

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN**(Traditional & Online Service) (White/Gold)**

May 3, 2026 • Sixth Weekend in Easter • Communion

John 14:1-14; Philippians 2:1-11*"Instructions for People on the Inside"*

When Jesus is talking to disciples, we should listen.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If an items unavailable, fret not:

- a piece of **white (or gold)** cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate with bread/crackers
- a cup with juice or water
- a glass or bowl with water
- a lighter/match
- an instruction manual
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week

For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you. Have enough Communion elements for each person in your household.

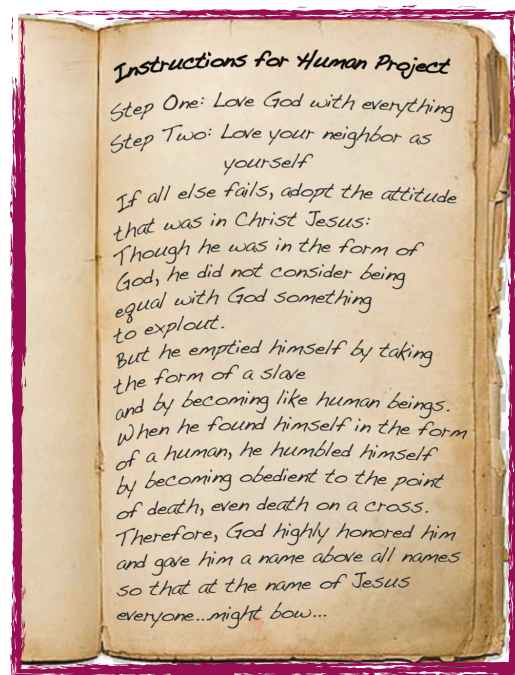
Questions for the announcement loop*In preparing for Worship, consider the following:*

- How closely do you follow instructions when you're working on something or putting something together?
- What do you imagine is different about the instructions for you versus someone else?
- What is the instruction from God you most follow in your life?
- What legacy of Easter do you hope God leaves with you?

Choral Introit:*"Glory to God"* by Noah Melton**Opening Sentence****John 14:12 (CEB)**

[Jesus said,] "I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father."

Happy Easter! As a part of the Easter Season we practice the traditional greeting: "The Lord be with you! And also with you!"



We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week, living that Christian life...

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than this Sanctuary.

Follow the Instructions!

So are you the kind of person who follows the instructions to the letter or takes the owner's manual as "advice"? Are you a rule keeper or someone who likes to live life by feel? Let's say first that there's room for both (and everyone in between) on God's earth. But those days when we are troubleshooting a problem, it is undeniably helpful to have the instructions available to work through what might be wrong. That includes troubleshooting humanity. As we approach the final weeks of this season of Easter, what instruction does the resurrection leave with you? How does the life, death and life of Christ inform your living and decision-making? What instructions of Jesus do you follow to the letter and what of Jesus' teachings do you take more like advice?

The Season of Easter

With Easter we not only celebrate the death of Jesus Christ, but the resurrection! And as Jesus rises, so God raises us!

Psalm 90:1 • Revelation 21:3



2026 Homecoming Celebration • 271 Years

This season Easter ends with our Homecoming Celebration. On May 17th, our church will be 271 years old! With our theme, "There's No Place Like Home" (Psalm 90:1; Revelation 21:3), we will thank God for the life of our congregation through the stories of God's people.

Youth Stock Is On!

'Tis that time of year! Youth Stock is yet one more way we can show our young people that their faith development matters to us. At \$10 a share (for however many shares you wish!), your investment returns our youth to their summer conference experiences in Montreat in Western North Carolina and Massanetta in Virginia. These distinctively Presbyterian conferences are opportunities to learn more about God but also to connect with other youth from around the region. In return you get personalized thank you cards and a luncheon in your honor where the youth will share their experiences with you. You can gain stocks personally from the youth following our worship services, online at our church website, or by calling the church office (336-578-2811).

We celebrate our May babies!

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Gathering Song

"Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks" GTG#240

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.

He is the King of creation.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

(10am only) Prelude:

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" arr. Victor Labenske

When Jesus is talking to disciples, we should listen.

