

Worship Bulletin: 2nd Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM (ELW p. 119)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG – “I Love to Tell the Story” (ELW 661)

I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry; how pleas - ant to re - peat
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain
I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry

I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory,
of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else would do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

2 I love to tell the story:
how pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it,
more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story,
for some have never heard
the message of salvation
from God's own holy word. Refrain

3 I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting
to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story
that I have loved so long. Refrain

GREETING (ELW p. 120)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 124)

Let us pray. **Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

BLESSING OF SEED

Dear Lord, You are wonderful in everything you do. In marvelous ways You take the full, rich life of the plant and carefully fold it into tiny seeds. You form the seeds according to many different shapes and sizes and colors, so that man can know what kind of growth will come of them. When they are placed the earth they may look dry and dead, but when they are watered by the life-giving rain and nourished by the warm sun, they lose all their lifeless look and grow in an almost miraculous manner. By the power You gave them, they take the dead minerals of the earth and build up the nourishing, tasty foods that men need to sustain life.

Soon, dear Lord, we will plant these seeds of (wheat, corn, or whatever it may be) that You have given us. Bless them, and watch over them, and bring them to the full growth and rich harvest that You wish to bless us with.

But, should You not allow them to come to full harvest, we accept Your will humbly. We trust that You will nevertheless watch over us and make the seeds of grace that You have given us grow to flower and fruit in the full Christian life that You intend for us here and hereafter. Amen.

WORD - God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Acts 4:32-35

A reading from Acts.

While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.

³²Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity. (*Ps. 133:1*)

1How good and how pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity!

2It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar of his robe.

3It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the hills of Zion. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing: life forevermore.

SECOND READING: 1 John 1:1--2:2

A reading from 1 John.

The opening of this letter serves as a reality check. The reality of God is light, but our confessed reality has been sin. God cleanses us from our sinful reality through Christ's death so that we live in fellowship with Christ and walk in God's light.

¹We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. ^{2:1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 124)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." ²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you

believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON (ELW p. 125)

In “Searching for Sunday,” Rachel Held Evans writes “I’ve heard many recovering alcoholics say they’ve never found a church quite like Alcoholics Anonymous. They’ve never found a community of people so honest with one another about their pain, so united in their shared brokenness.”

I remember hearing this quote and it made me both smile and wince. The honesty of it is refreshing and the imagery clear. No one joins AA because they think they have it all together. But how often do people join the church thinking they should have it all together to join, or at least they should pretend they have it all together to join, put on their Sunday best if you will?

Rachel Held Evans also tweeted, “Healthy churches look more like AA than country clubs.”

In our Lenten Bible Study from Shetek, “Dwelling in Discipleship,” one of the days was “dwelling in doubt” and we focused on today’s Gospel story and Thomas’ doubt. The story brought up all sorts of memories and questions about doubt and the place in the church for doubt. From that, more questions came up about how we share our true fears with others here. How do we make space for others to share their deepest pain and even their doubts?

For a pastor, I have, perhaps, an unusually high amount of friends who have turned away from the church or do not regularly attend. The reasons why people do not attend the church are as many as the people themselves. Too many other obligations that pull them from the church. A sense that, at best, the church doesn’t really care about the social issues that are near and dear to their hearts and, at worst, might be a driving force behind the social ills of this world. Experiences of being rejected for a variety of reasons. Turned off by the propensity in church to put on a facade that, “Everything is alright.” Feeling like they wouldn’t really be able to genuinely ask questions and express doubt and have people genuinely be okay with that... not just not and try to quickly “fix” them for Jesus.

For all the things people talk about in regards to reaching out to the quote “unchurched,” I am surprised at how rarely people discuss if their churches are places where people can dwell in doubt. Because I think that truthfulness and the ability to hold space with people who are not certain what all this means would, in fact, be the best outreach out there.

Today’s Gospel gives us a glimpse of a few essential elements in regards to doubt and our place dwelling in doubt.

