



# Mount Calvary Connected

April 28, 2022

*Mount Calvary Connected is a weekly newsletter sent out at the end of each week. Our goal is to keep you connected to your church and your faith with messages from our pastors, information about upcoming activities at Mt. Calvary and more!*

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## LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP SERVICE INFORMATION

Mt. Calvary hosts live broadcasts of the liturgy at 8:45 AM Sunday mornings. The broadcast can be heard by tuning your radio to 88.3 FM if you are near the church. We also stream these services live over the internet. Simply visit [www.mt-calvarylutheran.org](http://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org) and click "Live Radio Broadcast" from the home page on Sunday mornings.

Weekly worship bulletins can be found at: [www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/](http://www.mt-calvarylutheran.org/bulletins/)

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## A Message from Pastor Jonathan Adams

I've been continuing to dwell on the Gospel for this past weekend, the so-called story of "Doubting Thomas." It's a familiar story, one that comes up every single year on the Sunday after Easter. But for a variety of reasons, it has struck me a bit differently this year.

It wasn't just Thomas who doubted. It was ALL of the disciples. The story told by the women who returned from the empty tomb was dismissed as "an idle tale," they were more or less accused of talking non-sense. The disciples doubted what they said, even though it should not have been anything new. But they were also afraid. They were hiding, shut away behind closed doors.

All of that is the familiar part of the story. But this year, my attention was drawn to the "big picture" significance of Jesus' visits.

He comes to relieve any doubt, and calm any fear, both for the larger group of disciples, and later for Thomas when he felt left out. But the big picture is that all of that is about preparing them and sending them out for ministry. Sending them out to continue the work of sharing the good news.

It's not just, "don't be afraid," it's more like, "don't be afraid, you need to get out there, and God is with you every step of the way."

We don't have the blessing of having a real-life, in-person, "in the flesh" encounter with the risen Jesus the way that so many of the disciples and early church members did. But Jesus says that those of us who believe without seeing are blessed all the same.

So what happens if we internalize that message of “don’t be afraid, you need to get out there and God is with you every step of the way?”

Well, great and amazing things happened for the early church, and great and amazing things can happen for the modern church, and us as modern Christians, too.

There is no shortage of things to be afraid of in the world; no shortage of things that might shake our faith, even to its very core. But Christ is with us, every step of the way.

We can always try to hide away where it’s “safe,” literally locking ourselves behind closed doors, and shutting ourselves off from any interaction that might hurt us physically, mentally, or emotionally. But that’s hardly any way to live one’s life.

The real world is “messy.” We’re always going to encounter obstacles and set backs. We’ll always find things that try to seduce us away from walking faithfully, or question us the meaning of good and evil or right and wrong.

But just like the disciples, we need to find the courage that our faith gives us in order to go out in the midst of that muck and mess. Because the message of the risen Lord isn’t just a calming message of “don’t be afraid,” it’s a challenge.

Go forth into the world, with faith rather than fear, trusting that God is with you every step of the way.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jono

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### **Adult Sunday School**

Adult Sunday School is ongoing! We were happy to see some new faces and hope that even more join us! We meet in the conference room/library each Sunday after worship.

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### **Upcoming Meetings**

WELCA: May 16th at 6:00 p.m.

Council: May 17th at 6:30 p.m.

The Property Committee will meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the old lounge. \*No meeting in May.

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### **2022 Offering Envelopes**

Offering envelopes for 2022 are available in the narthex. Thank you in advance for your contribution!

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### **Help Wanted**

The Property Committee is looking to recruit a number of small job volunteers. Tasks might include replacing light bulbs, changing hardware on a commode, getting a lawnmower or snowblower ready for use, etc. The Committee believes we have a lot of talent in the congregation and wants to make greater use of it. Every small job handled by a member equals one less call that needs to be made to a vendor who may have a minimum visit charge or an hourly rate of \$50 or more.

Volunteers who can be available on short notice are needed to help with set-up, serving, and tear-down after funeral luncheons.

Interested parties should contact Mark Rychak or one of the pastors. A message could also be left with the church office at 814-266-4859. Thank you!

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### **Annual Flea Market**

May 7, 2022

Please no clothing or shoes at this time. Items must be dropped off at the church during office hours, Monday through Thursday between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

We would like to have volunteers to set up the Flea Market on Friday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m. Thank you!

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### **Bake Sale**

Calling all bakers! We are getting close to May 7th, the day of our annual Flea Market. WELCA is once again holding a bake sale and we need YOU to contribute your favorite goodie. Peanut butter, chocolate, trail mixes, fudge, and no-bakes are always popular. If you need ideas, call Joan Hunter at 814-955-2737.

