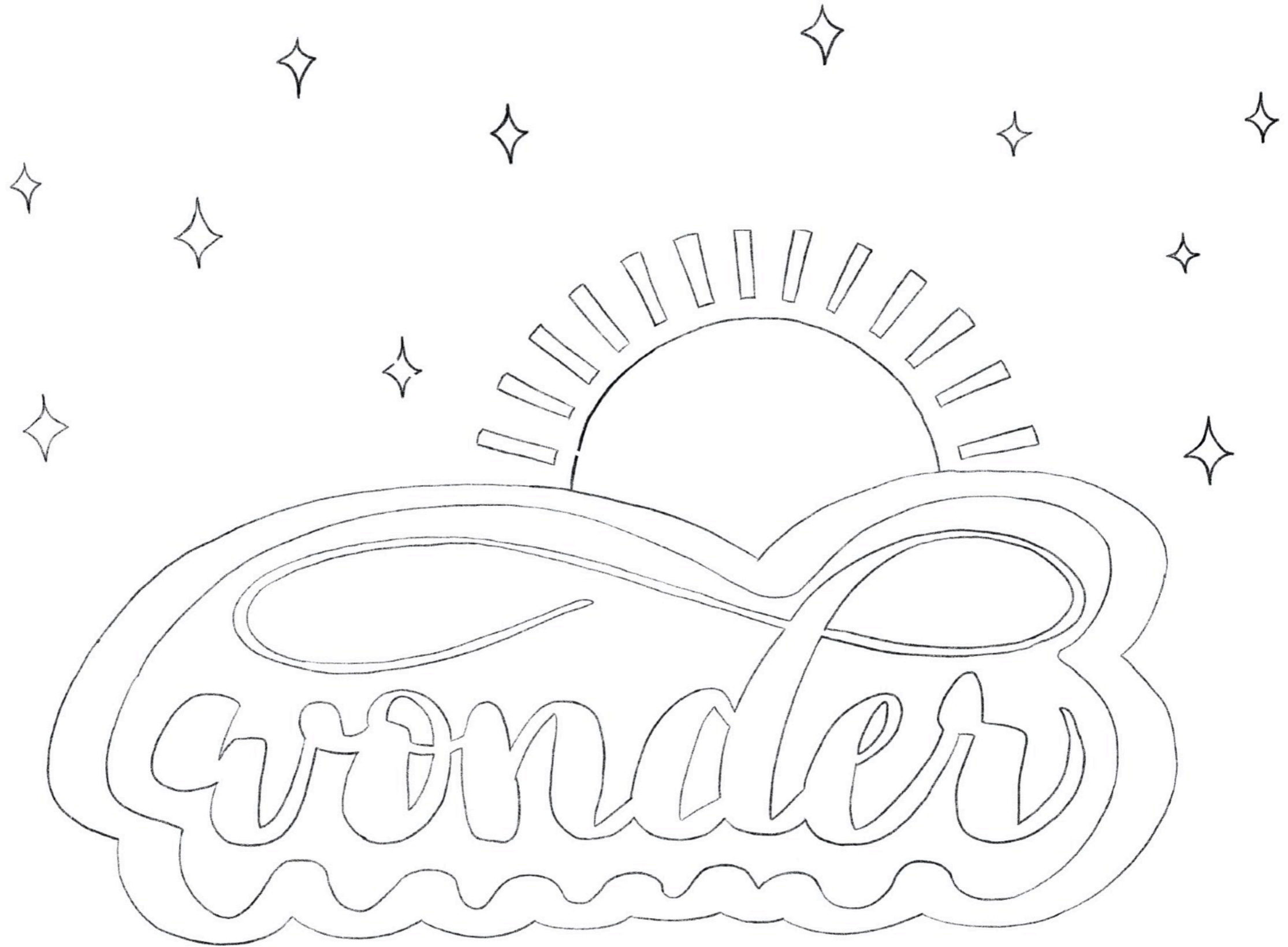
- Study the shape of the buds, blossoms, and leaves. Sketch them on this page or in a journal.
- Examine the bark of the tree. On a separate sheet of paper, do bark rubbings with crayon.
- Look in a local field guide to see if you can find out what type of tree you have chosen, and to learn a little more about it.

Sketch or journal what you see.



**TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR TREE AND
SHARE IT WITH US AT
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Create



Week 3: Bread & Fish

April 18-24, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 4:5-14

Psalm 98

1 John 1:1-2:2

Luke 24:36-49

Collect for Third Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, you gave your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and an example of godly living: Give us grace thankfully to receive his inestimable benefits, and daily to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Worship



Fish for Breakfast, Laura James

Celebrate

Savor

a note from Tamara

“While we feast, we savor.”

This is the rule my mother made for our family years ago. It might sound a bit funny to need a rule for feasting, but at least in our home we'd discovered a proclivity to serve up a beautiful meal with a side dish of shame. Whether we discussed calorie counts while we tried to enjoy a beautifully-crafted apple pie or talked about the down sides of all of our personal circumstances while passing the peas, my mother's instruction didn't feel like a penalty but a gift to all of us. There is a time, of course, to consider the choices we make and to evaluate our own health and that of the world, but over a lovingly created meal is not that time.

Brian and I have discovered that in order to savor the feast we need to give up the urge to multi-task. Even enjoyable things, like eating a meal in front of a favorite movie can hinder our ability to fully enjoy each gift (in this case, the meal and the movie) to its fullest. This week, let's consider the ways we miss the invitation for savoring gifts to their fullest for whatever reason - we're distracted, we feel uneasy enjoying something good, or we're feeling like we "should" be doing something else. Let's practice savoring the gifts and trusting God to lead us through the rhythms of work and rest in His perfect timing.



Let's savor bread together! Whether you are a beginner cook or a crusty old pro, let's make bread this week! Here are a few suggestions to get you started, but we hope you'll share your favorite recipe with us!

- **Resurrection Rolls** [Online Recipe](#)

From Audrey Willers: "In Resurrection Rolls, the marshmallow represents Jesus. When you put the marshmallow in, you can still see it because it has not been baked. But when it is baked and you bite into it, you don't see the marshmallow anymore and that represents the empty tomb. I like making these because they are fun to make and because they are so tasty!"

- **Altar Bread** [Download PDF](#)

From Tamara: This is the recipe Christ Church of Austin, our former church, has used since they were just a little band of parishioners trying to keep the lights on during a difficult season for their parish. Now they serve it each week to over 400 congregants. When we moved to Connecticut they gift wrapped a photocopy of the recipe taken from an old church cookbook for us to take to our new parish. This is the bread Father Brian or (soon-to-be Deacon) Walter have been baking for us each week for over a year. For now you might want to quarter or half the batch and savor the bread while you savor memories of us eating the body of Christ together. Thank God that we'll be able to feast together again soon!



God Comes to Dinner, Tanja Butler

[Read More About This Artist](#)

Film: *Babette's Feast* (1987)

The story told in [Babette's Feast](#) culminates with a dinner party of unsuspecting guests who are invited to the lavish, loving savoring of a feast. Babette serves the community living in the scarcity of a tiny fishing village to a sumptuous feast for the sole purpose of offering them kindness. The beauty of her gift compels the community to let go of quarrels and stinginess and restores their love for each other and for God. By the end of the evening, the friends know that they've been together in a new way, drawn together by the power of bread and wine. It's a beautiful film; please do not let the subtitles keep you from enjoying the many profound layers of the simply-told story.

Wonder

Poem: *Emmaus 2*, Malcolm Guite

Luke 24:25-26 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

We thought that everything was lost and gone,
Disaster on disaster overtook us
The night we left our Jesus all alone
And we were scattered, and our faith forsook us.
But oh that foul Friday proved far worse,
For we had hoped that he had been the one,
Till crucifixion proved he was a curse,
And on the cross our hopes were all undone.

*Oh foolish foolish heart why do you grieve?
Here is good news and comfort to your soul:
Open your mind to scripture and believe
He bore the curse for you to make you whole
The living God was numbered with the dead
That He might bring you Life in broken bread.*

- [Listen to the Malcolm Guite read his sonnet here.](#)

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Sketch or journal what you see.

Let's look at the night sky this week!

Choose a dry evening this week and “set up camp” outside - comfy blankets, hot cocoa or tea, and a flashlight. Give your eyes 15-30 minutes to adjust to the darkness, lie back and observe the sky.

Anytime is a good time to look at the sky but here are a couple key sky-watching dates at the end of April:

- On April 30: “When a lunar phase occurs on the first day of a calendar month, it can repeat at month-end – so tonight brings a first quarter phase for the second time this April. When the moon reaches its first quarter phase, the relative positions of the Earth, sun, and moon cause us to see the moon half illuminated—on the western (right-hand) side.” (Read more about this 2nd first-quarter moon of April [here](#).)
- April 16-26: Catch the Lyrid meteor showers! “You can catch it starting at 10 p.m., but this shower's perfect for early risers, as the hour or two before dawn is probably the best time to spot the ‘shooting stars.’” (More info [here](#).)

**TAKE A PICTURE OF YOU SETTING UP
CAMP AND SHARE IT WITH US AT
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Create

Origami Heart

Cut out the square on this page and follow the directions below to make a Simple Origami Heart!



Step 1: Fold the paper in half by folding the top corner to the bottom corner, then unfold.

Step 2: Fold the left corner to the right corner, then unfold.

