



FaithWestwood UMC

April 12 to May 24, 2026

Our Post-Easter sermon series, **Revisiting the Road Less Traveled**, invites us to explore the stories following the resurrection of Jesus and the start of the church. This series also draws inspiration from the books, *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck (1978) and *Exploring the Road Less Traveled* by Alice & Walden Howard (1985), exploring spirituality, psychology, and personal growth.

This guide may be utilized by FaithGroups and/or Individuals.

This guide follows the **SOAP** Bible study method (**Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer**) which is ideal for beginners and for mature Christians.

If you would like to connect with a FaithGroup on-site and/or online, please check out the latest **GROW Catalog** on our website faithwestwood.com

Post-Easter Church Challenges / look at the **end** of each lesson

Family Activities / see **INSERT**

Mission Offerings & Activities / look for the **"GOLDEN"** banner on **back page**



© 2026, Study Guide for Post-Easter, April 12 to May 24.
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Family Activities by Next Gen & Family Engagement Director Leah Dinoso

Week of April 12 / Camping Sunday

Discipline: Delaying & Accepting – After the resurrection of Jesus, he appeared to his disciples, yet Thomas was not with them and asks for evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead. When do you need to have faith to believe where you have not seen? And where do you need discipline to avoid procrastinating and to accept responsibility in your faith journey?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share when you have experienced a “Doubting Thomas” moment where you really needed to see to believe?

Gracious Lord Jesus, you meet me in this place today. You invite me to set aside my fears and doubts and to believe. Grant grace when I struggle in my faith. Inspire me this day and always. AMEN.

Scripture

John 20:19-29 (NIV) / ¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you!”** ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, **“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”** ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, **“Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”**

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, **“We have seen the Lord!”** But he said to them, **“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”**

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you!”** ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, **“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”**

²⁸ Thomas said to him, **“My Lord and my God!”** ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, **“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

- **Weekly question:** Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?
- How does the phrase **“Peace be with you”** tie the two appearances of Jesus together?

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?

(Week of April 12)

- Even with the doors locked, Jesus appeared among his disciples. How did the **disciples respond** to seeing the **Risen Christ** in these two scenes?
- How does the response of **Thomas** differ from the other disciples? How is he able to articulate his feelings?
- In the two appearances, how do the **words of Jesus** following “**Peace be with you**” give the disciples (and Thomas) the words they most need to hear?

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- How do the words of Jesus in **verse 29** inspire **faith** under difficult and/or challenging circumstances?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** In the book, Peck recognizes the need for **discipline** and writes, “**Discipline is the basic set of tools we require to solve life’s problems. Without discipline we can solve nothing.**” How does this relate to **spirituality**?
- From message: **As we become more disciplined, we become more *discipled*.** How do you see this being lived out in your **discipleship**?
- **Discipline** often involves **delaying gratification** (this only leads to suffering) and **accepting responsibility** (for your problem and your faith). How might these inspire us to be more **disciplined** and more **discipled**?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing an old camp song:
♪ Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah.
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Oh, Lord, kum ba yah.
Come by here, my Lord, come by here. Come by here, my Lord, come by here.
Come by here, my Lord, come by here. Oh, Lord, come by here. AMEN.
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Write down the names of Jesus which speak to you the most, and then visit with 2-3 others about the names which speak to them.

Week of April 19 / Creation Care Sunday

Discipline: Facing Reality & Balancing – On the Road to Emmaus, Jesus comes alongside some disciples who were still processing everything that had happened. Later, Jesus was revealed to them. How has the Risen Christ been revealed to you? And where do you need discipline to seek the truth and find balance with your faith?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share when & how the Risen Christ has been revealed to you along a path in your spiritual journey.

God of all Creation, You are always creating and recreating! Allow us to see Your hand at work in our families, our church, and our community. As the Risen Christ is revealed to us yet again, may our hearts be burning for him! AMEN.

