



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person*

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✘ *In Worship Today* ✘

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Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector	Magdalena Phillips

*This service of worship can also be heard online. Go to [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org) and click on "WORD OUT" to find both audio and print resources for worship at home.*

**SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

*April 19, 2020*

*"Word Out #7" audio transcript*

**Prelude**      Variations on VILLE DU HAVRE (*It Is Well with My Soul*, ELW 785)  
arr. John Purifoy (b. 1952)

**Welcome**

☞: Welcome, this second Sunday of Easter. Wherever you are listening, we invite you into this space: one where we will hear the good news in proclamation, spoken and sung, a time where you can be still and know God is God.

**P:** In today's gospel, the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection together in spirit even as we remain apart. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

### Greeting

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

**G:** And also with you.

### Gospel Acclamation

John 20:29

**G:**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**P:**

*Repeat alleluia*

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.

**G:**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**A:** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twentieth chapter.

**G:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

**A:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**G:** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

*In the Midst of Fear*  
Pastor Dan Peterson

It's interesting. Whenever John 20:19-31, our Gospel reading for today, appears in the lectionary, preachers almost invariably focus on Thomas. I am no exception. The last time I preached on this text I too focused on the "doubting disciple" and how, separated from the other disciples according to v. 24, he lost

his faith. It was only when Thomas was brought back into community, into fellowship, that Christ appeared to him. Is this not, I wondered, how we experience the risen Christ, not simply by ourselves but in and through each other? After all, where two or more gather in his name, there he promises to be (Matthew 18:20).

The sermon ended, as many of my sermons do, with the proclamation that Jesus calls us out of isolation and into fellowship.

Today, things are different. Many of us are called to live in isolation to slow the spread of the coronavirus. We isolate ourselves, not because we have no use for other people, but *out of love for our neighbor*. We know that gathering in-person for worship would endanger the people who attend as well as others with whom they come into contact. We accordingly remain apart.

And so, while we choose isolation out of care for other people, we find ourselves in the same situation as Thomas. We too are separated from our fellow believers.

Notice here, however, that the focus remains on Thomas. What about the *other disciples* huddled in the upper room (cf. Acts 1:13)? John provides the fullest account of their story. Matthew says nothing. Mark tells us simply that Jesus “appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen” (16:14). Unfortunately, these words were *added* to Mark in the second century, long after the original story, which ends six verses earlier, had been composed. The first author, the original author, like Matthew, says nothing.

Luke, next to John, provides the only other first-century account of the disciples gathering in Jerusalem after Jesus died. He mentions it twice: first in 24:36-49 and then in The Acts of the Apostles, which he also wrote. The details are minimal. He never tells us why they gathered in Jerusalem, nor does he mention Thomas; only John does. Behind locked doors, we read according to the account of the latter, the disciples gathered (v. 19) *for fear of the Jews*.

“For fear of the Jews” – it’s an ugly phrase. It appears only in John’s Gospel. We’ll examine it more closely next week. What matters here is the motive John supplies. The Fourth Evangelist tells us the disciples were *afraid*. Even though they were together, they found themselves in extreme isolation – and with good reason! The man upon whom they had pinned all their hopes, the one who they believed to be the messiah of God, had just been pinned himself to a cross. The

Roman Empire, in conjunction with local Jewish authorities, had the final word. Death, it would seem, had won.

Like the disciples, we too find ourselves in the grip of fear – albeit for different reasons. Some of us fear losing our jobs. Others fear having to return to work prematurely before the threat of the virus dissipates. Still others, especially those of us more vulnerable to disease (and I include myself here) fear what used to be the most routine of tasks – walking the dog, grocery shopping, or even picking up the mail.

We feel isolated. Perhaps we hunker down like the disciples, not really sure what's going on “out there.” We get nervous when we hear a knock at the door. We don't quite know what to do.

It's here, in the midst of fear, that Christ suddenly appears. Notice in John's account the first thing he says: “Peace be with you” (v. 19). These comforting words are a traditional Jewish greeting the disciples would have immediately recognized. It's a phrase we recognize too, a memory of our life together every Sunday for worship. Jesus repeats it several verses later. “Peace be with you,” he says to his disciples (v. 21). Then he does something modern readers might miss. He emulates God's act of creating Adam according to Genesis 2:7 by giving the breath of life – new life, the breath of the *new* creation – to his disciples, only to return to a third and final “peace be with you” in v. 26.

These words, dear friends, were not only spoken to that little band of frightened disciples. They are spoken today to each of you. To those of you who feel isolated, fatigued, or fearful, Christ says, “*Peace be with you.*” God brought life out of death before, and God will bring life out of death again; indeed, God is *already* breathing new life into the old creation when the comforting, reassuring Word of Christ breaks through fear and isolation in a phone call from a fellow church member, in a kind note from a friend, or in a neighborly deed. In each of these moments the Word of Christ not only speaks to *you* as it did those first disciples. It calls you to *be* that same Word of reassurance to others.

Look, therefore, for *one opportunity* this week to be Christ to someone else, and together, as new life gradually appears, we will rejoice as did the eleven long ago in the upper room.

Peace be with you.

And all God's people say, Amen!

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when  
 2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let  
 3 He lives—oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought; my  
 4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast  
 this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my  
 sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I  
 clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.  
 help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul.  
 bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
 Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

*Refrain*

It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.  
 It is well with my soul,

## Prayers of the Church

**P:** Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God scattered across times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence is given.*

**P:** Open the doors we close, O God, when we fear those who worship you in different ways. Guide us to unity and harmony so that we may come to respect and cherish our commonalities. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Open the paths we ignore, O God, when we prioritize financial gain and convenience over listening to the groaning of the earth. Inspire all to care for the world you have made so that living things might thrive. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Open the rooms we lock, O God, to those who live without a homeland or place of safety. We pray that generous nations offer refuge and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Open the hearts we close, O God, to the cries of those in pain. We pray for those isolated physically or emotionally through incarceration, addiction, mental illness, chronic suffering, grief, and all in need, especially those homebound or hospitalized by COVID-19, as well as those who have yet to have a home. Be near to each of them. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Open the ways of love, O God, in the pursuit of peace throughout the world, and bless the efforts of missionaries, healthcare professionals, activists for women and children, and relief workers, especially those who find themselves in harm's way. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** For who or what else do the people of God pray?

*A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.*

**P:** Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Open the way to eternal life, O God, as we remember those who have died in faith. Free us from the fear of death, that we live as you intended, trusting that our eternal destiny lies in your gracious hands. Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your care; through Christ our Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**P:** Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**C:** **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.**

**Amen.**

### **Announcements**

**P:** We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, we invite you to go to our website at [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org).

### **Benediction**

**A:** Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**P:** Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless and preserve you.

**C:** **Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

*Psalm 19 ("The Heavens Declare the Glory of God")*  
Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739), arr. Theodore Dubois (1837-1924)