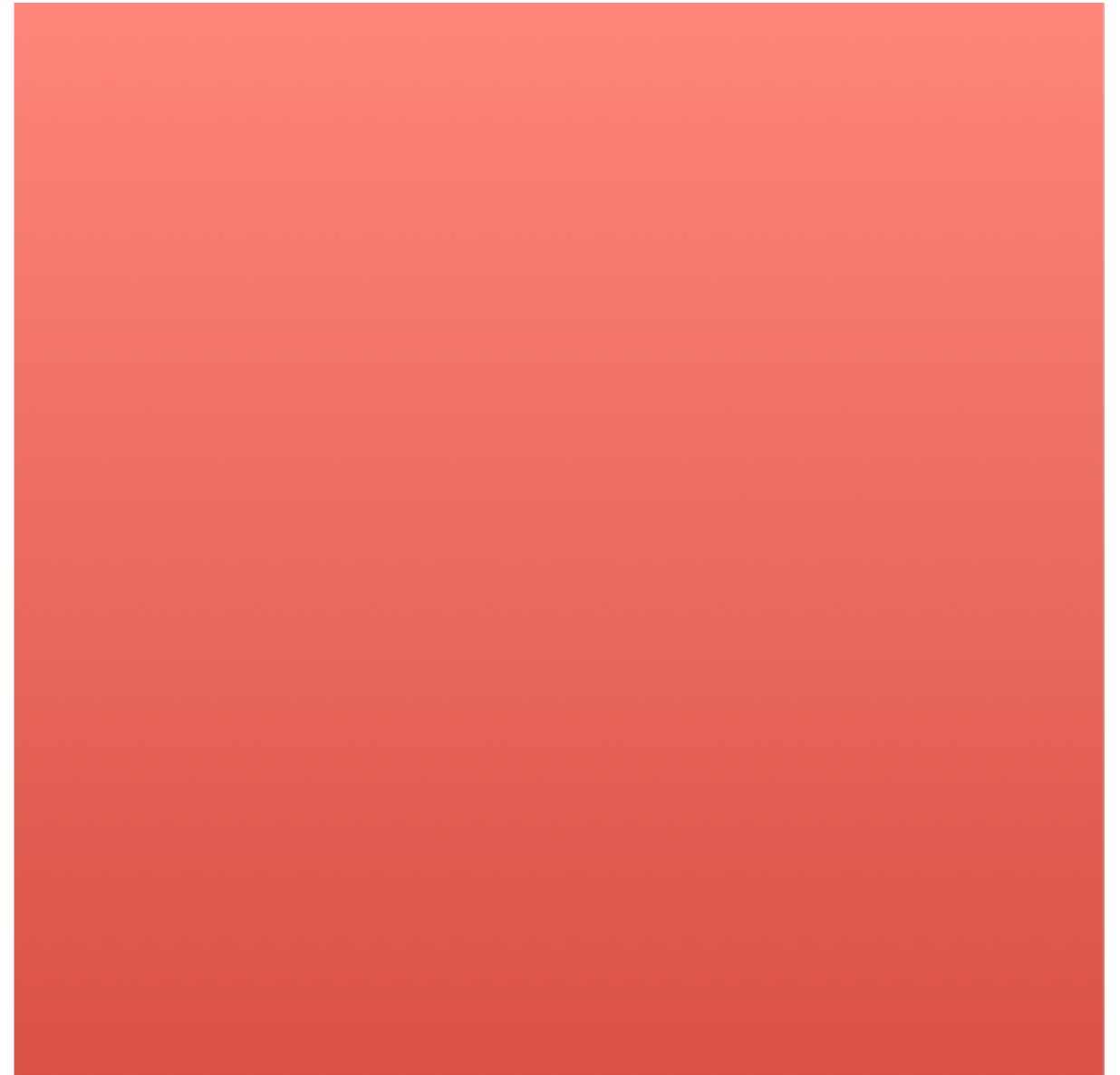
Step 3: Fold the top corner to the center.

Step 4: Fold the bottom corner to the top edge.

Step 5: Fold the bottom left and right edges to the center crease.

Step 6: Fold the top and side corners back.

Instructions and pictures found on here: <https://www.origamiway.com/origami-heart.shtml>.





Mural "Pasterz", Bielsko-Biała, Poland

[Source](#)

Week 4: Good Shepherd

April 25- May 1, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 4:32-37

Psalm 23

1 John 3:1-10

John 10:11-16

Collect for Fourth Sunday of Easter

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ 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

Worship

Celebrate

Rest

a note from Amy

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

We have been struggling to find rest in our home for the past few weeks, and I am guessing we are not alone. Yes, there is sleep (here and there!) but real restorative rest feels like an elusive dream all too often, especially now. At first, I was hesitant to choose “Rest” as my “Feast” word, but the more I thought about it, and the more I heard Father Brian talk about *Shalom*, the more I thought: *what is a more important part of a Feast than the absolute truest rest that our Good Father offers?* The absolute best feasts are when I eat and savor until I am content, and then sit back with a sigh of pleasure at the good food and company. That restful and content feeling is just as much part of the feast as the food!

Our Good Father knows we need rest, and He knows that there is no greater or more restorative rest than what can be found in Him. It has taken me too long to realize that “zoning out” in front of the TV or social media are just counterfeits to the true rest that God offers. Rest from God fills us to our core: it refreshes us, fulfills us, and restores us to how He actually wants us to live! It’s easy to say all this, but how? Where do we find this elusive rest that He offers? I’ll give you a clue: it’s really what this whole guidebook is about! From the Scripture readings, to the exploration of nature, to the creative ideas - these are the pathway to rest. Yes, it is celebration of Easter. But true rest is pursuing God in every moment. It can actually look a lot like celebrating!

So this week, put your phone down, turn the TV off, and read through each Scripture every day. Take some time to explore nature. Put your bare feet in the grass. Close your eyes and listen to a body of water, from a small creek to the ocean, or even just the rain. Celebrate that our Savior is risen and simultaneously find restorative rest in Him. And then go take a nap, because sometimes we really do need sleep.



A mother sheep and her two lambs on a hill in the highlands of Scotland.

“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.

It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with. . . .

The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.’ But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”

— C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*



Landscape, Cornish, N.H., ca. 1890, John White Alexander

Music: Psalm 23

It's no surprise that such a beloved Psalm would inspire myriad musical settings and hymn references. Here are a few notable arrangements and performances. Do you have favorite?

- Cissy Houston, Hezekiah Walker & The Love Fellowship Choir, *The Lord Is My Shepherd* [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#)
- Composed by Ben Zion Shenker, performed by Itzhak Perlman and Cantor Yitzchak Meir Helfgot, *Mizmor L'Dovid* - [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#)
- Arranged & Conducted by Lex De Azevedo, London National Philharmonic Orchestra, *The Lord Is My Shepherd*- [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#)

Wonder

Poem: *The Grass*, Emily Dickinson

The grass so little has to do,
A sphere of simple green,
With only butterflies to brood,
And bees to entertain

And stir all day to pretty tunes
The breezes fetch along,
And hold the sunshine in its lap
And bow to everything;

And thread the dews all night, like pearls,
And make itself so fine, —
A duchess were too common
For such a noticing.
And even when it dies, to pass
In odors so divine,
As lowly spices gone to sleep,
Or amulets of pine.

And then to dwell in sovereign barns,
And dream the days away, —
The grass so little has to do,
I wish I were the hay!

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Sketch or journal what you see.

Let's watch the grass grow!

Have you ever stopped to wonder at the gift of green grass with all its shades and varieties? This week, spend some time resting in a patch of grass (hammocks or picnic blankets, optional).

- Collect a few grasses to sketch or tape into a journal or on this page. Try to identify the particular shade of green.
- Find a tuft of grass to observe. Measure the tallest blade every day for a week. Record your measurements here.
- Create a fairy garden. This could be indoors or outdoors. Or make it a dinosaur garden or rock garden. Whatever seems appealing and don't be afraid to feel a bit silly.
 1. Choose a container (a flower pot or large bowl) and add some small pebbles to the bottom of the container for drainage.
 2. Sprinkle in some compost.
 3. Add in your selected decorations. Some suggestions: toy fairies, dinosaurs, lego figures, farm animals, glass stones, and shells.
 4. Sprinkle grass seed onto the exposed compost.
 5. Water gently and wait for your grass to grow!

If you don't have grass seed available, choose the base of a tree in your yard and use natural decorations like pebbles, driftwood and shells for your fairy garden.

Enjoy!

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Create

Read Psalm 23.
Then write the phrases of the Psalm
in your own words.

He makes me lie down



Week 5: Love One Another

May 2 - 8, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 66:1-8

1 John 3:11-24

John 14:15-21

Collect for Fifth Sunday of Easter

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 glory; 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..

Worship



Native American Friendship Blanket, c. 1900

Wazhazhe (Osage) - Read more [here](#)

Celebrate

Give praise for beauty

a note from Amy

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.*

Sometimes when I walk in nature or listen to a particularly beautiful piece of music, I realize that I am being offered a peek behind the veil to the world that I was meant to inhabit: a perfect world of peace, beauty, and tranquility. In those moments, my very being is a vessel of praise to my Creator, as if I was actually created to praise. There are no words to express the praise, love, and admiration that I am feeling. I am just offering up my whole self, and thanking God that He has made me enough.

We were, in fact, created to praise. And God has not made this a hard or onerous duty! Not only did he create an incredibly beautiful and complex world for us to explore and enjoy, but he made us to be creative, thereby creating more beauty that reflects what He has already given us. And even in the creating, we are praising. We see this in the Psalms all the time, as David contemplates the beauty of the Lord and then sings songs of praise to Him.

When we consider the beauty of the world, we can't help but turn it around as praise, whether that is in our own works of art or just a small, whispered praise-offering of ourselves. Even people who do not know the God of the universe cannot help but express themselves regarding the beauty they see! They just do not know the One to whom they should offer their praise.

This guidebook is meant to be a small taste of this beauty, whether through art, photography, music, exploring nature, or prayer. And as you walk through it, you are a living, breathing praise-maker to your Creator. This week, share with us what particular beauty gives you that "peek beyond the veil?" What makes you feel like there is no proper response besides praise? What piece of beauty has ever taken your breath away?

