

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



John 20:19-31
April 24, 2022



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



- **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome**

Pastor Mel Musser

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Forgiving God,

C: We spend so much of our time doubting you, doubting ourselves, failing to place our trust in you. Our lack of faith causes us to stumble, and when we fall we fall far. Forgive us our sin and lift us so that we can rise to the challenge of carrying out your mission. In Jesus' name we pray.

L: God is merciful and just. God offers forgiveness for all who ask it. Receive now the entire forgiveness of all your sins and walk with the power of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus.

C: Amen.

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Thine Is the Glory”

LBW 145



1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring Son; end - less is the
2 Lo, Je - sus meets thee, ris - en from the tomb! Lov - ing - ly he
3 No more we doubt thee, glo - rious Prince of life; life is naught with -



vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won! An - gels in bright rai - ment
greet thee, scat - ters fear and gloom; let his church with glad - ness
out thee; aid us in our strife; make us more than con - qu'rors,



rolled the stone a - way, kept the fold - ed grave - clothes
hymns of tri - umph sing, for the Lord now liv - eth;
through thy death - less love; bring us safe through Jor - dan



where thy bod - y lay.
death hath lost its sting! Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring
to thy home a - bove.



Son; end - less is the vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won!

* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Holy Spirit, Jesus gave the gift of your presence when he appeared before the disciples. Grant us your presence and teach us to work for the world with the guidance of your advocacy.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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• CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Theme: Trusting Jesus

Materials: Pictures of Jesus

Scripture: John 20:19-31

Good morning girls and boys! I'm so happy to see you here this morning! I hope you had a really great week... This morning I have a few pictures of Jesus I want you to look at. *(Show two slides of Jesus pictures...) (Do not show the third slide until asked...)*

So, which one of these pictures is the real Jesus? Which one looks most like how Jesus looks in real life? We really don't know what Jesus actually looked like because nobody drew any pictures of him. He was a poor man and only rich and famous people back in those days could afford to have pictures painted. So, we don't know whether he was tall or short, handsome or homely, with dark hair or light hair. Do we need to see Jesus in order to believe in him? One of the disciples, a man named Thomas, refused to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead until he saw him. He said, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands ... I will not believe" (v. 25). Then, the very next week, Jesus returned to the upper room where the disciples were hiding from the Romans and Jesus appeared to Thomas. He showed Thomas that he was alive and then said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (v. 29). We cannot see Jesus today, as Thomas did, but that's okay. Jesus says we are blessed if we have not seen and yet have come to believe and to trust in Jesus.

Can you name some of the things that help us believe in Jesus without seeing him? (His wise words, his healing power, his peace and comfort, the faith of our parents and others at Church.) Jesus loves each one of us deeply and promises to be with us always — even if we cannot see him face to face. I have one last picture for us to look at. Stare at the four dots right in the center of this picture... *(After about 30 seconds...)* Now close your eyes. Do you see Jesus?

Let's pray... Dear Jesus, we don't know what you look like, but we trust you and we love you. We have not seen your wounded hands of side, but we know you love us enough to die for us... Thank you for your love and for the special blessing given to those like us who believe in you even though we have never seen you. Increase our faith that we might love you even more. Amen.

• **SCRIPTURE READING: John 20:19-31**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the Gospel according to Saint John, the Twentieth Chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

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

²⁶A 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.” ²⁷Then 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.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But 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: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

- **SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the risen Christ, and from the spirit of the living God, amen.

This story of “Doubting Thomas” comes around every year on the week after Easter. I thought maybe when we switched over to this Narrative Lectionary that would change, but here we are and here we have this doubting disciple before us yet again. I think we’re too hard on ol’ Doubting Thomas. We don’t hear much about him until the last days or weeks before the death of Jesus.

Thomas wasn’t afraid to ask that question everyone else wanted to ask, but was too embarrassed to ask. Back a few chapters in John chapter 14 when Jesus had been telling the disciples he had to go away and that He was going to prepare a place for the disciples and would come again for them (John 14:2-4) everyone else was silent. When it seemed no one else would speak up, Thomas asked “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way” (John 14:5)? The other disciples might have been thinking the same thing but Thomas wasn’t shy about asking. When Thomas asked, “... how can we know the way, his question prompted Jesus to reply, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life...”

