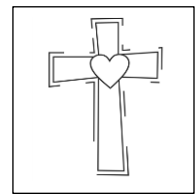


Perley Lutheran Parish
April 19th
2nd Sunday of Easter



Welcome and Announcements

Reminder – Starting 4/22 there will be a 10-15min devotional on Wednesday evenings at 7pm on Facebook

Continue to send in your offerings – perleyparish.org/give or Kirkebo Lutheran Church, PO Box 379, Perley, MN 56574

Thank you for the wonderful comments about Holy Week services – although it was different it was still very special

Keep in touch – if you need something please reach out

Invite friends to watch!

Made it through the first step in the process to becoming ordained with my Faculty Approval Interviews through Luther Seminary - whew! Thanks for your continued support in this final process.

Opening Responses:

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen

C: **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

C: **We give you thank, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace and love. Satisfy the thirsty and give us the life only you can give.**

P: To you God, be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen

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.

Psalm 16 (Read Responsively)

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. **I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."** As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight. **Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.** The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. **The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.** I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. **I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.** Therefore, my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. **For you do not give me up to Sheol or let your faithful one see the Pit.** You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

First Reading Acts 2:14a, 22-32

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. "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—this 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. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was

impossible for him to be held in its power. For 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; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence." "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. Since 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. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Holy Gospel according to John 20:19-31, **Glory to you O 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." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "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." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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." 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." 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 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." 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.

The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

Children's Message:

Good morning!

Today we are going to talk about trust, and how we can know that something is true...what if I told you that I have skydived from an airplane? Would you believe that?

Why or why not? What if I told you I brushed my teeth this morning? That might be a little more believable, but you still didn't watch me do it, so you would have to take my word for it. Well, look at this bag. Would you believe me if I told you I had a ball in this bag? How do you know?

Now we can know for sure, right? What if I let you touch the bag and try to feel what's inside - what do you think it is? Can you know for sure without seeing it? It might be a little trickier...

Well, in our gospel lesson today, someone had a hard time believing what others tried to tell him. The story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after Easter is so exciting. Imagine watching Him die, and feeling so upset, and then seeing Him alive again! But one disciple missed out.

He wasn't there in the room when Jesus came, and didn't see him personally. He did not believe what his friends told him about witnessing Jesus, and promised that he wouldn't believe it until he saw Jesus face to face. When Jesus did show up later, and showed His wounds, Thomas must have felt embarrassed. But the neat thing is that Jesus said "blessed are those who have not seen, and yet still believe."

He commended people who believed in Him without witnessing face to face. Do you know who that is? That's us! We haven't physically seen Jesus, but we can still believe in Him.

How? How do we know about Jesus? The Bible of course. We might hear about Jesus from other people, and that is great. But we have the word of GOD, most importantly.

We have the stories of the Bible, and we know what God's word says is true. In order to trust someone or something, we have to know that it is trustworthy. God has most definitely proved Himself trustworthy. He does what He says He'll do. His promises are real and are true.

The Bible gives us great hope. We can't see God necessarily, but we see His evidence and know He gives us life. The Bible is God's word, given to us so that we can know and believe!

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you for saving us
Thank you for your love
Help us to believe
Even in what we cannot see.
Thank you for Jesus!
In His name, amen

Message:
Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

When my boys were little I was blessed to have my youngest think it was funny to hide. Hiding at home wasn't such a bid deal... after all I knew he was either under his bed, in his closet, or behind his door – those three places that he believed made him invisible. He never ventured far away from his room when he thought he was hiding so I never thought much of it. Well, that all changed when he got a bit older – around the age of 4 – and decided it was even more fun to hide at department stores. No matter how many times I thought I had my eye on him, he would manage to allude my sight and disappear. He wasn't one who just went and hid behind the clerk's counter or in the dressing rooms – No, he thought it was great fun to hide up inside the racks of clothing. Oh, and did I mention that he not only went into the middle of those racks, he climbed onto the bars of the racks so even his little feet couldn't be seen if you were trying to look under all of the racks in the department.

I can't tell you how many times I spent minutes and minutes and minutes in terror wandering the area looking and pleading for him to come out. Had someone taken him? Had he wandered outside of the store? There would be me and his older brother, the clerk nearby and many times multiple more clerks who had been called in to help search, wandering and begging for the little guy to show himself. Yes, I had tears flowing many times when he played this little game. When I was able to manage to coincidentally get close to the rack he was hiding in, I would hear a faint little snicker and giggle from him – as he knew he was good at this game. Despite my desire to ground the kid until he's 20, I would swoop in, pull him from the rack and hug him to pieces. It wasn't about just hearing him or seeing him – I needed to hold him and squeeze him. It took all my fears away, gave me amazing relief when I had been in a sad and desperate state, to feel that connection with him.

We can't help but wonder if that's not a little bit of what was going on in our Gospel today – a need to hold on and to feel the love of Jesus – not just see it. We begin our passage today with the disciples on Easter night. They have gathered and are all tucked in and hiding behind locked doors. It's been a very scary and confusing few days for the disciples - they clearly are a bit leery of the Jewish authorities being out and about searching for them now that Jesus had been taken care of. They would've most likely been huddled together for a few days at this time – not really sure of what to do and who to trust. I don't think they were ready to move on - it was apparent that they needed Jesus to give them a little more guidance and assurance and perhaps that is exactly why he appeared to them that night.

