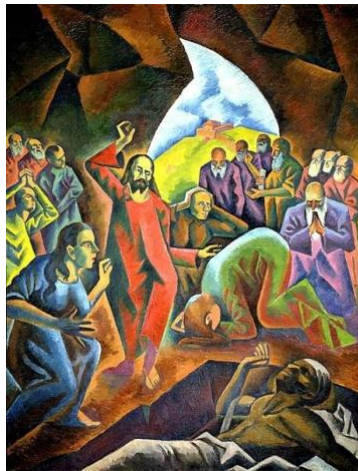


# April 2023 Retreat Guide — Resurrection

By Julie Meissner



## Prepare

Be intentional about your time with God. Set aside the day, time, and location you will linger in communion together. Print out this retreat guide and gather any needed supplies. GET A GOOD NIGHT OF REST to begin your retreat.

## Supplies

Bring this guide, Bible, journal, comfortable clothing, food, drink, and art supplies (if desired). You may have a device available for music as guided but set aside otherwise. Leave all else behind, freeing yourself from distractions to the intimate encounter Jesus longs to have with you.

*\*Include a cloth strip in your supplies. You can tear a strip off an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel, etc., or use whatever you have on hand—string, yarn, ribbon, tie, shoelace.... Be sure it is long enough to wrap around your wrist several times.*

## Settle

Arrive at your planned retreat location (retreat center, empty church, outdoor preserve, guest house, etc.) and settle into the space you will be inhabiting for the day. When you are ready, get into a comfortable place and position. Become quiet and present to yourself, to God, and to your surroundings. Gently invite your whole self into a restful posture. Take several deep breaths (inhale for five counts, hold, exhale for five counts, hold), then let your breathing slow to normal. "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10)

*\*Wrap the cloth strip around your wrist and tie it (loosely so as not to create discomfort).*

## Opening Prayer

Loving Abba, I enter into your presence and accept your gracious invitation of hospitality to spend the day with you.

Precious Jesus, I worship you and lean into your heart of compassion that healed the sick, cleansed the temple, blessed the children, endured the cross, and raised the dead.

Holy Spirit, I give myself to your indwelling, healing, and resurrecting power that intercedes on my behalf and transforms my body into a living temple of the Living God.

Wrap me in the safety of your love, Father, Son, and Spirit. Be my guide this day. Amen.

## Body Scan

Body scan meditation allows you the opportunity to connect with yourself in the present moment through awareness of your body—to stop and listen to what your body is communicating to you. God made us as physical beings, not just mental and emotional beings. We can assume that this was intentional—that there is value in paying attention to this part of God’s creation that is the body. Your body, along with the rest of you, reflects God’s image (Gen. 1:27) and is a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19). You look like God and God lives within you. If you want to experience God, experiencing your body is an excellent place to begin.<sup>i</sup>

—Dr. Irene Kraegel, Director of the Center for Counseling and Wellness, Calvin University

If you feel safe where you are and comfortable doing so, I invite you to use this guided body scan meditation.

**Listen:** [Body Scan Meditation \(The Mindful Christian\)](#)

## Walk with God

If the weather and circumstances of your location are conducive, and it feels good for you physically, go for a leisurely stroll with God. You may choose to [listen to peaceful music](#) as you walk or listen to the sounds of nature or the city, wherever you happen to be. You can also sit in a comfortable place outdoors and simply be with God. Talk with God as you walk or sit. Enjoy each other’s company. Maybe there’s a kayak accessible to get into the water. Do what feels life-giving!



## Looking Back

Reflections by Steven Stuckey and the Red River Region's Spiritual Foundation's Team

A monthly retreat day includes a regular, ongoing opportunity to look back over the past month and reflect on our life, ministry, and our walk with Jesus. Far too many of us, including those in "ministry," do not take time to reflect and ponder in such a way. Without this reflection and contemplation, it is easy to lose the "big picture," go through the motions, surrender to temptations, or not have clarity in our discipleship—our personal life, family relationships, ministry, etc. Even the words of the classic philosopher Socrates remind us: "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Take some time for unhurried reflection over the past month with the questions listed below and respond to them in your journal. Consider which ones you are drawn to or other questions of reflection that come to mind.