I wish my entire life consisted of those precious moments of enjoying beauty and expressing praise. But it takes some quiet and pause and practice. Practicing that pause, that taking a step back to really see the beauty that is right there, right where you are. Practicing Resurrection.



"The power of finding beauty in the humblest things
makes home happy and life lovely."

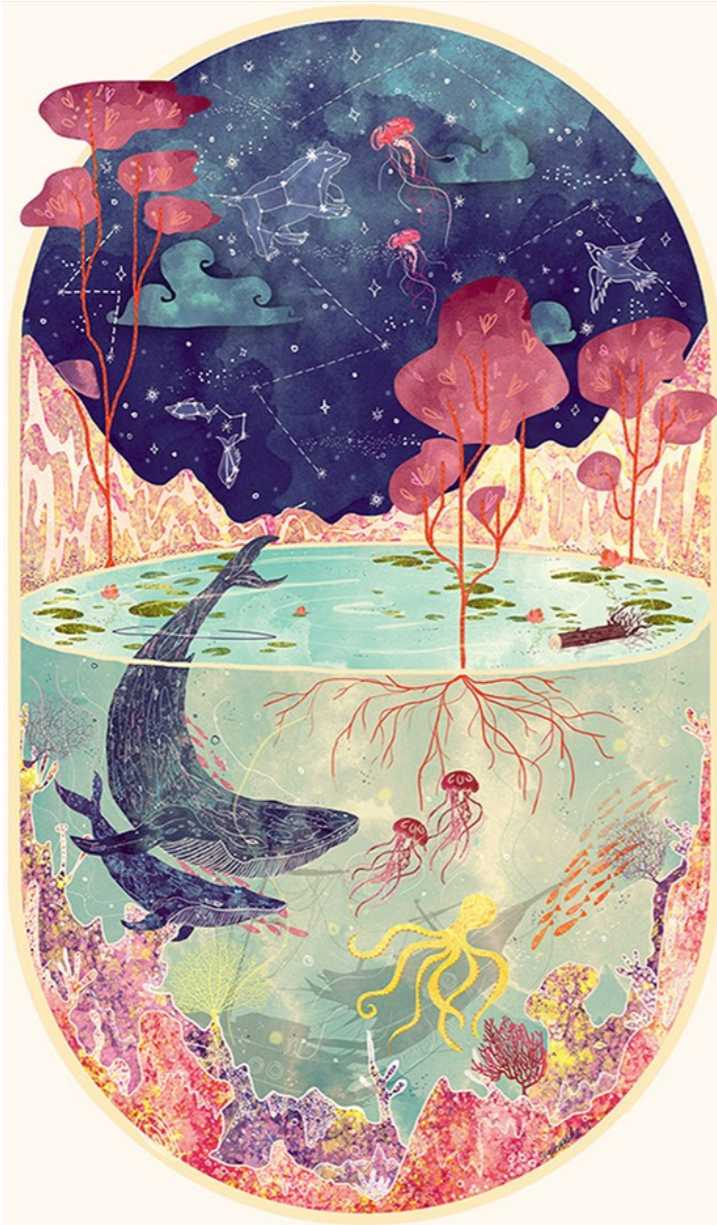
Louisa May Alcott

Where can you find beauty in the "humblest things" today?

"But we who would be born again indeed,
must wake our souls unnumbered times a day."

George MacDonald

How can you practice "waking your soul" today?



Ocean (2015), Svabhū Kohli (India)

Music: *Don't You Want To Thank Someone*, Andrew Peterson

“Don't you ever wonder why
In spite of all that's wrong here
There's still so much that goes so right
And beauty abounds?”

...

Don't you want to thank someone?
Don't you want to thank someone for this?”

Lyrics | Listen on YouTube | Listen on Spotify

Wonder

Poem: *Messenger*, Mary Oliver

My work is loving the world.

Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird -
equal seekers of sweetness.

Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.
Here the clam deep in the speckled sand.

Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?
Am I no longer young, and still half-perfect? Let me
keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,

which is mostly standing still and learning to be
astonished.

The phoebe, the delphinium.

The sheep in the pasture, and the pasture.

Which is mostly rejoicing, since all the ingredients are here,

which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart
and these body-clothes,
a mouth with which to give shouts of joy
to the moth and the wren, to the sleepy dug-up clam,
telling them all, over and over, how it is
that we live forever.

- from *Thirst: Poems* by Mary Oliver (Beacon Press, 2007)

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Sketch or journal your ideas.

Let's make some Land Art!

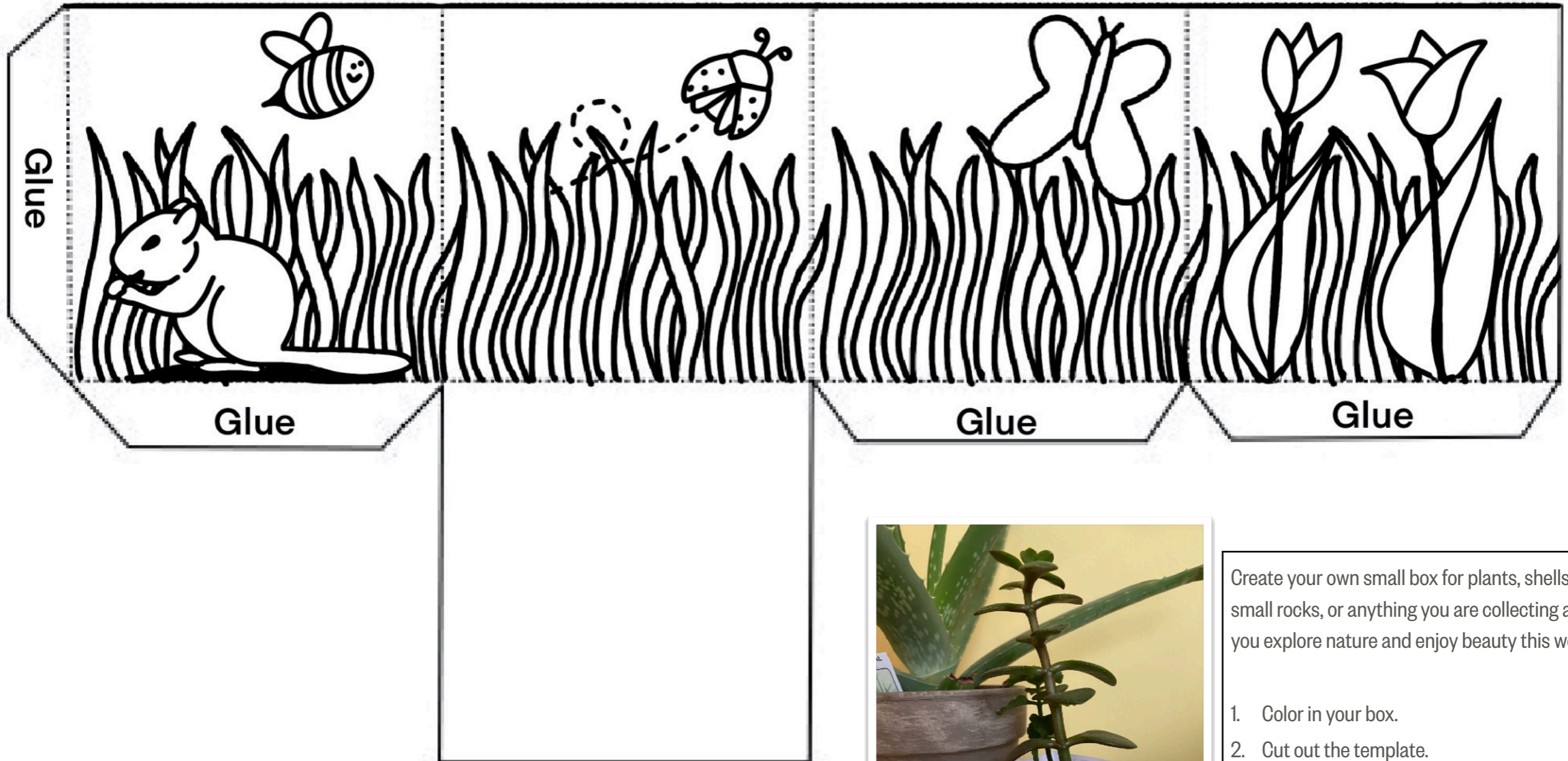
Andy Goldsworthy is a British artist who uses natural materials (sticks, stones, ice, leaves, branches, etc.) to create land art sculptures. Because of the temporary nature of this art, he uses photography to document his creations.

This week, let's all be land artists and create our own sculptures based on what we can find in our own backyard, or on our own street!

1. Take a walk down your street or around your yard and begin gathering any pieces of nature that interest you: rocks, leaves, flowers, sticks.
2. Examine the items that you picked up. Will your land art sculpture be colorful? Will it be symmetrical? Will it take the shape of something else? Jot your ideas down in the space to the right.
3. Take another walk to gather more of what you need to complete your idea.
4. Finalize your sculpture and take a photo!

**TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR LAND ART
AND SHARE IT WITH US AT
INFO@APOSTLESCT.ORG
& ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITH THE HASHTAG:
#CHURCHOFTHEAPOSTLESCT**

Create



Create your own small box for plants, shells, small rocks, or anything you are collecting as you explore nature and enjoy beauty this week!

1. Color in your box.
2. Cut out the template.
3. Fold along all dotted lines.
4. Glue edges.
5. Fold together, pressing glued edges so that they stick well. You can also add a strip of tape to make it more secure.

