

FAMILIES TOGETHER - CHURCHES TOGETHER



we are
the church

CHURCH OF THE CROSS
CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
RESTORATION ANGLICAN

TWIN CITIES, MN

Summer 2020

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder; crying out,

Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns
Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready
Revelation 19:6-7

A Note to Parents and Youth

We Are the Church

The church left the building in March. We miss our sacred spaces. Even more, we miss our gathering together. But we are still the Church. The church is not brick and mortar. It is a Body made up of many parts, established by God, commissioned by our Savior Jesus Christ, and equipped by the Spirit for the spreading of the gospel and the building up of the saints. It is you and I. It enfolds all nations. It is our children and youth now and their children to come. "Yes, we're the Church together!"

One of the great opportunities of this time (when we have had to do a lot of rethinking about church) is parents and caregivers reaffirming their calling as shepherds of their children, with the support of the local church. In this time, may you find your way to greater devotion with the help of God who desires that down the generations, mothers and fathers tell their children the "glorious deeds of the Lord, his might and the wonders he has done...so that they set their hope in God" (Psalm 78).

We Are Part of a Movement *and* a Moment

While our congregations in the Diocese of the Upper Midwest are culturally distinct, our diocesan home is theologically aligned. Our values are modeled after the "Acts 2" Church. Each week, for the next seven weeks, one of those values provides the basis for learning and going deeper together in understanding what it means to be the Church. But it's not simply about understanding! We are part of a movement whose mission is to *plant a revival of Word and Sacrament, infused by the Holy Spirit*. As the church emerges from time apart from each other into a world in need of God's justice and peace, may our devotion and action in our homes ripple out to bring more fully into being that joyful, grateful, generous community that was so attractive to the watching world of the early Christians. This is a moment for the Church.

How to Use This “Families Together” Guide

Between Dinner and Dessert?

One of the things that makes gathering our families for time together around God’s Word successful, is making that practice a habit. When you are already gathered for an evening meal, try taking a break before dessert, perhaps getting down from the table to a comfortable place and having that special time, with dessert to look forward to. Keep it short and sweet. The point is to build the expectation that *our* family takes this time consistently, and it’s *important* to us that everyone is there!

Weekly Rhythm

This Families Together devotional and Family Fit (<https://family.fit/en/>) resources both have three weekly options, so the rhythm below is for six days. But it’s flexible! Find a rhythm that works for your family to build habits and to make a life of faith central to your home. Additionally, by journeying through this devotional this summer you will know the unity of others in faith as members of our three Twin Cities churches are being strengthened to be the People of God he calls us to be in this time.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Family Fit 1	Families Together 1	Family Fit 2	Families Together 2	Family Fit 3	Families Together 3

Gathering - Get Ready:

- Choose your location, meet there daily - creating sacred space invites anticipation
- Put away screens - this is sacred time
- Make habit of how you sit - taking out variables helps us focus
- Everyone get out Bibles - holding a Bible is a precious gift
- Use the weekly guide - walk through the daily liturgy
- Finish with one of the “Do” options for fun and reinforcement - if you have time
- Plan your giving - follow through

What's Your Plan?

A Good Time:

A Good Place:

What will make it work well in our family?:

What is our prayer for our children, our family, the church as we begin?

Engaging Little Ones

Especially for parents of younger children there is a text box to engage our themes using the Jesus Storybook Bible (JSBB). It includes age appropriate questions and activities.



Week 1 - What is the Church?

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.

From Our Modern Services, Anglican Church of Kenya



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Ephesians 2:19-22

- The cornerstone was the first stone laid in the foundation of a building. All other stones laid down were done so with reference to this first stone so it became the basis for the entire structure. When Paul says that Jesus is the Cornerstone of the household of God, what does he mean? He also says that the apostles and the prophets are the foundation. What is a foundation?
- What are we, the Church, being built into (vs 21-22)?

Thank God for the places and spaces and ways he has given your church to gather in this time. Ask him to strengthen churches longing to gather more freely again, yet not wanting to miss the chance we have in this time to be built up as the people of God outside our buildings or in new ways!

