

2 Easter– April 11, 2021

Dear Zion Family,

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

It is Easter Monday and the sights and sounds of yesterday's celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord keep reverberating through my day. Over and over I have been belting out, "This is the feast of victory for our God, Alleluia..." The flowers on and below the cross, our organ, Jim's guitar, his and Katie's voices singing Zion's traditional "Jellybean Song," the Lord's Prayer, the daffodils and lilies on the windowsills, the white paraments and communion vessels on the altar, the people worshipping, all of it lighting up my life with hope, love, joy, and gratitude. More than eighty people worshiped together at 10 o'clock on Easter morning at or "at" Zion! Forty-six congregants attended in person, at least twenty-seven people joined us virtually, five people were on their phones, and still others used the Service of the Word. I am grateful for the twenty-five people I can name who joyfully donated their time and talents to make this service possible. My hope is that we all feel the love and warmth of our Zion family radiating out and embracing and sustaining each one of us.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN APRIL

THERE WILL BE NO IN-PERSON WORSHIP FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, APRIL 11TH & APRIL 18TH.

Please join us in one of the following ways for Sunday, April 11, 2021:

Virtual via Zoom: To join this Sunday's service via Zoom, same log-in info as last week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNbl01Qzd6WGxDdz09>

Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#

If you are joining us on Zoom, please be sure you are on mute and that your video is turned off from 10 AM when the service commences until it ends and the "Joyful Chaos" begins.

Livestreamed: If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbfcEz7-bIPvxp62IA>.

The Service of the Word is found later in this mailing.

For Zoom participants experiencing technical challenges, you can reach Katie prior to the service until 10 AM via phone or text for assistance at 315-404-6467. For people who have previously experienced issues with logging in, Katie recommends trying to log in early so you have time to get assistance from her. *If anyone would like to receive extra support or training with how to use Zoom, please reach out to schedule a time to speak to Katie during the week.*

The next in-person worship service is scheduled for April 25, 2021. Four volunteers will be needed to staff this service. Two greeters at the front door will welcome congregants, take temperatures, ask health questions, and record answers. Two ushers will hand out bulletins, direct people to take the communion elements, point out the offering plate, assist with seating, and give directions for departing from the sanctuary. To volunteer, please call Sara in the office (315-732-4110). You may request a specific responsibility.

At Our Saviour's Maundy Thursday service, Pastor Anita Mohr asked us to imagine what it would feel like to be there with the disciples and Jesus in the Upper Room at the Festival of Passover—the excitement, the delicious food, the drinking, the conversation. On Easter, the Reverend Jen DeWeerth asked us to engage actively in the Gospel reading, Mark 16:1-8, to choose our own adventure, and to answer the question, Will we go to Galilee? So, this week, come join the women at the tomb of Jesus. The stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty, and an angel speaks these amazing words, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." What good news! What hope! What love to share! Will you follow Jesus to Galilee?

In love and gratitude,

Laurel McCurdy, council co-president

2 Easter



SERVICE OF THE WORD
GATHERING

WELCOME

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #384 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 That Easter day with joy was bright; the sun shone out with fairer light when, to their longing eyes restored, the apostles saw their risen Lord!

Vs. 4 All praise, O risen Lord, we give to you, once dead, but now alive! To God the Father equal praise, and God the Spirit, now we raise!

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 4:32-35

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1-2:2

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Sermon: *-Pastor Janet Hoover*

Easter is the high moment of the Christian year, a day of hope and promise, a day of alleluias and chords of joy. This week is somehow anti-climactic. Oh, we refer to it as the second Sunday of Easter, but our good clothes are hung back up in the closet, the chocolate eaten, and now we wait. We wait to see if Easter really made any difference to us or to anybody else. We wonder and we hope—and we doubt. How biblical! For from the beginning even as God holds out the promise of new life, new possibilities for growth and joy, new ways of living and loving, God's people have retreated into safe and familiar places. They have sought to hold fast to old patterns and rational ways of planning and coping. And over and over God refuses to let them—to let us—hide from the joy and peace which belong to us as children of God. Our text this morning is one example. The disciples have been plunged into a life crisis through their loss of Jesus and the loss of a vision of purpose and calling. Everything that had ordered their world of meaning had been thrown into chaos. One moment the crowds are shouting Hosanna and the disciples are on top of the world, then Jesus is arrested, dies on a cross...and they are thrust into a maelstrom of fear and anguish. So, like any sensible group whose leader is killed, they place themselves into a sort of lock-down. They retreat into the safest place they can think of. A close reading of the Greek text offers evidence that this place to