In this moment, let us stand, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship together. Let us make use of the *Call to Worship* that is before you...

(10am only) Call to Worship

Like the birds migrate in due season

Like the flowers bloom when it's time

Like rivers must flow and mountains quake and rise

Like the rains must fall and the sun duly shine

God's will be done

God's dreams be fulfilled

Christ rose again with power

Before the face of God, smiling on us

Sing:

"Open My Eyes, That I May See" GTG #451

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

We sometimes mix up whose instructions we are actually following. It's not good that we do that. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: Almighty God, the resurrection proves that not even death gets to tell YOU what to do. Forgive us when we try to put limits on your grace and love. Forgive us when we place limits

on what you get to expect from us. Forgive us when we place limits on what your Spirit can accomplish in us and through us. Forgive us for doubting that we could actually be the Church of your hopes. With your resurrection, Great God, please, raise us. Raise our spirits. Raise our hopes. Raise our expectations. Raise us, O God. As the season of Easter unfolds, may your Spirit remind always of what's possible. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

The Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning

It is now and ever shall be

World without end: Amen, amen.

Reading of Scripture

Say: God's Word is confirmation of what God has promised all along: to be with us. Taking in God's Word is a chance for us to with God. God offers to make that happen through the power of God's Spirit. Let us take God up on that offer and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "I Love to Tell the Story" (Refrain)

GTG #462

I love to tell the story;

'twill be my theme in glory

To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Each of the Gospels has their own take with the run up to the crucifixion. The Gospel of John is the most extensive take on Jesus' final words before his trial, suffering and execution. It is believed that the words in John were preserved for the Church that would follow his resurrection. Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and for our place in God's adventure...

Read: John 14:1-14 (CEB)

Jesus' Instructions to the Disciples

¹ "Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me.

² My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? ³ When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too.

⁴ You know the way to the place I'm going."

⁵ Thomas asked, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father; that will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don't speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. ¹² I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

The letter to the Philippian Church is a rare instance of Paul's economy of words. In this short letter he uniquely summarizes the meaning of the crucifixion, the benefit of the resurrection, and the possibilities the Gospel affords to change everything. Listen further to the Word of God to us all and for our place in God's in what God is doing...

Read: Philippians 2:1-11 (CEB)

Christian living means imitating Christ.

¹ Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, ² complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and

agreeing with each other. ³ Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. ⁵ Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

⁶ *Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.*

⁷ *But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings.*

When he found himself in the form of a human,

⁸ *he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

⁹ *Therefore, God highly honored him and gave him a name above all names,*

¹⁰ *so that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow*

¹¹ *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us...

All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon

Adults, you'll need:

- a blindfold
 - a simple Lego® set or puzzle
 - be ready to answer questions
- "One Voice"*
- So this is a blindfold. I'm going to use it to wrap around my eyes so that I can't see anything. Then you all are going to help me put this (show the Lego set) together by everybody giving me the instructions at the same time. Ready? Let's do this!
 - (As you work, purposefully mix up the instructions and put things in the wrong place or follow pieces of different folks' directions.)
 - Well! That's a mess! It would be so much easier to just follow the directions of one person. That's why it's important that we decide who to listen to.
 - Our faith is like that. You will lots of people and things telling you what to believe or how to behave. But you don't need to listen to

everybody. You need to listen to people who really care about you. And nobody cares about you more than God.

- So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them about how God cares for them and what kind of directions they get from God's Spirit.
- Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"Lamb of God" arr. Lloyd Larson

"Instructions for People on the Inside"

When Jesus is talking to disciples, we should listen.

What would you is the hardest task you've ever been given? What has been the hardest thing you've ever had to achieve or do?

Once you have that firmly in mind, now think about how you navigated that task. **What directions did you use?** What were the guidelines? Were the instructions clear or did you have to make it up as you went along?

I think about my cooking skills. Let's be clear from the outset: I use the word "skills" very loosely. I can cook some things, but I would hardly call myself a cook. I whip up breakfast for you, several favorite entrees, even a General Hospital cake (seriously, see the recipe; ANYBODY can make that cake).