Day 2 - Read 1 Corinthians 12:12

- In the Ephesians text, Paul used the image of a building to describe the community of believers. What imagery does he use to describe the believers in this verse?
- Why do our feet need our eyes? Why do our eyes need our feet? Thinking about the church, what is important about the priest? The musicians? Those praying? The teachers? The children?
- Paul says that all together we make up one body. Whose body is it? What food and drink does this body need?

What are the gifts God has given you? Ask him how you can use those gifts to build up the church.

Pray for the Unity of all Christians: *O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace to take to heart the grave dangers we are in through our many divisions. Deliver your Church from all enmity and prejudice, and everything that hinders us from godly union. As there is one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so make us to be of one heart and of one mind, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and love, that with one voice we may give you praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God in everlasting glory. Amen.* (Book of Common Prayer 2019)

Day 3 - Read Matthew 28:18-20

- Jesus tells his disciples to go everywhere, and tell everyone about Him. What is the promise that Jesus leaves us with in the last verse to help us to do that big work?
- What is the basis for this work (v 18)?

Pray for the mission of the Church: *Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself: We praise and bless you for those whom you have sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labors, and that in every place your servants call upon your Name; for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, for ever and ever. Amen.* (BCP)

Remember

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Bless

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

Give

We are partnering with Together for Good to fill "Backpacks for Good." This week purchase your backpack and get ready to fill it up in the next six weeks. Choose an age group near your heart or perhaps the age of the children in your home. Make one backpack as a family showering it with love and prayers, or several if you are led. Check out the full list and instructions at the end of this devotional for all the details.

Do

- **Build with Blocks**

Kids love to build blocks and knock them over. Using blocks and Little People, build a church, put the people inside, and then knock down the blocks. What is left? The people! Talk about what it means to live the life to which God has called us, both inside and outside of the church building.

- **Build Again**

Gather blocks of various sizes. See how many different types of towers you can make. What happens if you put the littlest block at the bottom or, alternately, the largest block at the bottom? Why is the foundation important?

- **Write A Haiku**

Write haiku poems in appreciation of the gifting of people in your family. A haiku has three lines with 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third. Here's an example:

*Mom serves God's people
Blesses families with good meals
A gift of herself*

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- Jesus Storybook Bible (JSBB), *The Ascension*, start at pg 322-324

Wonder

- I wonder what the word "church" means.
- Who gets to be part of the church?
- Jesus says that He is three things. What are they?

Do

- Hand motions: 'Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people!'



Week 2 - Fully Scriptural

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

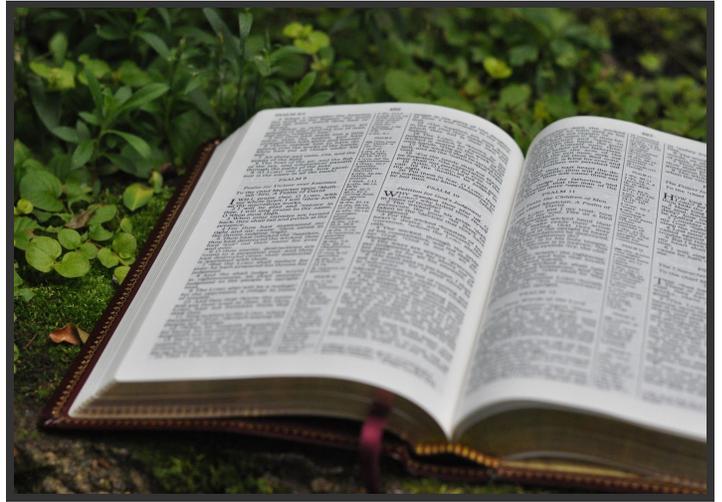
He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Isaiah 55:11

- If you put the four lines from verse 10 next to those from verse 11, what comparisons do you notice?

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

- Where does the Word come from and what is its purpose?

Pray that when we have strayed from God that his Word would accomplish its work and call us to return. Pray that those far from God would hear his Word and draw near to Him.

Day 2 - Read 2 Timothy 3:16

- How does this verse help us understand the one from Isaiah 55? Where does Scripture come from, what does it do, and what is its purpose?
- Can you think of a time when you've been taught, reproved, corrected, or trained by the words of Scripture?

