

# 2026



## Acts of the Apostles



*Growing Disciples Who Grow Disciples*  
[myfaithlcmc.org](http://myfaithlcmc.org)

# **Lectio Divina**

(Pronounced: Leck – tea – oh Dee – veen – ah)

Lectio Divina (from the Latin meaning “divine reading”) is a contemplative way of reading the Bible. The practice dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church and was established as a monastic practice by Benedict in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It draws on the ways the Jews read the ancient Haggadah, a text during the Passover that retells the Exodus story. It is a telling and retelling of the story; thus, there is a lot of repetition involved.

Lectio Divina is a way of praying the Scriptures that leads us deeper into God’s Word. We slow down. We read a shorter passage more than once. We chew it over slowly and carefully. We savor it. We open ourselves so that Scripture speaks to us in a new way with personal connection. We invite Jesus Christ, the Living Word, to touch our souls deeply.

So, Lectio Divina is not Bible study or even an alternative to Bible study but something altogether different. The practice understands Scripture as a meeting place for a personal encounter with the Living God. It operates very much on the emotional rather than the purely cerebral level. It is perhaps hearty rather than heady. Through it we allow ourselves to be formed in the likeness of Christ.

Lectio Divina is about communing with God, much like when we receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It’s meant to be an intensely personal experience. Thus, we don’t simply read the text; we think about it, we pray about it, we reflect on it, and we are silent with it, inviting the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and minds in a whole new way.

We will be practicing Lectio Divina as a congregation as we read through the Book of Acts over the course of 52 weeks. In other words, as you are experiencing God’s Word in a new way, you will have opportunity to share your thoughts, insights, and transformation with others at Faith.

If this all sounds too mystical, rest assured that each day, as you are reading a Bible passage, you will also be invited to read some reflections from Chuck Swindoll, a winsome Bible teacher and storyteller of nearly 60 years. You are also encouraged to participate in a Faith Group conversation, utilizing the reflections of Anglican Pastor NT Wright. Of course, each Sunday morning, you will also be encouraged and challenged from a Lutheran perspective.

DATE	LIVING INSIGHTS PAGES	SUNDAY TEXT
INTRODUCTION AND THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH		
January 1-3	3-26	
January 4		Acts 1:1-14
January 5-10	26-33	
January 11		Acts 1:15-26
January 12-17	33-42	
January 18		Acts 2:1-13
January 19-24	43-54	
January 25		Acts 2:14-36
January 26-31	54-65	
February 1		Acts 2:37-47
February 2-7	66-75	
February 8		Acts 3:1-26
February 9-14	76-87	
February 15		Acts 4:1-22
February 16-21	87-94	
February 22		Acts 4:23-37
February 23-28	95-101	
March 1		Acts 5:1-11
March 2-7	101-111	
March 8		Acts 5:12-42
March 9-14	111-119	
March 15		Acts 6:1-7
March 16-21	119-135	
March 22		Acts 6:8 - 7:60

DATE	LIVING INSIGHTS PAGES	SUNDAY TEXT
THE RISE OF THE CHURCH		
March 23-28	136-149	
March 29		Acts 8:1-24
Mar 30 - Apr 4	150-160	
April 5		Acts 8:25-40
April 6-11	160-170	
April 12		Acts 9:1-22
April 13-18	170-180	
April 19		Acts 9:23-31
April 20-25	180-189	
April 26		Acts 9:32-43
Apr 27 - May 2	190-199	
May 3		Acts 10:1-23
May 4-9	199-208	
May 10		Acts 10:24-48
May 11-16	209-216	
May 17		Acts 11:1-18
May 18-23	216-226	
May 24		Acts 11:19-30
May 25-30	226-236	
May 31		Acts 12:1-17
June 1-6	236-246	
June 7		Acts 12:18-25

DATE	LIVING INSIGHTS PAGES	SUNDAY TEXT
THE EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH		
June 8-13	247-263	
June 14		Acts 13:1-13
June 15-20	263-275	
June 21		Acts 13:14-52
June 22-27	275-285	
June 28		Acts 14:1-20
June 29 - July 4	285-290	
July 5		Acts 14:21-28
July 6-11	290-298	
July 12		Acts 15:1-12
July 13-18	299-308	
July 19		Acts 15:13-35
July 20-25	308-314	
July 26		Acts 15:36-41
July 27 - Aug 1	314-321	
August 2		Acts 16:1-10
August 3-8	321-332	
August 9		Acts 16:11-40
August 10-15	333-341	
August 16		Acts 17:1-15
August 17-22	341-352	
August 23		Acts 17:16-34
August 24-29	352-364	
August 30		Acts 18:1-22

