



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, April 11th 2021

Dear Lake Toxaway family and friends,

The Gospel lesson leaves Mark this week and goes to John. During this year of the lectionary, when Mark's Gospel is primary, there are frequent substitutions to the Gospel of John. There are a couple of reasons for this movement to John's Gospel: 1) Mark is a short Gospel and 2) The lectionary is a three-year cycle with Matthew, Mark and Luke highlighted as the Gospel reading in each year. Therefore, during the year of Mark's Gospel, we have many opportunities to read from John's Gospel. Most church scholars indicate John's Gospel was written later than Matthew, Mark and Luke; they highlight its rich focus on symbolism, "I AM" statements and other literary devices found in John's Gospel.

With this brief education about the organization of the lectionary and John's Gospel, I find it ironic how our lesson today is one to which many of us can relate easily. The resurrection of Jesus was and is a difficult tenet of our faith to believe. Thomas, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, is full of doubt. Jesus had appeared to the other disciples, but Thomas had not been in the room to see the risen Christ. When the disciples tell Thomas of Christ's appearance to them, he says: "unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

I often think the words, "I'll believe it when I see it." We have other expressions that communicate this same thought such as "the proof is in the pudding."

Did Thomas question his friends because he lacked faith or was it because he longed to deepen his faith in and understanding of the Risen Christ? It may have been a little of both. For us to believe in something, questioning is both a natural and often necessary part of developing our belief system. Doubt exists as an inescapable and necessary part of our human existence. If we move to the extreme in doubt, we become cynical and blind to any reality beyond the physical. However, to have no sense of skepticism allows us to be swayed by unrealistic promises and led astray by deals too good to be true (the Bible warns of following false teaching and teachers). Doubt can lead us to question, to reflect, to understand the reality at a deeper level. Faith is not so much the opposite of doubt as it is flowering of our understanding, our recognition of a mystery unfolding before us. If doubt is as much a part of us as sin, faith is the gift and grace we receive in baptism. It is not the end of all questioning. It is the peace that fills our hearts when we rest in God's presence!

Jesus appears to the disciple a week later and Thomas is present. Jesus lovingly turns to Thomas and offers the opportunity for him to fulfill his previous statement. Thomas then answers Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas had a deep revelation at that moment, knowing fully and completely Jesus Christ was the Risen Lord. But what about us? We have not had this opportunity, but we are invited to believe not based on what we have seen, but on what Jesus places on our hearts as truth. And Jesus says to Thomas and says to all believers throughout time: "have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Doubt is a natural emotion; one God knew we would all experience. But when we sit quietly with the Lord, wholeheartedly asking our tough questions and allowing Him to respond, our faith can and will blossom into a beautiful relationship of trust and deeper understanding of God's love for us. May we sit quietly with the Lord in our areas of life's doubts. May we find we can ask tough questions. And may we allow His grace to give us clarity and insight, eliminating our doubts. I pray we find ourselves able to lay our doubts and fears at the foot of the cross!

Faithfully,

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Second Sunday of Easter, April 11th**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/HHsoYOrMDEE>

PRELUDE

Fanfare and Meditation on "Crucifer" Charles Callahan

GREETING

We gather in the name of the risen Lord.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

We gather as sisters and brothers of the resurrected one.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

We gather to share our faith and to worship God.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

We gather to proclaim the good news of Easter!

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

HYMN #159

Lift High the Cross

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER

God of the resurrection,

we gather this morning

as a community of believers.

We come with joy to greet one another

and to tell again and again the amazing news:

Christ is risen!

Love is victorious over death!

You have given us new life

in the name of your Son!

May our singing, praying, listening, and proclaiming

be a testimony to the power of your love

to make us a new creation

as a community of faith.

We pray in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

***Acts 4:32-35** * During Eastertide a reading from Acts is often substituted for the lesson from the Hebrew Bible.

- 4:32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.
- 4:33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.
- 4:34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.
- 4:35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Psalm 133 (Please read responsively the bold text.)

133:1 How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

133:2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

1 John 1:1-2:2

- 1:1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life--
- 1:2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us--
- 1:3 we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- 1:4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
- 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.
- 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true;

- 1:7 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 1:9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
- 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;
- 2:2 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

John 20:19-31 (Please stand for the Gospel reading.)

- 20:19 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."
- 20:20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
- 20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
- 20:22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
- 20:23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
- 20:24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.
- 20:25 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."
- 20:26 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."
- 20:27 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."

- 20:28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"
- 20:29 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."
- 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.
- 20:31 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.