1. What events, people, experiences, or things you viewed/read have stirred you or made an impression on you?
2. Do you notice any patterns or common themes in these?
3. Is there an area in your life that needs healing?
4. Is there an area of pain, hurt, or suffering in your life, or something that has been lingering? What do you want to say to God regarding this, in honesty and openness? Consider how God is with you in this suffering. What does that look like?
5. Do you notice any obstacles in your walk with Christ?
6. What have you noticed in your ministry during the past month?
7. Where have you seen God at work? Have you had a sense of God's absence or silence? How do you want to talk to God about this?
8. Where have you sensed the presence of God in "all of life" in daily life?
9. What are you thankful for? How are you expressing gratitude to God?<sup>ii</sup>

## Sacred Pause

Move, Draw, Play, Sing...

Take a break by engaging your senses with an activity you enjoy.



## Lectio Divina

You are invited to listen to a beautiful, guided meditation on the raising of Lazarus, or if you prefer, you may read and reflect on your own using the text and meditation prompts below (or a combination of both).

We enter the story after Lazarus has died and been buried. Jesus delayed going to see him, explaining to his disciples that it would not end in death and would be for God's glory. Now Lazarus has been in the grave for four days, and his sisters and their community are grieving his death. At this point of great loss and grief, Jesus enters the scene in Bethany where Mary and Martha are mourning their brother's death.

**Listen:** [Contemplative at Home: Lazarus](#)

John 11:32-44, NRSV

<sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" <sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Visualize the Gospel scene as you read and listen to this text, hearing it afresh as if for the first time. Engage all your senses. What stirs your heart and mind as you listen? What emotions rise within you? What questions are raised in your mind? Write these in your journal.

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: With your sanctified in Christ imagination, become part of the scene. What are you drawn to? How do you move through the crowd? What is the presenting emotion you experience? Where are you in relation to Jesus? How is he interacting with you?

3<sup>rd</sup> Reading: Is there a particular word, phrase, or impression being highlighted for you by the Holy Spirit? Sit with this. Listen to what the Spirit is communicating to you. Respond to God in prayer in whatever way you desire—words, music, art, movement, groans, etc.

4<sup>th</sup> Reading: Rest in God as you listen to the text one last time.

\*Remove the cloth strip from your wrist. Hear Jesus speak these words over you: "Unbind her/him, and let her/him go."

What happened within your body at Jesus' words? What sensations do you notice? What emotions? What expression to God? Record any further reflections in your journal.

