

WELCOME TO... The Presbyterian Church of Saint David

April 12, 2015 EASTER 2



Gathering: *Lord, We find ourselves in the locked doors of ourselves just as the disciples were behind closed doors. We too are afraid, perhaps for a different reason than theirs. But we too need the breath of the Holy Spirit to take away our fears so that we can come out from behind these locked doors. Lord, we are like Thomas with our questions and our doubts. We sometimes need to see in order to believe, we need you in order to have faith. Lord, we too need the peace you bring because our world is fraught with violence, and unrest. Lord, just as Thomas confessed you are his Lord and his God, we boldly claim for our lives. Lord we thank you for the blessing you have given us, the ones who believe without seeing. Lord, may the doors of our churches be open to all and that doubters be welcomed here.* ~ written by Rev Abi

Hymn: Open our eyes, Lord (1) **445**

Opening and Confession: *Almighty God, Creator of the heavens and earth, we confess that we do not always live into the message of hope and salvation, the promise of eternal life. We live in ways that make the here and now more important than the future. We live in ways that put ourselves and our own success first over the needs of others and the*

long-term needs of the world. Forgive us for our selfish ways and call us into the path of Christ, who humbled himself and gave himself up for us on the cross, so that death might be no more and that all can share in the joy of salvation and eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon *"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen and Amen!*
Thanks be to God.

Hymn: Open our eyes, Lord (2)

445

John 20:19-31 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.

To consider: Michael E. Williams sees Thomas as "the only one among the disciples who was not so filled with fear that he was unwilling to leave the disciples' hiding place" (*The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, Vol. 10*). When he returned and heard that the others had seen Jesus, he of course wanted to have the same experience himself, with the same assurance the other disciples had received. He was no more a "doubter" than they were, before they saw the risen Jesus. Gail O'Day makes an excellent observation: "Indeed, what is most noteworthy for contemporary congregations is not that Thomas insists on his own firsthand experience, but that one week after the disciples have been visited by the risen Jesus and received Jesus' peace and the Holy Spirit, they have once again locked themselves away behind closed doors." An interesting contrast might be drawn between the reaction of the disciples to their first encounter with the risen Jesus, and Thomas' reaction to his first encounter, when he recognized Jesus as "My Lord and my God!" The rest of the disciples, O'Day writes, even after seeing Jesus risen, "still do not live as an Easter people" (*Feasting on the Word Year B, Vol. 2*)... Whatever overwhelms us, God comes to us in the midst of our fear and says, "Peace be with you." Whatever doubts churn in our minds, whatever sins trouble our consciences, whatever pain and worry bind us up, whatever walls we have put up or doors we have locked securely, God comes to us and says, "Peace be with you." Whatever hunger and need we feel deep in our souls, God calls us to the table, feeds us well, and sends us out into the world to be justice and peace, salt and light, hope for the world.

Hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia (1-2) 260

Living God, You appeared to your disciples in their hour of fear, and offered them your peace to still their hearts.

May we open our arms to be living hope in the world today, bringing peace to those in living in fear.

**Give us courage to be bold in what we believe;
may we hold firm to your promise of life and hope, and strive
for a new world, free from poverty, injustice and conflict.**

Hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia (3-4) 260

y Invitation: *Sisters and brothers in Christ, take your places here today in celebration and in awe. What you have heard has the capacity to change the world. Your very presence attests to the rising up of life from the tomb of despair, and to the uncontrollable power of God. We live on this side of resurrection and everything is made new!*

Hymn: Here is bread; here is wine 546
Prayer of Thanksgiving: *The Lord is here. God's spirit is with us. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.*
(Continue in thanksgiving) *O God, giver of all that is good,*
**We thank you for this bread and this fruit of the vine,
symbols of the harvest of your good earth, and we look to the
day when we will all eat together as your holy people.**

Communion

Prayer following communion: Most gracious God, source of all blessing, we give you thanks for inviting us to share this meal as your Easter people. Strengthen us to be a blessing to one another and to all people, glorifying you in everything we do and say, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: Now let us from this table rise (1-2) 556

Sending: *Jesus said: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am now sending you". Jesus believes in you. The busy world awaits your compassion.*

God believes in us. *Sometimes you will give your best yet fail.*

God believes in us *At other times you will succeed in spite of your stumbling.* **God believes in us** *Go gladly, daring to succeed or fail to the glory of God, and then at the very end, nothing shall dismay you.* **God**

believes in us. With Christ's own breath within us, we shall travel well. *The help of the saving Christ, the wisdom of the Living God, and the support of the loving Spirit, will be with you every step of the way, now and always.* **Amen!**