

***The Lutheran Church of the Covenant***  
***“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”***

JESUS SAID TO THEM AGAIN,  
PEACE BE WITH YOU. AS THE  
FATHER HAS SENT ME, EVEN SO

**I AM SENDING YOU.**

JOHN 20:21

*Second Sunday of Easter*  
*April 11, 2021*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! We continue to do our best in providing the safest environment possible for you to worship our Risen Lord with your whole heart, even during these COVID-19 times. Here are the precautions we are taking on behalf of our whole community of faith, so that we best care for one another and those we are around during the week.

- We ask you wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, unless you have a medical condition preventing you from doing so.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements are available for you to pick up as you enter from the back of the sanctuary. The Communion elements are available in wine and grape juice form as well as wheat and gluten-free wafers. We will partake of the body and blood of Christ together from our respective seats.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected for supporting our congregational and wider-church ministry, and so an offering basket is placed beside the bulletins and Communion elements, for those who wish to give this day.
- We are asking you to refrain from singing, as we do our best to minimize the spread of droplets and aerosols around our masks. You may do so in your heart, where we believe God hears just as well as if spoken or sung aloud. We, also, ask that you continue participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print, but doing so in a whisper voice.
- There will not be a time for sharing of the peace, but we encourage you to do so with one another before or after the worship (while maintaining the physical distancing recommendations of six feet).
- There will not be a processional or recessional of the cross, nor will there be a receiving line with the pastor after the worship. If you wish to speak for Pastor Brad, for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact him through email, text or calling him directly.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we will always err on the side of caution while knowing that we can still transmit the virus even with the full vaccination.

## Second Sunday of Easter

*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.*

Prelude *Christ the Lord is Risen Today!* (HILLERT)

Welcome & Announcements

\*Thanksgiving for Baptism

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at our baptism, remembering our everlasting bond with our Risen Lord.*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,  
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ,  
for these waters where you make us new,  
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.  
We praise you, Holy Spirit,  
for coming to us in these grace-filled waters of rebirth,  
like rains to our thirsting earth,  
like streams that revive our souls,  
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.  
Breathe your peace of serenity  
on your whole church when we hide in fear.  
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.  
Send us as loving companions on our journey  
as we share your new life among us.  
Make us one, risen Christ.  
Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God,  
now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn    *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright*

#384

Text: Latin hymn, 5th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

- 1    That Easter day with joy was bright;  
      the sun shone out with fairer light  
      when, to their longing eyes restored,  
      th'apostles saw their risen Lord!
- 2    O Jesus, king of gentleness,  
      with constant love our hearts possess;  
      to you our lips will ever raise  
      the tribute of our grateful praise.
- 3    O Christ, you are the Lord of all  
      in this our Easter festival,  
      for you will be our strength and shield  
      from ev'ry weapon death can wield.
- 4    All praise, O risen Lord, we give  
      to you, once dead, but now alive!  
      To God the Father equal praise,  
      and God the Spirit, now we raise!

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

First Lesson

Acts 4:32-35

*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.*

<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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Psalm 133

<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 Lesson

1 John 1:1-2:2

*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.*

<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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*Gospel

John 20:19-31

*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.*

<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.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Oh, Worship the King*

#842

Text: Robert Grant, 1779-1838, alt.

- 1 Oh, worship the King, all-glorious above.  
Oh, gratefully sing God's power and love;  
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.
- 2 The earth with its store of wonders untold,  
Almighty, your pow'r has founded of old;  
established it fast by a changeless decree,  
and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.
- 3 Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,  
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.
- 4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail;  
your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,  
our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.
- 5 O measureless might, ineffable love,  
while angels delight to hymn you above,  
the humbler creation, though feeble their lays,  
with true adoration shall sing to your praise.

\*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.

*A brief silence.*

You shower your whole church with grace, O God. Unite the entire body of Christ 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.**

You place within the heart of the church a spirit of sharing. Give us the power of you as the generous Spirit, that we provide for the needs of others. 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 Covenant family. 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.**

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.**



\*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, living, and loving God,  
we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.  
We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood,  
for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,  
and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.

We give you thanks for Jesus  
who, living among us,  
healed the sick,  
fed the hungry,  
and with a love stronger than death,  
gave his life for others.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life-giving death and glorious resurrection,  
we await your promised life for all this dying world.

Holy Spirit, breathe on us and on this bread and cup:  
carry us in your arms from death to life,  
that we may live as your living disciples,  
clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever. **Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Prelude on "Victory"* (PARKER)

Prayer after Communion

Wellspring of joy,  
through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.  
Satisfy the hunger still around us,  
and send us as joyful witnesses,  
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Blessing

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom  
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.  
The God of life,  
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Text: John S. B. Monsell, 1811-1875, alt.