Baked goods can be dropped off at the church office between 9-1 or on the evening of May 6th (set-up). Bake Sale tables will be in the narthex. Thank you!

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### **Yarn Collection**

While everyone is cleaning out and getting ready for the flea market, if you find leftover yarn of any size, the Prayer Shawl group would appreciate it if you would bring it in and donate it to our cause. There will be a bin in the narthex where you can place it. Our supplies are getting low and we could use your help. Thank you so much!

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### **Annual Weed and Feed**

We will be having our annual weed and feed on Tuesday, May 10th at 5:30 p.m. Please bring your favorite gardening tool and mark your name on it so that we can get it back to its proper owners. There will be vittles served afterwards. This will be in place of our normal property meeting, so there will not be a property meeting in May.

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### **Backyard Ministries Summer Club Volunteer Opportunity**

For the past 5 years, members of Mt. Calvary have been volunteering their time one day a week, for one hour to spend with the children of Coopersdale during the summer months. We have a core of about 5 people, but when one or more can't show up on a certain week, it makes things more difficult.

If you want to make a difference in underprivileged children's lives and share the word of God with them, then please consider this opportunity! All you need to do is show up. We already have games

and activities, as well as the Bible lesson to share each week. If you are interested, or would like more information on this rewarding experience, please contact Mike Kozak at 244-6880. Thank you!

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### **Backyard Ministries Snack Collection**

If you would like to continue to donate prepackaged snacks please continue to drop them off at the church. We have decided that we will also start accepting monetary donations. If you would like to contribute, and this is an easier way for you to do so, please drop off any donations at the church office. Thank you for your continued support!

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### **Scheduled Worship Help**

#### **Saturday, April 30:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!

**Communion Assistants:** Deb Rychak & Chris Koshute

#### **Sunday, May 1:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!

**Communion Assistants:** Volunteers needed!

#### **Saturday, May 7:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Volunteers needed!

**Communion Assistants:** Todd Moss & Deb Rychak

#### **Sunday, May 8:**

**Greeters/Ushers:** Jim & Cathy Prisk

**Communion Assistants:** Chris Koshute

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for Greeters/Ushers and Communion Assistants. Please sign up for the dates that would suit you best. We appreciate you volunteering. If you have questions about these roles, please contact Christine Koshute at 814-421-4921 or Chris Oleksa at 814-244-9851.

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**Family Cookout:** Save the date! Saturday, May 14th, the youth and family ministry team will be sponsoring a cookout picnic for all families with school-aged children after the 5:30 p.m. worship service. There will be food, friends, and games. We hear that Pastor Jonathan may even make some of his famous smoked pulled pork.

**Summer Camp at Sequanota:** We are blessed to have a GREAT Lutheran church camp practically in our backyard just twenty-five minutes away at Camp Sequanota near Jennerstown. Registration is now open, with programs for all school-aged kids. Talk with Pastor Jonathan to brochure, or visit [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com) for more information.

**Pastor Jonathan LOVES to get out and see our Mount Calvary youth in action doing the things they enjoy!** Be sure to share your schedules for sports, concerts, recitals, etc. You never know where he might show up!

Pastor Jonathan's office hours at Mount Calvary are Mondays & Wednesdays, 10am-3pm. He is available outside of those hours via email ([RevJonoAdams@gmail.com](mailto:RevJonoAdams@gmail.com)), cellphone (412-817-6704), or Facebook.

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### **Afghan Blanket Drawing**

Anita Brodt donated a beautiful afghan for our Good Gifts campaign. Chances are \$1.00. Since Anita is an educator, it would be wonderful if we could raise at least \$40 to send a girl to school in honor of Anita. The drawing will be held at the end of April.

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### **2022 Social Ministry Good Gifts Campaign**

During the season of Lent and continuing through Easter, Mount Calvary's Social Ministry Team used its "Giving Tree" to support the ELCA Good Gifts program. ELCA Good Gifts are a creative, meaningful way to support the ministries of the ELCA throughout the world. Each of these programs is a long-term, partnership-based ministry that focus on the needs identified by local congregations and global companion churches and their communities.

Each week, a different theme was highlighted with opportunities to make gifts matching the costs of various projects within that theme. As of the end of the Easter weekend, \$4,709 has been collected!

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously! And for the social ministry team for giving us this fun and exciting opportunity to support Lutheran missionaries and the work they do all throughout the world!