Pray for Christ, the Living Word, to be formed in us: *Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, make, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.* (BCP)

Day 3 - Read Psalm 119:105

- Can you think of a time when you needed a light to see where you were going? How is God's word like that light? In what darkness(es) do we need help to see?

Pray that God's Word would go deep in your heart to be that light for your path.

Remember

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Bless

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21(NIV)

Give

Write a card for the child who will receive your backpack and include a favorite verse. Write it out in your best handwriting, decorate it with fun colors, and add a picture or an encouraging note. In this way you will bless them, and prepare your heart to fill up your backpack.

Do

- **Send Scripture**

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? You may want to use the verse from your baptism. Write it out in your best handwriting, decorate it with fun colors, and add a picture or an encouraging note. The Word of God always accomplishes what God intends. Pray about who God would have you send it to. Put it in the mail before the end of the week.

- **Flashlight Tag**

Play flashlight tag in the darkness of the basement, giving the person who is “it” both a flashlight and a Bible. Discuss together the tagger’s advantage in being able to see in the dark.

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- JSBB, *The Story and the Song*, pg 12-17

Wonder

- What kind of story is the Bible?
- Read Ps 119:105. Think of a time you needed a light to see where you were going.
- Wonder together how the Bible is like a light.

Do

- Find a dark space (basement or closed room) and then turn on a flashlight. Talk about the gift of light in the dark. If you want to go further, play follow the leader, first in the dark and then with the leader holding the flashlight.



Week 3 - Fully Sacramental

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Matthew 26:26-28

- Exodus 12 tells of another meal in which blood plays a prominent role. Can you remember what happened around the time of that meal? What similarities do you notice between these two meals, in Exodus 12 and Matthew 26?
- At the meal, when Jesus said, "this is my body" and "this is my blood" he hadn't yet made his sacrifice, where his body was broken and his blood was spilt. What did it mean back then, at the last supper, and what does it mean now, during communion, that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood?

Pray that we will recognize Christ in the breaking of bread and the cup of salvation.

Day 2 - Read Romans 6:3-4

- Have you been baptized? What do you remember about that day? If you were too young to remember, what have people told you about that day?
- If you have ever watched a baptism, what are some of the things you remember seeing or hearing?

Pray for those who have been baptized recently at your church, and for yourselves:

Deliver us from the way of sin and death

Open our hearts to your grace and truth

Fill us with your holy and life-giving Spirit

Keep us in the faith and communion of your holy Church

Teach us to love others in the power of the Spirit

Send us into the world in witness to your love

Bring us to the fullness of your peace and glory. Amen. (BCP 1978)

Day 3 - Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- Jesus told his followers to eat and drink “in remembrance of me.” Why is it important that we remember? What is the opposite of ‘remember’?
- According to Paul, what happens when we eat the bread and drink the cup (v 26)? What does the word ‘proclaim’ mean? Why is it important that we continuously make this proclamation?

Pray for your experience of meeting Jesus at the Table to grow.

Pray for a truly thankful heart as you receive the bread and wine, or a blessing.

Pray for the unity of God’s Church.

Remember

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Give

Begin to gather materials to fill your *Backpack for Good*. This week start with clothes: undies/diapers, socks and jammies. Truly, is there anything better than new socks? You can be sure they will be well received.

Do

- **An Act of Restoration**

Find something that is broken in your home or community that you are able to mend as a family. Talk about God making all things new and giving us help (grace) to live this life.

- **Make a Poster**

At our baptism, we are welcomed to the family of God. Ephesians 1 talks about all the richness of being a son or a daughter of God. Take time to list the joys you can think of, being in this Family.

- **Participate in Communion**

How is your church offering communion at this time? Is there a way to volunteer to help?

- **Send a Letter**

Who are the people who have most recently been baptized in your church? Find out if you are not sure. Send them a note of encouragement or a welcome to God's Family.

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- JSBB, *The Lord's Supper*, start at pg 292

Wonder

- What did Jesus say he wants us to remember?
- I wonder what you see and what you feel when you take communion or when you watch a baptism.
- Have you been baptized? What do you remember or what have you been told about that day?

Do

- Learn the song 'What is a Sacrament?' from our Communion class.



