

Easter Day



St. Mark's At Home

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ST. MARK'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Welcome to St. Mark's At Home! This packet is our effort to help you bring worship and spiritual formation into your home. It is a menu to choose from, not an outline to follow from beginning to end. We know the merry-go-round of some households are operating at break-neck speeds of stress while others have twiddled beyond thumb and index finger to previously unknown depths of boredom.

This is offered as a gift, with no strings or expectations, and not meant to be a burden. Some resources are recommended for specific ages, some are for all; some will change each week, some things will stay the same. Choose what is a gift to you wherever you are right now and ignore the rest. We are all in this together.

What' Inside

- Gathering: Suggestions for Virtual Worship
- Barton Hills Easter Procession
- Prayers for Spiritual Communion
- Suggestions for your Table
- Youth and Children
- Music and Arts

Gathering (Suggestions On Preparing for Virtual Worship)

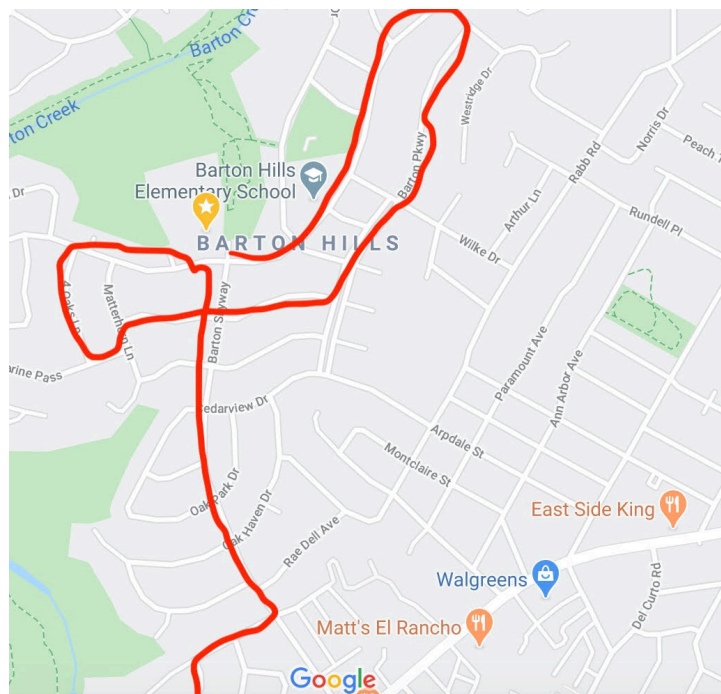
Worship is intended for in-person gatherings in physical space, which is why it is not easy or natural to worship virtually. Our brains and bodies encounter screens in very different ways than our brains and bodies encounter physical spaces. So while we wait; while we rightfully long to gather in-person for worship once again, here are a few practical suggestions for engaging virtual expressions of worship in the meantime:

- Wear white or bright colors to celebrate the resurrection!
- On whatever device you're watching on, take a few moments to shut down all other running programs and applications. Temporarily disable your push notifications. Place your phones in another room on silent or Do Not Disturb mode.
- Wash your hands and face, like an Old Testament temple priest. Today we are washing our hands to stay healthy, but it is also a way of signaling through your senses that you are preparing to worship.
- Light a candle--a symbol of Christ's presence with you wherever you are. You can even prepare a small home chapel. Clean off a table. Set out a cross. You are not alone even if you are alone.
- Take a few deep breaths and say a short prayer to prepare your heart to "enter" a different kind of space. We recommend the Collect for Purity:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Barton Hills Easter Procession