Thomas was also brave and courageous. When Jesus had decided to return to Bethany where his friend Lazarus had died, the same place where the Jewish

leaders had sought to have him stoned to death, it was Thomas who spoke up after the other disciples objected to going back into the danger zone. Thomas' half-hearted pep speech concluded, "Let us also get up and go that we may die with him..." This act of faith enabled Thomas to be one of the few who got to witness the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead.

I think it's unfortunate that Thomas has the label "Doubting Thomas" because he was never called that in the Bible. That's a label we've put on him and I think it's a bit unfair to him. How many of us, if we had been eyewitnesses of Christ and thought He was the Messiah, but was then later killed by wicked men using unjust methods, illegal trials and false evidence, would have doubted just as Thomas had? Wouldn't we too have given up when all our hopes were dashed to pieces when Jesus was humiliatingly crucified? I believe I would have. Thomas must have been heartbroken, having all his hopes crushed when Jesus died on the cross. We should realize the other disciples were not any less doubting than Thomas. After Jesus' death they were in hiding and had the doors locked for fear of the Jews, thinking they would be next (John 20:19). It was only after Jesus appeared to them that they finally believed. Matthew tells us at the first appearance of Jesus the first thing Jesus did was to show them his wounded hands and side. They had been thinking he was a ghost. Jesus even said to them a ghost

doesn't have flesh and bone as you see that I have. So their doubts were taken care of by the compassionate revealing of his wounds by our wounded healer, Jesus Christ. Thomas needed no more proof than what Jesus had already provided to the others.

I think a better nickname for Thomas instead of Doubting Thomas would be Bold Thomas. He was bold to ask hard questions. He was the first to volunteer to go back into harms way with Jesus. Even after the days of Jesus' resurrected appearances, Thomas was a bold evangelist and spread the Good News of God's Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as far as India. Church tradition tells us that Thomas was executed by a spear, but not until he had baptized many people. There are churches in India today that trace their origin to Thomas. Even if he started out his faith journey with doubts, he certainly overcame them and became one of Christendom's boldest proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's say we can't overcome our bias that Thomas was a doubter. Does that exclude him from being used by God? Well, not according to all the evidence from both the old and the new Testaments. Remember the prophet Jonah? He not only doubted God's word to the city of Nineveh, he actually tried to run in the opposite direction, which led him to be thrown overboard from the ship he was trying to escape on. He was swallowed up by a giant fish and only vomited up

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

onto the shore after he agreed to go to Nineveh to proclaim God's word. In the New Testament we have the final scene of Jesus with his disciples according to Matthew's Gospel. After being with the risen Lord Jesus for 40 days and talking with him, eating with him, Matthew tells us that just before Jesus ascended back into heaven, the disciples worshipped Jesus, but some doubted. Jesus must have known their doubts, but he allowed them all to worship him and to go from that point into history proclaiming He Is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! In fact, the Bible almost unanimously proclaims the people who are in the know, those who say "we know" this or that to be certain—the Bible portrays them as fools who really don't know God at all. Jesus never once rebukes someone for doubts, but he does rebuke the know-it-alls...

As for me, I would rather be one who asks questions and reveals my doubts because that's how our faith grows. Once you're certain of the facts, then your mind is made up and no amount of evidence can ever change the way you think. I freely admit I'm still learning and asking and growing. When it comes to faith and Jesus I hope I never stop asking and seeking. I hope you never stop either. Maybe we can all learn and grow together in our faith.

I read an interesting analogy about this whole topic of doubting and growing in our faith this week. The author said when Jesus returned it was like giving the

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

disciples a new bicycle to ride. Now ancient people near eastern people had never seen a bicycle so here's how the metaphor was explained. When Jesus appeared both times in this Gospel text, his first words were "My peace I give to you." The peace of Jesus is like a sturdy frame on a bicycle built for a long-long journey. Without the Peace of Christ the disciples would probably still be in that locked upper room to this day... But Jesus put wheels on that bicycle. He told them that just as the Father had sent him into the world, so he was now sending them. Every time I read this commissioning of the disciples I can't help but recall John 3:16 that God so loved the world that He gave his only son, not to condemn the world, but to save the world... So, the mission we're sent on is the wheels of the bicycle. Jesus also breathed on them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the energy they would need to pedal that bicycle to the four corners of the world. Finally, they needed to be able to steer the bicycle and to navigate through the hills and valleys, through the highways and the byways of life. So, Jesus gave the disciples a set of handlebars for the bicycle. The words, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven and if you retain the sins of any, they are retained are just the thing we need to navigate our way as we continue this mission Jesus handed over to those first disciples and now to us.