First, Jesus doesn't reject Thomas in his doubt. He doesn't get angry at him but stays with him. May this be a sign of hope for all of us in our doubt, and I'm guessing even most of us who are every Sunday kind of Christian have had doubts. If not about the truthfulness of the Biblical story about God's ability to change bad things in our lives, Christ's love and forgiveness for us or the like. Likewise, this model of Jesus being a faithful presence with one who doubts should cause all of us to question our ability to follow this way of being. What would your response be if someone sat down with you at coffee hour and said, "Honestly, I'm not sure if any of this is real. But I'm here for community." What if someone questioned your interpretation of the Bible or certain passages in it? What if someone came to church and didn't hold your social or political stances- and had Bible passages to back up their views..... and they did more than just post on Facebook about it but they actually looked you in the eye and told you about it? I'll be honest, as someone who has been in many such conversation, my most common prayer in the middle of them is, "Lord, please help me not say something dumb." Well, let's be honest... that's a pretty common prayer for me all the time on all accounts. But, I've learned that the most important thing to do in those moments is to listen and stay put. I might not have all the answers, but I can be there.

Second, as today's Gospel reminds me, though I don't have the answer, Jesus does. Jesus shows Thomas the nail markings on his hands and the wound of his side. I think one of the most off-putting and mis-guided perceptions of Christians is that we should "convince people to join our Christian team." But, we aren't the ones with the nails markings in our hands or the wounds in our side. We aren't the ones who died, rose again and saved humanity from death and despair. All we do is faithfully and patiently point to Jesus. I also think we'd do well to spend as much time listening and asking thoughtful questions as we do spouting out answers. Let's be honest folks. Jesus gets it right. But you, me, and the universal church- well the history of the church in the world pretty blatantly shows we don't get it all right. Perhaps we'd learn something if we stopped to listen. Perhaps we'd be more truthful disciples if we just listened. We believe that Christ can work through all sorts of people- inside the church and outside of it. We should live like it. I think we'd all feel a bit lighter, too. Trying to convince or change anyone is stressful. Let's let Jesus be Jesus and remember that we are simply His servants.

I'm not speaking as someone who often has gotten this entirely right. On the contrary, I can think of a lot of times I have painfully missed the mark. But, Jesus often seems to work anyhow, and that's the good news. One of my favorite stories is from preparing my first (and only) Confirmation class of students at my former congregation. One of the students was an on and off type student, much to his mother's dismay. His family got involved in church later in this student's life, so he was to get Confirmed his senior year in high school. There was, perhaps, an unnecessary pressure I felt to get the Confirmation done before he went off to college. I tried to be creative, knowing he was interested in science by pairing him to speak with a college student studying science and religion on a regular basis in order to make up for the lack of church and class attendance. This partnership was really valuable, and moreover, the relationships in the church were probably what kept him coming back, for whatever amount he did. The church cared for him in his struggles as a young DACA student. He found a place with peers at camp and the National Gathering. Church members and partner congregation members put time and effort to help him explore college options and scholarship possibilities.

Well, the time came for us to prepare for Confirmation and I made a rookie mistake, boldly telling the students, “This is your chance to claim this faith as your own. People made promises for you in your baptism and now you have the chance to claim those promises.”

I saw him grimace a bit. And I couldn’t get him to come in and get things done to be ready for the day. A mentor who was also involved with the young man pulled me aside and said, “You know, I remember making the same mistake, but you might want to make sure they know that you can have faith and doubts too.”

I circled back, and had that conversation, and was surprised at the doors it opened. “Yeah,” he said, “I believe but I also don’t sometimes...”. I assured him that most of us can relate.

In the end, he was Confirmed. Ironically, where most Confirmation students historically don’t re-enter the church building, he did, helping with the youth programs and assisting with a church camp program. I have lost track of where he might be now, but my prayer is that he, like all students, is still believing and doubting, knowing the church is always here with love and open arms.

May this retelling of my error give you guidance of maybe what to do and what not to do, but also, *moreso*, hope. I believe Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, re-oriented and changed that situation time and time again. From it, I have learned that when I don’t get it right, Jesus still works. So, I show up, ready to watch Jesus work miracles.