Scripture

Luke 24:13-35 (NIV) / ¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He asked them, **“What are you discussing together as you walk along?”** They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, **“Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”** ¹⁹ **“What things?”** he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. **“He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”**

²⁵ He said to them, **“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”** ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, **“Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.”** So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, **“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”** ³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, **“It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”** ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

(Week of April 19)

- **Weekly question:** Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?
- Transitioning from **Scripture** to **Observation**, consider the **Who, What, Where, and Why** of this passage.

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?
- Gospel writer Luke introduces **additional believers/disciples** in this passage – how does this affirm the impact of Jesus in their present and in their future?
- According to **verses 33-35**, after their experience, what did they do next?
- **Bonus:** Search the **internet and/or Bible** to discover how many **post-resurrection appearances** Jesus made to his disciples.

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- Thinking about those difficult days following Jesus' crucifixion, imagine yourself on the **Road to Emmaus** – what might keep you from **recognizing Jesus**? What questions might you have for this **"stranger"** who walked with you?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** In the book, **discipline** includes **facing reality** (which means always telling the truth and seeking the truth) and **balancing** (which allows one to take the frustrations with the blessings). How are these important for your **personal & spiritual growth**?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing verse 1 of UMH #92, **For the Beauty of the Earth**:

♪ For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies.
Lord of all to thee we raise this, our hymn, of grateful praise. AMEN.

- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Have you looked at the **Post-Easter brochure**? While the Lenten brochure included an insert with Mission Projects, the Post-Easter brochure includes an insert with **Service Projects**. Look through it noting service opportunities in which you would like to participate, then do it.

Week of April 26 / Love in Action Sunday

Love: Defining & Sacrificing – Peter had denied Christ three times, and now his reinstatement includes “do you love me?” asked three times. Where do you need to put your love into action? And where do you need to define the kind of love that is sacrificing itself for self and others?

Optional Ice Breaker: Reflect on moments and circumstances in which someone would use your full and/or given name!

Loving Jesus, when I betray you with my thoughts, words, or actions, you come before me with the words, “Do you love me?” Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Help me to show you my love with everything I do and speak. AMEN.

Scripture

John 21:15-19 (NIV) / ¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, **“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”** **“Yes, Lord,”** he said, **“you know that I love you.”** Jesus said, **“Feed my lambs.”** ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, **“Simon son of John, do you love me?”** He answered, **“Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”** Jesus said, **“Take care of my sheep.”**

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, **“Simon son of John, do you love me?”** Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, **“Do you love me?”** He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, **“Feed my sheep.”** ¹⁸ **Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”** ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, **“Follow me!”**

- **Weekly question:** Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?
- Think about the significant interactions between **Jesus and Peter** (call story, confession of Christ, three denials, etc.) How does this scene bring **reconciliation**?
- **Verses 15-17:** Jesus asks Simon Peter three times, **“do you love me?”** using variations with the **questions** as well as his **responses**. Discuss these **nuances** and how they emphasize how Peter needed to respond three times.
- **Verses 18-19:** Jesus reveals information about Peter, including his death. Use internet and/or Bible resources to discover more about this.

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?

(Week of April 26)

- Imagine being Peter in this scene – how would you respond to Jesus in these moments? What might need to be **healed** from your own journey and experiences (fears, doubts, denials)?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** Peck writes, “**Love is what provides the motive, the energy for discipline.**” And “**...love is the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth.**” How have you discovered this to be **true** for your own **journey and growth**?
- Share a time in the past or present when you needed to make **sacrifices** for someone you **love**.

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing verse 4 of UMH #384, **Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**:
 - ♪ **Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place.
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise! AMEN.**
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** How might you put your **love in action** this week? **Keep it simple:** phone a friend or write a note to someone who is homebound or recovering from an illness or surgery. **Keep it challenging:** invite a friend out for coffee or lunch (your treat) or go shopping for the FaithWorks Pantry and/or a gift basket for Family Ministry.

Week of May 3 / Graduation Recognition & Holy Communion

Love: Taking Risks – We step back into Gospel time and remember when Jesus promised the Holy Spirit and urged the disciples to love him by keeping his commandments. How do these words inspire you on this day? And where in your life do you need to take risks to love like Jesus?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a time when you took risks for the sake of love!

