



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 May 9

Learn

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

- This week our lecture is from Richard Rohr, as he unpacks some of the themes of his book *The Universal Christ*. This lecture will lead you to a hunger for more.
- Watch here: [The Universal Christ](#)

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 we journey to the sanctuary. This is the space we gather for communal worship. We worship God through song, we hear teaching through the proclamation of our sacred scriptures, we join together in prayer and partaking in the holy sacraments of communion and baptism. We provide an offering to God as a reminder that God has given us all things and we are to offer back to God our whole lives. We gather for healing words of comfort and hope, and to hear challenging, prophetic words where God calls us to change and work for change in the world. We connect with each other through fellowship and food in this space, to deepen our relationships with one another. We see the library, alternative worship table, and other tables filled with resources for all ages to deepen our discipleship and participate in missional witness. There is much that happens in this space that serves as our primary place that we gather together as this community of faith.

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray that the baptismal font will always serve as a reminder that we are all claimed as God's beloved children and that we have committed to offer our lives to Christ, the Church and the ministry of Christ in the world
- Pray that the communion table will always serve as our reminder to be an inclusive church that truly makes space for all, so that every single person may experience the love and grace of God
- Pray that our worship would be filled with the life and breath of the Spirit, that through song, prayer, sacrament, community and scripture our lives may be formed into the likeness of Jesus
- Pray that all that happens in this space may offer hope and life, that people can profoundly encounter God's presence, and the Spirit will be poured out upon this Church and we can be who our community needs us to be

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.

The week we reflect on places around our world that are experiencing humanitarian crisis, learn how groups are responding and ways we support their work

Learn

- [Displaced Families in Yemen Receive UMCOR Packages](#)
- [How Covid-19 has caused a significant increase in children who are hungry in the US](#)
- [What is happening in the Tigray region of Ethiopia? Understanding the crisis](#)

What You Can Do

- [Donate to India Covid-19 Crisis Children's Relief Fund](#)
- [Help provide needed supplies to children in Yemen](#)
- [Learn how you can join in advocacy to create a better world for children](#)

Week of May 2

Learn

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

- This week our lecture is from Dr. Carla Works. She is a New Testament professor whose work focuses on Paul and his letters. This lecture shares how counter culture, radical, and dangerous it was for the early church to proclaim Christ as Lord in the midst of the Roman empire.
- Watch here: [Gospel and Empire: In God We Trust](#)

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 we journey downstairs in the education wing to pray over the weekday school. During the school year these rooms are filled with children and loving teachers each day to provide a safe and nurturing environment to educate young children in our community. We see classrooms, the music room, and offices, we see walls filled with children's art and closets full of activities for fun and play based learning, we see a space filled with life and joy.

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray for all of our teachers and weekday school staff. Pray they may have all the support and resources they need to do their best in leading all the children who come
- Pray for all the children who are students in our weekday school, pray this will always be a safe, welcoming and nurturing space as they begin their educational journey
- Pray for the parents, that they may be supported and cared for, and have the energy and wisdom needed for the vital role of being parents
- Pray for how our church can be a partner to journey with the families who are a part of our weekday school

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.

Recently, on April 23, we celebrated World Book Day, a day to engage people in reading and to have fun doing so. Reading is a way to engage us in stories that take

us to new worlds, that shape our souls, that deepen our faith, that inspire us and connect to the deepest parts of who we are, that provide an escape, and connect us to others. To celebrate World Book Day we have three ways you can share the love of reading:

Actions You Can Take

- [Reach Out and Read](#) - This organization incorporates reading into pediatric practices and care, and works to help families make reading a daily routine. Your support helps provide books for pediatric care
- [Better World Books](#) - this is a great place to buy used books at very affordable prices, and each purchase helps support literacy programs and libraries, and for each book you buy you will also donate a book. If you create an account you can keep track of how many books you have donated. Buy yourself or a loved one a new book and donate one in the process!
- Church library - over the past couple of years we have been working to update our church library to provide an array of meaningful books to deepen our faith, challenge our thinking, and move us on our lifelong path of discipleship. I invite you to stop by the church and explore the library, take a book, or several, home to read. Our library is in the back of the sanctuary. You can make a financial donation so we can purchase more books to continue building our library. Most of the books we buy for the library are from Better World Books or ThriftBooks.com so we can buy as many as possible for the donations we receive. This library is for our church community to help us all deepen our faith

Week of April 25

Learn

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

- This week our lecture is from Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann. He is a renowned Old Testament scholar and in this lecture explores the Bible's teaching about money.
- Watch here: [What's In Your Wallet?](#)

