**4/14/24**

**Worship & Experience**

**Luke 24:36b-48**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSV) (2) **Amen.**

Good morning…. and continued Easter blessings to each and every one of you out there in the pews and on the conference call this morning. I want to thank you for being here physically or virtually and continuing to make worship alive and active. That is so vital to our continued health and life as the church. I want to thank you for coming to crave more knowledge about Christ and be fed with the Word of God. That is so vital to be able to recharge ourselves, and remind ourselves of all the stories and our faith being truly alive. I also want to thank you for being willing and excited to share the peace with one another later in this worship service. That is so vital just as it was when we heard of Jesus sharing that very same peace with his disciples in our Gospel Reading oh so long ago. I want to thank you for being willing to be fed again later at the table with Holy Communion. That is vital to show that we come together to eat, we come to share his body and blood together as we are active at the table just as he has taught us. It is also vital that we make sure that everyone knows that they are indeed welcome at that very meal. Lastly, I want to thank you for being willing to accept the call at the end of service. That is vital as we are all reminded of the very commission we accept as we are sent out to share the Good News with others in the world.

Now, if you happened to notice the Paschal Candle still remains up here near the altar with me. It will be up here the rest of the season of Easter, and it stands up here as a sign of the resurrection. That is the very resurrection we hear about today in another version of the Gospel Reading from Luke that was similar to last week’s version from John. We of course will talk about that a little bit more as I move on with my sermon here today too. However, since we are on the topic of the paschal candle, I also want to draw your focus to the fact that this very paschal candle was moved yesterday. It of course was moved to stand near Ed’s cremains as we had his memorial service. It stood there as it reminded us of the light of Christ that we all are given at our very own baptisms, and it stood there to remind us that we carry that very light of Christ with us throughout life. Thankfully, that very light of Christ also accompanies us and follows us as we leave this world and our earthly ministry. The paschal candle also stood there as it visually proclaimed the very message from the sixth chapter of Romans that we used at the beginning of yesterday’s memorial service which reminded us that "In our Baptism we have already died and been raised with Christ." Those words and proclamation are indeed powerful, but those words give us that ever constant reminder that we have died to self and were given new life with Christ. We were given that gift to go and proclaim and share with others too. That is whether we were babies and baptized with that calling accepted by our parents and sponsors, or whether we were baptized at an older age and had some recollection and understanding of that very call. As we follow that very called we go out there and share just a little bit of Christ in a broken world. Christ has indeed reminded us that he is not of this world, but we are to go forth and be his messengers and share about him so others can share in eternal life in his kingdom with us some day. Showing just a little bit of Christ to others can be so much more vital than all of us can ever think at times too. Yes, sometimes that means sharing the Word, and sometimes that just means being nice, or it even means being forgiving of others. All those things are easier said than done for sure at times, but of course we all need those constant reminders of our ministry and purpose. That is also the very essence of why we gather together with one another each week. We need to come together with fellow believers and recharge and remind ourselves of our very commission that we received at our baptisms.

Alright, sorry for being a little preachy and teachy there. However, I do feel that it is very important to explain why we do what we do, or even break things down a little bit, just like our bulletins do for us each week. Sometimes, we manage to get lost in all these rituals and acts that we forget their very purpose or reason. We need to learn or get reminders at times so that way we can indeed share our faith and purpose with others. We need that reassurance and to know that we are not just blindly going through some motions without any sense of real purpose or direction.

This week I was awkwardly served several different stories in the very research I conducted for this sermon. I found a few rather interesting, and a few rather strong, or possibly even damaging stories though. That is where the power of trying to be aware of your audience, and trying to be aware of the pulse come in. Some stories are indeed vital to share with different people, or at different times or seasons. This particular story I found to be a good one to share with you today to break things up just a bit. So, here we go… "In a certain mountain village, a nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople. Finally, he decided to build a church for a legacy. The complete plans for the church were kept secret. When the people gathered, they marveled at the church’s beauty and completeness. But an astute observer asked, "Where are the lamps? How will the church be lighted?" Without answer, the nobleman pointed to some brackets in the wall, then he gave to each family a lamp to be carried to the worship service and hung on its proper place on the wall. "Each time you are here, the area where you are seated will be lighted," explained the nobleman. "Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. Whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God’s house will be dark." (3)

That very story must be where we got the old thought of having assigned pews. That was definitely some type of roll call and accountability system for sure. However, each one of does worry in one way or another when we realize another church member has missed a service or two. Yes, that is typically because we do often sit on the same side of church, or in the same pew. We manage to be accountable to one another, and we care for one another. That is very much Christlike, and we learn so often that… “In our worship, each one is important, each one brings to the worship experience, their light, their response, their prayers, their confession, their love and compassion to be shared with others. Our faith lives, our faith stories are and can be shared during our worship experience.” (3) This is why I so often thank you all for being here physically or virtually. It is about that presence with one another that continues to drive us forward in our faith and ministry. We need to be that light for one another, and we need to light the worship space and build one another up.

Today, we are reminded that… “the gospel lesson says, the disciples were gathered together and Jesus appeared among them, ate some fish, then explained the scriptures to them. This act of explaining the scriptures can be seen as an act of worship.” (3) “Worship is the time for us to catch the faith, the excitement, the conviction of our brothers and sisters in faith.” (3) “We come to worship to be reminded again and again about the love Jesus has for us. And then we take that love out with us into the world where we live, work and play. That love gives us the courage, the confidence to live life. For we all know that ours’ is not a perfect life. We experience the brokenness of the world every day and when we do, we can turn to our worship experience to give us the courage, the peace, the confidence to live through all that reminds us we are less than what God intended for us to be.” (3)

Amen.

**References**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year B 2024

 April 14th, 2024

 Third Sunday of Easter

(2) Bible.com

(3) SermonCentral.com

 Are You Alive In Christ

 Contributed by Tim Zingale on Apr 29, 2003

 Scripture: Luke 24:36-49, Luke 24:49

 Denomination: Lutheran

**Luke 24:36b-48**

 In this account of an appearance after his resurrection, Jesus opens the minds of

 the disciples to understand him as Messiah. Jesus convinces them that he has

 been raised and sends them on a mission to proclaim the message of repentance

 and forgiveness.

 36b Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, “Peace be with

 you.” 37They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a

 ghost. 38He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in

 your hearts? 39Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me

 and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

 40And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41While in

 their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you

 anything here to eat?” 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it

 and ate in their presence.

 44Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still

 with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and

 the psalms must be fulfilled.” 45Then he opened their minds to understand the

 scriptures, 46and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer

 and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and

 forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from

 Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things.”