

April 19 2020 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

A Blessed 2nd Sunday of Easter morning to you, and welcome to our seventh online worship service, during the time of church closure due to COVID. We continue to celebrate the season of Easter this Sunday, and our beloved seminarian, Nicholas, has written the sermon for today. He shares his love for our community from his home in the Ottawa area, and is missing us dearly. Please include Nick and his family in your prayers.

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

**Please take a few moments of silence,
prepare your heart,
centre yourself for worship .**

Prelude: "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring"

Click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doJ2Fd6JRpQ>

Gathering Hymn 'Hallelujah' chorus from Handel's Messiah

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdRyNea19PE>

Greeting

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

C: And also with you

Prayer of the Day:

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

The First Reading: 1 Peter 1: 3-9

What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now! God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. The Day is coming when you'll have it all—life healed and whole. I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it *proved* pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out *proved* genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory. You never saw him, yet you love him. You still don't see him, yet you trust him—with laughter and singing. Because you kept on believing, you'll get what you're looking forward to: total salvation. [The Message Translation]

Word of God, word of life. ***C: Thanks be to God.***

Psalm 16: "Protect me oh God, for in you I take refuge"

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apLjJIflQ-o>

Reading Homework: Acts chapter 2

Children's Message

Click here for a children's message from Bishop Susan Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36wHnNKHgA>

Gospel Acclamation with visuals of our church windows:

"How Beautiful Are the Feet of Him from Handel's Messiah featuring Julianne Bintakies, soprano, Barbara Burden, alto, and Bradley Moggach, piano. The piece was recorded in 2009 for the 175th anniversary of our congregation. It was part of a CD created for the occasion entitled, Remember, Rejoice, Renew."

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm9bAUffHK4&feature=youtu.be>

The Holy Gospel According to John 20 19-31

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Jews, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he showed them his hands and side. The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were exuberant. Jesus repeated his greeting: "Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you." Then he took a deep breath and breathed into them. "Receive the Holy Spirit," he said. "If you forgive someone's sins, they're gone for good. If you don't forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?"

But Thomas, sometimes called the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We saw the Master." But he said, "Unless I see the nail holes in his hands, put my finger in the nail holes, and stick my hand in his side, I won't believe it." Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the locked doors, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he focused his attention on Thomas. "Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don't be unbelieving. Believe." Thomas said, "My Master! My God!"

Jesus said, "So, you believe because you've seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing." Jesus provided far more God-revealing signs than are written down in this book. These are written down so you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and in the act of believing, have real and eternal life in the way he personally revealed it.

[The Message Translation]

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

Message (Imagine Nick's voice here)

Good morning, afternoon, or evening friends in Christ, whenever you have come together or made your time to spend with God and the Word. I say this because these are not normal times. Easter was spent in the solitude of our homes or on the phone, all of us living at a distance from one another. For those among you who are called introverts or desire large bubbles of personal space, I hope that it has offered refreshment and peace, and to my fellow extroverts, well, we are all embracing

suffering with Christ a little right now aren't we? Yet we know it is all for a good cause! The safety of us all.

In dwelling on the Easter narrative in scripture, we all have quite a bit in common with the disciples of Jesus I have noticed. Scripture mentions them hiding away behind locked doors and keeping a low profile from their neighbours, living in fear of the outside world. A pall hung over them, keeping them afraid and hidden as they had seen what they hadn't thought possible, the death of the Messiah! For those who had followed Jesus as closely there could not have been a more imaginable moment of upheaval, they had lost their teacher, the man who had given them hope and inspired faith for years. So it is we find the disciples huddling together and locked away in fear, isolated from the wider community facing an uncertain future. Even after Jesus appears there is Thomas, who missed it the first time, that refuses to believe till he can touch the wounds on Jesus' body. Then again, Jesus appears to them and Thomas sees, crying out "My Lord, my God!"

Jesus then says something very profound, "So you believe because you've seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing.". Well, that is a statement that always left me with a warm feeling inside, because it reassures me that even though I cannot see, there is hope. I have always identified with Thomas, who needed proof, the doubter. I think we all identify with Thomas sometimes. We doubt the good news, we doubt finding hope, we doubt what others tell us.

