

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

April 27, 2025

Second Sunday of Easter

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

The Day of Resurrection!

ELW 361

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: *God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, 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 27, 2025 – Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING: Acts 5:27-32

²⁷ When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, ‘We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.’ ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority. ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, so that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.’

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM

Psalm 150

SECOND READING: 1 Revelation 1:4-8

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The word of the Lord.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

*Alleluia,
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

THE HOLY GOSPEL John 20:19-31

¹⁹ 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.’²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ 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.’

²⁶ 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.’ ²⁷ 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.’ ²⁸ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ ²⁹ 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.’

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTUBE VIDEO – <https://youtu.be/22cNv443CWQ?si=Iar7AcFYcib3VkeI>

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

EASTER 2C 4-27-25 – SCIENTIST THOMAS

A Texas rancher hit the jackpot at Lake Charles, so he bought 10 ranches and put them together to form one giant spread. He named his new mega-ranch The Square K, Roaring River, Triple Bar, Circle B, Lazy Creek, Bent Horseshoe, Lazy T, Broken Arrow, Crooked Horn, Double X Ranch. “Wow,” his friend said, “You must have a lot of cattle!!” He said, “Nope. Not many survive the branding.”

Scientist Thomas, PhD, has barely survived the branding that he has unfairly received, as a result of having the adjective, “DOUBTING”, erroneously attached to his name.

According to the record, over and over again, Jesus told his followers, “I’ll be back in three days.” If his followers even heard those words, they seemed to have dismissed them as religious rhetoric...holy hyperbole. Except for Scientist

Thomas, the Believer of the bunch. Please never diminish his heroic greatness and his concern for future generations who would need to learn about Jesus! Don't ever call him 'Doubting Thomas'!!

When some of the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, well....of course, he trusted them, but he sought some real-world verification. Trust, but verify. He wanted accurate information. He didn't even have enough information to doubt.

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 in spite of the fact that Jesus appeared to them, and breathed his blessing of the Holy Spirit into them.

Nobody.....absolutely nobody, was counting on the Resurrection. That event was not anticipated. How can you live in anything but the fear of the moment when the worst has happened and there is no walking it back. You can't unflog or unstab somebody!!

The first women witnesses to the empty tomb were met with doubt, fear, skepticism, cynicism, caution, and accusations of grave robbery. The disciples, when told the real news, quoted the entire thesaurus. "Drivel, nonsense, unbelievable, yeah right, women, not reliable legal witnesses. Whatever."

After this Resurrection event, everything changes. After two thousand years of thinking about it and proclaiming it and celebrating, we see in retrospect what a difference the Resurrection made in terms of history, civilization and reality. It is easier for us to rejoice now. Back then, in the days, and weeks and years following the Resurrection, fear and uncertainty still ruled. Forward motion in the faith was at first at a fearful standstill. Absolutely accurate testimony was needed to move forward.

Grade school science fairs at Longfellow were amazing events for Grades 2-6. They were teaching good science to young children. As an assigned adult sponsor, I coached children through simple but interesting research projects. We had to apply the scientific method and discover something. Building volcanoes out of baking soda was not allowed. My boys got shut down on a proposal to build a potato cannon to see what fuel in the chamber would shoot a potato the furthest. Something about no artillery allowed in grade school. A restrictive learning environment, don'cha think?!

We finally settled on the observation:

- Step 1. Houston is getting more smog and it smells funny.
- Step 2. Questions: What is it? How does it effect people? Where in the city is it better or worse?

- Step 3: Research. Smog has very small microscopic air-borne particles that are dangerous to people in a variety of ways. How can you measure it to find the best place to live and be safe?
- Step 4. The experiment. Draw a one-inch circle on an index card and staple it to a flat stake. Put clear petroleum jelly over the circle. Place stakes facing south to catch the wind in five locations from the south Houston city limits to the residential neighborhood where the school was located. We did two test runs lasting 40 hours each, verified with notes and photos. We retrieved the stakes and with a magnifying glass counted the particles in the circle. If heavily dusted, divide the circle into eighths, count the particles and multiply by 8.
- Step 5: Analyze. The closest to rural did have lots of dust and pollen particles. The residential neighborhood by the school with lots of trees, had the least. The worst intersection was highly toxic with a major street, a highway and railroad tracks going through it. There was an elementary school there, too.

Nobody called this experiment, a verification process generated by a hypothesis, a matter of doubting. Doubt was no part of it. It was systematically gathering and recording information. Why does Thomas get branded as a doubter, when he is verifying for you and me the fact of Jesus' Resurrection?

- Step 1. Observation. Jesus body is missing. Impossible. Wouldn't it be nice if he were alive?
- Step 2. Question. Some disciples said they saw him, but it was in a private place, and they were emotionally upset, and not reliable witnesses. What really happened?
- Step 3. Research. Circulate in the community. Do not stay isolated, like the disciples with their fearful claims. See what is going on; what are people are saying. What is Pilate doing? What are the Sanhedrin talking about in their meetings?
- Step 4. Experiment. If Jesus is out and about, he can prove to me that it is really him with direct observation of his wounds, both by seeing and probing them to determine their reality. You can't fake them.
- Step 5. Analyze. A week later Jesus appears to disciples, plus Thomas. It is his opportunity to see, hear, 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; not *folie a deux*, or mass hysteria; not the fleeting nature of opinion at any given time which does not account for anything real. He is Scientist Thomas. He got it. He understood. He knew early on! With only 155 words of his, recorded in the Bible, before the dangerous trip to Bethany to raise Lazarus, Thomas said ten words, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." There is not a smidgeon, not an inkling of doubt in those words.