- At the conclusion of our livestream (probably about 10:45 a.m.), Fr. Zac is going to process out of the church, ring the tower bell, and then continue the Easter procession all through the neighborhood with the Sanctus bells! If you live in the neighborhood, listen for the bells and come out to your front yard and join in the Easter proclamation! Grab bells, pots & pans, and whatever other holy noisemakers you can find and join in the noisemaking with Fr. Zac as he walks by, and if you shout out the Easter proclamation, **“Alleluia! Christ is Risen!”** Fr. Zac will respond with **“The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!”**
- For your planning purposes, below is the route Fr. Zac will take from the church all the way back to his house. Fr. Zac will hop back on **Facebook Live** at the beginning of the procession to share greetings with those who live further away. Sadly, you will only be able to participate in-person if you live within walking distance of the route.
- We discourage anyone from driving, and we encourage all who do greet Fr. Zac to adhere to all current social and physical distancing expectations laid out by the City of Austin. We will share resurrection joy from at least six feet distance from one another!



Prayers for Spiritual Communion

In their home this afternoon, Fr. Zac and his household will celebrate Holy Communion surrounded by photos of you. You may wish to share bread and wine in your own home, in echo of communion. You may wish to say prayers for the spiritual reception of communion (see below). You may simply be gladdened to know that your parish priest celebrates Holy Communion on this most holy day with you on his heart.



Spiritual Communion

Celebrating Holy Eucharist has been a core part of Christian practice since its beginning--and particularly at Easter. However, throughout history there have been times that faithful believers could not receive the bread and wine or even, as in our own day, gather to be a community in communion. For times such as these, we have the practice of Spiritual Communion. This is a way to express our longing to be in communion with God and each other and recognize that in a very real way, Christ is always present to us.



Prayers and Suggestions for Your Table

Act of Reception i.e. Prayer for Spiritual Communion

In union, blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, (and remembering particularly my own parish and those worshipping there) I long to offer praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory. And particularly for the blessings given me... I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen

Suggestions for your household table

Whereas the Maundy Thursday Agape meal is intentionally sparse, the Easter Feast is, well, a feast! It is a day of radical abundance. Decorate your table with greenery, flowers, and symbols of new life, such as decorated eggs and butterflies, light candles to celebrate the light of Christ. If you have given up any foods for Lent, include them in your Easter celebration. As appropriate and possible, include family and friends in your meal using telephones and WiFi! You might even have them “with” you as you and they dine.



A suggested prayer for use prior to a festive meal:

*Loving God, today we offer our thanks and a joyful Alleluia!
For the food we eat and the table around which we gather - even in spirit...
For all those we love, especially those we cannot see in person right now...
For the gifts of the earth, for Springtime, rain, sun, and reminders of abundance...
And most especially for the gift of your Son, the Risen Christ.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Resources for Children and Youth

HAPPY EASTER!

- **Sunrise breakfast** - Get up early and prepare an Easter breakfast. Open the curtains and let the morning light come in. Wake your children and tell them it's Easter morning. Have them shout "Christ is risen!" when they see the sunlight. Tell them that today will be a special day of celebration because Jesus is alive!
- **Read** - Spend a few minutes sharing the Easter story from a children's storybook or Bible over your breakfast. Focus on the surprise and joy of the discovery of the empty tomb. Discuss the various characters in the story and what they must have been feeling that day.
- **Dress up** - Just because you're not going out today doesn't mean you can't dress up for Easter worship! Put on what you would have worn for church today. Choose brightly-colored clothes for the kids. Let them have fun with getting dressed up.
- **Take a family photo** - Take a photo together as a family to commemorate your Easter at home. Share it with friends and family members that you are unable to see today.
- **Share Easter joy with neighbors** - What can you do to share your Easter joy with your neighbors today? You may write "alleluia's" and Easter greetings in chalk on your sidewalk for passers-by to read. You may decide to hang something decorative on your front door, or place some homemade artwork in a front-facing window. You could even go on a bike/wagon/stroller parade around your neighborhood, ringing bells, shaking noisemakers, and shouting "Happy Easter! Jesus is alive!" Have fun with this. You're announcing good news the world needs right now.
- **Dye Easter eggs** - Follow [these simple instructions](#) for creating beautifully-dyed Easter eggs. Display and enjoy!

