

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

April 7th, 2024

Second Sunday of Easter

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!*

ELW 385

INVOCATION

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen.*

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: *Amen.*

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

C: *We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.*

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of V Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: *Amen.*

PASTORAL GREETING

THE KYRIE

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

This is the Feast

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray, together.

C: **Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

April 7, 2024 – Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING: Acts 4:32-35

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

THE PSALM Psalm 133

SECOND READING: 1 John 1:1—2:2

The Incarnation of the Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

ELW Pg. 151

Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTUBE VIDEO –https://youtu.be/N_s0zmT4m6w?si=Z649_Uh7LWpfDK3b

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

EASTER 2B, 4-7-24, John 20.19-31

BELIEVING THOMAS, THE SCIENTIST

Johnny Carson was at Harvard to receive an honorary award. After the ceremony, the press had questions. One reporter asked Carson what he would like engraved on his tombstone. He said, "I'll be right back," the very words he said before every commercial break on his late-night show.

According to the record, over and over again, Jesus said those same words to his followers. "Gonna suffer, gonna die, then I'll be right back!" If his followers even heard those words, they seemed to have dismissed them as religious rhetoric or hyperbole. Except for Believing Thomas. Please do not call him doubting Thomas while I am in earshot. I might have a case of apoplexy!

The disciples in today's Gospel are in the third day. They are afraid. They will remain afraid into the second week in spite of an after-the-empty-tomb bodily appearance of Jesus to them, and his breathed blessing of the Holy Spirit into them.

Nobody.....absolutely nobody, was counting on a crushed and maimed, cold, dead Jesus, standing up again. There was no disciple welcome wagon at the tomb.

The first witnesses to the empty tomb were met with doubt, fear, skepticism, cynicism, caution, and accusations of grave robbery. When told the real news they said, "Drivel, nonsense, unbelievable, yeah right, women aren't legally recognized witnesses."

After this Resurrection event, everything changes. Huge events with social consequences change the way we understand things and interact with each other. After two millennia of thinking about it and proclaiming it and celebrating it we see in retrospect what a difference the Resurrection made in terms of history, civilization and reality itself. 12 disciples and a support group of women who were the first Apostles, the Apostles to the disciples, started it. By mid-2023, that number has changed from 26 or so followers, to 2.6 billion followers of Jesus Christ! It may be easier for us to rejoice now. Back then in the days, and weeks and decades and years following the Resurrection, fear and uncertainty still held rule. Forward motion in the faith was at first at a fearful standstill.

In the early 2000's Longfellow Elementary had an amazing science emphasis, with science fairs and inter-scholastic competition. Rigorous scientific method was enforced for 3rd to 5th Graders. Do not show up with baking soda and vinegar and be proud of your little model volcano. It proves nothing. An experiment must be conducted that demonstrates a hypothesis. The project had to be approved by one of the science professors at San Jacinto.

In 2005, Josh entered a project proposal, testing for the best combustible fuel used to launch a potato the furthest, out of a homemade PVC potato cannon. It got turned down.

So then, young Joshua Berggren asked, "What if there weren't any grocery stores? In the concrete city, can you grow food without any plantable surfaces?" He had made an observation, asked a question, and was embarked on the first two steps of the scientific method. I casually tossed out, "Sure, grow vegetables in pots." He began to hypothesize. (Step 3. Scientific Method.) He decided you can't produce enough food that way. The problem became maximizing food production in limited space. His corollary hypothesis asked if it was possible to grow more than one plant in a pot. He researched (step 4) and experimented (step 5), by cutting holes in the bottom of pots modified to hang, sticking vining tomato plants upside down out of the bottom of the pot, and filling it with dirt. Then he planted hot peppers in the top of the pot.

12 hanging pots and 24 plants in a 12' by 4' area, the size of a small balcony. He measured them and kept a photo journal and a daily logbook. He kept variables such as food, water, and lighting, equal. He analyzed his data and came to a conclusion (step 6). He presented several hanging baskets to the school Science Fair. They had tomatoes growing out of the bottom and curling up toward the light. Hot peppers were growing out of the top of the hanging pots. They were fruiting in time for the science fairs. He called it his Rotel Farm. Longfellow Elementary gave him the Young Scientist Award, and he won district competition at Sylvan Rodriguez Elementary, in botany.