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

***God of mercy,
we come celebrating our unity,
but we confess the many ways
that we are divided.***

***Our nationality, ethnic origin, economic status,
gender, age, and musical preferences
all too often obscure the common calling
we share in Christ's name.***

***May our common identity as your children
and our communal witness to Christ
bind us together in your name.***

***Forgive our tendency toward separation and division,
and remind us that we are your Easter people. Amen.***

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*When we walk in the light of Christ,
we have fellowship with one another.*

*When we confess our sins,
the One who is faithful and just forgives our sins
and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.*

*For in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,
God has showered mercy upon the entire world. Amen.*

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH (*United Church of Canada*)

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

*We believe in God: who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.*

We trust in God.

*We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.*

*In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.*

Thanks be to God. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen. Amen.*

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

This Joyful Eastertide arr. Charles Callahan

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*Generous and surprising God,
when we thought that death
had claimed your only Son,
you amazed us with the resurrection.
Surprise us again
with your ability to turn these humble offerings
into gifts that will transform the world
through our witness to your love.
We lay our very lives at your feet, O God,
knowing that you will use us
to proclaim and embody the gospel. Amen.*

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH 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. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN #310

He Lives

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Processional on "Crucifer" Charles Callahan

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Jacolyn Campbell

Liturgist: Beth Holimon

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lenten Journey Thank You – It takes a village!

Everyone played an important and impactful role during this year's Lenten journey. Thank you to those who wrote a personal Lenten devotional, the Worship committee for decorating the sanctuary, Memorial Garden, and the shroud on the cross on the hill, John and Becky Shoemaker for the wooden prayer plaque, the music and solo selections and the thought-provoking sermons.

2020 Tax Letters/Giving Statements

2020 Giving Statements were mailed in February and if you have not received yours, please reach out to Don McSwain, our Treasurer via email at bgamedon@gmail.com.

Scholarship Committee Update

April 15th is the deadline for LTUMC 2021-2022 scholarship applications.

If you are interested in being a mentor for a future scholar recipient please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167 to learn more.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for Jan Crocker, Mary Collins, Katherine Jeter, Kitty Neff, Marcus' nephew Steven Hudson, Marty Young, Thomas Blackstock, Frank Hardin, Chad & Anne Zimmerman, Madison Coleman & the Jeter family, Cathie Fussell's nephew, Jeff Tilley, Conor, Cynthia Wood's friends' two-year-old son.

Please pray for those with illness, upcoming surgery and recovery. Please pray for and their recoveries.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months; especially the family of Ellen Gauze, Cathy Fussell's niece, Fred Collins for the passing of his mother on March 29th, family of Dell Rearden, family of Kent Garner.

Please pray for our student scholars as they are finishing their semester.

Lift High the Cross

159

Refrain
(Unison)

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro-claim

till all the world a-dore his sa-cred name.

Fine

Harmony

9

1. Come, Chris-tians, fol - low this tri - um-phant sign.
2. Each new - born ser - vant of the Cru - ci - fied
3. O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
4. So shall our song of tri-umph ev - er be:

D.C.

The hosts of God in u - ni - ty com-bine.
 bears on the brow the seal of him who died.
 as thou hast prom-ised, draw the world to thee.
 Praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

WORDS: George William Kitchen and Michael Robert Newbolt, 1916, alt.
 MUSIC: Sydney Hugo Nicholson, 1916
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CRUCIFIER
 10 10 with Refrain

1. I serve a ris - en Sav - ior, he's in the world to - day;
 2. In all the world a - round me I see his lov - ing care,
 3. Re - joice, re-joyce, O Chris-tian, lift up your voice and sing

I know that he is liv - ing, what - ev - er foes may say.
 and though my heart grows wea - ry, I nev - er will de - spair.
 e - ter - nal hal - le - lu - jahs to Je - sus Christ the King!

I see his hand of mer - cy, I hear his voice of cheer,
 I know that he is lead - ing through all the storm - y blast;
 The hope of all who seek him, the help of all who find;

and just the time I need him, he's al - ways near.
 the day of his ap - pear-ing will come at last.
 none oth - er is so lov - ing, so good and kind.

WORDS: Alfred H. Ackley, 1933
 MUSIC: Alfred H. Ackley, 1933

ACKLEY
 76.76.76.74 with Refrain

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Refrain

He lives, he lives, Christ Je-sus lives to-day!
 He walks with me and talks with me a-long life's nar-row way.
 He lives, he lives sal-vation to impart!
 You ask me how I know he lives? He lives with-in my heart.