

Christ Shows Himself to Thomas
Washington Cathedral Resurrection Chapel



Second Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2020

Welcome on this second Sunday of Easter, as the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord extends out into the coming weeks of the Easter Season. As the beautiful stain glass windows at St. John's Lutheran and West Kish Presbyterian depict, Jesus knocks at our door, the front door, the back door of each of our homes. Through the Holy Spirit, let us invite Christ into our hearts through our worship over the air waves today.

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia! 128

1 Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day; Al - le - lu - ia!
 2 For the sheep the Lamb has bled, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3 Hail, the vic - tim un - de - filed, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4 Chris - tians, on this ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!

Chris - tians, has - ten on your way; Al - le - lu - ia!
 Sin - less in the sin - ner's stead. Al - le - lu - ia!
 God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled, Al - le - lu - ia!
 All your grate - ful hom - age pay; Al - le - lu - ia!

Of - fer praise with love re - plete, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!
 When con - tend - ing death and life, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!

At the pas - chal vic - tim's feet. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Now he lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Met in strange and awe - some strife. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Now he lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!

WELCOME

We continue to settle into this gathered space of praise and thanksgiving with this song written by a friend and Quaker leader, Ken Jacobson. It is based on the Easter Psalm 118 and the over 200 times in the Bible we hear translations of the Hebrew word “Hesed,” God’s steadfast love and loving kindness with us in difficulty, in strife at all times.

OPENING SONG: *Steadfast Love* Ken Jacobson
Please take this time for silent prayer and soulful preparation

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our sin and whose mercy endures forever. God of tender mercy, steadfast love and loving kindness, come to the help of your people, in this time. Give us the power of your Holy spirit that we may confront injustice in the world, confess shortcomings and failings in our own lives, receive your forgiveness, and grow in to the fullness of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen

C: Gracious God have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to You and uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

L: God who is rich in mercy holds us in steadfast love. By God’s grace we are forgiven

C: Thanks be to God. Amen

KYRIE

P: Kyrie Eleison

Lord Have Mercy

P: Christe Eleison

Christ Have Mercy

P: Kyrie Eleison

Lord Have Mercy

THE PEACE

L: Sisters and Brothers rejoice. Be reconciled, mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always **And also with you.**

Let us extend the peace, to the North, South, East and West, beyond the walls of our homes and into the world.

GREETING

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

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest; glory to God, glory to God, and peace to God’s people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest; glory to God, glory to God, and peace to God’s people on earth, and peace to God’s people on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ’s blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LESSONS and PSALM (you are encouraged to read these in your celebrate, bulletin or Bible before the service)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia*

HOLY GOSPEL

P The Holy Gospel according to John the 20th chapter

C Glory to you, O Lord.

(after the reading)

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

MESSAGE ~ Rev. Ela J. Robertson

Well, here we are “on the Air” As I stand in front of the big boom mic my husband has set up in our dining room, I can imagine seeing that ‘On the Air’ sign flashing in an old radio studio where a young woman raised in a gospel singing church is now given the chance to stardom, Singing her soul out (with the Holy Spirit) to an unknown audience who may or may not believe.

Air and breath are signs of the Holy Spirit. “Ruach” in Hebrew is Air, breath, Spirit. -

When in our Gospel today John tells us Jesus ‘breathed on them, breathed on the Disciples’ we know this is Christ giving the gift of the Holy Spirit to them. Through, receiving that Spirit they will be able to proclaim to others, ‘We have seen the Lord, we know our Lord is risen. we have seen the Lord.’

Still, knowing that air and breath refer to the Holy Spirit in this Biblical context, I can’t help but overlay our own situation today, and think about all those tiny crown viruses ‘on the air’ and have a knee jerk reaction to ‘he breathed on them’ - “gosh he was really getting too close for social distancing wasn’t he?”

This is a challenge. Accepting where we are, as we are secluded within the walls of our home, we realize our fears and annoyances can not help but influence how we hear and see things. Yet, we can also realize Christ enters the walls to speak through this and to us.

The disciples, after they have received the Holy Spirit have been commissioned by Jesus: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” They are ready to share their news. The first person the group wants to share this with is their fellow disciple Thomas, who was not with them the night Jesus miraculously appeared to them in their locked and bolted room. They may have thought that Thomas would hear that they had seen the risen Lord and immediately rejoice and be glad with them.