He was called Scientist Joshua, not Doubting Joshua.

Step 1. Observation. Jesus body is missing. Be nice if he were alive! But probably not.

Step 2. Question. Some disciples said they saw him, but it was in private, and they were emotionally upset, and not reliable witnesses. Hysteria was going around those days.

Step 3. Research. Continue to circulate in the community. Do not stay penned up in a fearful state like the disciples with their claims. See what is going on and what other people are saying. Collect information.

Step 4. Experiment. If Jesus is out and about, he'll be right back. He can prove to me that it is really him with direct observation of his wounds, both by seeing and by probing them to determine their reality.

Step 5. Analyze. A week later Jesus appears to disciples plus Thomas. Sight, sound, smell and touch....yes, it is Jesus without a doubt.

Step 6. Conclusion. "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas carries out the Scientific Method, rigorously applied, based on observable facts, not emotions, *folie a deux*, or mass hysteria, not the fleeting nature of perceived consensus truth at any given time, based on faulty and biased polling, which may not account for the actual reality of the moment. He is Scientist Thomas, not Doubting Thomas.

Thomas gets a bad rap from the adjective tribe. For some reason they don't like facts. They don't appreciate complexity. And they apply their opinions prejudicially. After all, you never heard about Drunken Noah, or Adulterous Murderer David, or Crazy Obsessive/Compulsive Widow looking for a coin, or Back-Stabbing Jacob and his conniving wife, Stealing and Lying Rachel. Then there is Whining Jonah, and Brutal, Violent, Macho, Misogynistic Samson. They didn't get locked in, to those definitions, so why Thomas. I consider him the patron Saint of Civilization. After all, Thomas is the one, who in John 11, urges the disciples to go on to Bethany in spite of the danger. He knew it might mean dying with Jesus. He was listening to Jesus. He got that much about what was going on, and if he had to die, well, fine!

In John 14, Jesus says, "I am going to prepare a place for you and you know where that is." Thomas will not accept that ambiguity. "Time out, Teacher. We do NOT know the way and we do NOT have a clue where you are going. Help us to understand without holy mumbo-jumbo." He is a bottom-line type of guy. Nobody likes them because they expose weaknesses and call for accountability. Just the facts will be fine. Let the facts bring forth the acts.

"But, we have seen the Lord!!!" "Yeah sure, Mr. I-think-I-can-walk-on-water-as-good-as-Jesus-can," Peter.

Thomas is out gathering intelligence. He is gathering data, and communicating with the outside world. He is not like the disciples. He has not shut down. He is not like the kid coming home on break from college.

I ask, “How are things going?” He says, “Fine.” “How’s the food?” “Good.” “And the dormitory?” “Good.” “How do you think A and M will do this year in football?” “Fine.” “How are your grades?” “Good.” “What is your major?” “Communications.”

There are the disciples, holed up and out of touch. Not communicating. Are you going to believe them? Are they credible? I am placing my bets on my hero, Believing Thomas. He believed that there was a future. He believed that he could be a part of it. He believed that it was important for his witness to be as accurate as possible. No sloppy emotional assumptions. People will be looking back at his moment, and asking if it is real. He recognized that he would provide a foundation fact, for a group of believers that would eventually become a church of 2.6 billion people. After 2000 years I still need his witness to believe the resurrected life of Jesus, and not worry that it was just a delusional wish dream.

For him, touching, hearing, smelling, and seeing was believing. This makes it possible for me to believe and so to see, touch, hear, smell and taste the Risen Lord.

Jesus chuckles and says, “Have you believed because you have seen me, dear Thomas? Because of you, ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.’” Heroic Thomas the Scientist, got us our own Beatitude. Thank you, Believing Thomas. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Breath on Me, Breath of God

Insert

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

APOSTLES’ CREED

P: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;**



**He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE LORD’S PEACE (Please share the Peace with a neighbor)

THE OFFERING

“Polonaise”
Piano/Organ Duet

W. A. Mozart
Pr. Jim and Rob

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

Presider: Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine.

Congregation: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have, mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Lamb of God

ELW Pg. 146

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in Eternal Life.

POST COMMUNION SONG

Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider: Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

I Know That My Redeemer Lives!