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### **Giving Tree**

The Giving Tree for May and June will go to The Precious Life Baby Bottle Campaign that runs through Birthright from Mother's Day to Father's Day. There will also be a basket in front of the tree to collect clothes for toddlers. Thank you for your continued support!

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### **The Greater Johnstown Community Chorus presents: *The Rhythm of Life***

Directed by Michael Meketa, accompanied by Jeff Hornick

Saturday, May 7th at 1:00 p.m.

Christ Lutheran Church  
337 Elknud Lane  
Johnstown, PA 15905

Donation \$10 at the door

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### **Ascension of Our Lord @ Lion Lutheran Church**

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Lion Lutheran Church  
613 Locust Street

Downtown Johnstown

Holy Communion at 2:00 p.m. (Chapel) and 7:30 p.m.

Roast Beef Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

A free-will offering will be received.

Sign up by Sunday, May 22, 2022 by calling the church office at (814) 535-2050

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**Give now for Eastern Europe Crisis Response**

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).*

Friends, I write to you again about our neighbors in Eastern Europe. First, I thank you for your outpouring of prayers and generosity — you are making a difference in the lives of people impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response during this crisis are already at work. Because of your generosity, \$1 million will support the Lutheran World Federation and these member churches:

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia  
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania

They are distributing hygiene supplies, food, medicine, bedding and psychosocial and pastoral care to refugees and internally displaced people, most of whom are women and children.

**Your support has made this possible, but more work remains. Your gifts to “Eastern Europe Crisis Response” will be used to in full (100%) to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and neighboring countries.**

Additional responses through partners in these countries and others in the region are expected in the coming weeks and months, and Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying those partners as the situation evolves. We pray for the Roma communities and foreign nationals who are facing racial and ethnic discrimination at the borders as they flee Ukraine. Our companions are ensuring that people in these marginalized groups will be treated with respect and dignity as they seek safety.

We know there are many organizations that you can choose to support, but it is only by giving to Lutheran Disaster Response that guarantees your gift will fund ELCA-supported work through faith partners in the region.

I invite you to watch this [video](#) from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton about the situation in Eastern Europe and the ELCA’s response. To share this information with your congregations, download this [bulletin insert](#).

Together we pray for our siblings in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. May God be with them in their time of need.

In Christ's service,



The Rev. Daniel Rift  
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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**Birthdays and Anniversaries for the  
Week: May 1 – May 7, 2022**

**May 2** – Colin Cunningham

**May 6** – Dustin Pringle

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**Remember those that prayer has been requested for:**

Jennifer & Ryan, Linda & Dick, Dolly & Chiz Palm Family, Claudia Plows, Maddie Pierce, Gladys Haupt, Bill & Linda, Jose & Family, Dave, Tom, Lt. Hunter Bergman, and Lt. Dylan Merchant, Harold, Rick, Midge, Shirley, Debbie, David, Lauren, Billy, Barb, Sara Solarczyk, Jackie Janak, Jack, Corinne, Joan, Dan, Natalie Zerby, Pastor Scott Custead, Luella Koontz, Al Lindner and Family, Bob, Dawn, Stacy & Josh, Bob Trotter, Bill Layton, Deb Zilch, Bennett, Cassy Sojak, Paul Miller, Keith Mayket, Ruth, Pete, the Teplitza Family, Ethel Warshel, Melanie, Ken, John Nerone, Dane Wisner, Jeff, Dorothy, Irene, Karen, Erin, Susan Dyers, Bob McMullen, Wyatt George, Larry Hockensmith, Jean Pellon, Mike, Corey, John Rychak, Pastor Jonathan & Family, Roxanee Horner, Lynn Palm and son, Alex, and Alex's wife, Becky Lilja, Kathy P., Al Johnson, Chris, Donna & Danny, Cheryl, Jennifer & Family, Jaime, Dorothy, Matt & Ashley, Landon, Max Lawn, Linda Haberkorn, Lorraine, Joe, Donna, Danny & Family, Becky Jo, Bill, Linda & Family, Mary, Cheryl, Mary Jane, Janice, Dennis, Rick, Don, the Chavis Family, Mabel Ann, Betty, Cathy, Cindy, Jill, Theresa & Family, Dean, Madi & Family, Patty & Family, Williams Family, Sydney & Family, and Paulette.

