

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP

APRIL 7, 2024

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, You call us together in your presence and charge us with the task of bearing your love into a suffering world. Strengthen us for this work, that all might share equally in your reign of justice and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READINGS: MARK 6: 7-13

⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: ACTS 1: 1-14

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER JOHN YARBERRY

Have you thought much about the forty days after the resurrection? Acts 1:3, "After His suffering He presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God." In the beginning of these 40 days the disciples had locked themselves in a room out of fear, a continuation of the fear they displayed when they scattered upon Jesus's arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, and Peter's denial that he ever knew Jesus. I wonder if Peter's denial came more from a sense of embarrassment or fear. His King was being shamed and physically abused. Jesus appeared weak, and powerless.

These forty days forever changed the world. Jesus appeared many times to the disciples, to crowds, and performed many miracles. The last verse of the last gospel's last book John 21:25 tells us, "But there were also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were to be written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

Forty days Jesus showed the world that He lived again. The Sanhedrin had called Jesus a blasphemer, and others claimed His miracles were of the devil... but His 40 days in Jerusalem and surrounding areas, being seen by multitudes, was scarcely disputed. The contemporary Jewish historian Josephus referred to it, as did other writers. Two generations later, the writer Eusebius interviewed many people who had known people who saw Jesus during these days, told of miracles, even cited sermons and letters of the risen Jesus.

Taken from an essay by Rick Marshall, 12-10-22

Yet as busy as He must have been, I have a picture in my mind of Jesus alone, also, maybe when darkness fell, down lonely paths, maybe through storms and cold silences, walking the dark hills, not responding to the curious crowds, but seeking out the troubled and the hurting individuals.

This is a plausible picture, because Jesus still does this today.

He is closer than a shadow, no matter what you think, or what you might prefer to believe. You might have experienced, say, the nightmare of something like a crib death; remember that Jesus offers peace that passes understanding. You might have health scares, insecure about your very life and what your place on earth is; remember that Jesus walks the dark hills to guide you and me. You might have had problems with drugs, and the law, and custody, maybe losing your home, with nowhere to turn; remember that Jesus offers you refuge. You might be a girl who has tried to shake addictions time after time after time; remember that the feeling around your shoulders is Jesus hugging you tightly. You might have lost a preemie, having prayed, believing, for a healthy child; remember that, through it all, trust is more important than understanding.

"God walks the dark hills, To guide our footsteps. He walks everywhere, By night and by day. He walks in the silence, On down the highway; God walks the dark hills, To show us the way."

The risen Savior, Lord of Creation, walks the dark hills, to seek out... me? and you? where we are? in our hurts, in our messes? That's the miracle of the Miracle Man, to me, still – that He loves you and me.

AMEN

HYMN OF THE DAY | RISEN

<https://youtu.be/2V2BAPVzCUs?si=8ZWMMu9PQJNO4S6E>

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Trusting in the promise of the resurrection, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

O God, you send us out into the world to bear witness to your transformative love and justice. Give us the words to say and the opportunities to say them, that all might experience the fullness of your presence. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Creation witnesses to your power and glory, O God. Make us partners with the natural world, ever aware of our interdependence and committed to our mutual flourishing. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Soften the hearts and minds of those who govern through fear and oppression and open them to partnerships with other nations for the benefit of all. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Be with those in our families, our lives, and community who suffer illness, trauma, grief, and all forms of pain and loss, especially Dorothy, Lori, Ed, Terry, Dave, and all those we lift through our Prayer Chain Help us to bear your healing love to them. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Inspire, strengthen, and support missionaries in their work to build communities and contribute to the health and wellbeing of all they serve throughout the world. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen us to care for those in need through the outreach ministries of our community. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided, especially those seeking help through the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, Rise Against Suicide, and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Provide for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower the staff and parents of children living on the Autism Spectrum. Nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of these children and adults, that they might reach their highest quality of life. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Encourage and empower those impacted by war, tyranny, and gun violence. Still the sound of weapons. Teach us to seek security that comes from respect rather than violence. Strengthen and comfort the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Gaza, Sudan and all those throughout the world whose lives are impacted by violence. Remind us of what You require of us: That we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, our help in every trouble, we pray for peace in the Holy Land. Protect those traumatized by ongoing violence, especially those with no access to safe spaces. Release people held hostage; provide food, water, fuel, and supplies for all in need; sustain medical personnel as they work in horrendous conditions; tend to those who are wounded; comfort all who grieve. Direct your people and its leaders into the way of peace. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember with gratitude the saints who carried your word into the world from the beginning of the church through to the present day. May we follow in their example to be open about our own faith, that others might follow after us. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

We place in your arms all for whom we pray, out loud or in our hearts, confident in your mercy and grace, through Jesus Christ, our savior. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

You had not imagined that something so empty could fill you to overflowing.
You have seen and so you are already blessed.
You have been seen and so you are the blessing.
There is no other word you need. Simply go and tell.
Go with confidence, trusting in God's unfailing love and faithfulness.
You are the work of God's own creation and his love endures forever.
Go in joy to love and serve the Lord! **Amen!**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.
Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.
Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS — APRIL 7 – APRIL 14, 2024

Sunday, April 7th — You Shall Be My Witnesses

9:30 a.m. — Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion
Coffee and Conversation immediately following Worship

Wednesday, April 10th

11:00 a.m. — Amazing Grace Book Study by Zoom

Friday, April 12th

7:00 a.m. — Men's Zoom Breakfast Bible Study
5:00 p.m. — Friday Perspectives

Sunday, April 14th — Peter Heals in Jerusalem

9:30 a.m. — Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion
Coffee and Conversation immediately following Worship

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

SHERILYN S. 4/6
KAY W. 4/9
DOROTHY F.
4/13
CINDIE S. 4/27

DAILY NARRATIVE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 7, 2024

Monday, April 8, 2024 – Acts 1:15-26 Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-115-26-matthias-chosen-to-replace-judas2024>

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 – Acts 2:1-13 The Coming of the Holy Spirit

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-21-13-the-coming-of-the-holy-spirit2024>

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 – Acts 2:14-36 Peter Addresses the Crowd

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-214-36-peter-addresses-the-crowd2024>

Thursday, April 11, 2024 – Acts 2:37-42 The First Converts

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-237-42-the-first-converts2024>

Friday, April 12, 2024 – Acts 2:43-47 Life Among the Believers

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-243-47-life-among-the-believers2024>

Saturday, April 13, 2024 – Acts 3:11-26 Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-311-26-peter-speaks-in-solomons-portico2024>

Sunday, April 14, 2024 – Acts 3:1-10 Peter Heals in Jerusalem

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-31-10-peter-heals-in-jerusalem2024>