Week 6: Rogation Sunday

May 9 - 15, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 11:19-30

Psalm 33:1-8

1 John 4:7-21

John 15:9-17

Collect for Sixth Sunday of Easter

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Worship



Rebirth, Manabu Ikeda

A reflection on 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan- [Read more here](#)

Celebrate

Ask God to Bless Our Neighborhoods

a note from Tamara,

adapted from “Get Dirty: 3 Reasons Why We Should Observe Rogation Days” by Jack King at Anglican Compass

and “Rogationtide: The Wendell Berry Days of the Church Year by Amanda McGill at The North American Anglican”

The sixth Sunday after Easter is traditionally known as “Rogation Sunday.” This is because the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this upcoming week (the three days before Ascension Day, on Thursday) are known as the “Rogation Days,” days for fasting and prayer—traditionally for God’s mercy and protection from danger. Churches will often mark the Rogation days with a “Rogation procession,” and the praying of the Great Litany as well as prayers of blessing from the Book of Common Prayer.

Rogation Days call Christians beyond the typically-understood “sacred spaces” of our church buildings to bless all of the good earth God has given. Rogation Days began in the 5th century when St Mamertus of Vienne developed processional liturgies to pray for God’s blessing and protection over the land by processing with parishioners into the actual fields surrounding them. Traditionally, congregations would walk around the borders of the parish, pausing at various places offer prayer. Gradually, the procession of prayer became a time of festival to celebrate the coming of spring, renew parish boundaries, and settle neighborly disputes.

Rogation is derived from the Latin verb ‘rogare’ which means ‘to ask.’ In the liturgies of Rogation Days, we ask the Lord to bless the fields, the crops, and the hands of farmers who produce our food. Worship on Rogation Days teaches us that we depend upon God’s favor over his land. We ask him for goodness over not just an abstract idea of our “land” but the very real earth beneath our feet in our backyards, our neighborhoods, and whatever part of the earth our feet hit the ground. As we’ve become a post-industrial society, the prayers for Rogation Days have expanded to include not only prayers for farmers and fisherman, but also for commerce and industry, and for all of us as stewards of creation.

If all of this sounds serious, well, it is - and it isn’t. Our need for God’s continued grace and mercy to sustain us is serious, yet the traditional Rogation Day processions included feasting, and quite a bit of festal jocularly. In order to make the borders of the parish (and, therefore, the sense of prayer over the specific land included in the parish), priests led congregations in what sounds a bit like pranks and pratfalls. Perhaps, on the eastern border where a creek ran, a few boys would get thrown into the water so that the rest of the year the parish could say “Remember that stream that runs along the eastern border - you know the one, we threw Elliot and Marcus in? I just caught the biggest rainbow trout I’ve ever seen. Thank God for the delicious meal my family enjoyed out of it! I’ll tell you the exact spot. Maybe you get a great catch to feed your family, too!”

“The likeliest path to the ultimate ground leads through my local ground. I mean the land itself, with its creeks and rivers, its weather, seasons, stone outcroppings, and all the plants and animals that share it. I cannot have a spiritual center without having a geographical one; I cannot live a grounded life without being grounded in a place.”

Scott Russell Sanders, Staying Put: Making A Home In A Restless World

If you were asked to coordinate a walking or biking tour of your neighborhood, what would you include in the tour?

“To be an American is to move on, as if we could outrun change. To attach oneself to place is to surrender to it, and to suffer with it.”

Kathleen Norris, The Cloister Walk

What are some common things you and your neighbor suffer because of where you live? How can this inform your prayer?

What could this look like for us in 2021? In a time we’re hopefully becoming more familiar with the actual physical contours of neighborhoods, how can we extend this tradition of Rogation Days into joyful, intentional acts of blessing for the earth we place our feet each day?

Might it look something like faithful, non-anxious walks through our neighborhoods, praying words of blessing over each home and business?

Might it look like planting literal seeds and asking God to help them grow into food that will feed our families and neighbors?

In the same week we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into heaven, we’re asking heaven to come to earth even as earth—in the risen body of Jesus—ascends to heaven. Might I suggest that the conversations we’ve been having about the Lord’s Prayer this spring have beautifully prepared us for this practice?

Every week we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.’ Perhaps more than any other week of the year, the liturgies of Rogation Days and Ascension call us to meditate and pray fervently on these petitions and blessings. Forever and ever. Amen!

Thank you to The Homely Hours for freely sharing the Rogation Day Prayer Bunting printable for the “Create” section of this week’s guidebook!

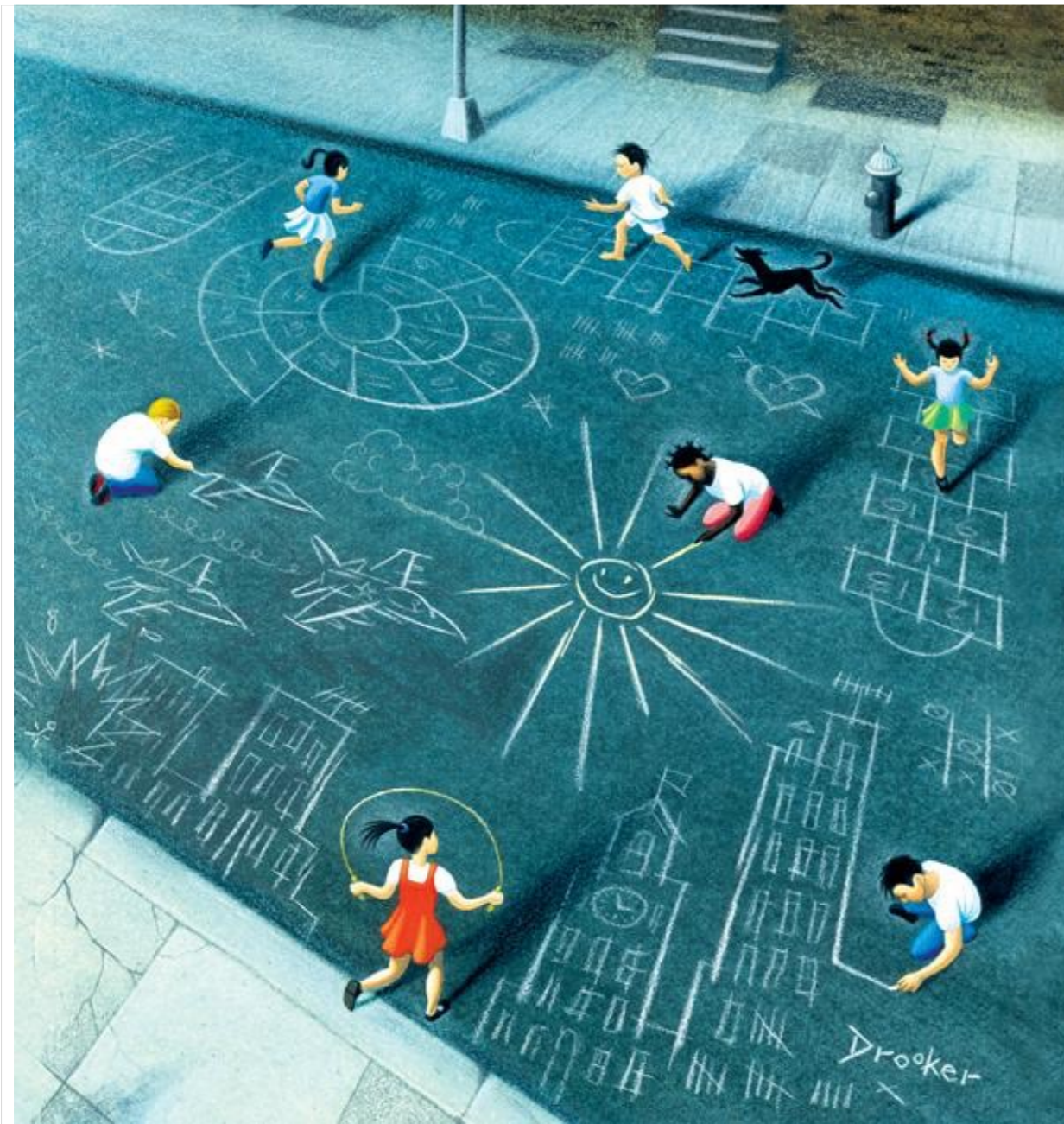


Illustration by Eric Drooker

Wonder

Song: *For the Beauty of the Earth*,
Folliott S. Pierpoint

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night;
hill and vale, and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon, and stars of light:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child;
friends on earth, and friends above,
pleasures pure and undefiled:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

4 For Thy church that evermore
lifts her holy hands above,
Offering up on every shore
her pure sacrifice of love:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

5 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense and sound and sight:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

6 For Thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n;
for that great, great love of Thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n:
Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Ascension Thursday: Let's play with bubbles!

Ascension Thursday is May 13, the day we remember Jesus rising into heaven after his 40 days on earth after the Resurrection. Spend some time that day playing with bubbles, watching them as they float into the sky and remembering our risen Lord. And don't forget to join the Ascension Service on Facebook Live on Thursday night!

**SING ALL THE VERSES OF THIS HYMN OVER THE NEXT
COUPLE DAYS. WHICH VERSES MOST CAPTURE YOUR
IMAGINATION?**

**WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH DAY.
SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Let's play with chalk!

This week take some time to decorate your driveway, walkway, or sidewalk with chalk!

If you don't have any sidewalk chalk on hand, here is an easy recipe to make your own.

Mix together:

2 tbsp cornstarch

1/4 cup water

A few drops food coloring

Make a few different colors in separate containers. Use paintbrushes to paint. This recipe will paint on thin at first but will dry like chalk.

In your creating, think about your neighbors and how you can use your chalk creation to encourage them.

