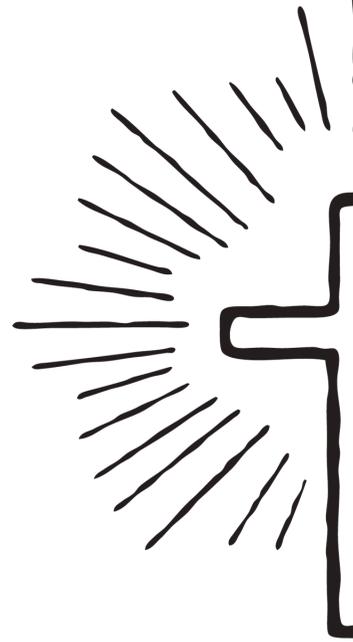


# A Prodigal People:

A Prayer Guide  
for Lent



# Dear Apex,

What you'll find in here is a prayer guide (similar to the Daily Prayer Guide our church makes each year!) with reflections (featuring YOUR leaders), scriptures, readings, prayers, songs (see QR code on the back cover for the Spotify playlist), and more. It is a labor of love—combing through lots of books and playlists and formatting (and re-formatting) and copying and pasting...you get the idea.

We hope this prayer guide is a real gift to you as you enter into Lent. It was really fun to put together and imagine each of you spending time working your way through it as we talk about Luke 15 at Apex.

We care about each of you a whole lot, and we love that we get to live life with you. So do your leaders. And even though we care about you a lot, God cares about you that much more. We hope this book is a tool for you reflect on just how powerful, deep, wide, and long that love is.

We love you!

- Lexi and Ryan

# Part 1: Jonah and God's Mercy for Evil People

*And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:11)*

Jonah is a story about a prophet who hates that God has mercy on evil people. Jonah, like Adam and Eve, and like you and me, wants to make his own decisions and have God sign off on them after the fact. He's good with following God as long as God is good with *following him*.

We often relate to God like Jonah does, and we can "get away" with it for a long time because our plans might align with God's for a long time. I bet Jonah felt like he and God were in lockstep right up until God asked him to go to Nineveh.

A couple of questions to consider in light of the time we've spent in Jonah this winter: how is God both just and merciful at the same time (especially with the clearly evil Ninevites)? Where is my Nineveh—where/what is the place/person/thing/issue in my life that I don't want God to have any part of?

The first question *forces* us to confront what we really think about who God is, and what we really think about who we are. Who is this God, so totally fair and righteous and also so totally full of mercy and grace? And how bad do we think we are? Can we even begin to imagine that we just might need

the same amount of attention and love from God as the people of Nineveh?

The second question gets at the problem of Jonah's relationship with God. He's cool with everything God wants to do *except with this one thing*. But as Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "When Christ calls [someone], he bids [them] come and die." You can't have strings attached to a calling like that. Either we do the hard work of giving all of ourselves over to God, or we give none of ourselves to him. We must choose. What might you be holding back from God's loving touch? Where do you need to be forgiven or to forgive?

As much as we have loved making fun of Jonah's stubbornness, remember that *we are Jonah*. It is only by taking such a view of yourself that you get to really experience the power of this story, about a prophet who thinks he's on a mission to help the people he hates but is actually just a small part of God's mission to save him.

—Ryan

**Lord, help us to see ourselves smack in the middle of your plan to restore the world. Remind us of your great love, and our need for that love. Tenderly touch and heal the parts of us that we have hidden from you. Help us to trust you with all of ourselves. Amen.**

## Week 1: March 2-5

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." — Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit."*

—Psalm 51:7-12

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 6-7 for the daily readings).

Ash Wednesday, March 2: Genesis 3, Jonah 1 & 2, Psalm 38

Thursday, March 3: Jonah 2, 1 John 1:5-10, Psalms 1 & 2

Friday, March 4: Jonah 3, John 4:1-26, Psalms 5 & 6

Saturday, March 5: Jonah 4, Matthew 25:14-30, Psalm 9

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Ash Wednesday, March 2: "Dirt" — The Collection  
Thursday, March 3: "From the Depths of Woe" — Indelible Grace Music  
Friday, March 4: "Lost?" — Kings Kaleidoscope  
Saturday, March 5: "In Tenderness" — The Sing Team

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: I hold up all my weakness to your strength, my failure to your faithfulness, my sinfulness to your perfection, my loneliness to your compassion, my little pains to your great agony on the Cross. I pray that you will cleanse me, strengthen me, guide me, so that in all ways my life may be lived as you would have it lived, without cowardice and for you alone. Show me how to live in true humility, true contrition, and true love. Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 674

## READING SELECTIONS — MARCH 2-5

### ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2:

"We receive ashes in the form of a cross on our forehead as a visible reminder of our sin and mortality. These ashes come from the fire of the previous year's Easter Vigil, in which our palm branches from Palm Sunday, and our written sins nailed to the cross on Good Friday, have been burned together to light the Easter candle. These ashes remind us of our cries of "Hosanna," of our longing for a savior, as we enter this season."

—Resto Daily Prayer Guide

*Why is it important to be reminded of our sin and mortality when we're already saved by God?*

### THURSDAY, MARCH 3:

"During the building of Interstate 79 from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie, one stretch remained unfinished for years because of a swamp that had to be crossed. They kept putting down pilings, trying to finally get to the bottom so the bridge would not sink. But whenever they thought they had gotten to bedrock, the pilling would give way and they would have to drill deeper.