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 opinions prejudicially. After all, you never heard much about Drunken Noah. It was a family secret back then too. Or Adulterous David who conspired in premeditated murder. (That's life-without-parole in Texas.) The story lurks, but never becomes a forever adjective. Or Crazy Widow looking for a coin; Back-Stabbing Jacob and his conniving wife, Stealing-and-Lying Rachel. They are heroes and heroines of the faith, who enjoyed favorable press releases. There is Whining Jonah, and Brutal, Violent, Misogynistic Samson. They didn't get locked in, to those definitions! Why Thomas? Personally, I consider him the patron Saint of Western Civilization. As such he may be losing a little ground here, lately.

In John 14, Jesus says, "I am going to prepare a place for you and you know where that is." Thomas is not hesitant about asking questions for clarification; not afraid or embarrassed, when he is not sure. "Time out, Teacher. I want to be sure we know the way. I don't have a clue where you are going." He is a bottom-line type of guy. Often nobody likes them because they expose weak assumptions, and self-serving lies. Bottom-line seekers call for accountability.

"We have seen the Lord!!!" Yeah sure, Mister-I-think-I-can-walk-on-water, Simon Peter.

Thomas is out gathering intelligence. He is gathering data, and communicating with the outside world. He is not like his companion disciples. He is exceptional! the disciples are in a bubble, out of touch. Not communicating. You really going to believe them? Are they credible? I am placing my bets on my hero, Scientist Thomas.

He believed there was a future. He believed that he would be a part of it. He believed that it was important for his witness to be as accurate as possible. No sloppy emotional assumptions. No swooning loves or petty hatreds. He recognized that he would establish a foundation fact for a people that would become a worldwide movement! In 2000 years, I would need his witness to believe the resurrected life of Jesus, and not worry that it was just another feckless wish dream of the brokenhearted.

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

Risen Lord, in true communion.

Having made himself present to us in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine, over centuries now, Jesus chuckles and says, “Have you believed because you have seen me, dear Thomas? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet will come to believe. (BECAUSE OF YOU)”. Scientist Thomas got us our own Beatitude. Thank you, heroic Thomas, rigorous believer and believable communicator of our faith. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

That Easter Day with Joy was Bright

ELW 379

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

“The Joyful Eastertide”

arr. V. Hoyle

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together: Risen One, you have gathered us around your table of grace along with these gifts we bring. Come among us again, breathe your life into us, and enliven us with this meal, that me may live as your risen body in the world. 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

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: Living One, in this feast you have made yourself known to us. Send us now to tell of your wonders, sing of your glory, and proclaim your risen life to a wounded and weary world.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain

ELW 365

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.*



- ♣ Lynn Ballard
- ♣ Alberto Basurto
- ♣ Bill Carty
- ♣ Glenda Chavez
- ♣ David Dupleth
- ♣ Darlene Fournier
- ♣ Maureen Fredrickson
- ♣ Anna Gardner
- ♣ Fred Gardner
- ♣ Eliseo Gonzales
- ♣ Mike Hodges
- ♣ Wendy Lambeth
- ♣ Nancy Lancaster

- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Kenneth Magrill
- ♣ Gloria McGarvey
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Wayne Schaper
- ♣ Steve Schulze
- ♣ George Schwalm
- ♣ Glenda Suarez
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski



Next

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be **today**,
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: April

Team # 06

Leader: John Wenger

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

APRIL

6 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — John Stokes

13 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Jay Byerly

20 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

27 Reader — Alma Byerly
P/E — Steve Schulze

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Each week after Sunday service there is a Coffee Hour in the FLC.

Coffee, tea and even hot chocolate are provided.

Please sign up to bring goodies (cookies, coffee cake, etc.) to snack on.

The sign-up sheet is in the FLC.

Thank you.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Our next meeting will be Saturday, **May 17**.

We will have a pot-luck at the church.

Nancy Beamesderfer

SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING
HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2025

CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday	4/13/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	5/18/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	6/15/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	4/5/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/10/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/7/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/21/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (for Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Friday	4/4/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	4/12/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/9/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/17/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/24/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	6/6/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Saturday	5/3/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/30/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/28/2025	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*
Nursery is available for small children during the service — Crib Room
- 10:30 a.m.** *Coffee fellowship following the service —FLC*
- 11:00 a.m.** *Council Meeting*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

28 Mon	29 Tues	30 Wed	1 Thurs	2 Fri	3 Sat
<p><i>11—12 ELC Chapel —WC</i></p> <p><i>7—8 pm Boy Scouts —FLC room</i></p>	<p><i>11—12 ELC Chapel —WC</i></p>	<p><i>10 am Roundtable group —AT</i></p> <p><i>11 am Choir practice —CL</i></p> <p><i>12 pm Bible Study —AT</i></p>	<p><i>8 am—4 pm ELC Teacher Conferences—FLC</i></p> <p><i>11 am—1 pm ELC Teacher Lunch —VR</i></p> <p><i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</i></p>		<p><i>9—5:30 pm SST CPR Instructor Class —MR/YR</i></p> <p><i>6 pm Saturday Informal service —AT</i></p>

APRIL 28—29 / 7AM—7PM — SBISD EARLY VOTING /YR

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, CR=Choir Room, FLC= Family Life Center, FLCA=Annex,
 KiM= Kids in Motion, MR=Media Room, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room
 BLS=Basic Life Support, SST=Safeguards Safety Training, UCL=Upcycled Crafty Ladies