

Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church
Barboursville, West Virginia
April 19, 2020
Second Sunday of Easter

Call to Worship 1 Peter 1:3

By God's great mercy

**we have been born anew to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

Hymn Thine is the Glory

Edmond Louis Budry, 1884

George Fredrick Handel, 1748

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou over death has won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded graveclothes where thy body lay.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou over death hast won.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without thee. Aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou over death hast won.

Prayer

**Living God, for whom no door is closed,
no heart is locked,
draw us beyond our doubts,
til we see your Christ
and touch his wounds
where they appear in others.
This we ask through Christ our Savior,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Scripture Reading John 20:19-31

In this text, Jesus appears to his disciples who are gathered behind closed doors in fear. In years past, I have not identified much with this text. This year is different, as we, too, are living behind closed doors. The disciples were in fear for their lives because of the civic authorities. Our fear comes from the COVID 19 Virus, a different kind of threat, but also deadly.

What does it feel like to be confined? Are you feeling fear and anxiety? Name some ways you are dealing with those things.

When he appears, Jesus immediately pronounces peace upon his friends. He gives them a mission: *to be sent*. Then he empowers them with the Holy Spirit to fulfill their mission. And then there's Thomas, who missed Jesus' visit. When the disciples tell him of it, Thomas declares that he needs to see the evidence that it really was Jesus before he believes them. And then Jesus appears to Thomas and provides the evidence- wounds in his hands and side. And Thomas is awe-struck like the others.

We are hearing a lot these days about the gathering of evidence-data related to the Coronavirus. Every day we hear about the number of cases diagnosed, and unfortunately, the number of deaths. Every day I look for West Virginia on the map of the US and breathe a sigh of relief when I see that we are still reporting fewer than a thousand confirmed cases.

We hear of the tragedy and the triumph this pandemic has wrought. Physicians are observing symptoms. Laboratories are analyzing specimens. Sociologists and anthropologists are studying why certain populations are especially hard-hit. All of this is to answer the questions this disease has raised, address the problems, and hopefully avoid another pandemic and another global catastrophe. So, maybe Thomas was ahead of his time in asking to see the evidence.

The death and resurrection of Jesus has a global impact, too. How are these two things alike? How are they different? In this time of social distancing, how can we, as Jesus' disciples, still be sent? How can we witness to our Savior and our faith in him?

Prayer

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. From the waters of death you raise us with him and renew the gift of life within us. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us live more fully into the everlasting life his resurrection makes possible.

Loving Lord, hear now the concerns of our hearts today (insert names of particular people or circumstances of concern to you).

Lord, we pray for the healing of this and every nation, all of us made in your image, who suffer the effects of the pandemic and other diseases and conditions. Assure the sick of your presence and love, comfort those who grieve, encourage those whose money can stretch no further, give the homeless a place to lay their heads, fill the hungry with good things, and keep all of us faithful.

We give you thanks for the blessings of this life: the birth of Evan Daniel Sadler, great-grandson of Clara Rose, and for birthdays and anniversaries and small victories wherever they appear. With the confidence of the children of God we pray, **Our Father...Amen.**

Blessing

The risen Christ says: Peace be with you.

We have seen the Lord! Alleluia!

May you be filled with all joy and hope in believing. **Amen.**

Worship resources: Glory to God, Westminster John Knox Press, 2013; The Book of Common Worship, Westminster, John Knox Press, 1993; Daily Prayer, Westminster Press, 1987