



Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Second Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31

Bishop Amy Current

Southeastern Iowa Synod

Hallelujah! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. 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. You may come to believe.

You, us, those of us who are good Friday and Easter people.

You, us, those who have not had the opportunity to put our hands in Jesus' wounded hands and resurrected side like Thomas.

You, us, those who believe, yet pray for God to help our unbelief.

You, us, those who are locked behind a closed door in fear.

You, us, those who witness the cruelty and injustices before our very eyes and throughout the world wondering, where is the Lord of life, the breath of salvation.

You, us, those who are locked behind a closed door in fear. that may be hearing this promise of the belief of life for the first time, or for the five thousandth time, the living word meets us, meets you behind the closed doors of our fears, behind the closed door of our hearts.

Just as the crucified and risen Christ met Thomas, in his doubt, his disbelief, his wonder, his desire for proof. For Thomas wanted to see proof of Jesus suffering and saw proof of his scars of healing. Thomas wanted to see proof of death and received the proof of life in the living breath of Jesus. Then Thomas finally exhaled, "My Lord and my God," confessing his beliefs, his faith, his life. And in this exchange, we witness Jesus once again meeting us like Thomas in our fear, our doubt, our disbelief, our unbelief, our unworthiness, our arrogance. our melancholy, really meeting us.

Meeting us in the stories of our lives and breathing the peace of life into our hearts, into our minds, into our bodies, restoring us from death to life. The purpose of John's gospel is clear, the stories are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life in his name. We often get stuck on the coming to believe as if there's a checklist, a test, a degree to be earned, a fee to be paid, and in striving to believe enough to believe rightly. We lose sight of the gift right before our eyes the gift of the Savior of life.

Earlier in John's Gospel we hear for God so loved to the world that God gave God's only Son so that everyone who believes may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son. into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. We humans, we excel at condemnation, exclusion, rejection, turning away from one another. But God is love and life. God gives



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us Jesus. God gives us Thomas and the others. God gives us one another along the way. God gives us faith, belief. Even when we cannot, by our own strength, the reason come to believe. In the words of Martin Luther, in the Small Catechism, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit who keeps us daily in faith. Forgives and promises us eternal life for all believers. This is most certainly true. Alleluia. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.