- 1 Christ is risen! Alleluia!  
Risen our victorious head!  
Sing his praises! Alleluia!  
Christ is risen from the dead!  
Gratefully our hearts adore him  
as his light once more appears;  
bowing down in joy before him,  
rising up from griefs and tears.

*Refrain*

- Christ is risen! Alleluia!  
Risen our victorious head!  
Sing his praises! Alleluia!  
Christ is risen from the dead!
- 2 Christ is risen! All the sadness  
of our Lenten fast is o'er;  
through the open gates of gladness  
he returns to life once more;  
death and hell before him bending  
see him rise, the victor now,  
angels on his steps attending,  
glory round his wounded brow. *Refrain*
- 3 Christ is risen! All the sorrow  
that last evening round him lay  
now has found a glorious morrow  
in the rising of today.  
See the grave its firstfruits giving,  
springing up from holy ground;  
Christ was dead, but now is living;  
he was lost, but he is found. *Refrain*

4 Christ is risen! Henceforth never  
death or hell shall us enthrall.  
We are Christ's, in him forever  
we have triumphed over all.  
All the doubting and dejection  
of our trembling hearts have ceased;  
hail the day of resurrection!  
Let us rise and keep the feast. *Refrain*

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**  
Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude *Christ is Risen! Alleluia!* (BALCOMBE)

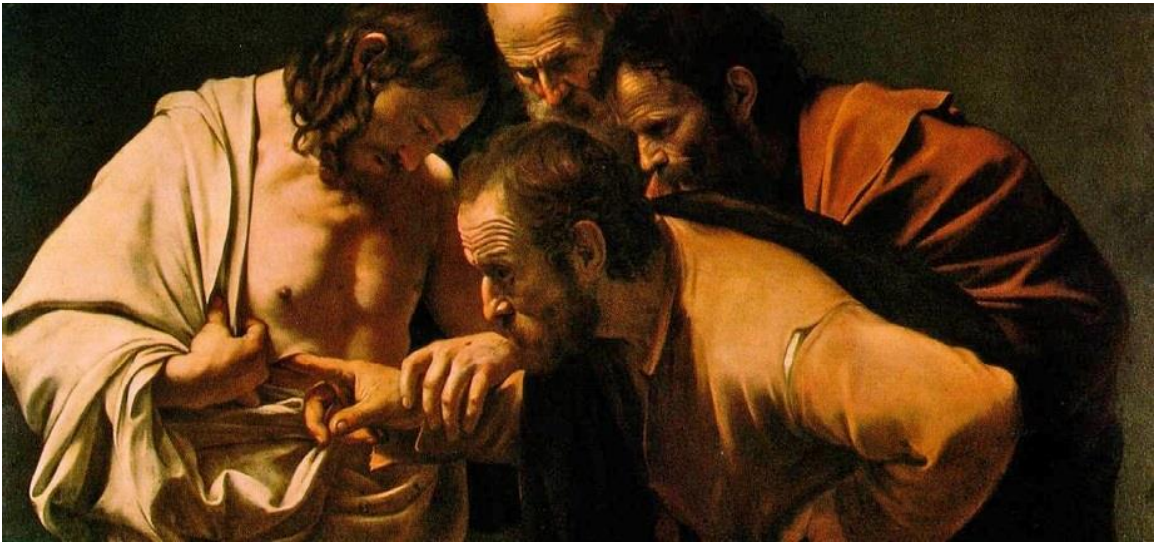
### **Praying Together**

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg Mary Kaye Bernardo, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Lauren Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Judy Jones, Matt Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Heather Lasher, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

### **LAST WEEK**

General Fund receipts for week ending 4/4/2021: \$3001.00

## *Lectionary Blog: The Wind of a New Spirit*



*Thomas the apostle from the story in the Gospel of John. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, 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.” Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” (John 20:27-28)*

“BAM!” My little Datsun was slammed into by a large delivery truck doing 60 miles an hour. It hit the car right behind the back door and the car spun round and round like a top, then “WHAM!” it stopped, wedged into the ditch on the side of the road. Every window was broken; the steering wheel was broken; the seat was broken. My head was in the backseat, passenger side and my feet were under the steering wheel, and I couldn’t breathe. I literally could not breathe. That truck knocked the wind out of me.

One of my parishioners ran over to my car from the convenience store across the road and leaned in the broken window. “Pastor, Pastor are you all right?”