DATE	LIVING INSIGHTS PAGES	SUNDAY TEXT
Aug 31 - Sept 5	364-373	
September 6		Acts 18:23-19:7
September 7-12	374-381	
September 13		Acts 19:8-20
September 14-19	382-391	
September 20		Acts 19:21-20:2
<b>THE CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH</b>		
September 21-26	392-402	
September 27		Acts 20:3-12
Sept 28 - Oct 3	402-412	
October 4		Acts 20:13-38
October 5-10	412-421	
October 11		Acts 21:1-17
October 12-17	421-432	
October 18		Acts 21:18-39
October 19-24	432-443	
October 25		Acts 21:40-22:30
October 26 - 31	443-452	
November 1		Acts 23:1-22
November 2-7	453-463	
November 8		Acts 23:23-24:9
November 9-14	463-471	
November 15		Acts 24:10-27
November 16-21	471-481	
November 22		Acts 25:1-22

DATE	LIVING INSIGHTS PAGES	SUNDAY TEXT
November 23-28	481-493	
November 29		Acts 25:23-26:32
Nov 30 - Dec 5	493-504	
December 6		Acts 27:1-44
December 7-12	504-510	
December 13		Acts 28:1-11
December 14-19	510-521	
December 20		Acts 28:12-31

# **Faith Group Guidelines**

A Faith Group needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing with one another. Guidelines give boundaries for people to operate within, help with the flow and pace of the discussions, help us to value one another, and help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Keeping things that are shared in the group confidential builds trust and shows value to the person. What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding. Silence in the group provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

AVOID "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing – no side conversations.

AVOID RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about their situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

AVOID FIXING: Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they will ask for it. You may want to take time later to ask if you may share some advice.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

“I” STATEMENTS: During the discussion, we want to hear your personal thoughts and perspectives. Using “I” statements to answer discussion questions allows you to speak for yourself rather than generalizing by using such terms as “you”, “they”, “them”, “the church”, “us”, or “we”.

FIGHT FOR RELATIONSHIP: Relationships reach a whole new level when conflict is resolved in a healthy manner. When conflict or sin issues arise between group members, commit to fight for the relationship and discuss the struggle with the person you are in conflict with or seek wise advice.

DISCUSS THE EMPTY CHAIR: While one purpose of the group is to grow in our relationship with God through relationship with one another, the other purpose is to invite new people into relational discipleship. Remind one another of the importance of inviting new people into the group with the goal of “branching” into two groups. Biblical discipleship has both an inward and an outward focus. Like the first century church, a healthy group is constantly inviting new people to “come and see”.

# **Faith Group Outline – 1 hour 30 minutes**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (10 minutes) - As your group gathers, allow time for everyone to introduce themselves/share recent life news. (This makes everyone feel valued and welcomed. A warm welcome establishes a foundation for relationships, makes everyone aware of what is going on, and brings focus to the group.)

OPENING PRAYER (3 minutes) - Invite God's Holy Spirit into your presence. (This prepares your hearts for what God has for you and shifts your attention from individual fellowship to the group.)

PURPOSE (1 minute) - Review the purpose for our gathering – “to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ as we grow in deeper relationships with one another”. (This helps prepare your hearts and minds for the discussion.)

GUIDELINES (2-6 minutes) - At the first meeting, read through the Faith Group Guidelines line by line. At future meetings, briefly review the guidelines. (This provides Biblical guidance for healthy conflict resolution while establishing a safe environment where everyone can share openly and honestly.)

GROUP DISCUSSION (60 minutes) - Discuss Swindoll's Living Insights and N.T. Wright questions. Discuss the Bible Texts.

CLOSING PRAYER (10 minutes) - Refocus your attention on God and His provision. (This is a time for God sighting related prayer, personal prayer requests, group needs, and to praise God.)

# **Serving Together**

Joyfully serving in the church and the community, with the goal of making Christ known to others, is one tangible expression of our growth as disciples. These are a few areas in which your group could serve together:

Church Plants and Missionaries

Ministry Partners

Sunday Mornings

Faith Kids Events

Young Adult Connections

New Opportunities in our New Neighborhood

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Acts 2:42-47



Faith Groups are the primary method for us to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. When Jesus first launched His ministry, He didn't begin with a big crowd; He began His ministry with a handful of ordinary, often-faithless people. As they were going about their daily lives (fishing!), *“Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!’”* – Matthew 4:19

#### Head (To Know)

*“Come, follow me”* – A disciple follows Jesus. To be His disciples, we must recognize and accept who Jesus is, and place our lives under His authority. Even as we have questions, He leads and we obediently follow His teachings. Therefore, we study and invite God's Word to penetrate deep into our thoughts.

#### Heart (To Grow)

*“and I will show you”* – A disciple is being changed by Jesus. God loves us just the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us there. Jesus grew the disciples through His teachings (beliefs), yet the real work of life transformation happened through their change of hearts in authentic, transparent community. Therefore, we allow the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts through relationships rooted in Christian faith.

#### Hands (To Invite)

*“how to fish for people”* – A disciple is committed to the mission of Jesus. When we grow in Christ, we can't help but care about what Jesus cares about... people. While Jesus cares about you and the people in your group, He also cares about those who are far from Him. Jesus created the church – you and me – as the primary way to reach those people through relational connections. Therefore, we create space for new people to experience Jesus through our Faith Groups... and we invite them to sit in the empty chair.

*Growing Disciples Who Grow Disciples*