"Jonah's heart was like that. Every time it seemed he had taken God and his grace to the very bottom, it turned out that he needed to go deeper. What does it mean to get to 'bedrock' in one's heart? If you say, 'I'll obey you, Lord, *if* you give me that,' then 'that' is the nonnegotiable and God is just a means to an end. 'That'—whatever it is—is the real bedrock. It is more foundational to your happiness than God is."

—Tim Keller, *The Prodigal Prophet*

*What is "that" for me?*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 4:**

"We are all asked to do more than we can do. Every hero and heroine of the Bible does more than he would have thought it possible to do, from Gideon to Esther to Mary. Jacob, one of my favorite characters, certainly wasn't qualified. He was a liar and a cheat; and yet he was given the extraordinary vision of angels and archangels ascending and descending a ladder which reached from earth to heaven."

—Madeleine L'Engle

*Where might God be asking me to do more than I believe I can possibly do?*

# Part 2: A Lost Sheep and a Lost Coin

“...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:7)

A lost sheep and a lost coin kick off our second week of Lent.

There is, according to Jesus, one sheep and one coin that are worth leaving everything else behind for. In fact, in the parables that Jesus shares, a man and a woman leave 99 sheep and 9 coins in order to look for the one that is missing. The math is a little funny there, isn't it?

What is it about this particular sheep, and this particular coin, that their owners are willing to pursue them at the cost of the other sheep and the other coins? What makes them so special?

We don't get an answer to that question, but perhaps the beginning of the chapter is instructive as to Jesus's intent in this story:

*1 "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*

Perhaps the only quality which made this sheep and this coin so special was the quality of being lost. If that were true, then the only precondition for being on the receiving end of a love ready to pursue you to the ends of the earth is being lost. And according to the Apostle Paul, that would mean we are all qualified to receive a love like this.

Have you ever tried to buy a milkshake and been one dollar short? Or, tried to fill out a team, and realize you really need one more person? What if that 100th sheep and that 10th coin were NEEDED to reach the fullness of joy of a chocolate milkshake, or a beautifully functioning sports team? When we are lost, God notices. And he misses us. He's not distracted or too busy with his 99 other sheep, or 9 other coins, but his heart yearns for the fullness of his people together, NOT lost. Do you want to be found?

—Lexi

**O Lord, we are lost people. We don't know up from down, left from right, or right from wrong. Without you, O marvelous light, we wander in darkness. But you light our path; you lead us beside still waters, into green pastures—indeed, we have a beautiful inheritance. We did not find you, Father. You found us. Amen.**

## Week 2: March 7-12

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." — Matthew 3:2

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.

"As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands."

—Isaiah 55:10-12

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 12-14 for the daily readings).

Monday, March 7: Luke 15:1-7, Luke 5:27-32, Psalms 14 & 17  
Tuesday, March 8: Luke 15:8-10, Matthew 9:9-12, Psalm 18  
Wednesday, March 9: Matthew 18:10-14, 1 Peter 1:1-12, Psalm 19  
Thursday, March 10: Ezekiel 34:1-10, 1 Peter 1:13-25, Psalms 22, 23, 24  
Friday, March 11: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 1 Peter 2:1-10, Psalms 25 & 27  
Saturday, March 12: Ezekiel 34:25-34, 1 Peter 2:11-25, Psalm 26 & 28

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, March 7: "Reckless Love" – Cory Asbury  
Tuesday, March 8: "Just as Good" – Chris Renzema  
Wednesday, March 9: "Living Hope" – The Worship Initiative  
Thursday, March 10: "Shepherd" – Bethel Music, Amanda Cook  
Friday, March 11: "Shepherd of My Soul" – Rivers and Robots  
Saturday, March 12: "Poetry" – Taylor Leonhardt

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. – 1 John 5:14

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*Almighty God, you have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; grant that we, who for our evil deeds deserve to be punished, by the might of your grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 669

## READING SELECTIONS – MARCH 7-12

### MONDAY, MARCH 7:

“True faith lives on the basis of two unshakable realities – that God really does exist and that he always rewards those who seek him. Grace has positioned me on two foundation stones that have redefined my identity, redirected my purpose, reshaped my desires, rescued my thoughts, and reformed my living. I have a new reason to get up in the morning and face my day with courage, hope, joy, confidence, and rest. Your grace has changed everything, for it has made me sure that you exist and that you reward those who seek you.”

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*How might you rest in the reality of God's existence, and seek him as you go throughout your day today?*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 8:

“God is the good shepherd who goes looking for the lost sheep. God is the woman who lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches everywhere for her lost coin until she has found it. God is not the patriarch who stays home, doesn't move, and expects his children to come to him, apologize for their sinful behavior, beg for his forgiveness, and promise to do better. God is the father who watches and waits for his children, runs out to meet them, embraces them, pleads with them, and begs and urges them to come home. It might sound strange, but God wants to find us as much, if not more, than we want to find God.”

—Henri Nouwen, *God Chooses Us First*

*Which of these aspects of God's character jumps out to you today? Spend time praying to Him, imagining the particular characteristic that you noticed.*

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9:**

“The passage says we’re like sheep. That’s an important element of this diagnosis; sheep wander because they’re sheep. It is their nature to do so. So our wandering-away problem is deeper than moments of bad choice and behavior. Our problem is a matter of nature. There is something inside us, something with which we were born, that causes us to water away from the good and wise will of the Great Shepherd, and the Bible names it – sin. Sin is a matter of our nature before it is ever played out in our behavior. And what does sin do to us? It causes us to make life all about us, to want little more than our own way. And to live like little self-sovereigns.”