Week 4 - Full of the Spirit

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

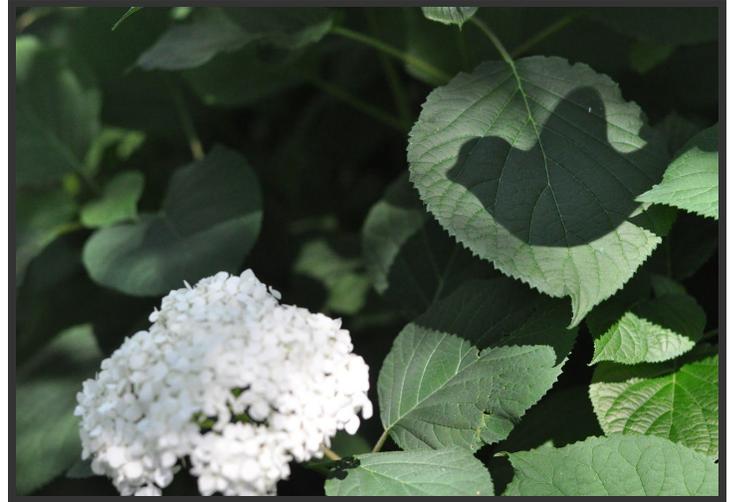
He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Acts 3:1-11

- Peter and John heal the man “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Why was doing it in Christ’s name important? Why couldn’t they do it in their own names or in no name at all?
- Read in John 14:12-17 about Jesus’ preparation of the disciples to do this healing work and his promise to them of the Holy Spirit’s help.

Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and all the amazing gifts he gives to the church. Pray for gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues to be given in your church (1Cor 12:8-10).

Day 2 - Read Acts 4:23-31

- Verses 24 and 25 tell of God's power over creation and the Holy Spirit's words through the mouth of David. How is verse 31 similar?
- How do the Trinity and God's people work in partnership in this passage?

Ask the Holy Spirit to be active and alive in you! Pray that you would become more aware of his Presence as you go about your day and ask him to grow you in showing forth the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control (Gal 5:22-23).

Day 3 - Read Acts 16:6-15

- In the first part of this section (vs 6-10), how does the Spirit guide the actions of these men? Does it surprise you that the Spirit guided them through a dream? Have you ever heard of that happening to anyone else? How do you think they knew that the Spirit was forbidding them to go to Asia and Bithynia? Do you think it was through a dream or some other way?
- In Paul's encounter with Lydia, how would the story have been different if the Lord hadn't intervened (v 14)?

Pray for all those who build up the Body of Christ by equipping people to serve. Pray that God will raise up apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers from among the children and youth in your church.

Remember

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Give

This week make an effort to collect the needed toiletries for your gift backpack: soap, shampoo etc. Pick them up at the grocery when you are out for your weekly errands.

Do

- **Take a Walk**

Galatians 5:25 reads: If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Go on a “Holy Spirit Walk.” Notice, talk, pray, and listen. Is there an action God is prompting in response?

- **Make a Chart, Keep Track**

Galatians 5 lists the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Write these out and put them in a prominent place. Have fun noticing the fruit in your family. Add a check and celebrate with a hug every time a fruit is displayed in your home.

- **Wake up with the Spirit**

Practice saying a prayer before you step out of bed: “Holy Spirit, I believe in you. Guide me this day and help me walk in step with you.”

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- JSBB, *God Sends Help*, pg 326-332

Wonder

- I wonder what the word, ‘helper’ means.
- How is the Holy Spirit *your* helper?
- What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? Can you say them together?

Do

- Try to say the fruits of the Spirit all week long! Say when you see them in the people in your family.



Week 5 - Free to Sacrifice

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

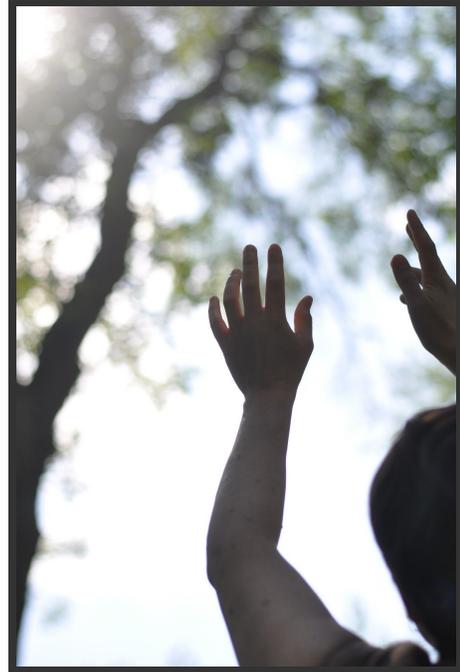
He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Acts 4:32-37