In this time of pandemic, we all probably identify with Thomas and the disciples before they saw Jesus. They were worried about the future, what would it hold for them? Their world had been turned upside down, a sense of invisible dread permeates the story, and doesn't that sound all too familiar? Here we are, stuck in isolation for who knows how long? There are lots of questions that don't seem to have satisfactory answers. Instead we find ourselves distracted by everything and anything. Books we haven't read in years, pictures we forgot were there, and perhaps dust bunnies that have not been attended too in years! Yet it can all get a little repetitive can't it? Aside from the odd walk, or maybe visit to the office, we are confined to the same walls and surroundings like prisoners in our own homes, with an unseen and intangible thing hanging about us.

Yet in scripture we see the risen Christ in all his glory! Peace to you he says, feel the Holy Spirit among you. Do you feel it still here with us? Since that first Easter with its locked doors and hiding away it has not gone anywhere. Through the greatest upheavals in history, God has not gone anywhere. God has always been right here, with us, calling to us, telling us that there *IS* hope, that there *IS* resurrection, there is a return to normal. Peter rejoices in telling us what an awesome God we have. A God who has fought death and won, a God who has claimed us as his own, no matter the time or place or circumstance. God tells us there is hope, there is tomorrow, there is a resurrection of the lives we once enjoyed.

But it will be a changed resurrection. All over the place there is talk of a new normal, one where we all keep a little distance, where we wash our hands more

regularly, where maybe we sit a little distant in the pews. We are the ones who shape what that new world will look like though, and what world is it going to be? When Christ returned to his followers they were reinvigorated!

We saw Thomas, who doubted most of all, travel all the way to India to set up churches. He who doubted and saw did tremendous things. What about us? We who believe but cannot see? What is it we can do? Maybe not travel like Thomas did, but what is our faith leading us too in the new days coming?

Right now, what are we doing? Knowing this community, I know the answer is a lot. Even here, in the middle of nowhere that I currently reside, neighbours are doing what they can. Food is being shared, strangers are helping one another, and a neighbour I have never met or spoken too came up and handed me a homemade mask! People are coming together apart in ways that seemed only for the movies. There is hope out there in that. There is hope in that we all have voluntarily stayed inside despite the weather getting nicer, wanting to see our families on Easter, there is hope. As a society, a city, a church, we have shown that we believe in hope unseen through simple things like staying home, and through people donating time, money, and prayers we are proving that we believe in hope above fear.

I have heard it said that this may create a new “greatest generation”, but I think that is misleading. This is creating a shared generation, a shared hope, and a shared future. What better vision is there than that? We are striving towards a shared healthy future. Even by doing what we are doing, our world has already seen healing in the environment, in the air and water. Easter has always been a time of renewal, and despite the empty streets the birds are singing, the flowers are blooming, spring is springing. The coming summer and school year may be out of the ordinary, they may be pushed back, but they are signs of what the coming world will be like.

He is Risen friends! He is risen that we might have hope. He is risen and the Spirit is with us. This week, even if they are all starting to blend together, is one more week closer to when our society is resurrected. What that resurrection looks like is in all our hands, from the oldest to the youngest. Together we will create a new normal like the disciples did, and it is my fervent hope and prayer that it will be a better normal. I believe this as I believe Jesus rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. I believe it like I believe this crisis shall pass, and from its trials and tribulations we will find new life and new hope in our world. Amen.

Hymn of the Day – Blest Are They

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chqY9S1Lm2w>

Thanksgiving for our Presence on this Land.

We thank you God, for granting our existence on this safe, bountiful, land, and we recognize that we thrive here and enjoy life on the traditional territories of the Anishnabe, Neutral and Haudenosaunee people. **Amen.**

A RE-cited Apostle's Creed (By Bishop Sid Haugen)

I believe that God created this good world of sun and stars, of wild places and cultivated fields, of work and play, of art and sport. I believe that God placed me on this earth for a reason; along with every other human being I meet each day. I believe that every day is a gift. For all of this I am called to thank God and love the life God made.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the divine one: who walked this earth, and who, in his teaching, life and death shows me the heart of a loving God. I believe that the resurrection of Jesus brings a hope and a life to the world and to my life that cannot be quenched by all the forces of this world, by my own human brokenness, or by death itself. For all this, I am called to love Jesus and to follow him by serving others.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe that I could never find God by my own intelligence or effort, but the Spirit of God, moving like the wind, has graciously called me through the wonder of the gospel: through the community of Jesus, through the Word and sacraments – just as the Spirit calls the whole church in its many families with its many names. I believe this same Spirit speaks and works through people who may not know a church and who may not call themselves religious in any way. For all of this, I am called to live generously, as one who has faith that God is always at work in me, in the church, and in the world itself.

