

**Welcome to
Crestholme Presbyterian Church
2nd Sunday of Easter
April 11, 2021**

At the *, please stand, if you are able.
Large Print Hymnals, Bibles, and Hearing Assist Devices are available upon request.

Gather for Worship

PRELUDE **“O Sons and Daughters Let Us Sing”** **J.F. Dandrieli**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff-L7Hstdll>

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

As the first Christians (primarily Jews) recalled the creation stories of Genesis, they remembered how God completed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh. On the eighth day of creation (“the first day of the week,” according to all four Gospels), God continued the work of creation by raising Christ from the dead. Sunday proclaims that all of time has been redeemed in Christ. Let us celebrate the Eighth Day!

THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP “Come Away From Rush and Hurry” **Choir**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZKIW-biz6Y>

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The darkness is gone!
People: Bright light floods into this new day of hope.
Leader: Those who went to the tomb received good news.
People: Christ was not there!
Leader: Christ is risen in our hearts and our spirits!
People: Christ is risen from the dead! Alleluia! Amen!

OPENING PRAYER

Living God,
long ago, faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection, and the world was

changed forever. Teach us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. Amen.

*** OPENING HYMN**

“Christ Is Alive”

Blue Hymnal #108

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD8pxDgTZZU>

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We are often not the Easter People that we should be, living in the certain knowledge of your great mercy and love. Distracted by the world around us we fail to hear your voice, or hide when faith is challenged as we wander off the path. Forgive us, we pray; restore the love that we first had, a faith that can endure. We will keep our eyes fixed on you, Lord, and with you at our right hand we shall not be shaken. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear now, O Church, who stand in the gap for the world as representatives of God. We have been made clean. As the angel of the Lord touched the unclean lips of Isaiah and made the man whole in word and deed, readying him to do his will, he has done the same for us by the cleansing touch of his Son, Jesus Christ. In him, the disparity between our word and deed is made right. In him, our unkindness in action and in word has been forgiven. Go now in the purity of the King to speak the Gospel through actions of justice, mercy, grace, and love.

*** GLORIA PATRI**

Blue Hymnal #579

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nplylz-EEEE>

*** SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST (From your seats, please)**

Leader: Peace be with you!

All: And also with you!

Leader: As God’s forgiven people, share the peace of Christ with each other.

Children’s Time

Jesus Appears to Thomas

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_QcGnwilXI

Hear the word of God

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

O risen Christ, open us to the power of your resurrection as we hear it proclaimed anew this day, that we too might rise to new life in you. Amen.

FIRST READING**Acts 4:32-35**<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204%3A32-35&version=NIV>**PSALTER READING****Psalms 133**<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+133&version=NIV>**CHORAL ANTHEM****“Thine Is The Glory”****Choir**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXzmjNE-yLA>**NEW TESTAMENT READING****1 John 1:1-2:2**<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+1%3A1-2%3A2&version=NIV>**GOSPEL READING****John 20:19-31**<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3A19-31&version=NIV>**SERMON****“SHOWING UP”****Fred Archer****Written by *The Rev. James Liggett***

Alleluia, Christ is Risen.
The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia.

The Second Sunday of Easter is very dependable. (Not just with attendance.) This is Thomas' Sunday, and every year the Gospel tells the story of Jesus' special appearance among the Apostles to greet Thomas. There's much to appreciate about Thomas – and much we can learn from him.

The first thing to learn is about the disciples and faith, the second is about doubt in general. Let's start with Thomas' unfortunate adjective. He's always called “doubting”, as if the other disciples had more faith than he did, and that made Thomas a bit of a problem. But it didn't work that way. The problem really wasn't with Thomas; it was with the others.

Remember what happened. For one reason or another, Thomas was not with the others on Easter morning; (the Bible doesn't say why, but perhaps he had company that weekend) so Thomas didn't share their experience of the risen Lord. That meant they had something he didn't have, and instead of their *experience*, what Thomas had was their *word* about what they had seen—and that wasn't enough. You see, Thomas never doubted Jesus; he doubted the other Apostles. The problem was not really Thomas—the problem was the credibility of the others. *They* had seen the risen Jesus; *they* had been given his peace and his spirit; *they* had been sent by him to continue his work in the world. We heard all of that in the first part of the Gospel.

It was now up to these witnesses to share the good news. That's what they were sent to do. And, bless their hearts, their witness to the Resurrection was not even compelling enough to convince Thomas; and Thomas *wanted* to believe – he was *ready* to believe.

It's the same way now. The temptation is to say that the problem is out there, with all of those unbelievers like Thomas—if they would only shape up and believe better, (preferably to the point of becoming Episcopalians), then things would improve immeasurably. It's easier to do that, to complain about *them*, than it is to pay careful attention to the less-than-persuasive words and lives of today's disciples—of those who are called to be witnesses to Jesus. It feels better to call Thomas “doubting” than to call the disciples—or ourselves—“unconvincing”.

But Thomas is here to make us uncomfortable, not smug. Remember, faith almost always comes to people through the faith of others, through the life and ministry of the Church.

Virtually everyone “out there” is like Thomas. Virtually everyone “out there” – and that includes our children and grandchildren – depends upon people who already believe to point them toward faith. Virtually everyone “out there” – and that includes our children and grandchildren – depends upon us.