**Loving God, Christ, and Holy Spirit, I am never alone in relationship with you.
Inspire me to keep your commandments as I love and serve in your Holy name.
Because you live, may I also live. AMEN.**

Scripture

John 14:15-21 (NIV) / ¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

- **Weekly question:** Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?
- Jesus is preparing his disciples for what is to come. What **specific instructions** did he give his disciples? Which **commandments** did Jesus want the disciples to keep?
- How are these **words echoed** in John’s letters? Read portions of **John 1, 2, and 3** for additional affirmation of Jesus’ words.

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- Concerning **commands of Jesus, loving God, loving neighbor, and/or loving enemies:** which are most challenging for you?
- Concerning **Advocate** and **Spirit of Truth:** which names do you most claim for the Holy Spirit, and why?

(Week of May 3)

- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** Peck writes how **love** comes with risks: **loss, independence, commitment, & confrontation**. How does genuine **love** motivate us?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing **Into My Heart**:
 - ♪ **Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.
Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.**
 - Out of my heart, out of my heart, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus.
Shine out today, shine out alway; shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus.**
 - AMEN.**
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Think about someone in your life who is very difficult and/or hard to love. How might the commands of Jesus to “love each other” / “love God and love your neighbor” inspire you to pursue forgiveness and/or reconciliation?

Week of May 10 / Festival of the Christian Home / Mother's Day

Growth & Religion – Paul’s journey to Athens discovers a religious community needing encouragement to believe in the LORD God and in his son risen from the dead. Do your beliefs need a faith-infusion? And where are you personally growing and spiritually growing?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a recent “aha” moment in your spiritual journey with something you have learned about God, Christ, and/or Spirit.

Holy and Everlasting God, there are times when my faith needs to be revived, refreshed, and renewed. Help me to grow personally and spiritually in this post-Easter season. AMEN.

Scripture

Acts 17:22-31 (NIV) / ²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “**People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.** ²³**For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.**

²⁴“**The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.** ²⁵**And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.** ²⁶**From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.** ²⁷**God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.** ²⁸‘**For in him we live and move and have our being.**’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹“**Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill.** ³⁰**In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.** ³¹**For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”**

- **Weekly question:** Which **words / phrases / verses** stand out to you?

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?
- Look up more information about the following: **first century Athens / Areopagus**
- In **verses 22-23**, what does the Apostle Paul **see** which leads him to share with the people?
- In **verses 24-31**, how does the Apostle Paul speak to the **theology of God and Christ**?

(Week of May 10)

- What does it mean to be **God's offspring**?
- What **proof & evidence** of the Risen Christ was consistently revealed?

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- On your spiritual journey, which attributes of **God** encouraged your belief & faith?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** Peck says that religion is **Our understanding of our world and our place in it**. In which ways do you **agree** with this statement, and in which ways might you **disagree**?
- In the early stages of spiritual growth, it is a journey of knowledge and not of faith, and Peck writes how **“the path to holiness lies through questioning everything.”** Which questions of **religion** and **faith** continue to be on your mind and heart?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing the chorus of **Old Time Religion**:

♪ **Give me that old time religion, give me that old time religion**
Give me that old time religion, it's good enough for me. AMEN.
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Do you have a neighbor and/or friend from a different world religion? Spend a few minutes talking about his or her faith tradition. This is not a time to proselytize (convert someone); this is a time for you to learn more about someone else's faith background and tradition.

Week of May 17 / Heritage Sunday

Grace: Miracles – As Jesus prepares to make his ascension into heaven, he instructs them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth? Where is Jesus inviting us to claim his miracles? And which miracles of spiritual growth do you most need to claim right now?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share any “miracles” you have experienced and/or you have witnessed in your life.

Risen Lord Jesus, as you equipped your disciples to be your apostles, equip me to be your witness in my neighborhood, in my community, and beyond. And forgive me when my eyes gaze into the sky a bit too long waiting for you! AMEN.