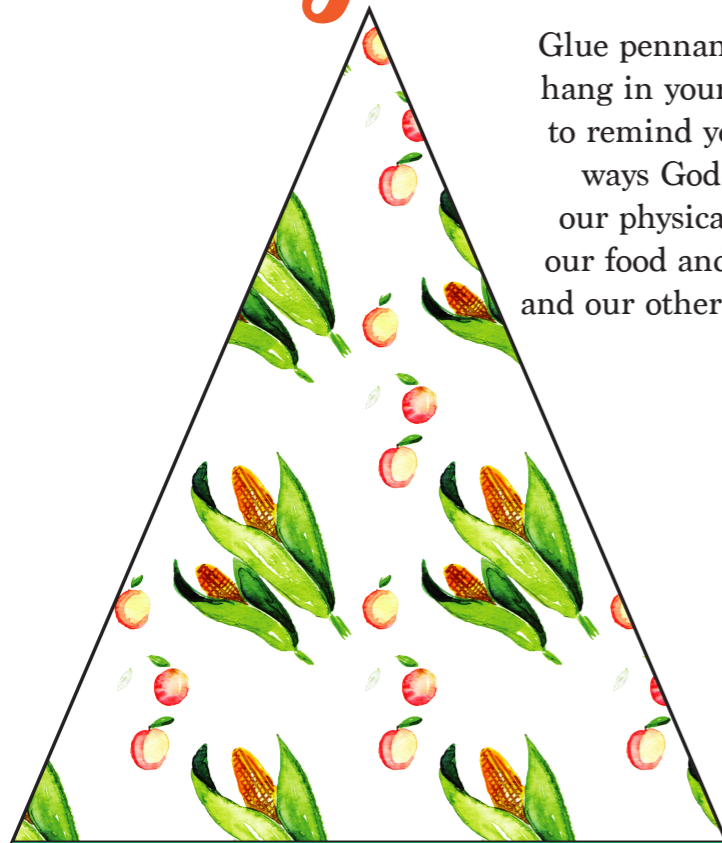
1. If you live in a neighborhood with a lot of children, think about making a hopscotch board, obstacle course, or other game board.
2. If you know of essential workers in your neighborhood, consider giving them a special "thank you" note where they will see it.
3. You can write Bible verses, riddles, personalized notes, or just scribbles and splatters with a lot of colors. Use your imagination!

Sketch or Make a list of your ideas.

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Rogation Day Prayer Bunting

Glue pennants onto a string to hang in your home or garden to remind you to pray for the ways God sustains us in our physical environments: our food and how it is grown, and our other material blessings.



For favorable weather,
temperate rains and
fruitful seasons,
and that there may
be food and drink
for all your creatures,
we pray to you,
O Lord.
Amen



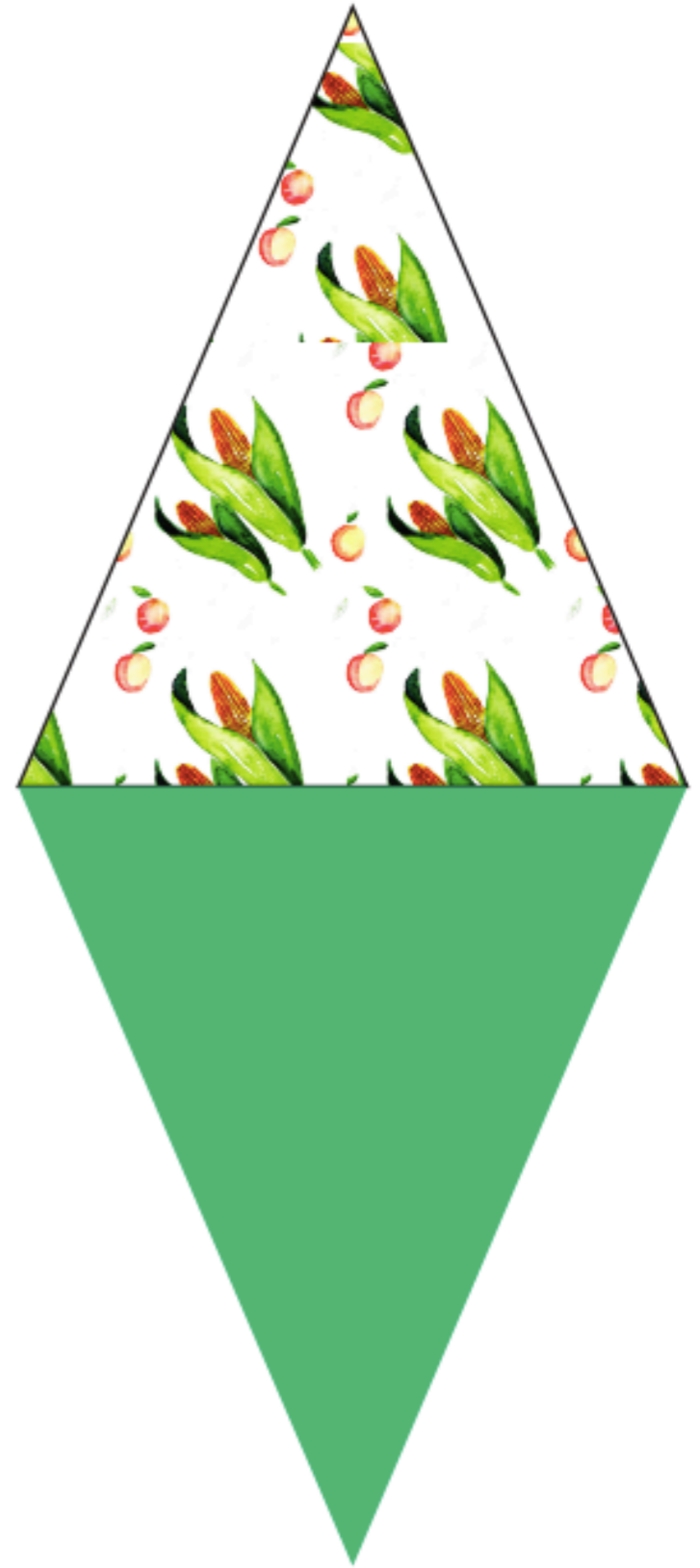
For your blessing
upon the lands and waters,
and all who work upon them
to bring forth food
and all things needful
for your people,
we pray to you
O Lord.
Amen



For all who care for the earth,
the water and the air
that the riches
of your creation
may abound
from age to age,
we pray to you,
O Lord.
Amen

