



April Opportunities for Lifelong Discipleship

The purpose of this resource is to help you be formed in the practices of disciples through four core areas and practices: 1) spiritual disciplines; 2) community; 3) generosity; 4) public witness. This resource will point to a variety of resources and opportunities in and outside of our church to help you grow and live out our faith in the world.

Four Core Practices of Discipleship

Experience God through Spiritual Practices

- Pray
 - [Explore daily Methodist prayer](#) through *Methodist Prayer*, which is based on *Daily Prayer*, the Church of England's form of service for morning and evening prayer. Early Christians continued the Jewish practice of reciting prayers at certain hours of the day and night, and this practice became what is known in various Christian traditions as the Liturgy of the Hours, Divine Office, Daily Office or canonical hours.
 - Pray along with [morning](#), [midday](#), [evening](#), and [night](#) prayers
- Easter Season Series
 - During the season of Lent we offered special opportunities for prayer, learning, and mission. We will continue this with a new series of discipleship opportunities for the season of Eastertide which runs from April 4 - May 16. During this Eastertide season we will have weekly opportunities to: Learn. Pray. Act. Each week will offer a lecture you can view by a biblical scholar and theologian, presenting a diversity of voices on a variety of topics. Each week will take us on a prayer journey through our church, stopping to reflect on a different space in our church building each week to reflect on the ministries that happen there, and the dreams of what God desires to create and do in those spaces for the future, and we

will join together in praying for the wisdom and breath of God. Lastly, each week will offer an invitation to join in God's missional work in the world through connecting to important days happening in the life of our church and world. Each week's opportunities will be emailed out at the beginning and the week and placed on our website under the Grow tab. Join us for this season of intentional discipleship and formation! <https://www.mountvernonumc.org/grow>

- Learn

- Books of the month highlight:

- [*Native: Identity, Belonging and Rediscovering God* - Kaitlin B. Curtice.](#)
Native is about identity, soul-searching, and the never-ending journey of finding ourselves and finding God. As both a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation and a Christian, Kaitlin Curtice offers a unique perspective on these topics. In this book, she shows how reconnecting with her Potawatomi identity both informs and challenges her faith. As Curtice shares what it means to experience her faith through the lens of her Indigenous heritage, she reveals that a vibrant spirituality has its origins in identity, belonging, and a sense of place.
- [*Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week* - Amy-Jill Levine](#)
Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward. Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade. He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume. We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges. In this book Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story, and shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience

Quote from John Wesley

"We should take care that we have some time every day for reading, meditation, and prayer....Our reading should likewise be closed in prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts. It might also be of use, if, while we read, we were frequently to pause and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our hearts and lives."

Connect with Others in Community

- In Person Communion and Prayer - Join us on Easter Sunday (April 4) and April 18 for in person outdoor communion. This will be a chance to see one another, catch up and share life
- Weekly coffee and conversation will be offered on Wednesday mornings from 8:00-10:00am beginning April 7. You are welcome to come for 10 minutes or stay for an hour. This is space given to see each other and have conversation safely in person

Give Generously

- Special UMC Giving Sunday
 - April 18 is our third UMC Special Giving Sunday of the year as we support Native American Ministries Sunday. Explore the link below to learn more about this Sunday. Last year's offering went to support a variety of important ministries, and this offering provides scholarship to Native American seminarians and ministry with local churches. You can send a check to the church marked Native American Ministries Sunday or donate at the link below
 - <https://www.umc.org/en/content/native-american-ministries-sunday-ministry-article>
 - Read stories about the Native American ministries in our denomination: <https://www.umc.org/en/what-we-believe/umc-topics/our-people/native-people>

Witness

- Ecumenical Advocacy Days
 - On April 18-21 join with people of faith from all over the country for worship, learning and advocacy. Each year people of faith join together to learn, pray and meet with congressional leaders to demand change. This year the theme is Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored. Join workshops and participate in advocacy to help address the urgent and important issues related to climate change and climate justice. The church has mission funds available to pay for everyone's registration fee so our church can continue to fund and support ministries of justice and witness. Please let Pastor Jay know if you would like to participate!
 - You can register and find our more information here: <https://advocacydays.org/>
- Advocacy with United Methodists
 - Check out UMC Justice and join with other United Methodist to live our social principle values. You can contact your members of congress and advocate on issues such as: climate justice, racial equity in health care, providing covid-19 international assistance and much more.
 - <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action>