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**Financial Update**

Due to teamwork and consistent effort, the finances of Mount Calvary remain in good shape. Since last March, our overall financial position has improved by over 12%. Through the end of this March, actual gifts and receipts are ahead of budget in three categories and behind budget in three other categories. Thankfully, the three categories which are lagging behind account for less than 8% of our total revenues and receipts. If there's a place to be behind, it's in these categories.

As for expenses, we are running 5% ahead of budgeted expectation, with almost all the difference related to some one-time, computer expenses paid in March.

The big picture thing to keep in mind is that our positive financial position finds us making do with less than we have had to use in the past. Moves out of the area have removed significant resources from our budget in recent years; as in over \$40,000 a year. As council and stewardship and administration continue to work hard to make the most of our resources, we will eventually have to start to make up

some of the resources we've lost due to moves through bringing in new disciples and increasing our own giving when possible.

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### Condensed Worship for Sunday, April 24, 2022

#### Prayer of the Day

P: O God of life, you reach out to us amid our fears with the wounded hands of your risen Son. By your Spirit's breath revive our faith in your mercy and strengthen us to be the body of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### First Reading: Acts 5:27-32

When they had brought [the apostles,] they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, 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." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

#### Psalm 118:14-29

P: The Lord is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.

**A: Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord acts valiantly!**

P: The right hand of the Lord is exalted! The right hand of the Lord acts valiantly!"

**A: I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.**

P: The Lord indeed punished me sorely, but did not hand me over to death.

**A: Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and give thanks to the Lord.**

P: "This is the gate of the Lord; here the righteous may enter."

**A: I give thanks to you, for you have answered me and you have become my salvation.**

P: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

**A: By the Lord has this been done; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

P: This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**A: Hosanna! O Lord, save us! We pray to you, Lord, prosper our days!**

P: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord.

**A: The Lord is God and has given us light. Form a procession with branches up to the corners of the altar.**

P: You are my God, and I will thank you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.

**A: Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good; God's mercy endures forever.**

**Second Reading: Revelation 1:4-8**

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, 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, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 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. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

P: The word of the Lord,

**A: Thanks be to God!**

**Gospel: John 20:19-31**

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." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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." 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." 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 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." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his 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.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon by Pastor Scott Klimke**

So much for a happy ending! One week after hearing of our Lord Jesus Christ's victory over sin, death, and the devil we don't get faith, hope, and love today. We get disciples locked up behind doors of fear. We get doubt and disbelief. In today's reading from John, Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the devil sometimes comes across as a pyrrhic victory, an empty victory, a nominal victory. Again, so much for a

happy ending. I guess it's why even before the cross and empty tomb, Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

These familiar words tell us there can be a disconnect between heaven and earth; between the part of us called saint and the part called sinner. In heaven every knee bends at the name of Jesus and every tongue confesses him as Lord. It's likely always been this way, but if there were ever any misgivings or misunderstandings related to Jesus his resurrection and subsequent glorification have put them to bed forever. But this is heaven, not earth. On earth the name of Jesus does not yet bring all to their knees. Our reading from Revelation today says the doubting and the disbelieving, the hesitant and the hostile, shall one day wail at the sight of Jesus' coming in the clouds. But that day hasn't come yet. There are still plenty on earth who do not yet use their tongues and their lives to confess Jesus as Lord; including us some of the time. Knowing this would happen, Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The fact that we pray these words when we gather together for worship is telling. In Acts, the disciples are together praying when the Holy Spirit descends. In today's reading from John, disciples are together when Jesus comes with peace and the Holy Spirit. First, it's without Thomas, then with him. It sure would seem there's something about these gatherings, these proceedings, these mutual times of prayer and worship, that overcomes whatever gets in the way of our doing our Father's will as it is already done in heaven. Though we don't want to be too limiting in our description of what makes these gatherings so transformative, the placement of The Lord's Prayer in the overall worship service is a bit telling.

Think about it! We pray that our Father's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven just before our risen Lord Jesus comes to us through the grape and the grain of holy communion. This suggests communion finds Jesus giving us the burst of Easter truth and power the first disciples received when their Lord and our Lord walked through their fears and their locked doors and their doubts to be with them. We can get this burst of Easter truth and power elsewhere, as when through his word Jesus says to us, "Peace be with you," but communion is distinctive. Though Luther was right to rank the sermon and the holy meal as equals, there was a reason communion was thought to be the climax and high point of worship for a long, long time. If it's from a distance that Jesus speaks to us through the hearing and the speaking and the preaching and the praying and the singing of God's word, communion finds Jesus getting up close and personal, saying, "This is my body and blood given for you. Don't worry. Don't fret. Don't fear. I'm here, risen from the dead, never to die again. Let my Father's will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

