

During Lent and Easter, we are inviting our congregation to spend time in God’s word. Once a week, we will guide this time with a devotional reading from Scripture and a reflection from someone within our church family. Begin by centering yourself in prayer; ask God to reveal something new and speak to you today. Next, spend time reading the Scripture passage for the day, noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through the text for *you*. Then, move to reading the reflection shared below. Below, you will see that we have also included a piece of visual art for you to consider as you reflect on the passage. I (Pastor Ashley) encourage you to actually get out your Bible and engage with the text on your own first, before reading the reflections shared below. Also, we would love to hear what God was saying to you through this passage! Comment on our [Facebook post](#) for today with what stood out to you from the Scripture passage.

Easter Devotional: Week One

Step One: *Prior to reading the Scripture passage, spend a moment centering yourself in prayer.*

Step Two: Our Scripture reading today is **John 20:1-18**. Read through the text (maybe even twice), noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through this text for *you* today.

Step Three: Now, enjoy this reflection from our Louise Sargent:

Resurrection Through the Senses



"Prevenient" by Hannah Garrity
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When God comes into our lives, He comes in wholeness and completeness. “Behold! If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5: 17)

We can look at the Easter story and see Christ’s resurrection through all the senses.

John 20:1-10.

Can’t you just imagine Peter and John arriving at the tomb, panting and out of breath? They see the stone rolled away; they see the empty tomb. They see the linen cloths and the napkin, folded up neatly. We don’t know about Peter (yet), but “the other disciple” (who is most likely John) “SAW and he believed.” (v.9)

We’ve often heard that “seeing is believing”—and for John, it was. For him, when he went into the tomb, everything fell into place—he understood (or began to understand) how the prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus.

John 20:1-2, 11-18

Mary, too, saw the empty tomb. She reacted—running to tell the disciples, looking into the tomb, seeing and talking with the angels, weeping over his stolen body—and when Jesus spoke her name, she realized that this was indeed the risen Christ. (v.16)

Names are powerful things. Adam’s first job in the garden of Eden was to name the animals. The Tuesday morning women’s Bible study group just finished a study series on the names of God. When God calls our names, we know it is His voice (John 10: 4). For Mary, Easter happened when she HEARD Jesus.

Luke 24:13-35

The disciples who were walking on the road to Emmaus didn’t recognize the risen Jesus when they saw him or when they heard him, for they talked together quite a while—long enough to walk about 7 miles—without knowing who he was. But when he handed them bread—ah! Then they recognized him (v. 30). In a scene that is reminiscent of communion, they break bread with Jesus and they discover Easter! In Psalm 34: 8 we are told to “TASTE and see that the Lord is good!”.

Luke 24:36-39; John 20:24-28

On Easter evening, Jesus mysteriously, suddenly, entered the room where the disciples were gathered, discussing the startling events of the day. When they first saw him, they thought he was a ghost and they were terrified! But Jesus reassured them. “TOUCH me and see!” he said (Luke 24: 39). Later, Thomas, not being there, refused to believe based on their testimony. However, when Jesus appeared to them again, Jesus spoke to Thomas directly. “Bring your finger here,” he said. “Bring your hand here and put it into my side!” For Thomas, it was the physical contact that convinced him. “My Lord and My God,” he replied (John 20:28).

Exodus 30:22-25; Mark 16:1-5; John 11:38; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16

When God instructed Moses to institute worship in the Tabernacle, he gave a specific recipe for the oil with which to anoint the priests. This mixture of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus (cane), and cassia was specifically applied to priests and was a symbol of sanctification and dedication. Later, this anointing oil was used to designate kings and potential kings of Israel. It had a distinctive odor, one that the Hebrews/Israelites/Jews would have recognized.

The women who came to the tomb on Easter morning, were bringing spices to use on Jesus’ body. Their bundles would have smelled strongly. Jesus had been in the tomb three days. His body would have smelled strongly, too, but in a different way! But the tomb did NOT SMELL of decay—the women, Peter, John, and Mary all went into the tomb at different times, or at least got close enough to look inside—and they were greeted with neatly folded linen and angels, not bad odors.

The Hebrew word “Messiah” means “Anointed One”—referring to the Christ, the Redeemer, the Great High Priest, he whose Kingdom is to come. The implication is one of sweet smells. And we are commanded to be the “sweet smell” of the Messiah (2 Corinthians 2: 14). To those who are being saved, we are the SMELL of life that leads to life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Kingdom New Testament translation)

If anyone is in the Messiah, there is a new creation! Old things have gone, and look—everything has become new! EASTER has radicalized the world. When Christ rises in our hearts, we are new creations! We experience the world in new ways, through all of our senses. Immerse yourself in God, in the risen Lord, the Christ, the Messiah. Taste His goodness, smell the fragrance of Life, see His holiness, feel the wind of the Spirit, hear His voice. Enjoy him with all of you, all of your senses, all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- Louise Sargent

Step Four: Close in prayer, thanking God for what has been revealed to you today and asking the Lord to help you carry it into this day and the days ahead. Here is a prayer written by Louise that you may use to close your devotional time today:

Dear Risen Lord,

Come reign in my heart and rule in my life. Help me experience and rejoice in you with all that I am, all my senses, all my thoughts, all my emotions. Thank you for the new life of spring, the new hope of everyday, and the New Life Eternal you have purchased through your sacrificial death. Live in and through me in this world, now and forevermore. AMEN.

Step Five: Join us as we continue reading God’s Word this week! Here are the daily Scripture texts for further reading:

- **Thursday, Apr 8** – Luke 24:1-12
- **Friday, Apr 9** – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
- **Saturday, Apr 10** – Psalm 16
- **Sunday, Apr 11** – Matthew 28:16:20
- **Monday, Apr 12**– John 20:19-23
- **Tuesday, Apr 13** – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21