We know it wasn’t quite like that. This story is one we’re all familiar with. Even people who may have never read the Bible, know what a Doubting Thomas is. This term has become a part of our popular culture. Interestingly, Thomas is not called ‘Doubting Thomas’ in the scripture. John introduces him as ‘the one who was called the Twin.’ He is also referred to as ‘Didymus’, a word in Greek translated as the ‘Twin.’ But nowhere in the Bible are we told who his twin is. As it is true in many kinds of literature, when a character is unnamed, it is as if the writer is asking the reader to stand in their place. So we become Thomas’s twin. We become the twin, the very likeness of Doubting Thomas, the disciple who questioned, doubted and wanted proof.

Is there anyone out there today who can say you have never felt like a Doubting Thomas? Especially in these times. We hear the news of the doctor, one of the first fatalities to Covid-19, during the first outbreak in China who warned, “this could be very dangerous, we need to do something” and people responded, “Oh, we doubt it.”

When the first cases appeared in the US, doubled, tripled and the list of cancellations, prohibitions and social distancing measures changed every day, with each more restrictive move we questioned, “I doubt if we really have to do that do we?”

Sometimes we apologize for being a doubting Thomas, and sometimes we just unabashedly stick to our views, until we have proof to think otherwise. Questioning facts and other peoples’ words in the world, may not be the same as questioning God’ word and our faith. After Thomas has the proof he sought and touches Christ’s wounds, Jesus says “do not doubt but believe.” (John 20:27)

Jesus is not condemning Thomas for doubting, he is listening, he is meeting him where he is and helping him to faith. And what about us, Thomas’ twins? John says these things are written, this story of Thomas is told so that you, you dear readers and listeners through the centuries, you who have not seen, may believe and have life. God recognizes that humanity, twins of Thomas, will question, will doubt yet God gives us proof if we need it and makes it possible for us to believe.

A victim of years of torture in a Hanoi prison during the Vietnam war, James Stockdale, credited his survival to a combination of Faith and facts, a melding of “absolute, unwavering faith that you can prevail,” with “the discipline to begin by confronting the brutal facts, whatever they are.”*

Through grace we have faith that we are one in the family of God, believers, doubters, faithful, factfinders. As brothers and sisters in Christ we willingly act in humility and service to others. With the newest proclamation: *workers and customers in face-to-face essential businesses, grocery stores etc. must wear masks*, let’s notice our doubts and level of willingness or resistance to live with this new fact of life. Can we continue to have both faith that we will get through this and the discipline to facilitate it? In some countries wearing a mask is seen as sign of community mindedness, like wearing a heart on your sleeve. Ed Yong, writing for the Atlantic noted that the “single most effective weapon against the pandemic (is) the willingness of its citizens to make individual sacrifices for the sake of all.”*

Christ willingly sacrificed all for every individual throughout time. Let us hold this in faith, know that God’s steadfast love is living, with us, while we face the facts of what we must sacrifice for others in this time. As we continue to worship on the air, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, let’s have faith we will be back together as the church, in the church in God’s time. AMEN.

*Ed Yong, Atlantic Monthly, April 14, 2020

Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain

1 Come, you faith - ful, raise the strain Of tri - um - phant glad - ness!
 2 'Tis the spring of souls to - day: Christ has burst his pris - on,
 3 Now the queen of sea - sons, bright With the day of splen - dor,
 4 For to - day a - mong the twelve Christ ap - peared, be - stow - ing

God has brought his Is - ra - el In - to joy from sad - ness,
 And from three days' sleep in death As a sun has ris - en;
 With the roy - al feast of feasts Comes its joy to ren - der;
 His deep peace, which ev - er - more Pass - es hu - man know - ing.

Loosed from Pha-raoh's bit - ter yoke Ja - cob's sons and daugh - ters,
 All the win - ter of our sins, Long and dark, is fly - ing
 Comes to glad - den faith - ful hearts Which with true af - fec - tion
 Nei - ther could the gates of death, Nor the tomb's dark por - tal,

Led them with un - moist - ened foot Through the Red Sea wa - ters.
 From his light, to whom is giv'n Laud and praise un - dy - ing.
 Wel - come in un - wea - ried strain Je - sus' res - ur - rec - tion!
 Nor the watch - ers, nor the seal, Hold him as a mor - tal.