But as we give appropriate kudos to holy communion, what is God the Father's will? Well, first of all, God the Father's will isn't a what. God's the Father's will is a who. His name is Jesus. When we do what Jesus would do, we do what God the Father would have us do. And one of the things about Jesus is he's not split in two. He doesn't have one foot in and one foot out. Jesus is all in. There's no split between his humanity and his divinity. These two aspects of Jesus' identity are not at war. They're at peace; complementing and supporting one another. Too often the same cannot be said of us. Too often we are re split in two, if not in fact splintered into thirds, quarters, or fifths. If Jesus is God's will for our lives, it becomes clear this ought to happen less than it does. If Jesus is integrated, so should we be integrated; ending the split between heaven and earth and the parts of us called sinner and saint. This might prove to be a unique challenge for us Americans.

After all, we are used to thinking of a separation between church and state. As it rightly respects and honors the religious liberty of all, this can quickly become a bifurcation; a splitting in two. We can come to think of faith as a private, personal matter which isn't meant for the public arena or the public square. When this happens, there's no meaningful integration between what we believe and how we live. We confess one thing in worship; thinking, "That's just church." And then, we confess something completely different through the words and deeds of our rest of the week life. Often nothing is even thought of this split. "You've got church and you're got state," we reckon and reason. And even when the disconnect is noted, we can sometimes try to cover our tracks by applying the words of Scripture out of context or by acting like every verse of Scripture is a standalone verse rather than just one verse of many. I'd suggest to you this happens a lot, but that doesn't make it right, to quote something many of us heard from our parents.

It's Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through him. Jesus is the will of God the Father; the will The Lord's Prayer would have us do as if we were already in heaven. And Jesus isn't a verse, a paragraph, or a chapter. He's a person. You take him or you leave him. The disciples make this quite clear in today's reading from Acts. Refusing to leave a single part of Jesus behind, they will not submit to any human authority at odds with the verdict God has forever rendered through the resurrection of our Lord. This is how you get to integration and integrity. This is how the will of our heavenly Father is done on earth as it is in heaven. You carry the Jesus you receive in worship out in the world and you don't diminish him or dilute him when it's convenient or tempting to do so; instead striving to do what Jesus would do always rather than just some of the time.

And what would Jesus do? Sometimes the issue is going to be so new that we're going to have to ask him and then listen for how he responds through the Holy Spirit and Scripture. But generally speaking, Jesus is going to bring the outsider in. When their fear locked themselves off from the faith Mary Magdalene had earlier experienced when Jesus called her by name in the vicinity of the empty tomb, Jesus could have settled for Mary Magdalene and let the rest be. He didn't. He brought the fear-filled inside through his words of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. When Thomas was not present for this event, Jesus could have let him be. We were now just talking about one rather than ten. But again, Jesus didn't let Thomas be. Coming back a week after this first post-Easter visit, Jesus brought Thomas inside too. This is Jesus. He's always bringing outsiders in; doing whatever it takes to get it done.

Thanks to Jesus, lepers are cleansed. The hungry fed. The blind see. The lame walk. The possessed are freed from demons. Hated Samaritans are praised. Women without a social safety net are rescued. By way of the cross and empty tomb, Jesus goes where we cannot go so he might prepare a place for us in his Father's house. This is Jesus; bringing outsiders in no matter the cost and as often as possible. When there's no split in our lives, it's also us. Whether at home or away from home, whether publicly or privately, in all aspects of our lives, we look for ways to bring the outsider in. It's how the will of our Father is done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen!

### **Prayers of Intercession**

P: Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation.

P: Holy One who acts righteously, equip your church as witnesses of your goodness to go and tell others of your abundant love, that they may believe that Jesus is our salvation and life. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Renew your people's commitment to use resources responsibly and to live well with your creation. Invite us to recognize and nurture signs of resurrection life in the natural world. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Direct those who are given human authority to lead with humility and compassion. By your Holy Spirit channel their attention toward serving those who are most in need. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Uphold your children who cry out to you (especially). Wherever people are overcome by the fear of death, breathe into them your life and peace. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Inspire those who lead your people in worship and praise (especially the art and music ministries of this congregation). With joyful motion and sound, send us forth with praise that we cannot keep to ourselves. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: Give us the words of your saints who, like Thomas, boldly confessed your Son as Lord and God. With Jesus our leader, empower us to live according to his ways. God, in your mercy,

**A: hear our prayer.**

P: In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**A: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**