Lastly, in this passage, three times Jesus wishes people peace. Keep in mind, he’s wishing peace to the people who literally abandoned him and allowed him to be crucified. He’s wishing peace to the people who couldn’t even stay awake in his final hours. Yes, Jesus is that loving.

Even still, as we reach out to people who are aren’t sure about church, as we reach out to each other in times of doubt, we hear Jesus wishing us peace in the middle of all of it. We trust Jesus is working for peace in all of it.

As we think about upcoming stages of our church life, I think it would be wise for us to think, too, about how we are not only a community of faith but also a community of doubt. As Rachel Held Evans notes, how can we be more like AA than a country club? May Christ bless our discernment and this journey together.

Rachel Held Evans. “Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving and Finding the Church.” Audiobooks. 2015.

HYMN OF THE DAY – “For the Fruit of All Creation” (ELW 679)

For the Fruit of All Creation

1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.

For these gifts to ev - 'ry na - tion, thanks be to God.
In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.

For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,
In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,
For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con - found us,

fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

For the Fruit of All Creation

1 For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.

For these gifts to ev'ry nation,
thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

APOSTLES CREED (ELW p. 126)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

You shower your church with grace, O God. Unite the whole church on earth, so that with one heart it testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with power and love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You proclaim the blessing of life forevermore. Like dew upon the mountains, refresh your creation. Restore waters, cleanse the air, and provide revitalizing moisture to parched land. Give your whole creation the promise of new life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You direct the nations, O God. Guide all in authority, that they shepherd their peoples in the ways of your love. Defeat in us our impulse to war. Bestow the peace of Christ upon those in authority and breathe upon them the Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord, we pray for the Chauvin trial. Give your strength and truth to those who testify. Guide the jurors and give them discernment. Give our communities a spirit of care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord, we pray for places that have been impacted by shootings and violence. Guide our nation in finding ways to live peacefully together. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You place within the heart of the church a spirit of sharing. Give us the power of your generous Spirit, that we provide for the needs of others. We especially pray for **Members:** Grace McGaughey, Janice Berger, Sandy Rogers, Todd Hallstrom, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson; **Members in Nursing Homes:** Bob Dieter, Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh; **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender; **Family Members & Friends:** Dan Cross (Agnes Cross's son), Maverick Thalberg (Fern Burmeister's great-grandson), Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son); **Our service men and women and Love INC.** We especially remember families who are still not able to gather safely or those who have lost loved ones who will not be at their tables. We remember families who are struggling economically and for those who feel alone today. Assure them of your promises. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** Announce your peace to those who are lonely, hurting, suffering, or afraid. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You give us fellowship with one another in this faith community. Shine the light of the risen Christ in our life together, so that we live in love for one another and our joy may be complete. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You share the gift of eternal life. In thanksgiving and remembrance, we recall the lives and gifts of those who now live in endless joy. Unite us with them in resurrection hope. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Lord, as our community discerns a possible relationship with Grace and upcoming staffing realities, give us wisdom. Help us to listen to each other and our community. Guide us so that we do Your will. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

OFFERING AND CGC ANNOUNCEMENT

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING (ELW p. 136)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *On What Has Now Been Sown* (ELW 550)

On What Has Now Been Sown

1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the
2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -
3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may

pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in
cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,
meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low

grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!
Lord, and prayers re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.
you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt.
Music: DARWALL'S 148TH, John Darwall, 1731-1789

On What Has Now Been Sown

1 On what has now been sown
your blessing, Lord, bestow;
the pow'r is yours alone
to make it sprout and grow.
O Lord, in grace the harvest raise,
and yours alone shall be the praise!

2 To you our wants are known,
from you are all our pow'rs;
accept what is your own
and pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive
and to your word a blessing give.

3 Oh, grant that each of us,
now met before you here,
may meet together thus
when you and yours appear,
and follow you to heav'n, our home.
E'en so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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