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*Ask God to show you where you are wanting to be the King of your own life.  
Where have you been wandering away lately?*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 10:**

“What is the solution for people like us? Well, systems of behavior reformation won’t work for us because our problem is deeper than behavior. Systems of self-help won’t work because we are our own biggest problem. There is only one place to run for help. There is only one place to find a cure. It is only ever found in God’s redeeming grace. The grace that places our iniquity on the Savior, so that we could be both forgiven and delivered, is more powerful than our sinful natures. Our cure is not a system, it is a person, and his name is Jesus! Run to him, he really is all that you need.”

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*If Jesus is our only cure, why do we often work so hard to cure ourselves?  
What might it look like to ask Jesus to cure your sin today?*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 11:**

"Many of the things we do are done out of fear and not faith. Fear happens when I look at myself, assess my resources, and conclude that I do not have what it takes to do what God is calling me to do or to face what I have to face. Fear in a believer is a function of forgetfulness. To the degree that you forget who God is, who you are as his child, and what you have been given by his grace, fear is your default emotion...Fear is defeated only by a bigger, greater fear... When the fear of God overwhelms and controls your heart, it protects you from the paralyzing and debilitating fear of other things. It's only when God looms hugely larger than anything you could ever face in this fallen world that your heart is able to experience peace even when you don't understand what is happening...

How can you enter the experience of vertical fear (fear of God) overwhelming and quieting horizontal fear (fear of anything else)? Well, first run to God and pray that he will grace you with the eyes to see and the heart to remember his awesome glory. Then require yourself to quit meditating on your problems and instead meditate on the glory of the God who has become your Father and who is always with you. NO, you should not deny your problems, but if you let them be the subject of your meditation, they will loom larger and larger, and you will grow more and more afraid. Today, face reality, but meditate on God's glory."

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*Try out following Paul David Tripp's steps above to replace horizontal fear with vertical fear.*

# Part 3: The Younger Son Leaves

*"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' (Luke 15:11-12)*

Children usually receive an inheritance once their parents have passed away. It's a bittersweet gift from an older generation who have spent their lives working and saving so their offspring can prosper. But the younger son asks for his inheritance early, essentially wishing his dad had already died so he could go on and get his money already. The younger son wants all his dad's gifts with none of the responsibilities of his household.

"Do I ask for good gifts from God while also hoping he keeps his nose out of my life?"

I imagine the younger son screaming, "Let's go!" after his dad gives him the early inheritance. He walks off, far away from the influence of his father and starts living his life exactly how he wants it. It sounds like paradise, but it's an empty promise of luxury and life with no limits. He is an empty child seeking to be filled by anything but his Father's love, but he will be continually disappointed.

"How do I try to fill myself when I'm empty? Where do I go when I'm sad or lonely?"

The younger son's sin caused a separation from his father and family. And now pigs—an unclean animal for the Jews—are getting fed while he has nothing. His days of luxury are far away, and hoping for anything other than a next meal feels futile.

“How does my sin impact me and my situations? Where do I turn when I feel hopeless?”

Friends, amidst this, I have good news: your Father is waiting for you.

—Robert

**O Lord, would you give us the courage this week to confront the many ways we have sought to run from you? Would you steel us to face the darkness we see and feel in our lives? And would you help us to leave this week only more convinced of the unstoppable power of your grace? Amen.**

## Week 3: March 14-19

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

—Romans 3:23-24

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 19-20 for the daily readings).

Monday, March 14: Isaiah 56, Romans 3, Psalm 34

Tuesday, March 15: Ruth 1, Luke 15:11-16, Psalm 38

Wednesday, March 16: Ruth 2, Mark 10:17-27, Psalm 37

Thursday, March 17: Ruth 3, Matthew 25:14-30, Psalm 40

Friday, March 18: Ruth 4, Colossians 1:15-23 Psalm 41

Saturday, March 19: Lamentations 3, Psalm 45

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, March 14: "Apple Pie" – Flannel Graph

Tuesday, March 15: "17" – Chris Renzema

Wednesday, March 16: "Over my Head" – Judah and the Lion

Thursday, March 17: "Good Good Father" – Curt Vernon and Julie Futch

Friday, March 18: "Nothing to Fear" – The Porter's Gate

Saturday, March 19: "Found" – Chris Renzema

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: I hold up all my weakness to your strength, my failure to your faithfulness, my sinfulness to your perfection, my loneliness to your compassion, my little pains to your great agony on the Cross. I pray that you will cleanse me, strengthen me, guide me, so that in all ways my life may be lived as you would have it lived, without cowardice and for you alone. Show me how to live in true humility, true contrition, and true love. Amen.*

—Book of Common Prayer p. 674

## READING SELECTIONS – MARCH 14-19

### MONDAY, MARCH 14:

"For over fifteen years I have been asking people of all walks of life from Morocco to India and from Turkey to Sudan about the implications of a son's request for his inheritance while the father is still living. The answer has always been emphatically the same...the conversations runs as follows:

Has anyone ever made such a request in your village? **Never!** Could anyone ever make such a request? **Impossible!** If anyone ever did, what would happen? **His father would beat him, of course!** Why? **The request means—he wants his father to die.**

—Kenneth Bailey, adapted from *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*How are we like the younger son in the story?*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 15:

"Leaving home is, then, is much more than an historical event bound to time and place. It is a denial of the spiritual reality that I belong to God with every part of my being, that God holds me safe in an eternal embrace, that I am indeed carved in the palms of God's hands and hidden in their shadows. Leaving home is living as though I do not yet have a home and must look far and wide to find one."

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of The Prodigal Son*

*In what ways have you sought to "leave home," and wandered from God's eternal embrace?*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16:

"How is such a turnaround possible? The answer is in Jesus himself. Jesus, like the prodigal son, was a companion of sinners and declared that prostitutes could enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 21:32).