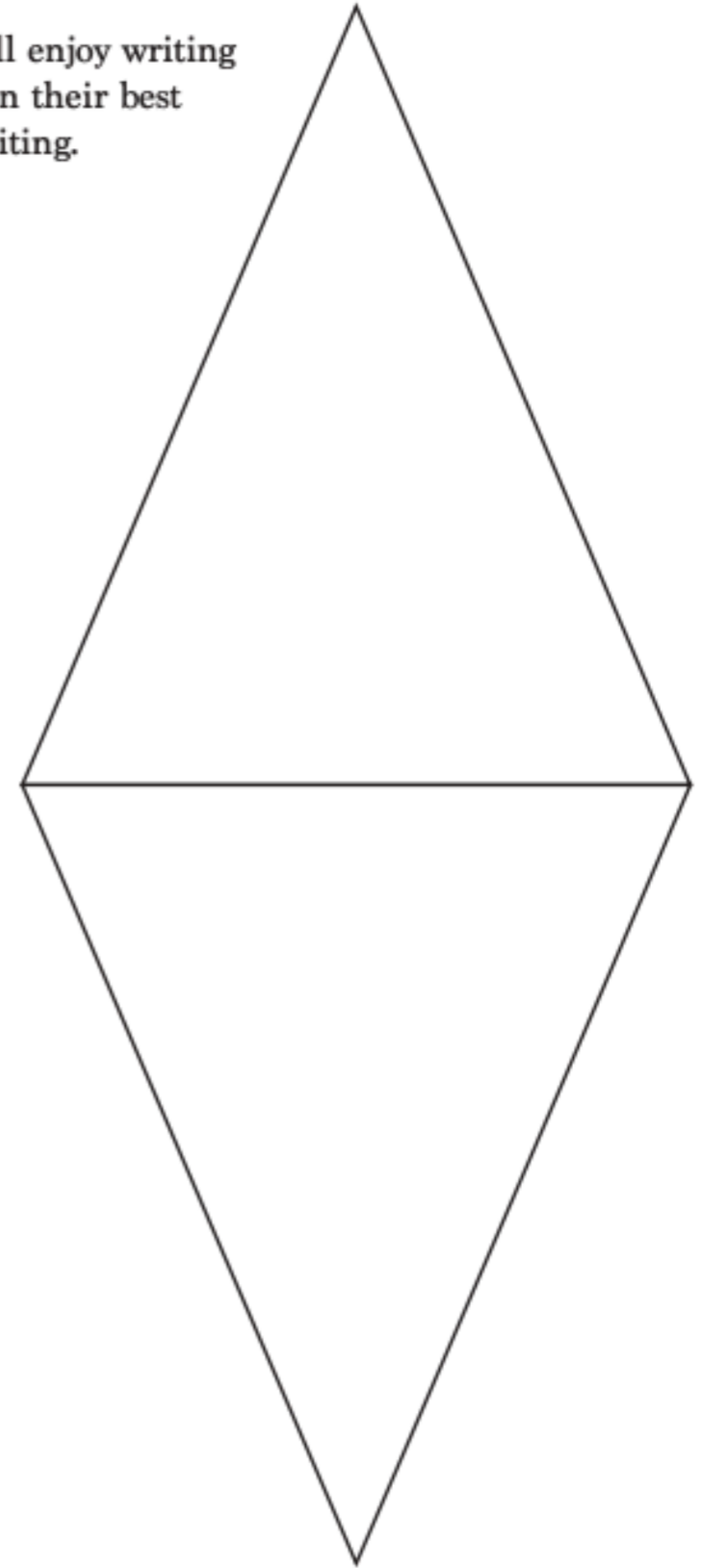
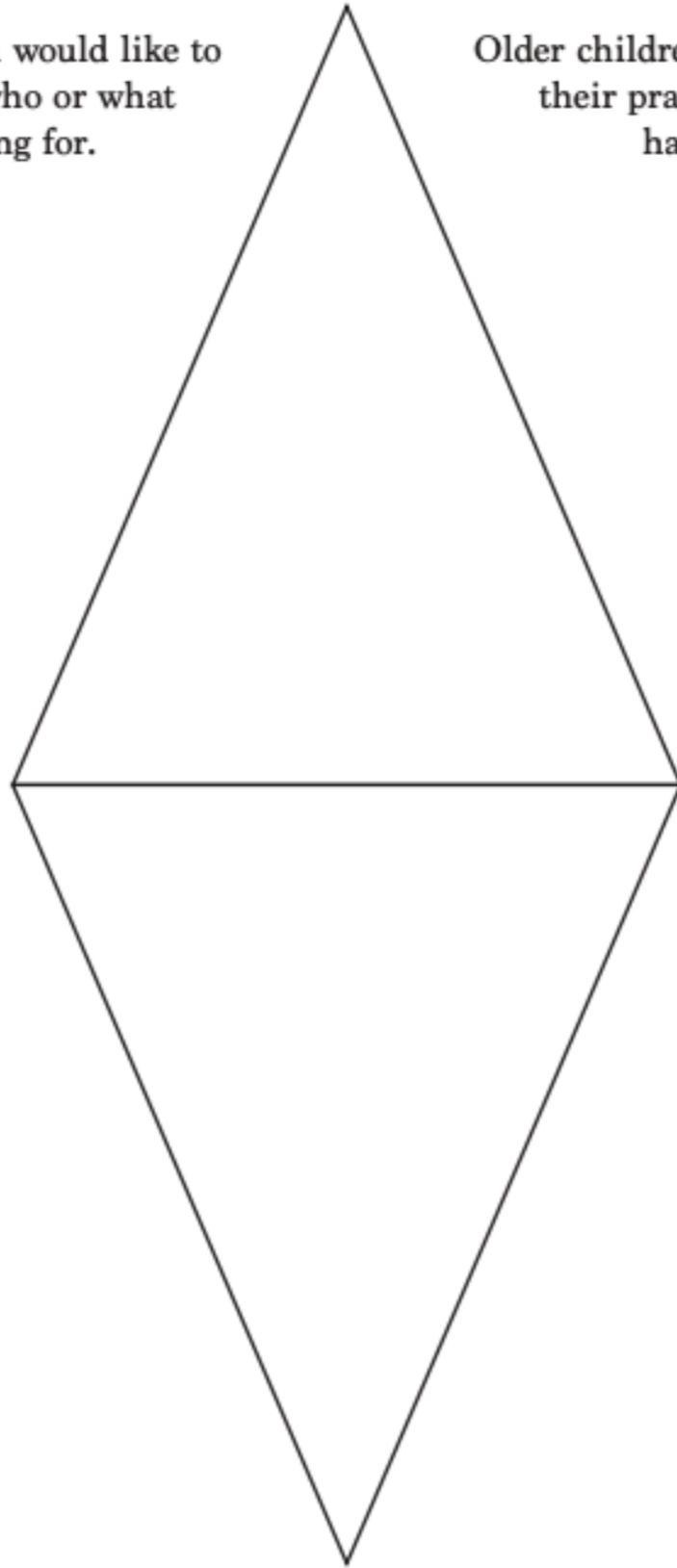
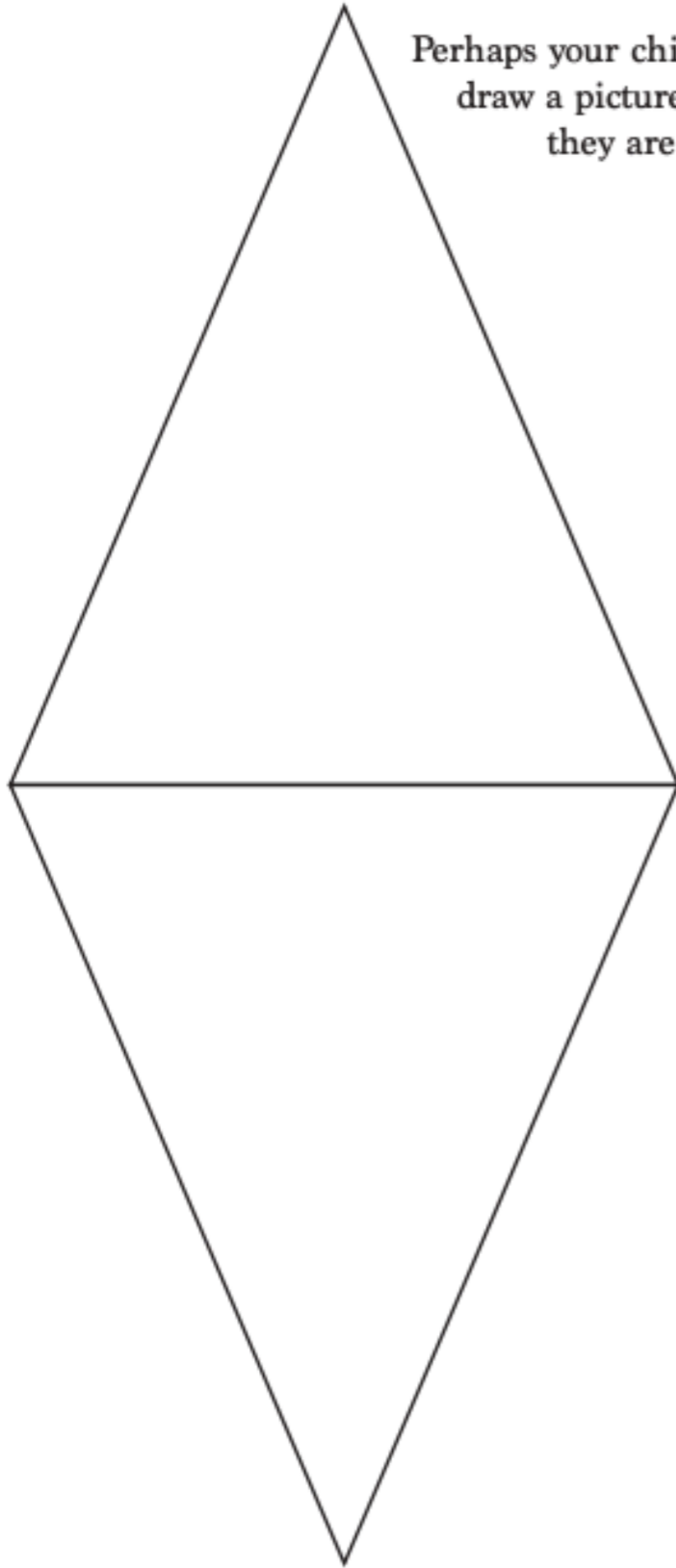


Write your own prayers for your home,
neighbors, or garden.



Perhaps your children would like to
draw a picture of who or what
they are prayng for.

Older children will enjoy writing
their prayers in their best
handwriting.





Outreach of the New Covenant, Shin Young-Hun - [Source](#)

Week 7: Ascension

May 16 - 22, 2021

Sunday Eucharistic Service Readings

Acts 1:15-26

Psalm 47

1 John 5:6-15

John 17:11-19

Collect for Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen..

Worship

Celebrate

(Re)introduce yourself

a note from Tamara

For the past sixteen years Brian and I have served within Living Waters, a healing prayer ministry overflowing with stories of forgiveness. It's the context we best found our own footing in communal acts of confession, forgiveness and healing. In the process, I've become drawn to stories of forgiveness and each story, no matter the scope and scale, restores my hope in the living Christ.

No story of forgiveness gets to be amazing without first deep suffering. I wish that -- even for one week -- you all could sit witness to this sort of healing with us. You'd discover, yes, many of your worst suspicions about human nature are true. Maybe, like me, you'd lose your ability to be surprised at the capacity for human beings to consume, degrade, abuse, and ignore each other. Hopefully, though, you'd also fight with me to keep feeling a response to suffering-- even when feeling hurts.

Staying open to the feelings of pain - my own and others' - also keeps me open to amazement. I hope I never stop feeling astonished at the God-created human capacity for hope that springs up in that space left open for hope when hope doesn't make any sense at all. It's as if the Father of the risen Christ wedged a pebble from the tombstone into each of our hearts, leaving a crack for resurrection air to survive until the moment we take Him up on the offer for hope, healing, and new life.

In Eastertide and Pentecost (and all the days of our lives), we welcome the Spirit of the risen Christ to restore and reconcile all that disconnects us in our relationships with God, ourselves and others. As we do this together, we bear each other's pain and we carry each other's hope. There's been no better honor in my life than to watch women and men stand upright and reintroduce themselves to the world as fully beloved children of God, reconciled to all things in Christ.

Together, as God's children, we practice the backwards, upside down and shocking claims of Jesus that when we forgive, resurrection power is released. Life happens when we surrender ourselves to Christ's command to live and spread His supreme forgiveness. Like Christ, we become power-full forgivers. We find that underneath the layers of unnamed wounds, old grudges and resentments, our truest, strongest, most peaceful self is hidden with Christ in God and we begin to reintroduce ourselves to the world in the radiance of a clean slate with God, ourselves, and others.

"The resurrection is a moment in which human beings are reintroduced to each other across the gulf of mutual resentment and blame; a new human community becomes possible."

Rowan Williams

What relationships in your life are separated now by "mutual resentment and blame"? Where could the reality of resurrection bridge the gap and allow you to reintroduce yourself?