Scripture

Acts 1:1-11 (NIV) / 1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: **“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, **“Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”**

⁷He said to them: **“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹**“Men of Galilee,”** they said, **“why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”**

- **Weekly question:** Which words / phrases / verses stand out to you?
- Which words and/or phrases **connect** Luke’s Gospel with Acts of the Apostles?

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?

(Week of May 17)

- **Verses 1-3:** within the 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, reflect on his appearances to his disciples (which are now called apostles).
- **Verses 4-8:** which **instructions** did Jesus give his apostles? How do the **apostles** respond to Jesus, and what were they most concerned with? What does it mean to be his **witnesses** in **Jerusalem**, in all **Judea & Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth**?
- **Verses 9-11:** as Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles' eyes gaze toward **heaven**. How does the **response** of the two men bring their attention **back to earth**?

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- As you hear these words of scripture, which **questions** come to your mind for Jesus?
- In terms of **spiritual growth** activities, where might your gaze linger a little longer?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** To best understand **grace**, you need to understand the **miracles of spiritual growth** including the **miracle of health, unconscious, serendipity, and evolution**. Which of these miracles pique your interest?
- Peck believes that spiritual growth is not easy as people have a natural inclination **"to keep things the way they are, to cling to the old maps and old ways of doing things, to take the easy path."** How might you take the **road less traveled**?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing **He is Lord**:

♪ **He is Lord! He is Lord! He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord!**
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!
AMEN.
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Explore the FaithWestwood photo albums of the past on-site between worship services. Look through your own albums and think about pictures taken at church and/or around special spiritual occasions.

Week of May 24 / Pentecost Sunday

Grace: Resisting & Welcoming – Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, the Day of Pentecost arrived with a mighty wind and tongues of fire, enabling the apostles to share the Good News of Jesus. Where is the Spirit guiding you this day? And where might you be resisting God's grace and needing to welcome it?

Optional Ice Breaker: Share a recent "Spirit" moment you have experienced and would like to celebrate!

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me! Continue to guide me, lead me, refresh me, inspire me, bless me, and equip me this day. May your Spirit work within me that having been born of water and the Spirit, I may always live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Scripture

Acts 2:1-18 (NIV) / 2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'"

- **Weekly question:** Which words / phrases / verses stand out to you?
- **NOTE:** the Day of Pentecost was on Day 50 after the resurrection, and this was 10 days after the Ascension of Jesus. **Pentecost** coincided with the **Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)**, and it is called the **Birthday of the Church**. Jesus promised this Spirit!

Observation

- **Weekly questions:** Who is the **audience** for these verses? What is the **context** of this passage? What are the primary **themes**? What is **God revealing** in these verses?
- **Verses 1-4:** How is the **Holy Spirit** described here – what did the apostles **hear and see**? How did this really get their attention?
- **Verses 5-13** indicate how there were **many Jews** present in Jerusalem. How did they **respond** to the apostles' speaking their **own languages**?
- **Verses 14-18** represent just a **portion of Peter's address** to the crowd (read **verses 19-36** for the rest). How do **Peter's words connect** with the people and inspire them to **respond** (as indicated in verse 37)?
- **Extra / Optional:** Search the internet for a **first century biblical map** and look up some of the places representing the people mentioned in **verses 7-10**.

Application

- **Weekly questions:** How do these verses **apply to your life** today? What **truths / changes / actions** do these verses invite you to embrace?
- Many Christians long to **"feel" the Spirit** with **wind and/or flame**, yet the Spirit may come in other forms like: a still small voice or whisper, nudge or push, words of scripture or song, and/or even a calm presence in times of stress. How have **you** experienced the Holy Spirit in the past, and how do you long to experience the Spirit?
- The attributes of the Spirit include **equipping, guiding, leading, encouraging** – how do we see some of these attributes on the **Day of Pentecost**?
- **Road Less Traveled thoughts:** Peck acknowledges how people are **resisting grace!** How might Christians be **welcoming grace** through the **Spirit's power & presence**?
- Remembering how those **earliest apostles** responded to the **Spirit**, how might the **Church** best lean into the **Spirit's power & presence** today?