Resources for Children and Youth

- **Redecorate crosses** - Remember the crosses that you made for Good Friday? Time to redecorate them for Easter! Depending on the materials you used, you may want to use paint or markers to recolor them, or cut out some paper flowers and paste them on. Talk about how the sadness and darkness of Good Friday is transformed into Easter joy and beauty.
- **Feast** - Enjoy a big Easter meal as a family. Give everyone a job to do, from preparing the food in the kitchen to setting the table. Use flowers as a centerpiece or drawings from the kids as placemats. Try to incorporate some of the kids' favorite foods in the meal. And be sure to enjoy anything you had been fasting from during Lent!
- **Dance** - Play some of your family's favorite music in the home. Sing loud and dance together!
- **For Godly Play and Storymakers, follow this link:** <https://www.stmarksaustin.org/childrens-resources>

YOUTH

- Sunday nights, 8pm: Zoom check-in and prayer:
<https://zoom.us/j/655860629?pwd=Tm00dks4cC9QSTZYV1NybGtKdWZ1UT09>

Music and the Arts

MUSIC

A Classic Easter Hymn

It's hard to imagine Easter without the glorious hymn *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*:

King's College, Cambridge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA_ggfwGOZQ

Based on verses from Matthew, Acts, 1 Peter, and Revelation, it began as the 14th-century Latin hymn *Surrexit Christus hodie*. Our English translation is an amalgam of 18th-century versions by Irish priest John Walsh, English writer John Arnold, and Charles Wesley. It has been associated with the tune *Easter Hymn* since the early 1700s.

The current version of the hymn is a masterpiece of sophisticated simplicity. The solid theology of the text is set to music outlining a C major chord, while the repeated Alleluias are given a florid melodic pattern. It's almost impossible to sing without smiling!

A striking feature of the hymn is that its text is written in the present tense. This is powerful because it places us in community with those who witnessed the resurrection in their own lifetimes, and reaffirms our own hope of being set free from death. "Made like him, like him we rise" conveys a hope that brings God's power and new life now, lifting us from our current situation into everlasting life.

I love seeing the joy on the faces of this congregation from a popular British television show that features hymn singing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sj9ljVsfk>

And it's impossible to top John Rutter's glorious arrangement, sung here by the Choir of St. Thomas Church in New York:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybykekAZi78>

Music and the Arts

ART

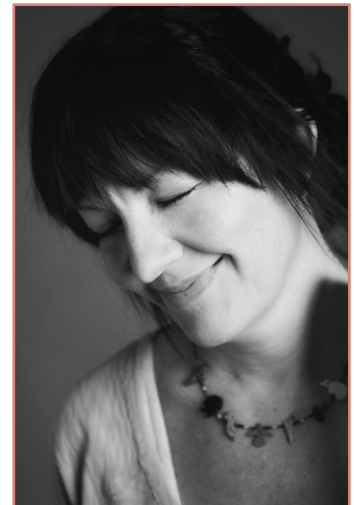
Spent some time meditating on the image on the following page. Begin by listing all the things you notice. Don't rush to interpretation.

Only after you have spent some time listing, begin asking yourself questions like the following:

- Why did the artist decide to make the image this way instead of that way? Why did they include this detail instead of that one? In what ways is the artist telling this story in a new way than I've heard before? Who might all the characters in the image be? Who or what is missing from this image?
- Finally: What might God be inviting me to consider through this image?

The art on the following page, was commissioned by St. Mark's and created for our congregation by parishioner Christie Stockstill, titled *The Light*. This piece is meant to be celebratory. The lines are a bit curvier, the overall piece is more colorful and there are symbols of life and rebirth.

“As an artist, my strength is fine art photography, but I love art of all genres and media and have recently begun teaching myself to draw and paint. What is one to do, though, when she gets a request for five art pieces created around the themes of Holy Week in the midst of a pandemic and an order to stay-at-home? One must get creative, so I gathered the tools I had, ordered more art paper and got to work.” - Christie



Music and the Arts



The Light by Christie Stockstill