- The world tells us that happiness can be found in the quantity or quality of our material possessions and in the security that money brings us. The believers in this verse “had everything in common” and “no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own,” and yet “great grace was upon them all.” How could this be? What did they understand that the world does not?

Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:34-35). Ask God to show you ways you could give of your time or possessions to serve others and help his kingdom come.

Day 2 - Read Acts 20:13-24

- As Paul prepares to depart for Jerusalem, not knowing what may befall him there, what does he hold up as the thing most important (v 24)?
- What types of opposition and tribulation does he mention in this passage (v 19, 22-23)? As he embarks on this dangerous journey into Jerusalem, facing potential imprisonment or even death, how is it that he is able to value the gospel even more than his life?
- What are some of the trials or struggles we face and how does Paul's example give us courage to face them?

Take a moment to think about the great sacrifice Jesus made to bring us back to God and make us part of his Family. Spend time thanking him.

Day 3 - Read Acts 28:17-24

- Though he is in chains, Paul has something that he offers to this group of people. What is it (v 23)?
- Paul is proclaiming Christ not just with his words but also in his actions. What does he communicate or show about the gospel through his willingness to be imprisoned or even killed? What are some of the "chains" that bind us as we live as Christians?
- Read Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. How do these verses help us to understand Paul's actions? What is the hope we find in these verses for our own lives?

Pray for hearts of service within your family, and toward the world. Ask for discernment as you examine your priorities, and ask for the grace to see how to serve Christ in others.

Remember

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Give

The sweetest bedtime routines often end with a book in hand, blanket wrapped around and favorite stuffed animal on a lap. Collect these items and say a prayer that God would manifest His presence in the life of the receiving child, that they would know his love that covers them, that He is their comforter, and that he loves to spend time with them.

Do

- **Make “Mercy Bags”**

Gather items as a family or in a small gathering with others in your church or neighborhood. Ideas to include in your large ziploc: water bottle, snacks, note of encouragement, perhaps a small gift card to fast food, toothbrush, lip balm, hand sanitizer, or other hygiene items. Have them in the car ready to pass out when you see someone in need at a corner.

- **Tidy and Donate**

Clean a room or closet and donate unwanted items to Bibles for Missions.

- **Share with a Friend**

What’s something that is hard to share with a sibling or friend? What would it be like to show generosity or extend an opportunity?

- **Take Responsibility**

Go on a neighborhood walk with a trash bag to pick-up litter.

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- JSBB, *Filled Full*, pg 244-249

Wonder

- I wonder what made the little boy willing to give his lunch away.
- Do you think that would have been hard?
- I wonder how he felt when he gave what he had and then God did so much with it! Do you think God could have done such an amazing miracle *without* what he gave?
- Is there anything you could give to someone else? Something of your own, or a homemade gift?

Do

- Make a plan to create and give something away to a friend, neighbor or relative.



Week 6 - Focused on the Salvation of Others

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Acts 2:37-41

- Read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. How is this parable similar to the story told in Acts 2:37-41 Who is the sower in the Acts passage? What is the seed? What are the thorny and the rocky soils? What is the good soil? What is the harvest?

Thank the Lord that he has rescued us from our sins, given us abundant life now and eternal life with him!

Day 2 - Read Acts 4:1-12

- As Peter and John are speaking to the people about Jesus, what are the two different reactions people have to their words (vs 1-4)? Why do they continue to speak about Jesus even when people are angry and annoyed with them?
- As Peter speaks to the doubters about the man who was healed, he claims that the healing was done in the name of Jesus. Then he goes on to make a startling statement about the name of Jesus in verse 12. Can you try to explain in your own words what that verse says?
- Peter talks about salvation and being saved. I wonder what we are being saved from.

Pray for people who don't know the love of Jesus and what he offers them to be brought into his Family.