But all the things I cook happen according to instructions. Instructions I give my hands. Instructions I give my feet. Instructions drawn from the first time to the hundredth time I've made the dish in question. Tips I've picked up along the way. Improvisations circumstances teach me to embrace. All of this instruction pointing toward my real goal of having the dish. Because **all the instruction in the world doesn't matter if I don't actually follow through and cook.** That means errors, forgetting ingredients, power failures, missing pans, learning to wait, learning what really works, taste-testing, starting over, even sharing.

Huh. That actually sounds like faith.

You see, in John's version of the run up to the crucifixion, Jesus knows things are about to become bad, really bad and complicated. So, he's trying to prepare the disciples for what's coming. Earnestly, Jesus could've been saying all of this to us.

Read: John 14:1-14 (CEB)
Jesus' Instructions to the Disciples

We use that first part in funerals a lot. And we should. It's comforting to think that there's space with our name on it waiting for us. We're in. God's ready for us.

But remember that Jesus is talking to the disciples and is doing so before the arrest, trial, suffering and death. And all of that is going to seem *normal* compared to the resurrection. They are going to need help. And so Jesus spends John 13-17 giving them instructions.

He tells them to wash one another's feet. He tells them to love one another. He tells them to pray and to pay attention. He tells them at one point to await the coming of the Holy Spirit to them. But the most disturbing thing I believe Jesus says is here in chapter 14. **Specifically, Jesus claims** that "whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father."

Errr...what?

This hits on so many levels. I mean, it's like the movie "Spiderman" says, "With great power comes great responsibility." If I'm capable of doing what Jesus did and more, then it is appalling how little I've exercised this God-given power for God's purposes.

But then there's the question of *ability*. Last time I checked, I'm not walking on water and all of you suffering from chronic illness or pain are going to be sorely disappointed at my not-so-healing touch. I've said grace with the best of them and still found I had to go to the store for more food. Any Lazarus sleeping in our cemetery can rest easy.

Then there's the reality that a sentence like this, a prophecy like this from the mouth of Christ doesn't just measure my trust in God. It's a measure of how much I believe in *myself*.

Because I have to ask: **given the state of world, the state of our affairs, the state of my own heart and mind, WHY does God believe in me, believe in us, so?**

But I think it's easy to miss that we aren't being asked to be *Jesus*. We being asked to do greater works.

What is God even *talking* about?!

God is referencing something we've talked about over and over. The task of reconciling the world IS bigger than Jesus' earthly ministry. It was always going to be. In order for us to be a part of what God is doing (and not just recipients) the ministry was always going to move beyond, even evolve. That's why Jesus promises later the advocacy of the Holy Spirit. But importantly, Jesus promises his very own help when we pray. In other words, **it's not all up to us, but it does involve us.**

Great. Fantastic. We are a part of saving the world. Nothing like a light side hustle to give one's life meaning or anything. But what does that really look like? How are we (really) to fulfill the promise Jesus himself seems to see in the disciples, the promise Jesus sees in us?

Read: Philippians 2:1-11 (CEB)
Christian living means imitating Christ.

When we lived in Idaho, one of the things we ran into **was the Mormon Church.** Where we lived in Rexburg, that was the only option for 50 miles. So we went. I should say, we were an oddity in this town for a number of reasons. But one of them was that we were not a part of the Latter-Day Saints and so that meant very frequent visits by the famous pairs of missionaries to our house. It meant going their church and getting a deep dive into their theology. This included the idea that God was human at one point and ascended. That Jesus came and did the same thing. The implication was that we could also. While this is a conversation for

another time, I will simply say here, "No, that's not what the Bible teaches." But it does teach quite a bit about imitating God's example, imitating Christ's example.

Paul is writing to a church community in trouble. And while under the threat of scrutiny and arrest, Paul writes from prison and employs the root word for "joy" fourteen times. Where is this optimism coming from? What is driving his belief that we can pull this off after all?

First, he addresses motivation. Let's face it: it makes a huge difference if the reason I'm helping you because I love you versus I'm trying to make myself look good. But then he goes on to cite the example Jesus gives us to live by: radical submission to God's will.

I want to be clear: I'm not suggesting we all go out and put crosses in our yards and make our crucifixion plans. But the choice becomes simple and the stakes incredibly high when we boil down the question to whose will is more important: mine or God's?