Prayer

- After sharing your **prayer requests**, read or sing the chorus of **Every Time I Feel the Spirit**:

♪ **Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray-ay-ay,
Yes, every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray. AMEN.**
- **Post-Easter Church Challenge:** Reflect on the **50 Days of Prayer** and how the Spirit has been moving in your life. Be creative in expressing the Spirit through a journal entry or even sketching and/or painting one of your roads less traveled. Share your spiritual journey with a friend (or a stranger, if bold enough).

Mission Offerings & Activities

4/12 - Camp Fontanelle. On this *Camp Sunday*, our mission offering will help support *Camp Fontanelle* and their outstanding ministry to kids, adults and families. **Mission Activity:** Celebrate *Earth Day* by signing up today to volunteer in one of our church landscape gardens or the FaithWorks Pantry Garden. And remember, always use an “orange bag” to dispose of your recyclable plastics!

4/19 - Native American Ministries Sunday. Today’s mission offering for United Methodist *Native American Ministries Sunday*, supports Native American congregations and ministries, and funds Native American seminarian education. (Our *Great Plains Conference* is blessed by the leadership of Bishop David Wilson, the first Native American bishop in the United Methodist Church.) **Mission Activity:** Try a new serving opportunity in our Hospitality ministry. Contact Shane Goughnour, our Music & Worship Director, via email shane.goughnour@faithwestwood.com (or find him on Sunday mornings) to learn more about serving as part of the coffee team (opening or closing), donut team, or as an usher, greeter, or connector.

4/26 - Iglesia Comunitaria. Today’s Mission Offering is designated for Iglesia Comunitaria, our sister United Methodist Church in South Omaha. These funds will be used to assist with their greatest current needs, including their own Helping Hands fund, which offers short-term financial assistance to those in their congregation who may be facing an unexpected financial need. **Mission Activity:** Volunteer (spring to autumn) to serve in the Pantry Garden with a variety of tasks throughout the growing season. Contact: Nancy Vogel.

5/3 - Helping Hands. Today’s mission offering supports our Helping Hands Fund, which offers short-term financial assistance to people in our own church family facing an unexpected financial need. **Mission Activity:** Remember to bring at least four (or more) items from the green “Four or More” list each month - to help meet the increasing needs of those in our community facing food insecurity. Items may be placed in the canvas carts in the foyer near the elevator and outside the church office. To volunteer as shoppers, food distributors, and restockers (second Thursday and Fourth Saturday) contact: tinyurl.com/FWPantry.

5/10 - Vacation Bible School. Today’s mission offering supports all the activities necessary to make our Vacation Bible School so fun and enriching for kids from FaithWestwood and the surrounding community. Those who attend learn how much God loves every one of them! Putting on such an impactful program takes many resources, and your gift today helps us to cover the costs of curriculum and supplies that make our VBS such a special and transformative week for the kids. **Mission Activity:** Be sure to pick up a brown paper bag (or bags) and fill with the supplies listed so we have all the supplies and resources needed to offer a fantastic “Rainforest Falls” Vacation Bible School program this year!

5/17 - Miracle Sunday. The United Methodist Church has designated Sunday, May 17 as “Miracle Sunday”—a one-time special giving Sunday to raise funds for an endowment to provide theological education for UMC pastors outside the United States. More than 70 percent of UMC pastors in the U.S. have a master’s degree (or higher) in theological education. Outside the U.S., that number plummets to about 10 percent. Yet, in many cases, these pastors are serving areas with a high potential for growth and engagement. Your support of “Miracle Sunday” will provide these pastors with the tools needed to introduce more people to the risen Christ and receive preaching, teaching, and pastoral care from a Wesleyan theological perspective. **Mission Activity:** Continue adding new and *gently used* household items and furniture for *The Furniture Project* to the collection tubs in foyer and inside the west entrance, under the coat rack.

5/24 - FaithWorks Pantry. Today’s mission offering will help us purchase items in bulk to stock our pantry shelves. **Mission Activity:** Donate new and gently used *spring and summer* clothing for the *Iglesia Community Closet* which serves the greater South Omaha community. Place your donations in the wooden collection box inside the west entrance.