which they retreat is the same room where they had shared their last meal with Jesus. They were afraid that the crucifixion of their Lord might be only the beginning of terror for them, so they gathered behind the locked doors of the last place when life seemed almost normal as though they were hostages trapped by an impending crisis. They were afraid of the authorities from the temple. They were afraid of each other. But mostly they were afraid of the consequences if what they had heard and seen concerning a risen Jesus might really be true. Their cowardice, their betrayals and denials of Jesus, were fresh in their minds and hearts, and if Jesus were alive...all they knew is that they didn't want to face him. As Tom Long describes it: *Here is the church at its worst—scarred, disheartened, defensive. What kind of advertising might they put in the paper? The friendly church where all are welcome? Hardly—a locked door is not a sign of hospitality. The church with a warm heart and a bold mission? Forget it—this is the church of sweaty palms and shaky knees. And yet—despite locked doors, God is at work. The power of the resurrection will not be stifled or blocked—even by our own fear and doubt. Jesus comes as Jesus always comes...with a word of forgiveness, with grace that unbinds the knotted heart, with love that loosens the bonds of death...to unbar the doors we shut and swing them wide open. Jesus came to frightened, wondering people and breathed into them courage and joy.*

But one of the disciples is absent. Thomas, for some reason, isn't there. Maybe he needs space to do his grieving, maybe he is out gathering information. What matters isn't why he is gone, but that he misses out on the amazing appearance of his friend and teacher. Poor Thomas. He is a loyal follower. As far as we know he doesn't crumble like Peter, try to claw his way to the top of the discipleship heap like James and John, betray like Judas. It is believed that he was killed for his faith. But we don't remember Thomas for the good things he did. Instead, his nickname of Doubting Thomas has carried down through the centuries. For Thomas, it's not enough to hear about someone else's vision. He's not going to believe just because someone tells him he should, he needs to see for himself, experience for himself. He refused to have a secondhand faith, wanting to understand with heart and head what was happening. I'm glad Thomas was part of the story. His life—his example of stubborn questioning helps us understand that faith can include wondering and a refusal to settle for easy answers. I hope you noticed that Jesus didn't condemn or belittle Thomas for his skepticism. Instead, Jesus came to him—arms outstretched to embrace and reveal the amazing truth of God's love. Life is full of mystery and ambiguity. Faith is acknowledging that, accepting that, and at the same time wrestling with it. The story of Thomas says we are to be as honest about our doubts as we are about our beliefs. Somewhere, somehow, most of us were taught that, if we have doubts and questions about God, it means we are not faithful, and so we push our concerns down deep, covering them with smiling faces and proper words. Thomas opens up a whole new view of faith—one where questions can be expressed openly, where our fears and anger and doubts can be shared with God. Out of the crucible of doubt, honestly faced and grappled with, faith develops and grows and matures. It is only as we refuse to settle for a secondhand faith, as we continue to try to make sense of what it means to follow Jesus, as we ask our questions and seek understanding, that we can grow in faith. Or, as Frederick Buechner puts it: *Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.* Faith is believing even when there is no absolute guarantee, no scientific proof. Faith is choosing to believe in spite of concrete evidence. Thomas stayed with the disciples despite his doubts and uncertainties. He acted on the hope that the promise of resurrection was true—that Jesus was alive and present to those who followed him. His encounter with the risen Christ came as he lived and wrestled with his doubts. Every day we too are called to live lives of faith in the midst of our doubts. Doubt need not be a permanent state. Even while we question and wonder, we can make affirmations with words and deeds. We can choose to act in ways that are compassionate, loving, self-giving and, as we do, our choices will refine and deepen whatever faith we have. The answers to our doubts will come not from proofs and evidence, but from our actions. We are to live what we want to believe. And, as we do, we begin to construct a life of trust and joy and hope. This doesn't happen overnight. It is a process that begins with the whispered prayer: *Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.* And then, through our actions, our conversations, our living out the faith we want to have, we will discover that for which we have been longing. Did you notice the way that Jesus reassured the disciples? He didn't let loose a lightning bolt of destruction on the Roman garrison, he didn't present them with money enough to build a huge cathedral in his honor, instead he showed them his hands and his side, as if to say: God has experienced all the wounds, all the suffering, all the pain of human living—and God has prevailed. God has shattered the darkness, conquered the despair, destroyed death. John Vannorsdall writes: *Maybe we won't see Jesus until we see the wounds, for the resurrected Christ is forever the wounded Christ. Living, but never all fixed up. Not bound by death but scarred for all eternity.*