That's not a novice question. That's not a question for someone new to the faith or just exploring. That's the kind of question you ask someone who's walked with Jesus for a *while*. That's why I think it's wrong to use any of John 14 as part of some program for proselytizing or beating up non-believers. It's a word for disciples. People on the inside. And when Jesus is talking to disciples, we should listen. We should act. We should be mindful of our responsibility, our obligation, our mission. We should be mindful of our power to transform the world and each other. We have our instructions, y'all. For God's sake let us follow them.

For Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Hallelujah!

Song of Reflection

"God, be the Love to Search and Keep Me (O Christ, Surround Me)" GTG #543

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This

is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

(10am only) Offertory

"Worthy Is the Lamb" arr. Lloyd Larson; Duet: Noah and Lora Melton

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Blessing

(text is for the ONLINE service)

Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Service of Communion

- Say: Let us first show we belong to a faith larger than ourselves. Let us say what we believe:

**I believe in God the Father Almighty—
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost
Born of the virgin, Mary
Suffered under Pontius Pilate
Was crucified, dead, and buried
He descended into Hell
The third day he rose again from the dead
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father Almighty
From thence he will judge
the living and the dead
I believe in the Holy Ghost
The holy catholic Church
The communion of saints
The forgiveness of sins
The resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

- Say: The Lord be with you...and also with you. God invites us to the Table as we are, given who we are! God invites us to the Table even though we may think we don't belong. Yet God invites us, does NOT force us, because God still loves

us. So let us answer together as one Church across time, across our homes, across our various situations, and eat and drink of what the Lord offers. Let us pray...

- "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" GTG #469

Lord, listen to your children praying.

Lord, send your spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying.

Send us love; send us power; send us grace.

- Holy God, First and foremost, Hallelujah! Happy Easter! And thank you for another day to celebrate your resurrection. Thank you for the rains, showing us how your love and mercy comes to us. Thank you for the brilliance of the sunlight and the bursting of Spring all around us. Thank you for the strength and the will to live and the empowerment of your blessings. Thank you for embarrassing riches and for choices we will never have to make. Thank you for our ability to choose, Great God. And with all of that, thank you for your instructions.
- Thank you for making your will known. Now as we take in what we are to do, lend us the courage to follow through. Help us to take on living that miraculous kind of life. A life that transforms. A life that begs possibilities. A life that forgives. A life that believes in truth. A life that hopes. A life, Dear Lord, that loves. Let us not only mimic Jesus on occasion. Let every occasion and moment become an opportunity to practice what your Spirit gives to us.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Teach us to live lives weeding out apathy, selfishness, cravenness, callousness, and evil. We pray this not only for ourselves, but for so many that we can name... (take time to name your own prayers)
- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

- (take the bread in your hands) On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread and having blessed it he broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, "This is my Body given for you. As often as you eat of it, do this in remembrance of me." (break and eat some of the bread)
- (take the cup with juice in your hands) In the same manner he took the cup, and, having blessed it, he gave it to his disciples and said, "This cup represents the new covenant sealed by my blood for the forgiveness of many. All of you drink of it." (drink some of the juice)
- Say: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's saving death until He comes. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.
- The only proper response to the grace of God is gratitude. Let us pray together with the whole Church:
- **Pray: Thank you, God, for making us your kingdom. Help us live out that thanks by being a refuge to all you call us to. Thank you for including us at your Table. Help us do the same with ours. In the great name of Jesus Christ we pray this together. Amen.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) "Your Only Son (Lamb of God)" GTG #518

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

When Jesus is talking to disciples, we should listen.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guide your hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Sing: "There Is Power in the Blood" (Refrain)
CEL #329

**There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder working pow'r
In the blood of the Lamb.**

**There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder working pow'r
In the precious blood of the Lamb.**

(10am only) Postlude

"Hallelujah, What A Savior!" arr. Tom Fettke

General Hospital Cake

Take a yellow cake mix and combine the ingredients according to the box directions.

Add:

a bag of semi-sweet chocolate chips

8 oz of sour cream

a *large* box of *instant* chocolate pudding (or one and a half small boxes)

Grease pan and bake about 10-20 minutes longer than the yellow cake mix box calls for (typically).