The other disciples told Thomas, “We have seen the Lord.” But they were scared; they were hiding behind locked doors; they were only talking to each other. Just a week earlier, Jesus had stood among them—but you couldn't tell it from them. They sure didn't *act* like something wonderful had happened at Easter. So, Thomas didn't believe them, even though he wanted to. That's the way it was, and all too often, that's the way it still is. Thomas was not the problem. Today's doubting Thomases are not the problem. The problem is the authenticity, the power, and the persuasiveness of the Church. That's the bad news.

But there is good news here as well—Good News for Thomas, for the disciples, and so for us, the Church. For Christ is risen, and he comes to us. Risen, he comes to the Church—even when the Church continues to huddle in fear behind locked doors.

And he brings to completion the work that a weak and sinful collection of disciples cannot do alone. Work that *we* cannot do alone. The good news is that Jesus continues to be with us, that he continues to be for us, and that he continues to speak to us and to his world his words of forgiveness and of peace.

This doesn't mean we are off the hook. It doesn't mean we have no responsibilities and no vocation to service. It doesn't mean that Jesus will do it all for us, and we can take it easy. But it does mean that we are able to continue—warts and all—in hope and in confidence. It does mean both that we are not alone, and that we do not need to be afraid. Sometimes we fail, as the disciples failed with Thomas. But we don't stop, and we don't give up, and we are free to do our best, even if it's risky. While there is always room for improvement, there is never cause for despair. We continue to struggle forward together, and Jesus continues to be found among us.

The heart of the story of doubting Thomas is not about doubt (Thomas' or anyone else's), it's about the call of the Church to witness to the Resurrection. And the biggest piece of good news is not that Thomas comes to faith; the biggest bit of good news is that the Risen Lord still comes to his Church. That good news is for us. We are called to be witnesses to the Resurrection, and our Lord is with us.

At the same time, we can't let Thomas slip by us without saying something about doubt, real personal, bone-deep doubt as to the truth or value of parts (or all) of this whole religious enterprise. First of all, doubt is always part of the life of faith.

There is never authentic faith without doubt; that's something we all know about. And doubt is not at all a bad thing; it's a necessary thing. Doubt happens—often in times of crisis and tragedy, sometimes just all by its own self. Faith matures with ups and downs, not in a straight line.

Anyway, let's consider one tiny thing about doubt, ours and his, that we can learn from Thomas' story. Did you notice that Jesus did not come to Thomas while Thomas was on the way to work, or walking the dog, or playing a round of golf, or just thinking things over? Jesus came to Thomas when Thomas was with the disciples, when he was within the fellowship of believers. Thomas was smart; he didn't believe the disciples, but he did stay with them. He knew that if his doubt were ever to be met, it would be met there—not somewhere else.

That's usually the way it is with us. Our doubts are usually met as we stay within the community of faith, as we hang in there doing the sorts of things we would be doing if we weren't bothered (or overwhelmed) with doubt. It was a good thing, and not a hypocritical thing, for Thomas to stay with the others even when he didn't believe a single word they said. So it is for us. There's a very real connection between hanging around this place, and living this life, and the gift of meeting the Lord. That connection isn't simple, and it isn't exact, and it isn't at all predictable, but we can depend on it. He will come to us, through whatever doors we lock, through whatever barriers we build.

Sometimes, as it must have been with Thomas, what turns out to be the greatest moment of faith doesn't *feel* like faith at all; it feels like doubt. Sometimes what turns out to be the greatest moment of faith *feels* like just hanging on and just showing up; it feels like waiting and going through the motions. But that's alright; that's the way it works. That was what Thomas needed to do, and that was *all* Thomas needed to do.

Jesus did the rest. It still works like that.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia. **AMEN.**

*** HYMN**

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

Blue Hymnal #306

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81d84iBhUjg>

Respond in Love and Service

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles: this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please, continue to support the life and work of Crestholme. You can mail your tithes, pledges, and offerings to...

CPC
PO Box 23919.
SA TX 78223-0901

Or you can save them and gather them until we meet again. Thank you!
Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.

*** DOXOLOGY**

Blue Hymnal #592

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uyg6-htOtHU>

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Gracious God of Light and Hope: We bring our offering to your altar this morning, still riding the joy of our Easter celebration of your triumph over the grave! Scripture has reminded us that we have been given the pathway for new birth, the promise of an imperishable heavenly inheritance, and the power of God’s protection. Silent in the realization of these priceless gifts, we offer ourselves to make this good news known to those who have not yet heard the good news. With praise and thanksgiving, we dedicate these gifts. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.

*** HYMN FOR OUR NATION**

“Heal our Land”

Red Hymnal #800

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm_rA54EGw

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Sisters and brothers in Christ, God invites us to bring our doubts and fears, our joys and concerns, our petitions and praise, and offer them for the earth and all its creatures.

* **CLOSING HYMN** **“Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!”** **Blue Hymnal #341**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3TGrRKf4H8>

* **BENEDICTION**

Go into your week knowing you are loved perfectly, saved eternally, and empowered as a disciple of Jesus to share God's love with everyone you meet.

The End of Today's Worship Service – The Beginning of Service

Announcements

Welcome to worship with us this morning! We're glad that you're here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become a part of our compassionate church family... ask Carlos, Larry or an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

Next Sunday CLP Larry Sears will lead the service.