

## Faith Lutheran Church

**Sunday, April 26, 2020**  
**Third Sunday of Easter**



### **Opening Prayer**

Please join me in prayer:

O God, Your Son makes Himself known to all His disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see Him in His redeeming work, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** (from the Third Sunday of Easter, © sundaysandseasons 2020)

### **Readings and Psalm**

- **Acts 2:14a, 36-41** *Receiving God's promise through baptism*
- **Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19** *I will call on the name of the LORD. (Ps. 116:13)*
- **1 Peter 1:17-23** *Born anew through the living word of God*
- **Luke 24:13-35** *Eating with the risen Christ*

### **The Holy Gospel according to Luke 24:13-35, NRSV**

(<https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/TextsAndResources#texts>)

<sup>13</sup>Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. <sup>17</sup>And He said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered Him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” <sup>19</sup>He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find His body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Him.” <sup>25</sup>Then He said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into His glory?” <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things about Himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if He were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So, He went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road, while He was opening the scriptures to us?” <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and He has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### **Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on this Third Sunday of Easter. Amen.**

Besides worshiping and praising, singing and praying, two of the greatest joys many congregations celebrate are the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism. In this time of social distancing, all three of the congregations I serve are fasting from both of these sacraments. However, we look forward with anticipation to the day our communities can safely resume services and we pray that time is not too far off.

In many denominations, a person of any age can be presented to God for Holy Baptism. They are surrounded by their loved ones and the congregation-their church family. Water is sprinkled on their head with these words: “*Child of God*, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit.” The sign of the cross is marked on their forehead to remind them that they “have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” (LBW p. 124)

As I mentioned, the person receiving Holy Baptism is surrounded not only by their family and friends but by their church family as well. It is as much the responsibility of the congregation to fulfill the promises of Holy Baptism as it is the person being baptized, the parents and/or the sponsors. There are many promises that are made to God: to raise the child in the community of faith, take them to church, teach them the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Those gathered promise to teach of God’s love through scripture and by living example.

In fellowship with Sisters and Brothers in Christ, the congregation responds, “We welcome you into the Lord’s family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, children of the same heavenly Father, and a worker with us in the kingdom of God.” (LBW p. 125) What a joyous time it is to be the Church!

The faith life of a Christian continues to grow throughout their life. The learning never stops. Our faith continually blossoms as we mature in both knowledge of God, applying God’s Word in our life, and in godly living. A part of our growth is experiencing God’s love through sharing with others.

In our gospel reading on Easter Sunday (from John 20), after Jesus appeared to Mary, she went to where the rest of the disciples were gathered and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” She told them of Jesus’ resurrection. She shared her conversation and her experience.

In our gospel reading last week (also from John 20), the doors of the house were locked where the disciples-all but Thomas-had gathered. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Before departing, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

After Jesus departed, Thomas returned. The other disciples shared their experience. Thomas said, “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.” I’ve often wondered if there was any tension in that household during that week. Did the disciples try to convince Thomas that Jesus really did appear? Did they continue to discuss it and share their experience? The gospel doesn’t give us any clues.

A week later, Jesus again appeared to the disciples and Thomas was present this time. Thomas saw Jesus and believed! The gospel last week ended with these words, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. 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.”

In our gospel reading for today from Luke 24, Jesus appeared to Cleopas and his wife, Mary, who were walking on the road to Emmaus. Even though they didn't recognize Jesus, they still shared with Him their experiences. They told of all that had happened from the time their Lord was condemned to His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus shared with them all the things about Himself in all the scriptures.

It wasn't until they sat at the table and Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them that they understood - the Lord was with them! All this time, as they shared their experiences, they were sharing Christ's story with Himself. After Jesus left, they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road, while He was opening the scriptures to us?” Then the two disciples returned to Jerusalem, found the other eleven, and shared their experience.

Mary shared her story of the empty tomb with the disciples. The disciples, minus Thomas, shared their story of the resurrected Jesus. Thomas, once a doubter, became a believer after seeing Jesus for himself and shared his story. Cleopas and Mary, after recognizing Jesus in the breaking of bread, shared their story. These are all the same stories we share today.

It is through sharing that our faith is nurtured, our faith is strengthened, and marvelous things happen. It is through this sharing - that the things not seen - are believed.

In this time of pandemic, when many of us are isolated in our homes, we find ourselves relying on these stories to get us through the day. We rely on our Sisters and Brothers in Christ who share phone calls and messages with us. We rely on those who volunteer to shop for us and pick up our essentials. We rely on school staff to package food for our children. We rely on those who have the ability to make masks and gowns that protect our EMS and law enforcement, our volunteers for the Feeding America program and other agencies who interact with the public. We rely on those who are able to financially assist others who are not working and have been without a paycheck.

It is through these experiences that our faith in God and trust in humankind is strengthened. We share the many and various acts of kindness through our words, our actions, and our prayers. We share those Newberry Nightly Neighborly Nods or participate in other get-to-know-your-neighbor programs. We stand on our porches as our high school seniors drive through the town, the only graduation celebration they will have – for now. And we give thanks.

We give thanks to God for sending His Son into this world - to be born of a human mother, to live, die, and rise again, and to ascend into heaven so that we might be saved. We give thanks to God for our faith leaders and congregational members who continue to spiritually nurture our lives. We give thanks to God for the helpers and helpmates called to be our hands and feet when we are unable to leave our homes. And we give thanks to God for his everlasting and abundant love shown to us through Jesus Christ.

Sharing in Christ's love, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20) Thanks be to God! **Amen**

### **Blessing**

And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (*Philippians 4:7*)

### **Prayers of Intercession**

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.*

We pray for those whose hearts are fervent with love for Your gospel, that they are empowered to tell the story of Your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love.

We pray for the diverse natural world: for jungles, prairies, forests, valleys, mountains, and for all the wild and endangered animals who call these spaces home, that they are nurtured and protected.

We pray for broken systems we have inherited and that we continue to perpetuate; for that, forgive us. Restrain the nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence.

We pray for all who call upon Your healing name that they may receive rest. Stay with us, and walk with all those who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and desiring healing in body, mind, and spirit, especially those we name in our hearts, our minds, and with our voices....(please name your prayer concerns).

We pray for the faith forming ministries of this church; for those preparing for baptism, first communion, confirmation, and membership; for those who participate in Sunday school and adult education. Guide and inspire learners of every age and ability.

Create in our hearts, Creator God, a yearning to rest in Your promise of eternal and resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have walked on, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with You.

With bold confidence in Your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into Your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.** (prayers from the Third Sunday of Easter, © sundaysandseasons 2020)

### **Our Lord's Prayer**

*I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us to pray...*

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen**

### **Benediction**

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace; in the name of God the Father, God the Son+, and God the Spirit that makes us one. Amen.

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace to serve our Risen Lord! **Thanks be to God!**

### **Food for Thought**

Have you felt your faith life affected by the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order? Would you care to confidentially share your thoughts with me? Please feel free to call me at (906) 293-8331 (ORLC office) or (906) 291-0897 (Cell).