



# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)

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April 7, 2024  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Easter

## **Announcements**

**Trinity will** offer a Sunday morning affirmation worship service to mark Pride Month on June 16. The service is intended to recognize the past wounds caused by the greater church on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and to foster healing and belonging with the community. Assistant to the Bishop Adam Snook is scheduled to preach and assist at the service.

**Trinity's music program** continues to expand and our offerings diversify. Sam Fedele returns next week to help lead the congregation in song. Classical guitarist Esther Yang joins us on April 28.

## **Coming Services**

**May 12** - Music Sunday. The Trinity Band and choir will help lead the congregation in song as part of the Mother's Day service. As well, Trinity musicians and singers will provide liturgical music during portions of the service, such as the offering and communion.

**May 15** - Pentecost Messy Church, 5 p.m. A mid-week session that includes a meal, activities and a devotional. All are welcome!

### **We Remember in our Prayers**

**In Residence:** Cordelle, Dorothy, Katie, Margaret, Sharon, Vern.

**Members:** Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Evelyn, Connie, Judith.

**Friends & Family:** Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Michelle, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank

## **Introduction to the day**

*The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today, we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need.*

Inshallah # 40 God welcomes all  
ELW # 482 I come with joy  
ELW # 561 Joyous light of heavenly  
glory  
ELW # 267 Joy to the world

### Prayer of the day

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 Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**AMEN**

### First reading: Acts 4: 32-35

<sup>32</sup>Now 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. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There 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. <sup>35</sup>They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

### Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity.

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

<sup>2</sup>**It 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.**

<sup>3</sup>It 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

<sup>1</sup>We 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—<sup>2</sup>this 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—<sup>3</sup>we 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. <sup>4</sup>We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>5</sup>This 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. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; <sup>7</sup>but 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. <sup>8</sup>If we

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

<sup>2:1</sup>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; <sup>2</sup>and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

### **Gospel: John 20: 19-31**

<sup>19</sup>When 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." <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the

Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So 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."

<sup>26</sup>A 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." <sup>27</sup>Then 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." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>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.

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### **Sermon**

#### **Easter People**

The disciples are in Jerusalem ... huddled safely behind a locked door.

It's a fear-filled, uncertain time for them.

The disciples are sure that the Jewish leadership ... the temple authorities ... the romans ... are hunting down Jesus' followers.

Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb that morning and believed that someone had stolen Jesus' body.

She runs to get Simon Peter and the beloved disciple ... tells them what she saw at the tomb ... and the three of them rush back.

They see the linens lying in the tomb ... but don't understand what it means. So, they return home.

Mary Magdalene ... stays behind ... weeping ... she sees two angels sitting in the tomb and then ... turning around ... she has an encounter with Jesus.

Jesus tells her to go tell the rest of disciples that he is ascending to the Father ... to their God.

Mary Magdalene joyously announces to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

Their response to her witness was to be afraid.

There's a similar reaction in Mark's version that we heard last week when she arrived at the tomb with Mary the mother of James and Salome.

Now ... in John's version ... the disciples are the ones who are experiencing fear ... so much so ... that they lock themselves away.

But in that room ... the disciples ... minus Judas and Thomas ... witness the risen Christ in their midst.

He comes to them in their time of uncertainty and offers words of peace ... words intended to ease their uncertainty

and fears ... to assure the disciples that he has indeed risen ... that death has been overcome and new life has been made possible.

Those reassuring words?

... "Peace be with you."

We need to keep in mind that Jesus isn't speaking about a peace marked by the absence of violence. Jesus was speaking about peace ... a deeper, personal peace ... the Hebrew word for such a peace is "Shalom."

It is a word that means wholeness ... a wholeness of body, mind and soul. It is a blessing for the well-being of all ... that a person's heart is untroubled.

It is a peace that marks right relationships between people. It is a peace that comes through faith ... it is a peace with grace at its centre.

It is God's gift.

The peace Jesus offers the disciples this morning is intended to enable the group to overcome their fear and move forward in their calls through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus breathes upon them.

After Jesus leaves, Thomas arrives.