Well no, I wasn't all right. I couldn't breathe. There was no air in my lungs, and I didn't seem to be able to get any in there. I couldn't speak; I couldn't even move. I just stared at her with my mouth open. She started crying, and then started screaming to the other people rushing to help, "He's dead! He's dead! Oh my God, the preacher's dead!" Which is, I assure you, a disconcerting thing to have screamed in your ear when you are indeed very much alive.

After what seemed like an eternity I was able to get a bit of air into my lungs and lift a hand to touch her on the shoulder; which, in retrospect, was not the best thing to do, seeing as how she thought I was dead and all. When I touched her on the shoulder, she jerked her head up and looked at me with real terror in her eyes. Finally, I squeezed out the words, "It's all right. I'm not dead." It was a peculiar and disorienting thing to find myself in that position, that of the one who had been hurt reaching out to comfort the onlooker. But that is the situation in which we find Jesus in our Gospel lesson—the one who had been hurt bringing solace to the witnesses.

On the evening of that first Easter, the disciples were meeting in a room. They had the door shut, bolted, locked. They were frightened. They could not get their bearings. They could not breathe. They had given up everything to follow Jesus, and this is not how they expected things to turn out. Just a week ago, on Palm Sunday, they had entered the city with such gigantically high hope, and now ... this. This, this ... disaster. This, this ... craziness. This, this ... car crash of an ending. Indeed, they had had the wind knocked out of them. And so, on that first Easter evening, Jesus the Christ came to the disciples in that locked and airless room and breathed new life into them.

At one time or another all of us are like the disciples were on that first Easter evening. We too have had the wind knocked out of us. Some of us have lost loved ones unexpectedly, some of us struggle with a long-term illness in the family, some of us have lost economic security, some of us have failed to get that promotion we had hoped for, some of our children haven't worked out the way we hoped, some of our marriages are hurting. All of us have had the wind knocked out of us, sometime; probably sometime lately. Believe you me, in times like those, the big picture fades away and all your energy is centered on surviving, on breathing, on taking one more precious breath, and anything other than the present, personal experience becomes difficult to believe in or focus upon. All we know or believe is what is happening to us—right now, right here.

This is what has happened to the disciples. Though they spent several years working with and listening to Jesus, though they saw his miracles and healings, they heard his teachings and expositions of Scripture, though they knew that he had said he would rise again, in the moment, in this moment, in this place in this time all they could feel was their fear, doubt and pain.

So it is with us. The personal experiences that convinced us to believe and trust in God in the first place fade into the background, they seem are few and far between, practically non-existent; while the many things that cause us to not believe, not trust, knock the wind out of us, become much louder, more persistent and much more frequent. And into those spaces of doubt, fear and unbelief, Jesus comes to us and shows us the wounds in the hands of the living God.

As he did with the disciples, and finally with Thomas, Jesus comes into the locked rooms of our souls and wipes away our tears with his blood-stained hands. Jesus breathes the wind of a new spirit into our withered and faded souls. Jesus responds to our fear, reactivity, and defensiveness with vulnerability and offers of peace. Jesus answers our fear of death with the presence and promise of new life. And we are invited to join with Thomas in proclaiming him, “My Lord and my God!” Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Amen and amen.

*This article was originally published April 8, 2018, on [LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org).*

*Please visit their website for the latest resources for the journey of faith.*



*Delmer Chilton is originally from North Carolina and received his education at the University of North Carolina, Duke Divinity School and the Graduate Theological Foundation. He received his Lutheran training at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C. Ordained in 1977, Delmer has served parishes in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.*

# Believe It or Not!



But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." John 20:25

Based on John 20:19-31 (NIV)

Y J M N P S M B J D J Y D J S  
C X I T A T F M L H O Y W A X  
W X R K N Y G X P O F O M E D  
X M A D V Y G E A X C O R E H  
R X C C J V D R L X H K V S A  
T L L U V E D A E T N E E D M  
T K E S H E H I R C I N S D S  
O X S C W B A S S L O C Y N T  
G R U O L K N Z E C L R G D N  
E O H D Q Z D B H J I I D E P  
T S I U J J S A S R S P F E Z  
H N T F E K D P I A M I L B D  
E T W U S N K D D U L G E E E  
R S R N U K P S E S L V H N S  
R P T V S V D O U B T I N G B

JESUS  
MIRACLES  
DOORS  
TOUCHED

TOGETHER  
SIGNS  
LIFE  
THOMAS

DOUBTING  
SHOWED  
HANDS  
SIDE

RECORDED  
BELIEVED  
DISCIPLES  
LOCKED