5 Alleluia! Now we cry
 To our King immortal,
 Who, triumphant, burst the bars
 Of the tomb's dark portal.

Come, you faithful, raise the strain
 Of triumphant gladness!
 God has brought his Israel
 Into joy from sadness!

OFFERTORY (you may submit your offering by mail or drop it off at the church.)

Offertory Prayer: Blessed are you Oh God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As we stay at home, attempt to limit our shopping and are resourceful with what we have, help us to recognize how much less we need. Open our hearts to serve you through giving to our church and denominations through the ELCA Covid-19 response fund and other programs designed to look out for and give to those suffering illness and economic hardship. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and respond to those in need through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED - Proclaiming our Faith

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 the CHURCH ~ *see celebrate insert.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*in unison*)

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 today 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.

BENEDICTION

260

On Our Way Rejoicing

1 On our way re - joic - ing Glad - ly let us go.
2 Un - to God the Fa - ther Joy - ful songs we sing;

Christ our Lord has con - quered; Van - quished is the foe.
Un - to God the Sav - ior Thank - ful hearts we bring;

Christ with - out, our safe - ty; Christ with - in, our joy;
Un - to God the Spir - it Bow we and a - dore,

Who, if we be faith - ful, Can our hope de - stroy?
On our way re - joic - ing Now and ev - er - more.

Refrain

On our way re - joic - ing; As we for - ward move,

Hear - ken to our prais - es, O blest God of love!

Pastor: Reverend Ela J. Robertson Phone 740-338-7123
Church Office: 935-2032 **Email us at stjohnco@embarqmail.com**
St. John's Christian Day Care: 935-2959

Please remember in prayer ~ Audrey Michael, Sally Shingler (now at Valley View), Donna Snook (now in a nursing facility under Hospice care), (sisters of Lucy Magda and Nancy Aumiller, they are all, including Nancy dealing with health concerns), Kim Aumiller, Ev Young, Samantha Smith, our members ~ Betty Harmon (Elmcroft), Carol Yoder, Diddy Cleck, Betty Smith, Nancy Aumiller and Larry Walter (VVH).

Hallelujah! Welcome to worship as we praise our living Savior! Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. tune into AM 670 or FM 92.9 for our church service! Our organist will be our own John Haubrick, Senior (in exile) at Mifflin County High School. The service may also be streamed on your phone or computer at biglewie.com. Be sure to scroll down to bottom to the arrow to 'Listen'.

Many thanks to all who helped with the Easter lunch. Special thanks to the cooks, Ted and Tammy Carothers, as well as those who helped pack and deliver the meals: Mike and Isaac Maclay, Dave Semler, Jay & Joy Byler, Pastor Ela, Ann & Tom McNabb, and Matt, Judy, and John Waddell. Some people have asked how to make a donation toward the meal, but this is not necessary. If anyone wishes to make a special contribution anyway, all donations received will be sent to the Shelter Service in Lewistown.

Larry Walter died last week and will be buried in New Jersey beside his loving wife, Nellie. The Walters moved to the cottages in 1994 and soon joined St. John's. We thank God for their presence in our lives.

Church office hours will be 8:00am – 1:00pm Monday's and Thursday's until we can open our doors again.

For those of you who would like to continue blessing the church with your tithe, it can be mailed to P.O. Box 5716 or place it in the mail slot found in the side door leading into the coatroom area off the narthex.

Checking account balance 1/1/20 \$ 16,763.74
Income \$58,678.16 Expense \$47,506.12
Net Income \$ 11,172.04

The following is an email from Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. It is regarding the ELCA's COVID 19 Response Fund. If you want to donate to help people in need during this time this would be a great fund to contribute to. The ELCA also recognizes that congregations eager to respond to the needs of those unemployed and struggling in their own communities are best positioned to respond locally. Carol and I will be looking over the possibility of applying to the ELCA's COVID 19 Response Fund for local mission.