While you listen to the offertory song, continue your prayers with the words of the song, and consider how you may be a blessing in the coming week.

Offertory – **Dona Nobis**

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bURkIF4aULM>

Offering Prayer

God of all abundance, receive our brokenness and the offering of our lives. Take us, who return to you in thanksgiving: form us and shape us into a love like Jesus, so that we may be love for this broken world. **Amen.**

(please remember to send an offering to the church if you are able)

Prayers of Intercession (Prepared by Pastor Joanna Miller)

Loving God, in these days, when it feels like we're living out the realities of Holy Week like never before, keep reminding us that the story doesn't end with death, or waiting. Help us to believe that something new and wonderful will emerge from this; fill us up with hopeful expectation for what will come. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We are seeing reports, God, of drastic drops in the levels of emissions and pictures of the ways that life is re-emerging. Help us to be inspired by these stories and pictures, that we might become even more committed to the work of caring for this planet we inhabit and for all the creatures who share it with us. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the decision makers, O God. For our political leaders, that they lead according to the best information to keep as many of our neighbours as safe as possible. For the scientists, who are working so hard to understand what is happening and for the ones who work hard for a vaccine. For the business leaders who are responsible for the care of their workers. For the health care providers, who run towards the fire and accept the risk in the name of serving others. For the parents, who struggle to find a balance between work and play, screens and fresh air. Give them all your wisdom and compassion. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the vulnerable in our midst. For those whose suffering began long before we heard of COVID-19. For those whose mental health is suffering. For those who are in the midst of treatments and diagnoses and for all who are medically fragile. Be with each one, send them your healing, be present with them. We pray especially for those we name we name either silently or aloud.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for all the saints that have gone before us, whose faith reminds us to hold on in the midst of fear and unknown. Bless all those in your presence and all who will die this day. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

All these things, Lord, we entrust to your care, knowing that you hear all of our prayers. And we pray in the way that 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 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.**

Sending Hymn: In Christ Alone

Click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

Blessing:

May God bless you and keep you.

May the face of God shine upon you with grace and mercy.

May God look upon you with favor

and give you ☩ peace.

Amen.

Dismissal:

L: Go in Peace, Go in Hope. **C: *Thanks be to God.*** *

Notices about church in time of COVID-19:

- **The Public Health & Provincially mandated closure of churches continues through May 12th (at the earliest). We will continue to keep you updated on Facebook, via website and by telephone, as we are able. Although the church building is closed, voicemail is checked regularly at 519-653-4721 the church number or 519-588-7701 Pastor. Please call if you need a pastoral telephone visit, or if we can help in any way. It is impossible for Pastor to call everyone in turn, so she is relying on you to reach out if you need a call.**
- **You will find this worship service most helpful if you read the sections out loud at home 😊 And sing along 😊 Brad also recommends looking up other lyric videos that pop up - Glory to God at home 😊**
- **As far as possible, the regular work of the church continues. Lay leaders are meeting using online meeting tools. This past week, church council and VIM met using video conferencing, to finalize a Terms of Reference for continuing our missional redevelopment explorations. We will communicate on this item as soon as materials are ready.**
- **Bonnie Scott continues to prepare and share information as widely as possible for those who do not have internet access. Brad continues to come in and practice. Pastor continues to visit, via telephone, to accompany however possible, and to prepare worship materials. Alex continues to bear the responsibility of treasurer and reminds us that buying and selling maple syrup is a good way to occupy our time 😊**
- **Thank you for accessing this 2nd Sunday of Easter service. When we re-open, we will have our Easter service in community.**
- **Please stay in touch with each other. Call each other. Visit on the telephone, and where safe, through closed glass doors, and across fences. Let us know how we can help if you are shut in but need groceries or something delivered. Keep safe, and keep on praying. Think of this time as our time in the tomb, with our Saviour, from which we will be delivered soon 😊 Call Pastor if you need to talk, because she cannot possibly call everyone 😊**
- **May God bless you and keep you safe ...**