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 invites us to walk past the church offices and choir room into the education wing. This space is used by multiple groups in the church and in the community. The conference room is where our church council meets to discern and make decisions about the direction the church is going. In this room we also have small groups that meet for discipleship and spiritual formation. The other rooms in this area provide space where our children's Sunday School meet, and host our community neighbors through AA groups and District CPR meet

When we walk past the rooms, whether they are full and active, or empty and waiting, may we be filled with imagination and dreams for the ministry that is waiting to happen in this space

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray for our church leadership council, groups and ministry teams that meet in the conference room, that God would surround us with wisdom and grace to move forward into God's future for our church.
- Pray for the small groups that meet in the conference room, that our church have would have strong small groups that grow community, deepen our faith, and ignite our commitment to discipleship
- Pray for our church's young people and the children that meet for Sunday School, that it will always be a place where young people can experience the welcome and love of God in a nurturing space

- Pray for the community groups that use this space, for AA groups, CPR classes and more, that it may be a safe space for healing, training, and community
- Pray that this space may be used to as a home for more groups in the community, that we can grow our community partnerships to do good in Alexandria

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 25, was World Malaria Day. The UMC has long committed to the work of ending malaria in our world. To learn more about our denominations work and how you can be involved, see below:

Ways to Learn More

- Learn about what the [Imagine No Malaria Campaign](#) is and the progress the UMC has been a part of as a partner in global health
- Explore this [infographic](#) that shares the highlights of the ministry celebrations of this work
- Read: [Imagine No Malaria: Promoting Abundant Health For All](#)

Actions You Can Take

- [Support UM Global Ministries and give](#) to our Imagine No Malaria projects
- [Participate in advocacy](#) by joining with Nothing But Nets to connect with congressional leaders to make the ending of Malaria a priority

- Join [The Safety Net](#) and for \$10 a month you can two bed nets to families in need to help protect from mosquito bits

Week of April 18

Learn

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

- This week our lecture is from Lisa Sharon Harper as she explores *The Very Good Gospel, How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right*. This lecture takes a deep dive into the Genesis creation stories to reflect on our relationships with God, with one another and with all creation. It is a powerful and passionate dive into the biblical text and how it matters for today's world
- Watch here: [The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right](#)

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 invites us into one of our first stops upstairs. This week we prayerfully reflect over the staff offices and choir room. This is a space where the staff spend a

lot of their time praying, planning, and preparing for works of worship, spiritual formation, community building, active missional witness in the world, counseling, visioning, handling all the administration and communication needs, developing resources for ministry, continuing to grow and learn in theology and the practice of ministry and much more. This is where staff work to dream for our church's future and seek God's wisdom and grace to follow God's leading. This is the space where people from the community come in when they are in need of assistance, where church members stop by for conversation, where the choir gathers for practice and preparation, and where staff work to help people grow in our love for God and love for neighbor. There is a lot that happens in these spaces, many dreams and hopes are represented here and we work together to move forward in God's calling

Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray for the staff of Mount Vernon UMC, that we would all be led by the Spirit, that our work, planning, visioning, and dreaming would be God-breathed and through the Spirit will help the church be a faithful reflection of God's love in the world
- Pray that God will give our church staff wisdom to discern how to faithfully be the church God is calling us to be
- Pray that the many conversations that happen in this space with all who are present may be life-giving, inspiring, and responsive to the needs of our community
- Pray for the fellowship and worship planning that happens in the choir room, that it may be a place of joyful community and passionate worship to lead the church into God's presence.

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.

This Friday, April 22, is Earth Day. A day to remind us of our lifelong responsibility to care for the earth that God has created.

Ways to Learn More

- UMC Resources to learn more about our response to climate change
 - The UMC is [committed to ministries](#) that address both the impacts and root causes of climate change
 - [Be Just. Be Green.](#) - UM Women's Resources on Climate Change
 - Resource UMC - [Climate justice is everyone's issue](#)
- Read [50 Ways to Help Save the Earth: How You and Your Church Can Make a Difference](#)
- Watch this moving poem that was given at the UN by a mother to her daughter promising that we will not climate change take away any more than it already has: [Dear Matafele Peinem](#)
- Watch this stirring piece from poet Amanda Gorman titled: [Earthrise](#)

Actions You Can Take

- Connect with Creation Justice Ministries in their [Monthly Action Center](#)
- Support [Earth Day Canopy Project](#). For each dollar you give you can plant one tree to help reforest the earth
- Through education, advocacy, and symbolically adopting animals you can help [protect, preserve, and restore habitats for our wildlife](#).
- Be trained as a [UMC Global Ministries Earthkeeper!](#)
- Invest in [Creation Care and Renewable Energy](#) with UM Global Missions

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](#).