He became weak and despised, he stood in our place and took the punishment and the rod that fools deserve, so that he could forgive and draw the worst sinners and fools to himself."

—Tim and Kathy Keller, *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life*

*What similarities can you find between the life of Jesus and the parable of the prodigal son?*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 17:**

"In the long run God is no one but Himself and what He does is like nothing else. You could hardly expect it to be. What, then, is the difference which He has made to the whole human mass? It is just this; that the business of becoming a son of God, of being turned from a created thing into a begotten thing, of passing over from the temporary biological life into timeless 'spiritual life,' has been done for us."

—CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

*How does it make you feel knowing that the "work" of becoming a son is already done?*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 18:**

"But reliving these misgivings can yield no lasting peace. My regrets are only symptoms of pain that cannot be outmaneuvered. I cannot change the past. I cannot master this chaos of emotions by an endless repetition of anguished memories. [But] you are my only defense, O Christ, for you have already carried the burden of every cause and consequence of my regrets. You alone cut these binding straps and loose this load, and bid me leave it scattered here..."

—Douglas McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy: Volume II*

*What misgivings do you find yourself needing to let go of?*

# Part 4: The Younger Son Returns

*"And he arose and came to his father. But while he was a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)*

Just a few verses earlier, we saw the younger son leave full of pride, plans of his own, and money of his father's. Now, we see him at the end of himself—no money and nowhere to turn but back to his father. He is so low he doesn't believe he is worthy of being called his father's son. We've all been there: totally lost with no clue where to go next.

The farther we run from the place where our Father dwells, the less we are able to hear Him call us His Beloved. The less we hear God's voice, the more we rely on the voices of others for acceptance, affection, and approval.

And yet, while we often run far, we know that we have a Father who loves us endlessly and sent His only Son to save us and forgive our sins.

*"<sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found'. And they began to celebrate."*

Not only does the Father welcome his Son home, he celebrates his son's return. He does not scold, lecture, or require repayment of what his son took from him. He feels only love and joy for his son returning home.

We all will run and feel lost, but our Father will always be there when we return to welcome us home, running toward us with arms wide open. What a beautiful promise this is.

—Alec

**Lord, it can be scary to return home, knowing all the things we've done wrong. They weigh so heavily on us. And yet, you in your love cannot even wait for us to return home. You run to us as soon as you see us over the horizon. Help us to run and meet you, confident that it is in your love that we are found worthy of being called your children.**

## Week 4: March 21-26

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

—Revelation 21:1-4

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 25-27 for the daily readings).

Monday, March 21: Matthew 11:28-29, Luke 15:11-16, Psalms 50 & 51

Tuesday, March 22: Isaiah 25:6-9, Luke 15:17-24, Psalm 52-54

Wednesday, March 23: Isaiah 44:1-5, 21-28, Psalm 56 & 57

Thursday, March 24: Isaiah 1:16-20, John 13:3-17, Psalms 59, 63, & 64

Friday, March 25: Ephesians 2:1-10, Ephesians 3:14-21, Psalms 113 & 138

Saturday, March 26: John 6:28-40, Ephesians 2:14-22, Psalm 61 & 62

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, March 21: "Hello My Old Heart" – The Oh Hellos

Tuesday, March 22: "Homeward" – Benjamin Hastings

Wednesday, March 23: "Calm" – Nathan Colberg

Thursday, March 24: "Washed by the Water" – NEEDTOBREATHE

Friday, March 25: "The Secret Place" – Phil Wickham

Saturday, March 26: "Run to the Father" – Cody Carnes

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do, give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will. Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 673

## READING SELECTIONS — MARCH 21-26

### MONDAY, MARCH 21:

"It is a humbling yet and yet vital thing to acknowledge - you and I simply don't have much in our relationship with God and our growth in grace for which we can take credit. The fact of the matter is that we give daily proof of our ongoing need for that grace. The reality is that if we followed Jesus for a thousand years, we would need his grace as much for the next day as we did the first day that we believed."

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*Why is it heartening to you that we need Jesus' grace as much today and tomorrow as the first day we believed?  
In what area of your life do you most need the Lord's grace today?*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 22:

"What I love about our generation is that we are likely to name our junk. But are we willing to repent from it? There is nothing holy about authenticity without repentance. Authenticity without repentance is narcissism. Authenticity is the necessary soil for repentance, but if healing comes from Jesus, then confession is only the first step... Grieving and leaving our sin in the next one. What makes us clean? His BLOOD makes us clean. Jesus was clear, only those who accept His cleansing will become a part of Him. Only those who are willing to confess, repent, expose their sin, and receive His forgiveness will have eternal life."

—Jennie Allen, *Nothing to Prove*

*Thank God for the freedom to be authentic and honest about your sin! But don't stop there... ask him for help to grieve and leave your sin.*

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23:**

### **Identity**

No need to search for myself.

No need to grasp for meaning for my life or purpose for what I do.

No need to hope for inner peace, that sense of well-being for which every heart longs.

No need to hope that someone or something will make me happy or give me joy.

I no longer need any of these things because grace has connected me to you, and you have named me your child."

—Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

*Which of the lines above resonates most with you? Bring that to God and ask him to show you that you are His child.*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 24:**

I wash your pride that thinks that I need you.

I wash your doubt that you think I can't handle.

I wash your fear that stops you.

I wash your shame that makes you hide.

I wash your independence that makes you think you don't need Me.

I wash your performance that you think you must produce.

I wash your betrayal that haunts you.

I wash your pride that thinks you are above needing forgiveness.

I wash your striving for your own name.

I wash your love for your own honor.

I wash your mistakes that you cannot name.

