

MINISTER'S MINUTE

2nd Sunday of Easter/Holy Humour Sunday

Morning Prayer

We Are One With You

O God, we are one with you. You have made us one with you. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, you dwell in us.

Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection.

O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you, and we love you with our whole being, because our being is your being, our spirit is rooted in your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world, and which makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

- Thomas Merton



This Sunday is the second Sunday of Eastertide, the season of Easter which ends on Pentecost Sunday. Scripture tells us that after the Resurrection, there were a number of days when Jesus appeared to his disciples and friends. Even if it was a shock, if Jesus did not return our faith story would have been much different. Thanks be to God that we have an entire Easter season to continue to appreciate it!

Through Easter, we have been introduced to the good humour of God and the surprise of resurrection. Resurrection is a word that comes to mind after the winter when the first bits of green begin to appear. It is God's goodness and joy that makes us feel happy in this time. Easter happens to create joy in us so why not share the good humour? After all, Jesus was the first one to say, "I'll be back", way before Arnold Schwarzenegger did in the Terminator movie. G. K. Chesterton is famously quoted as saying: "A good joke is the closest thing we have to divine revelation." If what he says is true, then it is pretty safe to say that we can joke around. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:4 that "there is a time to weep

Sunday Scripture

Acts 2:14a, 22–32

Peter preaches on Pentecost.

Psalm 16 (VU pp. 737–738)

In you, God, I take refuge.

1 Peter 1:3–9

Salvation is the outcome of faithfulness.

John 20:19–31

Jesus appears to the disciples and to Thomas.

More Fun Jokes:

Q: How does Easter end?

A: With and R.

Q: What music do Bunnies listen to?

A: Hip-Hop

Q: What did the Easter Bunny say about the Easter parade?

A: It was eggs-cellent!

and a time to laugh.” and some jokes can make us do both! So, in order to stick with the joy that is created through jokes, here are a few for you:

1) What is a dentist’s favourite hymn? Crown Him with Many Crowns (2 points: Holy, Holy, Holy)

2) How do we know Peter was a rich fisherman? By his net income.

3) What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth? Ruthless

This Sunday’s scripture is often focused on Thomas, one of the followers of Jesus. It just so happens that Thomas was not there when Jesus first appeared to the disciples. And so, like many of us, until we see for ourselves, we do not believe. Until we touch and know for sure, it is too often that we are not swayed from our understanding of what we believe to be ‘the way things are’. We are in fact more like Thomas than we would like to admit, but this does not mean our faith is weak.

Our society often focuses on the truths that come from actions instead of words that are spoken. In Christian faith, we are challenged because we repeat things like Jesus said: ‘Love your neighbour’ or ‘God is with you’. And there are words that are even harder to follow. For example, ‘If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’ I imagine that these words would have been extremely difficult to follow. Jesus had just returned from the dead and was telling his followers to forgive people. To forgive the people who had let their beloved teacher die on a cross?

However, in this interpretation of the text, we need for Jesus to say these words because they echo his most famous words, ‘to love one another as I have loved you’. It is my understanding that these words reminded the disciples of who they follow and it helped them to trust in Him.

I would like to centre in on these scriptural words because I feel we can most relate to them right now. To forgive is to forgive. To forgive allows you to let go of what is burdening YOU. It can be very hard to do, but I believe therein lies the important lesson: especially during this pandemic. There is a great deal of pressure on people who are doing everything they possibly can to turn this

situation around. But there is no right way to do everything as quickly as we wish it could happen. The best thing we can do for each other is to forgive and keep going. So, let us take the pressure off of each other: forgive when we argue and when we make mistakes.

In our gospel scripture about Thomas today, we could talk about his flaws: his inability to do what everyone else was doing. We could talk about how Thomas should have had more faith, or that we are like him with our fears and doubts or we could talk about how Jesus understood that there were a variety of believers around him. Jesus realized that faithful people did not all have to be the same type of believers. We do not have to express or experience our faith in exactly the same way.

The thing I always trust in this passage is that Jesus came to Thomas where he was at in his faith. And God most definitely comes to us where we are at. Thomas is not to blame in this passage for he was experiencing something bigger than he could process. Sometimes we do not feel able to believe everything in our world either! Not everyone can do everything right all the time. For Thomas, something more was needed to happen for him to trust. We can trust that Jesus' faith in us will not waver and that Jesus will meet us where we're at.

People today are having a hard time trusting and believing in each other. Truly, it is a world that shows how much work there is left to be done to get everyone on the same page. And this takes different ways of learning. Not everyone hears a message when it is spoken. Not everyone understands when messages are written or when they are shouted. Not everyone internalizes a message when it is sung. And there are folks who only do what they want. Well, perhaps they are always going to do only what they want.

So, when someone like Thomas, children of any age, young people or even adults, decide to question and wonder, let us meet them where they are at. The purpose of this scripture, for me, is that in any situation, we should allow ourselves the grace that Jesus allowed Thomas. The time that was given to Thomas to touch, feel and respond was good for him and helped him to believe. We are going to have to work to meet people where they are at, no matter the struggle. And maybe we do not have that ability yet. But we can keep trying, especially now that there are more and more questions about how we got to this place in time. And one of the ways we can reach people is through humour. So, in faith, let us try to keep laughing at ourselves as we live together in God's world.

Amen. Peace be with you, Rev. Emma

Sunday Fun: Can you find Gwen the Wonder Dog?



Leslie Pipes 2018