Jesus appears to them gathered and provides them with peace. Yes, peace. Instead of reassuring these fearful followers that he's coming with protection from their enemies, instead of bringing them courage to conquer their fears and upcoming challenges and instead of helping them to believe they can live and work without Him, Jesus comes to them with the salutation of "Peace be with you". I don't know about you, but when I am fearful or dealing with uncertainty, I'm pretty sure I want more than "peace" – I want and need some reassurance.

Jesus gave them peace – a peace that was to calm their fears and alter the situation. "Peace be with you" doesn't sound like much but Jesus' peace comes from love – a love that reminds us of God's never-ending steadfast love for them and for us. Jesus' peace comes to them and to us as a presence in our lives – a relief from fear in their lives and ours. This peace is from God. This peace can transform our fearful lives.

After Jesus shared the peace with them he shared his hands and his side. The proof and they rejoiced in seeing and knowing that He had done as he said he would. Jesus had been raised from the dead and was now standing among them just as he said, and just as they had hoped. And then he breathes the Holy Spirit onto them "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." This is one of the most important pieces of our passage – it's the direction and plan that Jesus is giving to them. Jesus is telling them that they will continue what he has started - this is their call to action. However, this often times gets passed by because of Thomas – we lose our call to action because of doubt.

We know the story, Thomas wasn't with them when Jesus comes to visit and even though I'm sure he can sense the elation in their words and stories of Jesus' visit – he's doubtful. He hears them say "we have seen the Lord". He sees how excited and even relieved they are and yet he just can't believe. "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." I don't doubt for a minute that he WANTS to believe. I don't doubt for a minute that he truly senses that they are telling him the truth, however, he needs to feel it. Remember how I said I needed to hold my son when he was finally found – so did Thomas need to see it for himself and feel the presence of the Lord.

Once again, Jesus appears to them and once again they are gathered together behind closed doors. This time however, Thomas is among them. This time Jesus again shares the peace with them but this time he also addresses Thomas and his disbelief. "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas realizes exactly what the rest have believed already and answers Jesus with "My Lord and my God!" Yes, Thomas believes now but Jesus needs to point out "Have you believed because you have seen me?" For Thomas it took seeing to believe. What about the rest of the disciples though Thomas? Jesus tells him "blessed are those who have not seen – you, me, everyone else but those few that had been gathered in that room - and yet have believed". There's the true meaning of faith isn't it – our belief in a God that we can't see?

Although I don't know if any of us would be brazen enough to stand before Jesus and expect him to prove himself to us. I sometimes wonder though, if how we in our own lives make choices that are our way rather than God's way isn't basically the same thing. We know Jesus rose, we know the amazing miracles that our God has done and the unending love that we receive from believing and yet, we hide or cower in our fears or worries or we try to build ourselves up by tearing others down. After all, how could God really forgive a sinful person like you and me?

But he does. Jesus took on those wounds – bled and died - for you and me. Those nail marks are payment for our sins and the blood that he shed washed away all of our guilty stains. He became flesh and blood to die in our place – to gain our forgiveness and now his living body amongst them proves exactly that – he accomplished what He came for. We are fully forgiven!

Jesus gives us peace – a gift of peace but he does asks of us one thing – to love one another. It isn't possible to love until we are at peace – they go hand in hand.

So, as we face the challenges of our own calling as disciples, we need to hold on to that peace. It is only when we are in God's love, presence, power and control that we can respond to the faith and the calling that God's grace can lead us forward in. We are all called to continue what Jesus started and boldly proclaim the Gospel and peace to all – all those that are so in need of it today in this world. That same peace that changed the disciples. That same peace that transforms our own lives and that same peace that enables us, as Christians to carry out the mission that Jesus started and we must continue to the life everlasting. So I say to you "Peace be with you" today, tomorrow and until we are united with Him. Amen!

Hymn of the Day: Hallelujah! Jesus Lives! #147 (green) Vs. 1 & 4

Hallelujah! Jesus lives! He is now the Living One:
From the gloomy halls of death Christ, the conqueror, has gone,
Bright forerunner to the skies Of his people yet to rise.

Jesus lives! Let all rejoice. Praise him, ransomed of the earth.
Praise him in a no-bler song, Cherubim of heav'n-ly birth.
Praise the victor king, whose sway Sin and death and hell obey.

Apostles Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian/catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen

Prayers of the people:

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...

Loving God, we look to you in our times of disbelief, help us to trust in the peace you want for us and not give in to the doubts that sneak into our lives. Remind us when we are questioning that your

peace is the love that you give us and want for us to continue your work here. Lord in your mercy,
Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, we ask you to be with those who are holding back the peace that you want for everyone in the world. Be with those who work tirelessly to bring peace in places of turmoil and suffering. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Peaceful God, open the hearts we close to the cries of those who are lonely and hurting. Be with all those who are struggling to fight this horrific virus and those that are working day and night to care for them. Be with those within our congregation and those who now join us on-line who continue to seek healing and strength in their health and life struggles. We ask you to be with those that we now name too in our hearts.... 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 our Lord and pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us...

Lord's Prayer

Our father which 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
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:

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen

Sending Hymn: Thine is the Glory #145 (green) Vs 1

Thine is the glory
Risen, con-qu'ring Son
Endless is the vict'ry
Thou o'er death has won!
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes
Where they body lay.
Thine is the glory,
Risen, con-qu'ring Son;
Endless is the vict'ry
Thou o'er death hast won!

Dismissal:

Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

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