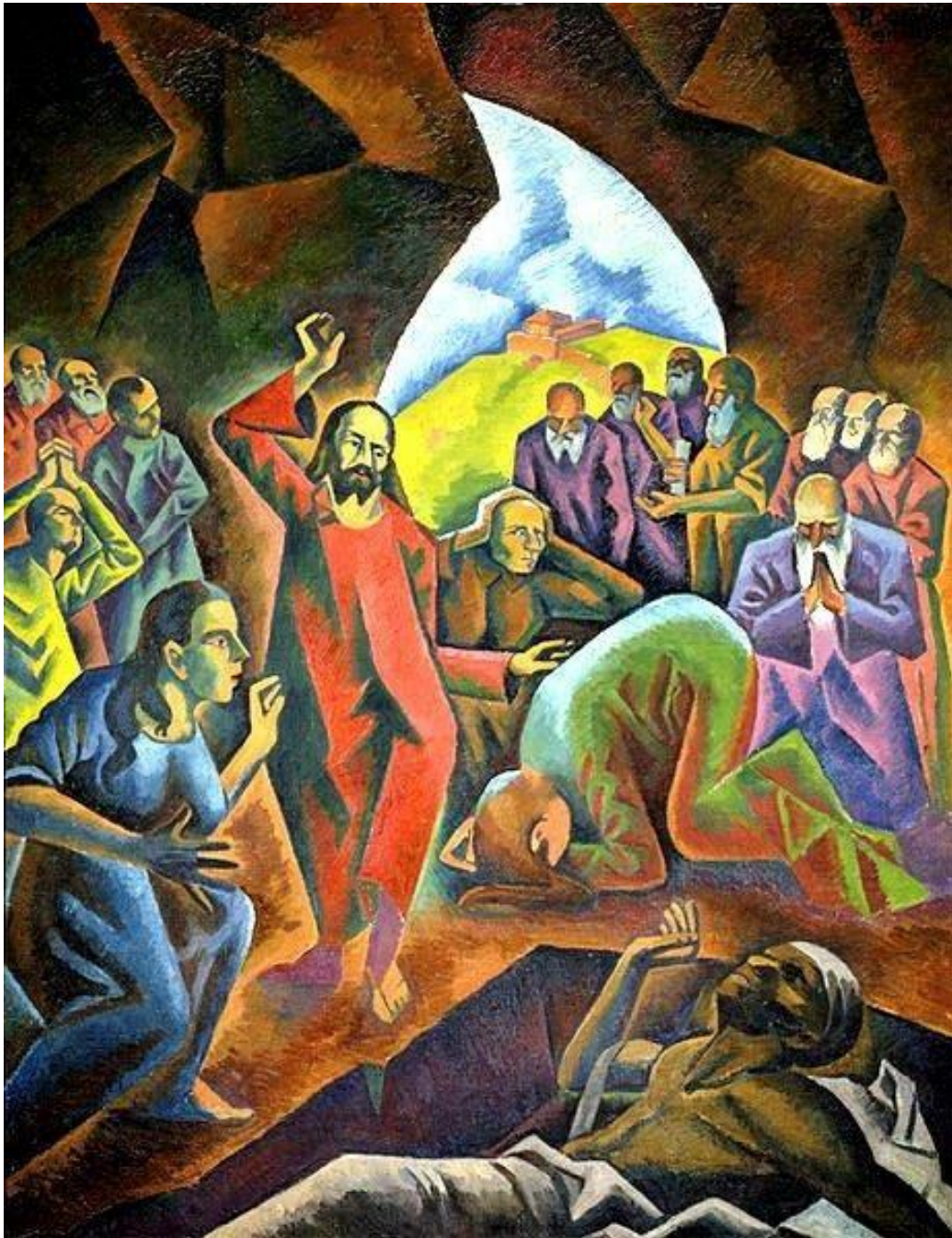
"The **practice of resurrection** is an intentional, deliberate decision to believe and

participate in resurrection life, life out of death, life that trumps death, life that is the last word, Jesus life."<sup>1</sup> —Eugene Peterson, Practice Resurrection

## Closing Worship

"Grave Clothes"<sup>iii</sup>





Kubista, Bohumil (1884-1918) - 1911 The Rising of Lazarus (Gallery of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic)  
Oil on canvas; 163.5 x 126.5 cm.

<sup>i</sup> Irene Kraegel, "Body Scan Meditation," [https://www.themindfulchristian.com/guides\\_for\\_practice.html](https://www.themindfulchristian.com/guides_for_practice.html) <sup>ii</sup>  
Steven Stuckey and Red River Region Spiritual Foundations Team, "Making Space for God Guide." <sup>iii</sup> Tribl  
Records, "Grave Clothes." Performed by Jessica Hitte, Maverick City Music, Montel Moore, and Tribl. Written

by Drew Scott, Jessica Hitte, Julissa Leilani, Kayla Yvonne Thompson, Kimberly Onyia, LeBron Arnwine, Melody Adorno, and Michelle Marie Mateo. Produced by Jonathan Jay, Tony Brown, and Brandon Lake.