Day 3 - Read Acts 8:26-39

- This story is about a man traveling between Jerusalem and his home, in Ethiopia. Can you locate those places on a map?
- What does God do in this story (vs 26, 29, 39)? What does Philip do? Why was it important to God that Philip go out and meet with the Ethiopian man? What do you think the Ethiopian man did after Philip was gone?

Pray for the people, ministers, and missionaries you know who are boldly proclaiming the Gospel. Pray for *all* God's people to be ready to "give an account for the hope that is within you" (1 Pet 3:15).

Almighty God our Savior, you desire that none should perish, and you have taught us through your Son that there is great joy in heaven over every sinner who repents: Grant that our hearts may ache for a lost and broken world. May your Holy Spirit work through our words, deeds, and prayers, that the lost may be found and the dead made alive, and that all your redeemed may rejoice around your throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

Remember

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Bless

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

Give

Our gathering is near its end. What is left on our list? A bottle, a small toy, a few extra bits. Check the chart at the end of this booklet, high five, well done!

Do

- **Boat Rudders**

Is there a child in your family who likes research? Find some books on boats or look up images online. Take the time to notice the rudder. It is so small, but it is what gives the ship direction. Without Christ, many are lost in the sea of life without direction, purpose, hope, and calling. We get to share the hope we know with others!

- **Bake**

Cooking together can be a family joy. Make something to share or buy some popsicles and talk about how sweet the love of God is - it must be shared!

- **Pie!**

Make a pie chart of your family's schedule, or better... get/make a real pie and cut the slices of your week. Talk about how we can share the gospel in our different activities and how sharing God's love is always on our minds.

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- JSBB, *Paul's Mission*, start at pg. 337-340

Wonder

- How did God get Saul's attention?
- God chose Saul/Paul to tell the whole world about Jesus. How *did* Paul tell the world?
- How can we tell and show others God's great love?

Do

- God's love is so great, it is worth sharing with others. To illustrate this make something worth sharing (cake, cookies, buy some popsicles) and share with a friend, family or neighbor.



Week 7 - We Are the Church

Gather

Leader: Is the Father with us?

People: **He is.**

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

He is.

This is our God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are his people:

We are redeemed.



Hear, Wonder, and Pray

Day 1 - Read Acts 2:42-47

- In the Acts 2 passage, what are the believers *doing* and how are they *feeling*? In our homes, how can we devote ourselves to “the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”? (You might want to discuss each in turn.)
- In this passage we see a picture of the relationship between God and His church. How is God responding to the believers (v 43, 47)?

Thank God for your own church. Pray for your leaders. Pray for your church to grow.

Day 2 - Read Acts 10:34-48

- There is a great mystery that God only hints at in his earliest dealings with His people in the Old Testament. Jesus also gives us glimpses of this mystery during his ministry. Then in Acts 10:44-48 the curtain is drawn, and the mystery is revealed. What is the great mystery? (Need a hint? Paul speaks of this mystery in Ephesians 3.) What does this mean for the world? Who is invited into Christ's church?

Pray for the churches everywhere to work for justice for all people: *Almighty God, you created us in your own image: Grant us grace to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and help us to use our freedom rightly in the establishment of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and The Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.* (BCP)

Day 3 - Read Revelation 7:9-11

- Take a moment to imagine that you can look out and see all of the people of God, standing together. Who do you see? What do they look like? Imagine being in that company.

Pray for the diversity of races and cultures in the church: *O God, who created all peoples in your image: We thank you for the diversity of races and cultures in this world. Show us your presence in those who differ from us, and enrich our lives with their fellowship, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (BCP)

Remember

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Bless

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

Give

With your backpack filled and labeled, let's gather them for delivery and pray for the impact of these gifts and the work of Together For Good. If you are able, please join us:

Saturday, August 29th at 10:00 a.m.

Together for Good offices

845 Summit Ave

St Paul, MN 55105

Do

- **Three-legged race**

This old fashioned activity really requires teamwork. Give it a try. Talk about challenges and joys. Do it again and mix up the partners. Have a conversation about working together.

- **Braiding and Weaving**

Using yarn, paper strips, ribbon, embroidery floss, practice braiding, or find a tutorial on friendship bracelets online. It takes effort to collect materials - bringing people together can be hard work. It takes skill to weave and twist items - we get better being together with practice. Different colors make it beautiful - have a conversation about the gathering of the nations.

