



Season of Easter 2021

“In the season that follows Easter Sunday we see that the resurrection of Jesus is a missional event in which the followers of Jesus are given transformative work to do in the world.” Walter Brueggemann

Week of April 12

Learn

Each week we will have a lecture by a different theologian to teach, inspire, and challenge us on our discipleship journey.

- This week we are offering two lectures by Rev. Dr. Sathi Clarke, Professor of Theology, Culture, and Mission at Wesley Theological Seminary. In these lectures he looks at how to live out Matthew 25 locally and globally and addresses the question do Jews, Christians, and Muslims share the same God
- Watch here: [Living Matthew 25 Locally and Globally](#)
- Watch here: [Do Jews, Christians, and Muslims Share the Same God?](#)

Pray

Each week we will reflect on a different space in our church, to pray about the ministry that happens there and discern God's dreams for the ministry that God desires to happen. This Eastertide season will invite us into a prayer journey through the church.

This week's stop invites us to our church's fellowship hall. There is a lot that happens in this space. Here people gather for community and building friendships. People get together here to share food, hugs, laughter and life stories. People gather here to share meals with each other and to pack meals for the hungry through Phoenix Rising, Rise Against Hunger and for the hypothermia shelter. The weekday school uses this space weekly for kids to have play time, and for gatherings, concerts and graduations for the students and parents. This space hosts game night and the yard sale, and is also used for community events such as health screenings with Lifeline. For all that is named, there are many more events, stories and memories unnamed.

A church fellowship hall is a space where many gatherings and events happen. If we are listening, the space is always teaching us about the missional nature of who we are as God's people. It is a space for welcome and hospitality, to come and find friendship and community; this space welcomes the community to gather in our space to do important and meaningful things; and this space gathers us to send us out in missional service to the world.

The possibilities for the ministry that can happen in this space are endless, so may we use imagination, creativity and passion to let this be a space that is always full of laughter, love, and friendship, a space that is welcoming to all persons, a space that serves as a mission center for the community, and a space that is equipping and sending us out to do God's work in the world.

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray that this can be a space that continues to foster a missional heart for our church, where we can continue to pack food for our neighbors who are hungry, and continue to train and equip us in missional service
- Pray for this to be a space that cultivates community and true friendship and fellowship, that we form deep and authentic relationships with one another

- Pray for this to be a place where many groups in the community can gather, that our church can offer and use our space to be a mission and gathering center for the community
- Pray for our church to have missional imagination for what this space can be for all people, to ask for God’s wisdom for how to faithfully use this space
- Pray that this space can always be one that provides time for meals together, for fellowship, for education, for celebration, for mourning, for all of life’s moments, big and small, for all people

Action

Each week we will have a focus on living out our faith in the world. We will connect with important days that are being highlighted each week that invite us to live as God’s missional people bearing witness to a world of love, justice and peace.

Sunday April 18 is our next UMC Special Giving Sunday as we celebrate and honor Native American Ministries Sunday

Ways to Learn More

- What is Native American Ministries Sunday? [Learn more about this special Sunday, and learn what various types of ministries past donations on this Sunday have funded.](#)
- [Learn about Native American Ministries in the UMC](#)
- Read many of our [United Methodist values](#) from the Book of Resolutions, especially in regards to condemning the Doctrine of Discovery and organizing acts of repentance. You can also find our denominations [Faith and Facts Card on Indigenous Peoples](#) here

[You can give online to support this offering at this link \(you can also give at this link to support other UMC Special Sundays\)](#)

Week of April 5

Learn

Each week we will have a lecture by a different theologian to teach, inspire, and challenge us on our discipleship journey.

- This week's lecture is by Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath titled: Prophets, Reformers, Movements and the Church. This lecture will challenge us and invite us to dream of the incredible possibilities that exist for the ministry we are being called to as Christ's Church.
- Watch here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frOm1uRbhkE>

Pray

Each week we will reflect on a different space in our church, to pray about the ministry that happens there and discern God's dreams for the ministry that God desires to happen. This Eastertide season will invite us into a prayer journey through the church.

Our first stop is the entryway into the church building through the glass door. For many this is the place we enter the church as we come to worship on Sundays.

The sights we see point us to a vision of ministry that follows God's heart. We see the food donation boxes that collect food for our hungry neighbors. Sometimes the food goes to Rising Hope and United Community, and other times it is given to people who come to the church who are hungry. We see the elevator, reminding us of our continual work to create a space that welcomes people of all ability levels. We see our bulletin board that shares of ministry opportunities in the church and in the community. We see resources shared for prayer, mission and community life, and ways people can connect to community partners. We see the doors to the kitchen, to the sanctuary, and to the fellowship all, each of which speaks to a different part of our communal life together.

Next time you enter the doors into this space, pause for a moment to think of the people who walk in and out of these doors, and how this space can lead us on a path of transformation

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray for those in our community who experience hunger. Pray for how our church can always provide food to those who are hungry, water to those who are thirsty, and work for a world to create new systems and structures that eliminate hunger and poverty
- Pray that our church can always be intentional in creating space in the building and in worship for people of all abilities.
- Pray for the bulletin board space, that it may always be filled with announcements for ministry, mission, and community, that we may always be an active and missional church. Pray for our community partners and ways we can grow in our partnerships and working together.
- Pray for all who enter the doors into the space, that they may encounter grace, love, community, friendship, and the invitation to God's abundant life, and to the call of Jesus Christ to the disciple's path.

Action

Each week we will have a focus on living out our faith in the world. We will connect with important days that are being highlighted each week that invite us to live as God's missional people bearing witness to a world of love, justice and peace.

April 7 is World Health Day. This week we remember that millions in our country do not have affordable and quality health care, and that as the Church we care deeply about the health and well being of all.

Ways to Learn More

- Learn about [World Health Day](#) and how we can move into a world that is fairer and healthier for all

- One of the four areas of focus for our denomination is **Seeking Health and Wholeness for All**
 - Knowing that poverty and health are intertwined, The United Methodist Church has been a key player in fighting diseases such as malaria and AIDS and promoting initiatives that improve well-being. The church had a \$75 million goal to provide education, infrastructure, communication and prevention measures to defeat malaria. In fact, the death rate from malaria in Africa has been cut in half, thanks to international efforts such as the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign. A new "[Abundant Health](#)" campaign for the denomination would [reach one million children](#) with lifesaving interventions by 2020.

Connect to Ministry Partners

- Learn how the Virginia Interfaith Center is working to educate communities about the [benefits of Medicaid expansion](#), and check out their bulletin insert for [Health Care Hope](#) to educate and advocate so more people can have access to the health care they need
- Partner with [RIP Medical Debt and join one of their campaigns](#) to erase the burden of medical debt. Each dollar you donate forgives one hundred dollars of medical debt an individual or family may have. Notice how many campaigns are started by communities of faith!
- Connect to our denominations ministries around health care: [Imagine No Malaria](#), [Global Aids Fund](#), [Abundant Health](#), [Global Ministries projects on global health](#), and [UM Advocacy on health care issues](#).