"Refusing to forgive is tantamount to re-crucifying Christ. Instead of seeing stones rolled away, we throw stones at each other. ... When we forgive we set loose the [Easter] power of love in the world."

Johann Christoph Arnold

What stones of unforgiveness is God inviting you to put down? List the names of those you desire to forgive.

Five Roadblocks to Forgiveness

1. We believe surrendering to forgiveness equals ignoring wrongdoing.
2. We're afraid that forgiving someone who isn't trustworthy means that we'll be opening ourselves to be hurt again.
3. We've become so familiar with the energy, anger and bitterness give us, we're afraid we'll no longer recognize ourselves if we release those who've wounded us.
4. We convince ourselves that we aren't really hurt and, therefore, do not need to forgive.
5. We already prayed to forgive our offender once and that was enough/it didn't work.

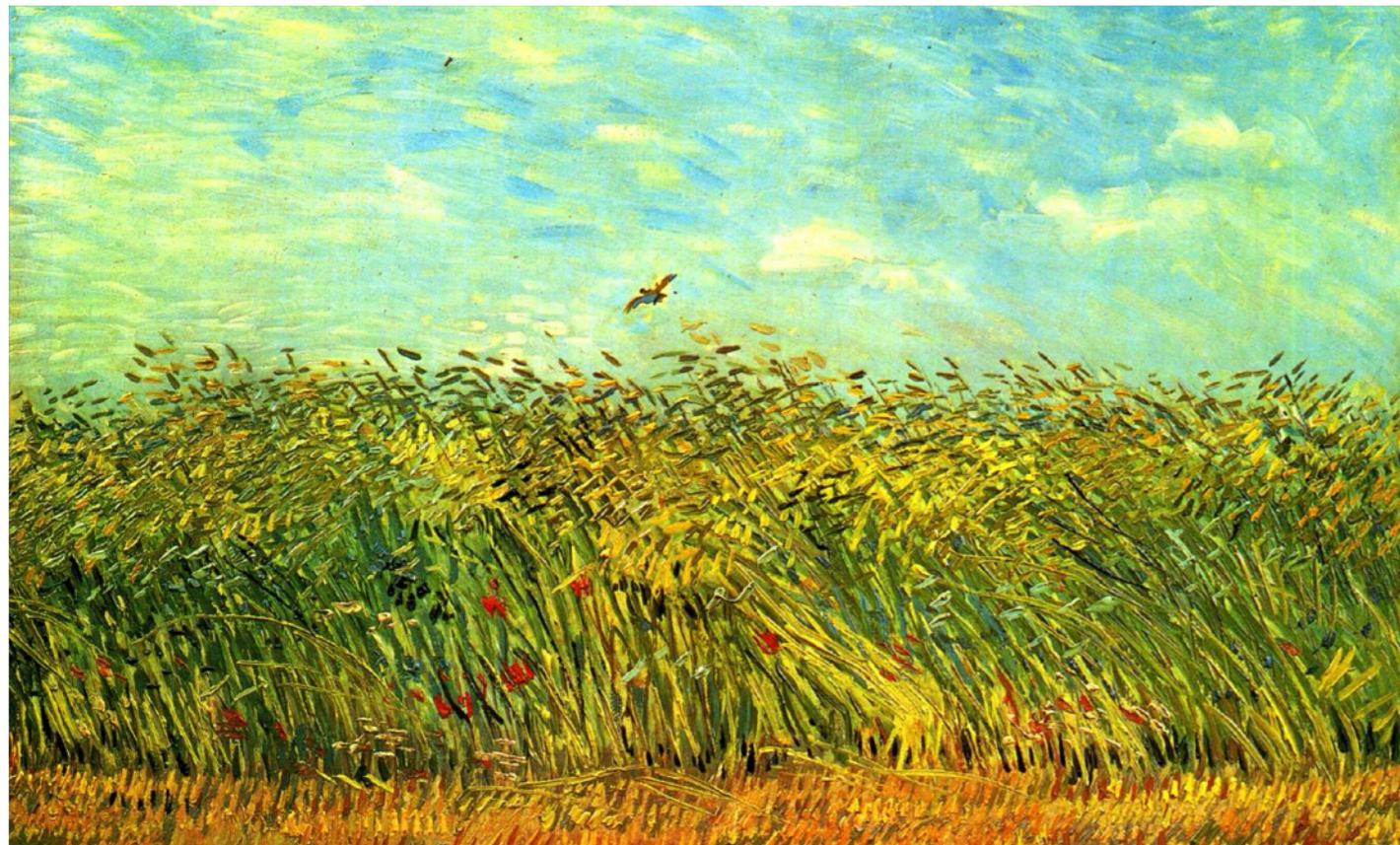
If any of these roadblocks resonate with you, reach out to the church office to make an appointment for prayer.

Music: *The Lark Ascending*, Ralph Vaughan Williams

Inspired by George Meredith's 144-line poem about the song of a skylark, Ralph Vaughan Williams composed *The Lark Ascending* in 1914, shortly before the outbreak of World War One and went on to become one of the most popular songs in the Classical repertoire. The British violinist Iona Brown, who died in 2004, made a classic recording of *The Lark Ascending* with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields and Sir Neville Marriner. This is full of a special, rapt atmosphere and delicate beauty.

[Listen on YouTube](#) | [Listen on Spotify](#)

[Read more about the song here.](#)



Wheat Field With A Lark, Vincent van Gogh

Wonder

Poem: *The Lark Ascending (an excerpt)*,
George Meredith

He rises and begins to round
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake

For singing till his heaven fills
Tis love of earth that he instils
And ever winging up and up
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes

Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings

[Read the entire poem here.](#)

**READ THE POEM OUT LOUD A FEW TIMES.
WHAT WORD(S) CAPTURE YOUR IMAGINATION?
HOW DOES THE PHRASE MAKE YOU FEEL?
WRITE THE WORD(S) WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT EACH
DAY. SHARE IT WITH GOD & A FRIEND.**

Explore

Let's go on a Sound Hunt!

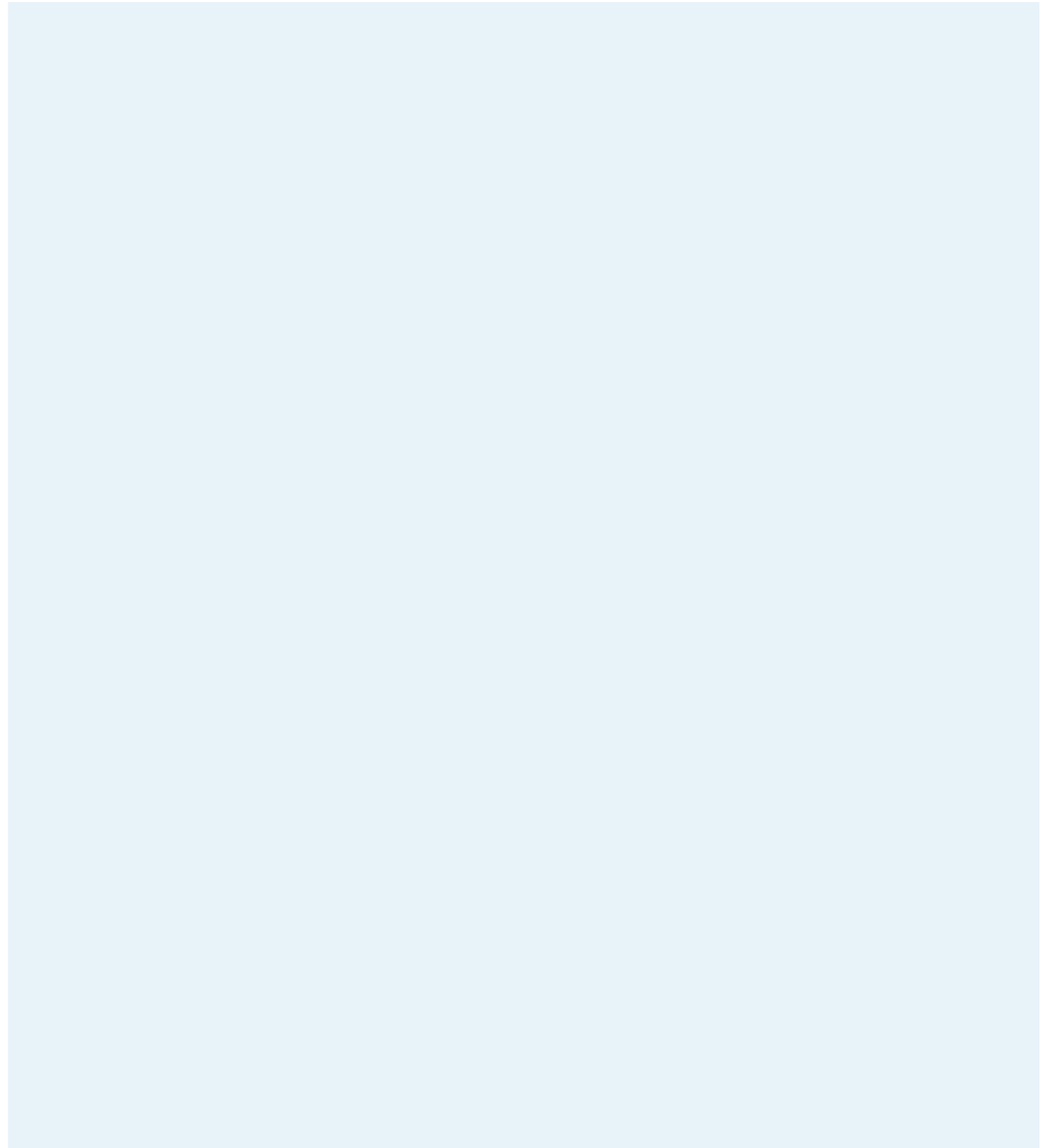
In the spring, it's easy to let our eyes do all the exploring and appreciating of beauty. But this week, let's be intentional about using our ears to really hear.