The disciples tell him what they had experienced moments before. But the story of an empty tomb isn't enough to convince him that all Jesus promised is true. The words Jesus shared with the disciples ... that they no doubt shared with Thomas ... didn't convince him.

Thomas wants to experience Jesus for himself before he believes.

Jesus' re-assurance is the answer to fear.

But did it ease their fears?

The next week ... the disciples and Thomas are in the room again.

Jesus appears ... offering Thomas the opportunity to touch the wounds on his hands and on his side so that Thomas will come to believe.

Thomas comes to believe without touching the wounds ... "My Lord and my God," he affirms.

Jesus opened himself to Thomas in a way that he could understand.

In this moment, Thomas realizes that his relationship with Jesus didn't end at the cross.

Thomas has unfairly taken it on the chin over the centuries for his demand to experience Jesus ... to see Jesus ... before giving into belief. We've come to call him "Doubting Thomas."

It seems a bit unfair ... because what gets overlooked by many who hear or read this passage is that a week after Jesus first appeared to them ... the disciples are right behind the locked doors again.

The good news may inspire their hope, but it doesn't erase their genuine fear.

If we were in their place ... would we be fearfully locked in the room or would we be somewhere else? Would we understand what the resurrection meant? Even now ... do we fully grasp what it means for us and for the world?

Last Sunday ... Easter Sunday ... we faced the open tomb and celebrated the risen Christ. For some, that's it ... Easter

has come and gone ... now life returns to its usual routine.

It shouldn't.

The story of Easter ... the story of the resurrection ... turns the world upside down. It is a story of disruption ... of life disrupted. Uncertainty comes with such disruption.

But Easter is a season ... seven weeks ... 50 days long ... ending with Pentecost in mid-May. It is a season that ... if fully lived into ... is a season of transformation for us and for the world around us.

It is a season that invites us to live into the reality of the resurrection and know that through Jesus there is heartfelt peace.

Gail O'Day is a professor at Emory University in Atlanta.

She says that allowing ourselves to be shaped by this new reality transforms us into "Easter people." We are a people of the resurrection.

Which means that ... as a congregation ... as followers of Christ ... we are shaped by the dying and rising of Christ ... we are molded by the expectation-shattering reality of Jesus overcoming death and the grave.

It is a reality that the disciples began in fear ... in the need for proof that their belief hadn't died on a hill outside Jerusalem. It is a reality that they are slow to accept.

By staying in a locked room on that first day, the disciples clearly weren't living as "Easter people."

They didn't fully grasp the reality of the resurrection ... even when Jesus

appears and seeks to ease their fears and bring a sense of peace in their lives ... they still remained away from the world ... lost in the uncertainty.

Thomas ... for his part ... was open to experiencing the resurrection.

They ... like some congregations in our time ... kept the promise ... the reassurance of new life to themselves. They remained on the wrong side of Easter.

They failed to share the peace they had been offered. They were still afraid of the new life that had been offered to them.

BUT ... Jesus comes a second time to that closed room ... Jesus offers himself ... over and over again ... to people who long to experience Jesus ... God's love ... the grace that comes through the cross.

Living as Easter people ... living as a resurrection community ... means being present for others ... the hungry ... the suffering ... the hurting ... the conflicted ... and the afflicted.

It means we cannot try to keep the promise of the gospel behind closed or locked doors ... requiring people to come to this space to experience Jesus. We need to go out into uncertainty ... journeying into unfamiliar ground ... to share the grace we have received ... to share and foster peace.

This means going out from this place ... recognizing injustice ... inequality ... oppression ... and exclusion ... those things that prevent people from experiencing true, deep peace and then bear witness to those moments when

we felt God's love touch our lives ... and allowing these moments to shape our words and approaches to the world around us.

It is a peace we offer through the wounds we share with the world ... through our accepting ... inclusive ... loving presence in the life of the world ... and it shown through the four words we share each Sunday ... "peace be with you."

It is the joy we feel as Easter people ... that |Jesus has overcome death ... and that we are continuously and unconditionally loved.

Shalom...

**AMEN**

### **Lord's Prayer**

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**

The God of all,  
who raised + Jesus from the dead,  
bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit  
to live in the new creation.

**AMEN**