I wash your anger that sneaks out sometimes.

I wash your feet and set them on a single path.

—Jennie Allen, *Nothing to Prove*

*Pray the above prayer a few times, and invite the Lord to truly cleanse you.*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 25:**

"God is urging me to come home, to enter into his light, and to discover that, in God, all people are uniquely and completely loved. In the light of God I can finally see my neighbor as my brother, as the one who belongs as much to God as I do. But outside of God's house, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, lovers and friends become rivals and even enemies; each perpetually plagued by jealousies, suspicions, and resentments... the story of the prodigal son is the story of a God who goes searching for me and who doesn't rest until he has found me. He urges and he pleads. He begs me to stop clinging to the powers of death and to let myself be embraced by arms that will carry me to the place where I will find the life I most desire."

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*What could you let go of today, in order to fall into the embrace of the Father?*

# Part 5: The Older Son Leaves

*"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him." (Luke 15:28)*

You'd nearly forgotten your long-lost brother—or at least you tried to. You couldn't quite shake your incredulity at what he'd done, essentially wishing your Father dead as he had. It was hard to forget the pain that had caused. But in the midst of it, you'd stepped up. You'd always been a hard worker, but when he left, you pulled the extra weight. Your Father came to depend on you, and you were proud to be dependable. Proud, if a little frustrated by the sacrifices you had to make to keep showing up—time with friends, the carefree years of your youth, and building your own family, to name a few. And your Father, grateful as he must have been, had never said as much. You worked so hard for *no* recognition.

Before he left, your brother had unquestionably been the favored one, everyone always overlooking your steadiness in favor of his magnetism. You never imagined he'd have the guts to show his face again. Surely he was smart enough to be ashamed of what he'd done.

And now this? The prodigal golden child returns. To a party in his honor?

Anger. Indignation. Confusion. Jealousy. Disdain. Your mind can't help but spiral. The fattened calf? For him? It couldn't be.

He should be sent away, back to wherever he'd run with all that money. You'd heard whispers around town of what he'd been up to all these years—certainly nothing to celebrate.

Once people find out he's been welcomed back with open arms and rejoicing, there will be a permanent stain on your family name. Your brother's reputation will tarnish the image you've spent years cultivating. Your father should have considered this. He'll be gone soon enough and you'll be left to deal with it. Your brother abandons the family and is celebrated. You faithfully do what you're supposed to and are left to clean up his mess. You deserve better than that.

—Callie

**O Child of God, listen well, and be comforted. He has never judged you unfit for any service he has called you to, for it is in Christ's righteousness he has clothed you. And his measure of greatness has never been your own. If you would pray to do great things for God, then you must pray such prayers without regard for how they should be answered.**

**You have till now been too invested in the results of your own efforts, as if those outcomes were a thing you could ever know or measure in this life! Be invested instead, child, in simple obedience to your king, and in long faithfulness to his call, shepherding daily those gifts and tasks and relationships he has entrusted to you, regardless of outcomes and appearances.**

—Douglas McKelvey, "A Liturgy for Those Who Have Not Done Great Things for God", *Every Moment Holy: Volume I*

## Week 5: March 28-April 2

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

—1 John 1:5-10

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 32-34 for the daily readings).

Monday, March 28: Jeremiah 5:1-17, Luke 18:9-14, Psalm 69  
Tuesday, March 29: Jeremiah 5:18-31, Matthew 7:1-29, Psalm 70  
Wednesday, March 30: Jeremiah 6:16-30, Luke 15:25-32, Psalm 71  
Thursday, March 31: Jeremiah 7:1-14, John 7:1-24, Psalm 74  
Friday, April 1: Jeremiah 7:15-34, John 7:25-52, Psalms 75 & 76  
Saturday, April 2: Jeremiah 31:31-40, John 8

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, March 28: "How Long?" – The Porter's Gate

Tuesday, March 29: "There is Nowhere (Psalm 139)" – Trinity Music

Wednesday, March 30: "What I Cannot See" – The Silver Pages

Thursday, March 31: "March To The Sea" – Twenty One Pilots

Friday, April 1: "Zion & Babylon" – Josh Garrels

Saturday, April 2: "Turn Your Heart" – Future of Forestry

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*O God, of your goodness, give me yourself, for you are enough for me. I can ask for nothing less that is completely to your honor, and if I do ask anything less, I shall always be in want. Only in you I have all. Amen.*

—Julian of Norwich, Book of Common Prayer p. 673

## READING SELECTIONS — MARCH 28-APRIL 2

### MONDAY, MARCH 28:

“That is why the Christian is in a different position from other people who are trying to be good. They hope, by being good, to please God if there is one; or—if they think there is not—at least they hope to deserve approval from good men. But the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us; just as the roof of a greenhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it.”

—CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

*How am I still trying to earn God's love, when it is offered to me freely?*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 29:

“The lostness of the elder son, however, is much harder to identify. After all he did all the right things. He was obedient, dutiful, law-abiding, and hardworking. People respected him, admired him, praised him, and likely considered him a model son. Outwardly, the elder son was faultless. But when confronted by his father's joy at the return of his younger brother, a dark power erupts in him...suddenly, there becomes glaringly visible a resentful, proud, unkind, selfish person, one that had remained deeply hidden, even though it had been growing stronger and more powerful over the years.”

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*Do you recognize any of the qualities of the older son in yourself?*

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30:**

“This story reveals above all the sheer self-centeredness of the grumbler. The older brother shows, in his bad temper, that he has had no more real respect for his father than his brother had had...at this point we sense that Jesus is not content simply to tell the grumblers they’re out of line; [he wants to point out that God’s generosity] is indeed reaching out to people they didn’t expect, [but] this doesn’t mean there isn’t any left for them. If they insist on staying out of the party because it isn’t the sort of thing they like, that’s up to them, but it won’t be because God doesn’t love them as well.

—Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone*

*What kind of people would you be surprised to see receiving God’s generosity? Why?*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 31:**

“The people stood in the holy place and spoke the current religious cliché and supposed that everything was just fine. They were in the right place, and they said the right words—but *they* were not right. The reform was necessary, but it was not enough. For religion is not a matter of arrangements or places or words, but of life and love, of mercy and obedience, of persons in a passion of faith.”

—Eugene Peterson on Jeremiah 7, *Run with the Horses*

*How are the people of Jeremiah 7 and the Older Son similar, or dissimilar?*

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 1:**

“It is only at the elder brother’s expense that the younger brother can be brought back in[to the family.] ...the father had divided his property between them before the younger son had left. The younger brother had gotten his 1/3 portion and it was completely gone. When the father says to the older brother, ‘My son, everything I have is yours,’ he is telling the literal truth.

Either as elder brothers or younger brothers we have rebelled against the father. We deserve alienation, isolation, and rejection. The point of the

parable is that forgiveness always involves a price—someone has to pay. There was no way for the younger brother to return to the family unless the older brother bore the cost himself. Our true elder brother paid our debt, on the cross, in our place.”

—Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God*

*How does change your perception of the older brother in the parable?*

# Part 6: The Older Son Returns

*"...when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" (Luke 15:30)*

The older son is a good church kid. He stuck with the Father, doing his due diligence. He watched the Father grieve as the younger son fled from home, and he wiped his Father's tears of lament over the loss of the younger son. While the younger son was gone, the older son formed a close bond with the Father.

Now the younger son is back, and it seems the Father has forgotten all of that. He's forgotten how the older son was there for him when the younger son was nowhere to be found. He's forgotten that the older son was faithful, "slaving" for him and "never disobeying" his orders. He's forgotten that the older son is special.

A lot of us are like the older son. We are good church kids who have done God's work our whole lives. We have formed a close bond with Him, and we know we are special. When we see God forgive our friends who have led lifestyles that we've avoided, it feels like betrayal. How could God give them the same gift of closeness He has given us who have "earned" it?

The reality is that none of us have earned it. Sometimes we lose perspective and think that we have. We "become angry and refuse to go in." But even then the Father "pleads" with us to come home. When we run away because we are jealous of

others, and forget how God has cared for and favored us, He doesn't roll His eyes and give up. He welcomes us back with love.

Will you remember how God cares for you and come home?

—Ashley

***Intercessor:* Is this still your heart's true desire then, to do great works for the kingdom of heaven?**

***Petitioner:* It is, though I had not known before what it even meant. I ask now for grace that I might truly and humbly repent of any root of vainglory buried in my former prayers, and I pray also for grace that I might now ask aright, in purity of heart, that the good works of God would be manifest in their many outworkings in my heart and life, at all times and in all endeavors, howsoever it pleases him.**

—Douglas McKelvey, "A Liturgy for Those Who Have Not Done Great Things for God", *Every Moment Holy: Volume I*

## Week 6: April 4-9

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." — Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*"Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?"*

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"*

*Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard."*

—Isaiah 58:6-8

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 39-41 for the daily readings).

Monday, April 4: Mark 11:12-25, Luke 15:25-32, Psalms 81 & 83  
Tuesday, April 5: Matthew 18:1-4, John 8:34-36, Psalms 84 & 85

Wednesday, April 6: Romans 8:1-11, Romans 12, Psalms 86-88  
Thursday, April 7: Romans 8:12-17, Hebrews 12:1-13, Psalm 89  
Friday, April 8: Romans 8:18-27, Hebrews 12:28-29, Psalms 90 & 91  
Saturday, April 9: Romans 8:28-38, Colossians 1:3-14, Psalms 92-94

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, April 4: "How to Be Yours" – Chris Renzema  
Tuesday, April 5: "Satisfied in You (Psalm 42)" – The Sing Team  
Wednesday, April 6: "Teach Me to Dance" – Jervis Campbell  
Thursday, April 7: "Firm Foundation (He Won't)" – Maverick City Music  
Friday, April 8: "Thank you Jesus for the Blood" – Charity Gayle  
Saturday, April 9: "Graves Into Gardens" – Elevation Worship

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon where there is discord, union; where there is error, truth; where there is doubt, faith; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may seek not so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

Prayer of St. Francis Assisi, Book of Common Prayer, p. 672

## READING SELECTIONS — APRIL 4-9

### MONDAY, APRIL 4:

“By telling myself that I am not important enough to be found, I amplify my self-complaint until I have become totally deaf to the voice calling for me. At some point, I must totally disown my self-rejecting voice and claim the truth that God DOES indeed want to embrace me as much as he does my wayward brothers and sisters. To prevail, this trust has to be even deeper than the sense of lostness. Jesus expressed its radicalness when he says ‘Everything you ask and pray for, trust that you have it already, and it will be yours.’ Living in this radical trust will open the way for God to realize my deepest desire.”

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*Do you believe that God truly desperately wants to embrace you?*

### TUESDAY, APRIL 5:

“No man is born either naturally or supernaturally with character; he has to make character. Nor are we born with habits; we have to form habits on the basis of the new life God has put into us. We are not meant to be illuminated versions, but the common stuff of ordinary life exhibiting the marvel of the grace of God. Drudgery is the touchstone of character. The great hindrance in spiritual life is that we will look for big things to do. “Jesus took a towel... and began to wash the disciples’ feet.” There are times when there is no illuminations and no thrill, but just the daily round, the common task. Routine is God’s way of saving us between our times of inspiration. Do not expect God always to give you His thrilling minutes, but learn to live in the domain of drudgery by the power of God.”

—Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

*Where might God be inviting you to draw near to him in the “common stuff of ordinary life” today?*

## **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6:**

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”

—Romans 12:1-2, Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* Translation

*How do you want to ask God to change you from the inside out today, in the midst of your ordinary life?*

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 7:**

“Lord Jesus, give me a deeper repentance, a horror of sin, a dread of its approach. Help me chastely to flee it and jealously to resolve that my heart shall be thine alone. Give me a deeper trust, that I may lose myself to find myself in thee, the ground of my rest, the spring of my being. Give me a deeper knowledge of thyself as Savior, Master, Lord and King. Give me deeper power in private prayer, more sweetness in thy Word, more steadfast grip on its truth. Give me deeper holiness in speech, thought, action, and let me not seek moral virtue apart from thee.”

—Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*

*If you know that you can rest in the Father’s embrace, how does that assurance allow you to pray boldly the prayer above? Try praying it a few times, and see what the Holy Spirit brings to mind.*

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 8:**

“Gratitude as a discipline involves a conscious choice. I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment. It is amazing how many occasions present themselves in which I can choose gratitude instead of a complaint. I can choose to be grateful when I am criticized, even when my heart still responds in bitterness. I can choose to speak about goodness and beauty, even when my inner eye still looks for someone to accuse or something to call ugly. I can choose to listen to the voices that forgive and to look at the faces that smile, even while I still hear words of revenge and see grimaces of hatred.

There is always the choice between resentment and gratitude because God has appeared in my darkness, urged me to come home, and declared in a voice filled with affection; ‘You are with me always, and all I have is yours.’ Indeed, I can choose to dwell in the darkness in which I stand, point to those who are seemingly better off than I, lament about the many misfortunes that have plagued me in the past, and thereby wrap myself up in my resentment. But I don’t have to do this. There is the option to look into the eyes of the One who came out to search for me and see therein that all I am and all I have is pure gift calling for gratitude”

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*Call to mind the areas where it would be easier to choose resentment over gratitude today. Try making an active choice to choose prayers of gratitude today, and notice how your heart responds.*

# Part 7: The Father

*"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."* (Luke 15:31-32)

Though we know it was the "The Parable of the Prodigal Son," we could very easily retitile it "The Parable of the Father's Love."

Søren Kierkegaard, reflecting on the upbuilding love of God described in 1 Corinthians 13, says that the love of the Father "presupposed" love in the prodigal son. In other words, the Father loved the prodigal son (and the older son) in such a way as to create/spur on/bring out love from his sons. The Father's love made his sons lovely.

This is the same way that God loves us.

Some of us, like the younger son, have sought to escape the love of the Father by running to a far away country. We have tried it all, but still we find ourselves thirsty and homesick. And the thought of going home? Voices whisper that you are not worthy to live at home again after what you did.

And some of us, like the older son, have been lost at home. We, like our younger brothers, misunderstand who our Father is, and find ourselves wondering if we have been missing out the whole time. Voices whisper that this life of obedience isn't all it's cracked up to be.

As we wrap up Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter, why does it matter what we think of this Father and his two sons?

It matters because what you think about God will determine the way that you live your life. Neither the younger son nor the older son had the whole picture, and it dramatically shaped the way that each son thought about his Father.

If you think God is harsh, unfair, and holding out on you, you'll find yourself in the far away country, starving and wondering what went wrong.

If you think God is soft, doesn't honor your work, or is just a taskmaster, you'll get fed up when you find out that serving him cannot change the amount of love he has for you.

So as we prepare to reflect on the resurrection of Jesus, the image of the invisible God, take a moment to confront the counterfeits in your life and commit to following the real God.

You will find that your pursuit of him is unmatched by his pursuit of you, that your commitment to him cannot compare to his commitment to you, and that your love for him is engulfed by the ocean of love that he has for you. In all you do to draw near, you will find that he's been there the whole time.

—Ryan

**Teach me to seek you, and as I seek you, show yourself to me; for I cannot seek you unless you show me how, and I will never find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you by desiring you, and desire you by seeking you; let me find you by loving you, and love you in finding you.  
Amen.**

—Anselm of Canterbury

## Week 7: April 11-16

**PAUSE** and slow yourself down. Settle your heart as you draw close to God.

Take a moment to breathe, slow down, and ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to you.

**INVITE** God into the quiet.

Read the verses below aloud.

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – Matthew 3:2*

*The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us adore him.*

*"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

—1 John 3:1-2

**REFLECT** on the following scriptures and the daily readings (see p. 47-48 for the daily readings).

Monday, April 11: Genesis 37, John 13:1-7, Psalm 103

Tuesday, April 12: Genesis 41:1-36, John 13:18-38, Psalm 100

Wednesday, April 13: Genesis 41:37-57, John 14:1-14, Psalm 107:1-22

Thursday, April 14: Genesis 42, John 14:15-31, Psalm 107:23-43

Friday, April 15: Genesis 46, John 15:1-17, Psalm 116

Saturday, April 16: Genesis 50, John 17:6-26, Psalm 118

**LISTEN** carefully to the words of a song. Scan the QR code on the front for our Spotify playlist, which contains all the songs in order.