ELW 619

GO IN PEACE, IN SERVICE

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM 19:14

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*



- ♣ **Candy Berggren**
- ♣ **Barney Boeker**
- ♣ **Susan Caradec**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **Vicki Carty**
- ♣ **Lorraine Chavez**
- ♣ **Patty Conberi**
- ♣ **Karen Davidson**
- ♣ **Cathy Doughty**
- ♣ **David Dukleth**
- ♣ **Steve Forrester**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Linda Kuhar**
- ♣ **Daniel Lara**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Todd Miskel**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Mike Paine**
- ♣ **LaVerne Pivonka**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Rosie Stork**
- ♣ **Vern Terry**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**
- ♣ **Bennie Valites**
- ♣ **David Watson**



INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS & COUNCIL MEMBERS

Installation of 2024 Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Council Officers and Council Members will be today.

Church Council

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **April 21st, 2024**

at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Friendship Club will be meeting at
the Ragin Cajun located at 1725 Wirt Rd (77055)

Saturday, April 20.

Please note the time **CHANGE**: we will begin to gather at **4:00 pm.**

Looking forward to seeing y'all!"

Nancy Beamesderfer

MEMORIAL GIFTS

On behalf of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, we thank the Betty Firth family for using their Memorial gifts toward the landscaping.

In addition, we thank the Merle Jensen, Stan Crick, Clarice Gross, Madelyn Price, Bernice Rogge and Dorsey Mae Alexander families for donating to the music/organ and audio/visual funds.

Your gifts are greatly appreciated and gratefully received.

HCLC Memorial Fund

Tillie Remmert, Chairman
Penny Schick, Member
John Lambeth, Member

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

APRIL

- 7 Reader – Steve Schulze
P/E – Linda Cuzzort
- 14 Reader – Nancy Beamesderfer
P/E – Penny Schick
- 21 Reader – Ike Thompson
P/E – John Stokes
- 28 Reader – Mallory Hileman
P/E – Wendy Lambeth

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist
Nancy Beamesderfer

SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING
HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2024

CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday	4/7/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Saturday	5/4/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	5/26/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	6/9/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	4/6/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	4/19/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	5/18/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/31/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	6/15/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Sunday	6/30/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Saturday	4/13/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/3/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Friday	5/17/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	5/23/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/8/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/27/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$325)	Saturday	4/20/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/10/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/1/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	6/21/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm

Classes are in the Youth Room, Media Room and in the Annex.

You can sign up online for classes by going to

www.safeguards-safety.com and choosing “Register for Classes.”

Or call 713-854-8085 for more information

Congregation members and their families will receive a discount of 15% for any class by using the above-mentioned coupon code when signing up.

John Lambeth

SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. *Traditional Worship service with Rev. Jim Berggren –WC*

Installation of Council Officers and Council Members

Nursery is available for small children during the service – Crib Room

10:30 a.m. *Coffee fellowship following the service –FLC*

3:30—5:30 p.m. *Girl Scout meeting –FLC room*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

8 Mon	9 Tues	10 Wed	11 Thurs	12 Fri	13 Sat
<p>11—12 pm <i>ELC Chapel</i> —WC</p>	<p>11—12 pm <i>ELC Chapel</i> —WC</p> <p>7—8 pm <i>Boy Scout Troop meeting—</i> <i>FLC room</i></p>	<p>10—11:30 am <i>ELC Snake man</i> —YR</p> <p>10 am <i>Roundtable Group</i> —VR</p> <p>11 am <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> —CL</p> <p>12 pm <i>Bible Study</i> —AT</p>	<p>1pm <i>Ruth Circle-FLCA</i></p> <p>8 pm <i>AA Women mtg.</i> —FLCA</p>	<p>9—12 pm <i>ELC Spring Fundraiser</i> —FLC + kitchen</p>	<p>9—12 pm <i>ELC Spring Fundraiser</i> —FLC + kitchen</p> <p>4:30 pm <i>Guitar class</i> —CR</p> <p>6:00 pm <i>Saturday Informal Service</i> —AT</p>

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, FLC= Family Life Center, FLCA=Annex,

KiA= Kids in Action, MR=Media Room, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room

BLS=Basic Life Support, SST=Safeguards Safety Training, UCL=Upcycled Crafty Ladies