

## NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

During the Easter season we celebrate Christ's victory over death and our new life in this victorious God. Our Baptism connects us to Jesus Christ's death on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Day. Through Baptism, the old person drowns and rises to a new life. In the early church, Baptisms occurred late on Easter Eve, during the Easter Vigil service, making a vivid connection to Christ's death and resurrection.

During Easter's 50 days, we praise God for God's deep love for us and for God's power to defeat death, no longer our fiercest enemy. We rejoice that we know and are intimately known by this God of power and love. And we celebrate our new life as God's forgiven people.

## DEVOTIONS FOR EASTER

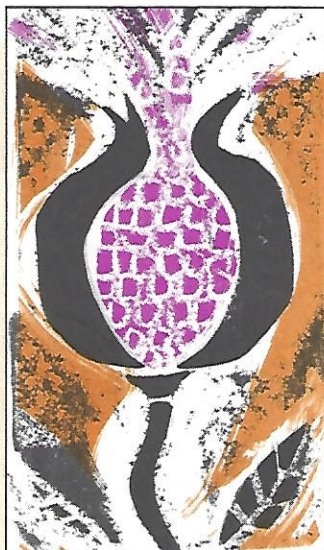
The daily Bible readings listed below focus on this new life in Christ for each person and for the whole community, for people and for God's creation. As individuals, we celebrate renewed trust in God and a renewed commitment to witness and service. As a community, we celebrate the goodness of relationships and the variety of gifts among us. And as caretakers of God's creation, we celebrate our responsibility for earth and sea and sky.

O God, we praise you for suffering on the cross for us. We praise you for your victory over death for us. We praise you for giving new life to us. Thank you, Jesus. Amen

God of life, you make all things new through the death and resurrection of your Son. Use us as witnesses to tell this wonderful good news to those who are in special need, that they might see the risen Christ clearly in their lives, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen



**Crown and cross:** Symbolize the reward in eternal life to those who believe in the crucified Savior. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10 KJV).



**Bursting pomegranate:** Symbol of Christ's power to burst the tomb.

God of victory, Jesus' resurrection from the dead brings new life to all of creation. Change us from lives that abuse your gifts of earth and sea and sky to lives that express your loving care for all that you have made, through our risen Lord. Amen

## ACTIVITIES FOR EASTER

1. After reading the Scripture assigned for the day, think about or discuss the passage in light of your new life in Christ. Consider its effect upon your decisions, your relationships, and your trust in God.

2. Go to the zoo or park and look for signs of new life within creation: buds, larvae, young animals, seedlings. Think about, discuss, or draw a picture that shows similarities between this newness and your own new life in Christ.

3. Read the Exodus story of new life after slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1-15). You might read one chapter a day. Note key passages and images that speak to our new life in Christ after slavery to sin.

4. Pray for those whose lives and/or commitments express newness: newborns, new Christians, new parents, new neighbors, the newly married, the newly employed. Send them a card, phone them, or visit them to let them know they are in your prayers.

5. Reassess your involvement within your Christian community. What are the needs within the community? Are your gifts better utilized in a new way? Involve other Christians in your assessment.

6. Create an Easter collage and display it on your refrigerator. Tape items onto it that symbolize new life, such as tiny leaves, seeds, or pictures of people. Tell visitors about your collage.

Symbol definitions are from *Symbols of the Church*, edited by Carroll E. Whittemore, published by Abingdon, Nashville (1959).

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
<b>S</b>	Luke 24:1-11	Acts 1:1-5	Acts 9:1-9	2 Cor. 1:3-7	Rom. 5:1-5	Phil. 1:3-11	1 Peter 2:9-10
<b>M</b>	Ps. 148	Acts 1:6-8	Acts 9:10-22	2 Cor. 4:1-6	Rom. 6:5-11	Phil. 2:1-11	James 1:16-18
<b>T</b>	Luke 24:13-27	Acts 3:12-16	1 Cor. 1:4-9	2 Cor. 5:16-21	Rom. 8:18-25	Phil. 4:8-9	1 John 3:1-3
<b>W</b>	Luke 24:28-35	Acts 4:32-35	1 Cor. 12:4-13	2 Cor. 8:1-7	Rom. 12:1-8	Eph. 2:1-10	1 John 4:7-12
<b>T</b>	Luke 24:36-43	Acts 6:1-7	1 Cor. 12:14-26	2 Cor. 8:8-15	Rom. 12:9-12	Eph. 3:14-19	1 John 4:13-21
<b>F</b>	Luke 24:44-49	Acts 8:26-40	1 Cor. 12:27-30	2 Cor. 13:5-14	Rom. 15:1-6	Eph. 6:10-18	Rev. 5:11-14
<b>S</b>	Ps. 150	Ps. 34	Ps. 126	Ps. 51:6-12	Ps. 147:1-12	Ps. 52:8-9	Rev. 21:1-5