Pastor Ela

From Bishop Eaton:

I know that, for many of us, this is a time of uncertainty and financial hardship. However, for those of you who are in a position to do more, the needs are great.

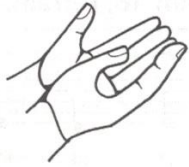
In the United States, unemployment has soared. We are already seeing rising demands on our food pantries, homeless shelters and social services. Around the world, millions of people living in poverty are facing this pandemic without reliable access to sanitation and health care.

With congregations and ministries across the country, and a network of companion churches and partners in over 70 countries around the world, we anticipate this crisis will affect us all. Your gifts to the ELCA's [COVID-19 Response Fund](#) will provide funds to the ministries of the ELCA most in need and best positioned to help. This includes our congregations as well as local and churchwide ministries capable of reaching and assisting those in need. If you are able, please help with a gift today.

I have been reflecting on the words of Peter: “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received” (1 Peter 4:10). Now is a time when we need one another. Now is a time to live and act as faithful people of God.

Be of good courage, dear church, and remember that Christ is with us now and always.

**In Christ,
Elizabeth A. Eaton**



Celebrate

Second Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2020

In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]:

²²"You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I
will not be shaken;

²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and
my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷For you will not abandon my soul
to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience
corruption.

²⁸You have made known to me the
ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness
with your presence.'

²⁹"Fellow Israelites, I may say to you
confidently of our ancestor David that
he both died and was buried, and his
tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was
a prophet, he knew that God had sworn
with an oath to him that he would put
one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke of the
resurrection of the Messiah, saying,
'He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience
corruption.'

³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that
all of us are witnesses."

Psalm

Psalm 16; refrain, Ps. 16:11



In your pres-ence there is full-ness of joy.

Protect me, O God, for I take ref-¹uge in you;

I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good a-¹bove all other."

²All my delight is in the godly that are ¹in the land,
upon those who are noble a-¹mong the people.

³But those who run after ¹other gods
shall have their troubles ¹multiplied.

⁴I will not pour out drink offerings ¹to such gods,
never take their names up-¹ on my lips. **R**

⁵O LORD, you are my portion ¹and my cup;
it is you who up-¹hold my lot.

⁶My boundaries enclose a ¹pleasant land;
indeed, I have a ¹rich inheritance.

⁷I will bless the LORD who ¹gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night ¹after night.

⁸I have set the LORD al-¹ways before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall ¹not be shaken. **R**

⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spir-¹it rejoices;
my body also shall ¹rest in hope.

¹⁰For you will not abandon me ¹to the grave,
nor let your holy one ¹see the pit.

¹¹You will show me the ¹path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for-¹evermore. **R**

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3-9

This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer

various trials,⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord.

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."²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.²⁴

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ 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."²⁶

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."²⁷ 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."²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"²⁹ 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."

³⁰Now 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.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Open the doors we close, O God, when we fear those who worship you in different ways. Guide us to unity and harmony so that we may come to respect and cherish our commonalities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Open the paths we ignore, O God, when we prioritize financial gain and convenience over listening to the groaning of the earth. Inspire all to care for the world you have made so that living things might thrive. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Open the rooms we lock, O God, to those who live without a homeland or place of safety. We pray that generous nations offer refuge and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 114. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, died 1109) 1 Corinthians 15:19-28. **Wednesday** Matthew 12:38-42. **Thursday** (commemoration of Toyohiko Kagawa, renewer of society, died 1960) Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19. **Friday** Isaiah 26:1-4. **Saturday** (Mark, Evangelist) Mark 1:1-15. **Third Sunday of Easter** Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35.

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Tracks 1 and 2

Open the hearts we close, O God, to the cries of those in pain. We pray for those isolated physically or emotionally through incarceration, addiction, mental illness, chronic suffering, grief, and all in need (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Open the ways of love, O God, in the pursuit of peace throughout the world, and bless the efforts of missionaries, healthcare professionals, activists for women and children, and relief workers, especially those who find themselves in harm's way. (*Here other worldwide ministries may be named.*) Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Open the way to eternal life, O God, as we remember those who have died in faith (*especially Olavus Petri and Laurentius Petri, renewers of the church*). Free us from the fear of death, that we embrace the peace you have promised. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**