Engaging Little Ones

Hear

- Acts 2:42-47

Wonder

- Can you tell some of the things that the Church was doing in these verses?
- How does *your* family or church do some of these same things?
- Imagine that you can see God's people all over the world. What do they look like?

Do

- Learn the song, *I am the Church, You are the Church*
 - "I am the church. You are the Church. We are the church together. All who follow Jesus, all around the world - yes! - we're the Church together."



The Church Gives

A service project in partnership with:



The Lord calls his church to the work of tending to the widow and the orphan. A local organization, Together For Good (TFG), states their mission as, “creating pathways for the local church to come alongside vulnerable children and families in Christ-centered ministry.” They set their vision from Isaiah 1:17 *Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.* TFG has invited us to participate in an act of generosity by providing “Backpacks for Good” that will be gifted to children in foster care who often arrive empty handed.

- 1. Pick an age group, choose boy or girl, and label your backpack accordingly.**
- 2. Shop for items - they should be new.**
- 3. Backpacks will be collected and prayed for on August 29th at 10am at the TFG offices.**

Infant 6-9 month	Toddler 3T	Elementary 6-7yrs	Youth 14-16yrs
Backpack/duffle bag	Backpack/duffle bag	Backpack/duffle bag	Backpack/duffle bag
Diapers size 3	Diapers size 6 or 3T pull ups	Package of underwear 6-7T	Package of underwear 14-16
Wipes package	Wipes package	Soap	Deodorant
Formula	Socks size 3T	Package of socks size 9-2	Package of socks size 3-9 or 14-16
6-12mo socks	3-4T Pajamas	6-7T Pajamas	14-16 Pajamas
6-9mo Pajamas	Toothpaste and toothbrush toddler size	Toothpaste and toothbrush kids	Toothpaste and toothbrush adult
Bottle with nipple size 2 and up	Sippy Cup	Small toy such as: fidget, cards, jump rope	Soap and Body Wash in Ziplock
Blanket	Blanket	Blanket	Blanket/small throw
Board Book(s)	Board Book(s)	Book(s) -Early reader	Book - age and gender appropriate
Kid Shampoo in Ziplock	Kid Shampoo in Ziplock	Kid Shampoo in Ziplock	Shampoo and Conditioner in Ziplock
Stuffed Animal	Stuffed Animal	Stuffed Animal	Femine Hygiene Products

Parents and Youth - Going Deeper

Take some time during the week to watch short videos on each week's topic.

<i>week</i>	<i>theme</i>	<i>find these resources online!</i>
1	What is the Church?	Bible Project - Temple
2	Fully Scriptural	Bible Project - What is the Bible? Bible Project - How to Read the Bible Bible Project - Literary Styles
3	Fully Sacramental	3 Minute Theology: What is a Sacrament? Word and Table: Infant Baptism
4	Full of the Holy Spirit	Bible Project - Holy Spirit
5	Free to Sacrifice	Bible Project - Sacrifice and Atonement Bible Project - Generosity What the Bible Says About Generosity
6	Focused on the Salvation of Others	Bible Project - Bad Word Series Bible Project - Witness Bible Project - Gospel
7	We Are the Church	Bible Project - Gospel of the Kingdom Bible Project - Justice Bible Project - Peace

Parents and Youth - Cultural Conversations

Have a conversation about messages that are pervasive in the culture, but which contradict a view of the world under the reign of a loving, Creator God. What are the contrasts? Can you find scriptures to support what you think?

	<i>Counter-cultural Conversation</i>	<i>Relevant Scriptures</i>
1	"You were made with a purpose." OR You can be anything you want to be."	
2	"The Bible is the Word of God." OR "The bible is old and irrelevant. There are many places for truth."	
3	"We are mind/body/soul creatures living in a world where physical things matter." OR "Be you. Live your truth based on how you feel."	
4	"The Holy Spirit's power animates our lives." OR "Your only limit is you."	
5	"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." (Jim Elliot) OR "Live in service of your dreams."	
6	"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." OR "You do you."	
7	"We belong to Christ and to one another in a Family." OR "I don't need the church to live a spiritual life."	

