

# lentenSMALL groups

ST. LUKE'S UMC

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

APRIL 7, 2019

**CHANCE ENCOUNTERS:**

**THE DISAPPOINTED GRIEVERS**

OPENING | 20 MIN

## I. Welcome

*Use these questions to enter into this week's discussion. You may also want to have people share a high/low from the week to get conversation flowing.*

A. Take a few moments to share where you saw God at work this past week (perhaps through a Spiritual Practice, a conversation, a moment of quiet with God).

B. This week's text is about four central characters (Jesus, Mary, Martha & Lazarus) and includes references to the community around them (the disciples, those comforting Mary and Martha.) In pairs, share how you have experienced community around you when you've gone through a difficult time. What was helpful?

*This will help set the stage for our discussion.*

## II. Group Values:

It's important that every group agrees on the values they want to have in their group.

*Review the following values: openness, growth, authenticity, confidentiality, presence & empathy.*

## III. Spiritual Practices:

Each week, we will invite your group to try a different spiritual practice together. This week's practice is gratitude.

***Try this practice of being intentionally present before you begin discussion.***

**Gratitude:** We have much to thank God for. Today: Go around the group and let each person tell one thing they are grateful for. In prayer together, give thanks for one another and what each one is grateful for, thanking and praising God for these blessings.

**This week:** Each day, at bedtime, try writing down three things for which you are grateful.

OR - Offer God thanks for three things in the natural world that you have noticed in the last few days. As you remember each one, pause and let a mental picture take shape. Allow your joy to well up and whisper a "thank you" to God.

***For more information on these spiritual practices, please contact Rev. Regina Proctor ([proctorr@stlukesumc.com](mailto:proctorr@stlukesumc.com)).***

## GROUP DISCUSSION | 35 MIN

*It is not essential to cover all of these questions. Conversation and exploration are more highly valued.*

*Read aloud this week's Scripture text: John 11:1-45 (you might have a few readers!)*

A. What one idea stood out from the Scripture passage or Sunday's sermon that has caused you to think?

B. The disciples are skeptical of Jesus' plans to go and visit Lazarus. After all, it means returning to a dangerous place (vv. 7-8) and Lazarus is dead (vv. 11-16). **When have you been skeptical if your presence would do any good, or if the trip to see someone was worth the cost? What did you discover?**

C. Jesus' response to Martha and Mary reveals His divinity and His humanity. He is God, come to us. **How is seeing both sides of Jesus a comfort to you? What about it is challenging?**

D. God's power is often revealed in our pain. **How has this been true for you? Where have you experienced God's power to be most evident?**

E. **What helps you get through very challenging times? How does faith and community impact you? How can you be a source of hope for others?**

Over →

## WRAP-UP/ANNOUNCEMENTS | 20 min

### I. Announcements

#### A. Next Steps

*(This is your last week for Lenten sermon discussion. Please discuss the following and have the group host let Mindie know your plans.)*

#### Pre-Easter:

We'll be sending out a short survey to improve this experience and help facilitate next steps.

#### Consider participating in Holy Week activities as a group.

**April 15-19:** Stations of the Cross (anytime church is open) – an interactive and prayerful walk through Jesus' last week. Takes around 45 minutes.

**April 18, 7pm:** Maundy Thursday Service – come take communion at round tables in the Sanctuary. A powerful way to remember the Last Supper.

**April 19, 12pm & 7pm:** Good Friday Services

**April 21, 6:30am:** Easter Sunrise Communion  
**7am:** Breakfast in Great Hall  
**8am, 9:30am, 11:15am** in Sanctuary  
**9:30am and 11:15am** in Chapel

#### Post-Easter – Summer:

Plan with your group to get together for a meal, serve together, do something social (like a Summer Meet Up) over the next 3 months. *Hosts can share contact info!*

OR - If your group would like to continue meeting weekly after Easter for 3-6 weeks, let Mindie know, she will have study suggestions.

#### Summer Meet-Ups:

In June and July we'll host many one-time gatherings to help our big church feel smaller. These are often great ways to meet new people and grow your group.

Examples include: community concerts, a backyard BBQ, meeting for dinner etc. If you or your group would like to host one of these let Mindie know.

#### Fall:

Decide if you'd like to continue as a group come fall - let us know this on the survey or reach out with questions.  
(Fall Groups launch the week of September 8)  
*You may need to see if a different person in the group would like to host, or if you'll share this role.*

### II. Prayer Requests

A. Share prayer requests and have someone write them down to share with the group. Hosts can invite someone to close in prayer.

## SPACE FOR PRAYER REQUESTS/ NOTES & IDEAS



**St. Luke's**

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

— OPEN FOR YOU —

Questions or Comments:

Contact Mindie Moore,

Director of Groups and Young Adults

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