This week, take a listening walk around your neighborhood, paying attention to all the different sounds you hear. Is there anything that surprises you?

Or simply sit outside in your yard and do a sound hunt:

1. Listen carefully to the birds. Do you hear any emotion in their song? Are they calling to one another or do they seem angry? Do you hear any babies chirping?
2. What insects can you hear? Do you hear bees buzzing or crickets chirping?
3. What about the weather? What sounds are unique to the weather of this particular day?
4. Sit in absolute silence and use your phone to record for 2-3 minutes. Then, go inside, turn up the volume, and listen a few times. How many different sounds can you hear? Can you identify all the sounds?

Sketch or journal what you heard.

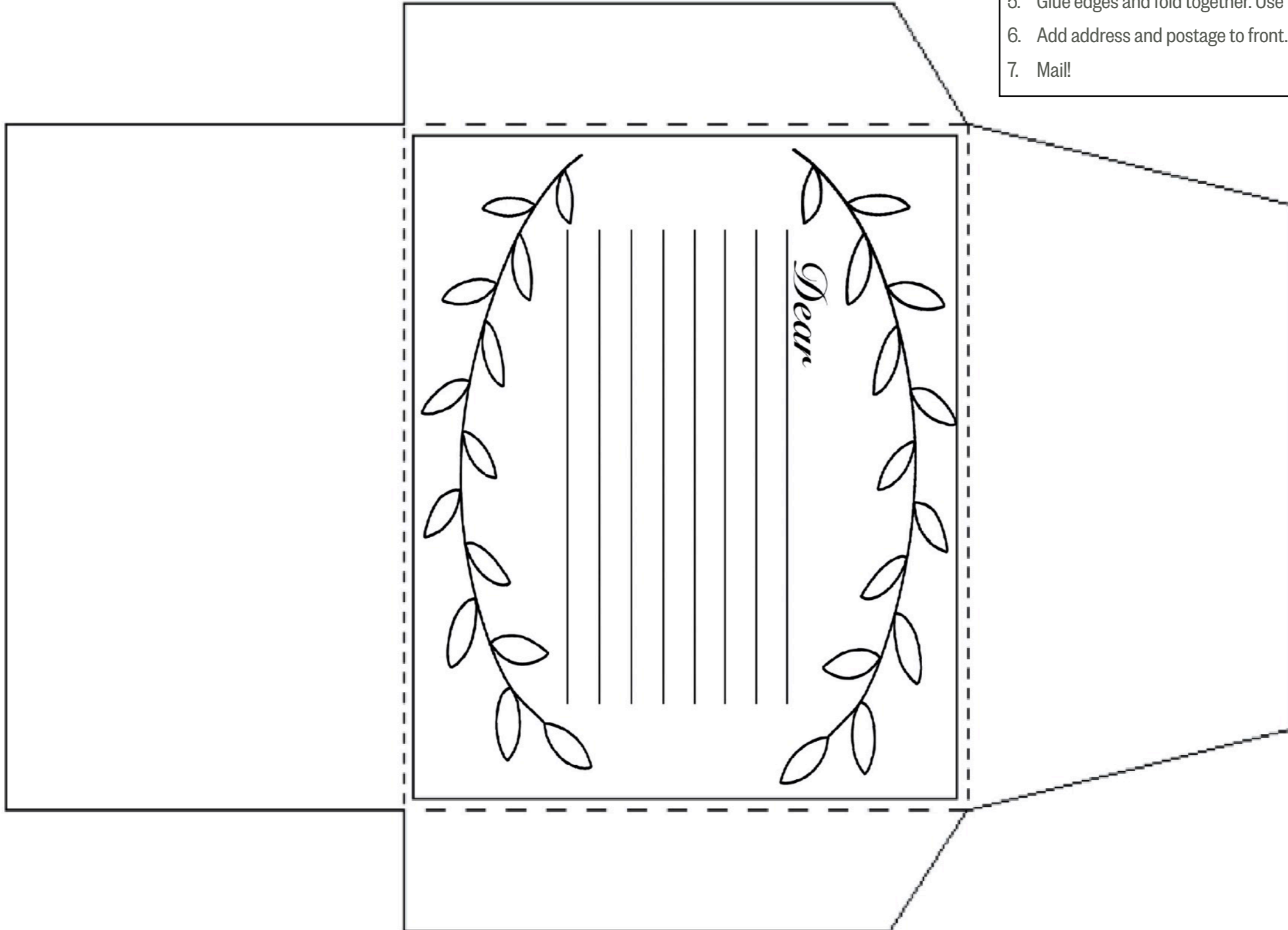


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Create

Create your own letter/envelope to encourage someone this week!

1. Color in your envelope.
2. Cut out the template.
3. Write your letter.
4. Fold along all dotted lines.
5. Glue edges and fold together. Use tape to seal flap.
6. Add address and postage to front.
7. Mail!



Pentecost

The movement of Pentecost is lit for outward projection, the great current of Spirit moves us toward all people, in every nation, everywhere. Some of us send, some of us go, and all of us become (or are called to be) a faithful non-anxious presence for Bridgeport, Fairfield County, and the world.

While he was with them on earth, Jesus repeatedly told his disciples that he must return to the Father. This made them sad. The news that Jesus would die was heartbreaking, that he would rise again astounding, that he would leave us alone and return to heaven, troubling.

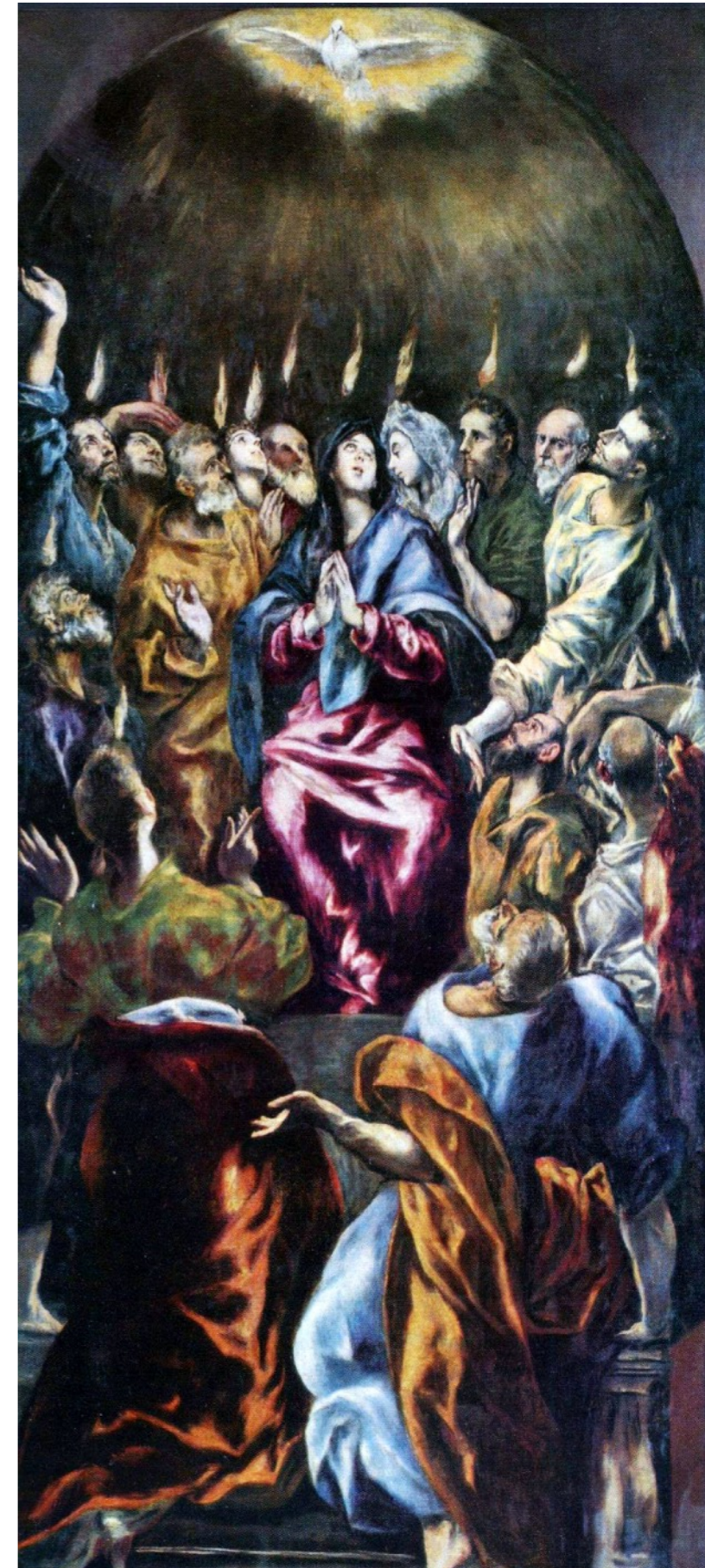
Yet Jesus assures us, “I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7)

Practicing resurrection does not end on Pentecost Sunday. Rather, our practice becomes enlivened and empowered by the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God helps us become the walking icons of God’s love and mercy, empowers us to live our lives for the sake of others, and guides and comforts us through sufferings of all kinds.

With our new-found Helper’s help, we are free to boldly show and tell that Christ is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed!

Collect for Pentecost Sunday

Almighty God, on this day, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, you revealed the way of eternal life to every race and nation: Pour out this gift anew, that by the preaching of the Gospel your salvation may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Descent of the Holy Spirit, El Greco



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