Parents and Youth

Pray for the Persecuted Church

The Church is one Family. Persecuted Christians often do not ask *first* for their circumstances to change, but to be faithful witnesses in the midst of their trouble. The Scriptures tell us not to forget them. Please look up Hebrews 13:3.

Here are the seven countries where the Church faces the most persecution. A list is compiled every year by Open Doors, whose researchers assign a point value to incidents of persecution — forced conversions, attacks on churches, arrests, etc. Visit Open Doors to find out more. Pray each week for our brothers and sisters in one of these countries, enduring hardship for their faith in Jesus.

<i>week</i>	<i>americanmagazine.org search: top-10-worst-countries-christian-persecution</i>
1	North Korea (94 points) — Christians and Christian missionaries are routinely imprisoned in labor camps.
2	Afghanistan (93 points) — The government of this Muslim country does not recognize any of its citizens as Christian.
3	Somalia (91 points) — The Catholic bishop of Mogadishu has described it as “not possible” to be a Christian in Somalia.
4	Sudan (87 points) — The Muslim government has slated Christian churches for demolition.
5	Pakistan (86 points) — Christians and other non-Muslims sit on death row, facing charges of blasphemy.
6	Eritrea (86 points) — Only four religions are officially recognized (Sunni Islam and the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran churches). Those belonging to other faiths are persecuted and those of recognized faiths are routinely harassed by the government.
7	Libya (86 points) — The government is reportedly training militants to attack Coptic Christians.

The '5 S' Values of the Diocese of the Upper Midwest

Fully Scriptural

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..." (Acts 2:42). We recognize the Bible as God's Word to us. We devote ourselves to the teaching of the Scriptures as the core foundation and authority for all belief and behavior. The Scriptures fuel our prophetic voice to renew our culture and transform our lives. We make God's Word accessible to all, regardless of age or level of education. We develop a personal knowledge of and interaction with the Bible. We are committed to interpreting the Bible within the gift of the Apostolic tradition.

Fully Sacramental

"...to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). We experience the living presence of our Lord in the Church. We encounter Jesus in Baptism, Holy Communion, and prayer. We position ourselves under the authority of the Church, encountering the personhood of the Church, who is a "she," not an "it." We see the spiritual world and material world as intertwined: God reveals Himself through creation. Matter matters. Baptism and Holy Communion minister the real presence of Jesus to the Christian. This sacramental fullness appears in our liturgy, in our art and music, and in our lives.

Full of the Spirit

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). We serve under the authority of the Spirit, submitted to His leading, manifesting the living Kingdom of God, and living a supernatural life. The Holy Spirit lives in every follower of Jesus to teach us the truth, comfort us, and give us gifts for the building up of each other in the Church. The fullness of the Spirit appears through many gifts, including healing prayer, prophetic ministry, creativity, and encouragement.

Free to Sacrifice

"...selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone in need" (Acts 2:45). We want to be so Kingdom responsive that we may find ourselves being worldly irresponsible. This freedom to sacrifice appears through our fasting, service, welcoming of the lost and the least, generosity with money, forgiveness, reconciliation, and following Jesus even when the cost is high. Being mother or father, husband or wife, celibate—all require consistent sacrifice. We honor spiritual fathers and mothers. We ask all to live a sacrificial life, recognizing that the cost is different for each individual. We honor chastity, waiting, self-sacrifice, and counter-cultural generosity.

Focused on the Salvation of Others

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). As we have been saved, we seek to invite everyone into a transforming relationship with Jesus and His Church, proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. We deeply desire that the Lord will be drawing new believers to Himself through Her people. We welcome the newcomer; we multiply groups and plant churches; we love, bless, and pray for unbelieving family members, neighbors, co-workers, and friends—all of this in order to invite everyone into personal faith in Jesus and into the life of the Church.

Notes

Notes

Church of the Cross

Hopkins, MN

www.ofthecross.org

Andrea Lang

Sarah Hoffner

Church of the Redeemer

St. Paul, MN

www.oftheredeemer.org

Rev. Liz Stewart

Sonia Keillor

Restoration Anglican

Minneapolis, MN

www.restorationmpls.org

Molly Stawarz

Emily Collings