Monday, April 11: "Farther Along" — Josh Garrels  
Tuesday, April 12: "How Deep the Father's Love" — Kings (MHM)  
Wednesday, April 13: "Homeward" — Future of Forestry  
Thursday, April 14: "The Sun Will Rise" — The Brilliance  
Friday, April 15: "On Jordan's Stormy Banks" — Indelible Grace Music  
Saturday, April 16: "Wake Up O Daughter of Zion" — Wendell Kimbrough

**PRAY** knowing God hears you.

Bring to God what you noticed in the readings, confess the ways you have fallen short this week, praise him for the ways he has been with you, and ask his intercession into the troubles and trials of yourself and your friends and family.

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. — 1 John 5:14*

**GO OUT** in the confidence that your God goes before you.  
Pray the collect below aloud as you close your time in prayer.

*O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 670

## READING SELECTIONS — APRIL 11-15

### MONDAY, APRIL 11:

"See, the prodigal son's father was perhaps the only one who did not know that he had a prodigal son, because the father's love hoped all things. The brother knew immediately that he was hopelessly prodigal. But love builds up, and the father won back the prodigal son simply because he, who hoped all things, presupposed that love was present in the ground."

—Søren Kierkegaard on 1 Cor 13, *Works of Love*

*How can the love you have for others begin to look more like the love the Father has for you?*

### TUESDAY, APRIL 12:

"It dawned on me that even my best theological and spiritual formation had not been able to completely free me from a Father God who remained somewhat threatening and somewhat fearsome. All I had learned about the Father's love had not fully enabled me to let go of an authority above me who had power over me and would use it according to his will. Somehow, God's love for me was limited by my fear of God's power, and it seemed wise to keep a careful distance even though the desire for closeness was immense."

—Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

*In what ways can you continue to draw closer and closer to God?*

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13:

"O be quick, my soul, to answer him; be jubilant, my feet! And sure enough my soul leapt dancing inside my chest, and my feet sprang up and sped me forward, and the sense came to me of undergoing creation, as the land and the trees and the beasts of the orchard had done some long time before. And the pulse of the country came around me, as of voices lifted at

great distance, and moved through me as I ran until the words came clear, and I sang with them a beautiful and curious chant.”

—Leif Enger, *Peace Like a River*

*How does this passage encourage you to imagine what it will be like to see God as he is?*

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 14:**

“Remember what you learned that day on the mountain, that ‘the Word (that means God) became flesh (that means Jesus) and dwelt among us’ (1 John 1:14)? That is as down to earth as you can get. And remember that other sentence: ‘For God so loved the world that he gave...’ (3:16)? Friend, you are the one he loved. You are the beloved. I’m not putting anything alien or ill-fitting on you. This who you are: loved by God. But being loved is not all there is to it. Being loved creates a person who can love, who *must* love if that person is going to be fully human. *Getting loved* is a launching pad into *giving love*.”

—Eugene Peterson, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*

*How does understanding the love you receive as a “launching pad” into giving love change the way you think about your identity?*

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 15:**

“Do you see how the devil is defeated by the very weapons of his prior victory? The devil had vanquished Adam by means of a tree. Christ vanquished the devil by means of the tree of the Cross. The tree sent Adam to hell. The tree of the Cross brought him back from there. The tree revealed Adam in his weakness, laying prostrate, naked and low. The tree of the Cross manifested to all the world the victorious Christ, naked and nailed on high. Adam’s death sentence passed on to all who came after him. Christ’s death gave life to all his children.”

—St. John Chrysostom, *Common Prayer*  
*If God defeated the devil by his own weapons, how might God redeem the areas of weakness in your life?*

# A Benediction

Awaken to the mystery of being here  
and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.

Have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.

Receive encouragement when new frontiers beckon.

Respond to the call of your gift and the courage to follow its  
path.

Let the flame of anger free you of all falsity.

May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame.

May anxiety never linger about you.

May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.

Take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no  
attention.

Be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.

May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around  
the heart of wonder.

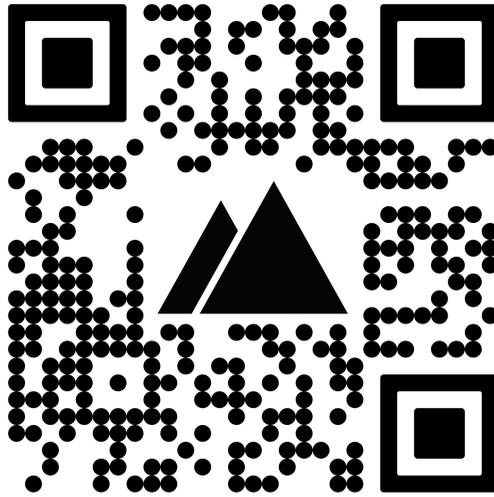
—John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

**We love you, Apex students!**

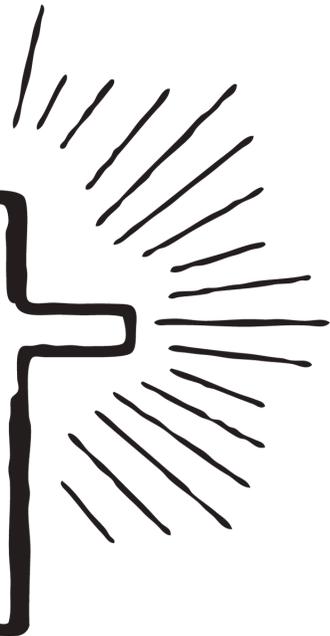


With love from your leaders:

Hannah, Valerie, Alec, Will, Ryan, Robert, Callie, Kendall,  
Catherine, Corinne, Emily, Ashley, Dan, Sebastian, Lexi,  
Meaghan, Jonathan, and Sam



Spotify Playlist



Restoration Anglican Church  
Arlington, Virginia