In American Sign Language, the word for Jesus is made by placing the middle finger of each hand in the palm of the other. Jesus—the one with the wounded hands. And in that communication, there is a remembering—a physical remembering in

their own flesh. So if we want to know Jesus—to understand Jesus—we must touch the places where the wounds are. If we deny the wounds, we'll see only a glorified Christ who can go through locked doors. But the wounded Christ shows us something else. This scarred Jesus doesn't wait until we're all fixed up to meet us. Have you been betrayed by someone you loved? Have you felt let down by your closest friends? Have you been afraid to go on living—but afraid also to die? Have you been uncertain of God's will for your life? Have you felt alone and abandoned? If these times come—when these times come—touch the palms of your hands. Jesus was wounded in these same ways—even before the cross. And his wounds touch the wounded places of your life—betrayals, denials, both those you make and those made against you. And the wounded Christ comes and says: Peace be with you all. God doesn't want our lives to be hemmed in by all those things we do to protect ourselves from being hurt, to protect ourselves from being disappointed, to protect ourselves from the possibility of failure or looking foolish. God comes to us—in spite of us—to bring us hope. Touch the palms of your hands and feel Christ's peace move through you. As our minds and spirits are unlocked, we shall discover that life is more than we see, or think we see here and now. And then Easter will become more than one Sunday a year. Life is more than today. Death is not the end. And so we can be touched by Easter throughout our lives. Its promise of hope and life and peace will strengthen and sustain us through every trauma and crisis. The reality of the resurrection does not center upon scientific evidence or archeological discoveries, but upon hope and trust in the Savior whose Spirit is breathed into our hearts. Easter is not a day, it's not even a season. Easter is a way of life. Every day we are called to make Easter choices. Every day we make choices that refine and deepen whatever faith we have. We choose to act in ways that indicate whether we believe in compassion or indifference, love or hate, persons or things. As God didn't let the disciples stay locked away, so we are called to move forward with deep peace and wonder-filled joy, for God is good, and God's steadfast love is forever. There is nothing in life or in death that can tear us from God's arms of grace and mercy. No trouble. No doubt. No anguish or uncertainty. No power can separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God.

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 catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ANTHEM: Be Not Afraid, by Bob Dufford, arr. by Marianne Kim Kelli Watson

Prayers of Intercession

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

You shower your church with grace, O God. Unite the whole church on earth, so that with one heart it testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with power and love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You place within the heart of the church a spirit of sharing. Give us the power of your generous Spirit, that we provide for the needs of others. Announce your peace to those who are lonely, hurting, suffering, or afraid. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You give us fellowship with one another in this faith community of Zion Lutheran Church. Shine the light of the risen Christ in our life together, so that we live in love for one another and our joy may be complete. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, Doris, comfort for Patsy, Claudia, Bill & Rusty, healing for Jeanette, Sara and family, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Joyce, Your Neighbors clients, Matt & Jen and family, Bill, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Hear us O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Closing Hymn: *Thine Is the Glory vs. 1 & 3* Hymn #376 -Kelli Watson

Vs. 1 Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son; endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won! Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away, kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay. Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son; endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!

Vs. 3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life; life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife; make us more than conqu'rors, through thy deathless love; bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son; endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!

Blessing:

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!** Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Notes from the church office:

I will be out of the office from April 7th- 9th. I will be checking emails and messages periodically. Please do not hesitate to reach out, and I will get back to you as soon as possible! -Sara Silva

Two Meetings at Zion: *The next meeting of our Task Force for Return to In-person Worship took place on Tuesday, April 6th. The TF will be providing recommendations to council about how and when we might continue to safely loosen the restrictions in place for our Sunday services. Our next council meeting will take place on Monday, April 12th.*

