

**Monday**

Read Acts chapters 1 and 2

As we wrap up this section of the Church's story, we read both chapters so that we can get the overall sense of what is going on in the birth of the Church.

It has been a roller coaster two months for the disciples following Jesus. They were with Jesus night and day, traveling with him as he taught, healed, prayed, and was the very presence of God in their midst. They marched with him into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They shared a Passover meal with him – the most important meal of the year. But then a few hours later Jesus was arrested. He was given a show trial, convicted, brutalized, and executed by crucifixion. They were devastated and in fear for their own lives. Then Jesus is resurrected – transformed from death to new life – and visits with them and teaches them what is to come. And then they wait. Jesus appears again. Again, they wait. There are weeks of waiting with uncertainty. Jesus appears to them a final time, instructs them that the Holy Spirit is coming, and then ascends into heaven before them.

A few days later they are all gathered in a large room and the Holy Spirit comes upon them with the sound of a mighty wind and like individual flames resting on each one of them. They start telling the story of the resurrected Jesus in all the languages of the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Near and Middle East. The crowds in the streets celebrating a Jewish festival are stunned and want to know what is going on. Peter tells them that it is the birth of the new age of the resurrected Jesus Christ. He tells them to turn away from their own ways and from evil and to turn to God. He tells them to be baptized to signify that they are giving their lives over to God. About 3,000 people do proclaim Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Messiah, are baptized and join the disciples. They then form a community that gets together often. It isn't just a one-and-done, it is a way of life.

Today, reflect upon how Jesus and His Church have become your way of life. Take stock with a smile and a glad heart.

**Tuesday**

Read Acts 2:42-47

Luke lays out four essentials that the new community of Jesus followers practice regularly. They are devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. The sermon went deeper with teaching and fellowship than it did with breaking bread and prayer, but take a moment and reflect on which one appeals to you most. Which one(s) do you prefer to shy away from? Pray that God would help you, and all of us, grow deeper with all four areas that we can be the congregation God is calling us to be.

**Wednesday**

Read Psalm 133

To mutually care for one another is to sacrifice our own preferences, comforts, and even our own needs for the needs of others. How are we as a community and as individuals sacrificing of ourselves to meet the needs of others as it relates to the big issues confronting us today – the pandemic, systemic racism, and economic recession? Are we (you and me!) trying to maximize our own liberty and our own preferences? Or are we trying to glorify Jesus by making decisions that are in the best interests of others? What should we lift up and celebrate? What should we reform?

Following Jesus was not and is not an individualistic or private pursuit but requires us to be gathered in community – physically, online, on the phone – to share the gifts of the Spirit and lift our voices and tell and sing God's praises together. And not just gathered together looking inwards, but as a group that looks to others outside the community. Otherwise, how could the people outside their fellowship have a favorable opinion of them as v. 47 says? Secret meetings don't garner public interest and acclaim.

**Thursday**

Read Luke 11:1-4

The early Church would offer spontaneous prayers and set prayers – like the Lord's Prayer. They would offer psalms as prayers. Their prayer life was rich and diverse. If you feel a bit stuck in prayer, why not try something new? Go to [cooks creekchurch.org/sermons](http://cooks creekchurch.org/sermons) and scroll down to the prayer resources heading. You can try something new and experience God's presence!

**Friday**

Please read Acts 3:1-26 in preparation for Sunday worship.