When I learned to ride my first bicycle it had training wheels. Our training wheels are our sisters and brothers in Christ. It must have been so difficult for those first disciples to wrap their heads around someone, anyone, rising from the dead. It had never happened before or since for that matter. They had no one, other than each other, to help them in their walk of faith. We might not have the advantage of seeing the wounded hands or placing our hands into the side of Jesus to see for ourselves, but we do have the faith of each other to encourage and answer our faith questions. We have the witnesses of all the saints who have gone before us. We have the faith of our parents and grandparents all the Church leaders from our generations all the way back to those first disciples who rode that first faith bicycle so long ago. Thomas rode his all the way from Jerusalem to India... How far will you ride your faith bicycle?

May the witness of the first disciples and the witnesses of all the saints in our lives, help us when we face doubts of our own. May the peace of Christ be our sturdy frame and the mission of Jesus compel us to proclaim God's love. May the Holy Spirit energize us to move into God's world and proclaim his salvation. And may the handlebars of forgiveness guide us along this exciting journey to make Christ known to all people by seeking them out, welcoming them into our

community, and serving their needs as Jesus served ours. He is risen... And we shall rise in him. Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

*** NICENE CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

L: Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. In a world where proof is everything and faith often seems foolish, give us courage to proclaim what the Spirit has revealed to us, not through our eyes but through our hearts and lives. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As we celebrate Earth Day and Month and seek ways to better care for the earth which you have created, we look to the natural world as our teacher and life-giver. Guide us in creative and compassionate ways to preserve the ecosystems with which we are so closely intertwined. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: How often we keep the door to our heart locked in fear—scared to risk judgment, failure, or discovery of our true selves. Pass through the barriers we put up, and send your persistent spirit to push us past our fears. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You are near to all who call on you. Be now with all those who need to feel you close, and long for your healing touch, especially... Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: With Thomas, Mary, the other disciples and all the witnesses of the resurrection we join in thanksgiving, united in your love and held forever in the power of your eternal life. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

P: Raise our eyes to you, and out to the world, that our prayers may be living words which bring about your kingdom on earth, for the sake of Jesus our Lord.

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping online if you go to www.pitsburgtlc.org you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... We ask no greater gift, Lord, than the gift of your Holy Spirit. With gratitude and thanksgiving, we present these offerings before you as a witness to the power of your life in us. Use these gifts to further your mission in the world. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: 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.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: God, the Author of life, Christ, the living Cornerstone, and the life-giving Spirit of adoption, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

* SENDING HYMN “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

LBW 315



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and



heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us thy
ev - 'ry trou - bled breast; let us all in
all thy life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re -
spot - less let us be; let us see thy



hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown.
thee in - her - it; let us find thy prom - ised rest.
turn, and nev - er, nev - er - more thy tem - ples leave.
great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in thee!



Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion, pure, un -
Take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha
Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing, serve thee
Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, till in



bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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*** DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

*** POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff

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Scripture readings for next Sunday, May 1st
Acts 9:1-19a

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Trudie Arling
Acolyte	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: See your eye doctor annually

MIND: Clean out your emails

SPIRIT: Spend time with animals

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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SPECIAL MUSIC, READINGS, ETC. needed for our worship services. A sign up sheet is on the table near the office or contact Marge Warner (937-623-2544).



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

AROUND THE PARISH

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

This Week @ Trinity – April 24 thru May 1, 2022

Sun, April 24	10:30 am	Worship Service
Tues, April 26	10:00 am	Prayers & Squares Quilting
Wed, April 27	6:30 pm	Confirmation Class
Fri, April 29	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, May 1	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Holy Communion

Trinity Contact Info

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