



April 7, 2024
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Meditation

The times when you and I can't trace His hand of purpose, we must trust His heart of love!

Anne Graham Lotz
Why? Trusting God When You Don't Understand (2004)

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

As we join in worship on this day, we might feel like the disciples, overwhelmed by grief. After all, the state of the world is so uncertain now.

But our resurrected Christ comes to us, saying, "Peace be with you."

We might feel like Thomas, looking for physical signs that the unbelievable could be true. After all, nothing like this has ever happened before.

But our resurrected Christ comes to us, saying, "Here are the marks on my body."

Can we really believe that Jesus is here again?

Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on us. Christ's peace is with us. We don't need to be afraid.

Our resurrected Christ calls us to worship, and we receive the peace of Christ.

Let us worship with joy! Alleluia!

* *Invocation*

Resurrected Christ, you have taught us how the unbelievable can be possible. When there is so much to fear in the world, we can find peace in your presence. As we worship, breathe your Spirit on us, that we may carry it with us. Help us comfort our neighbors. Help us serve a world of need. We pray this with thanksgiving for your work among us. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

"Crown Him With Many Crowns"

CH #45

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

God, we confess that we too might be like Thomas. As we are overwhelmed by the world's grief, it's natural for us to be cynical. It's hard to believe that hope is possible when hope is hard to find. But when we stop believing in hope, we also stop believing liberation can be possible. When we stop working to tear down injustice and discrimination, we stop others from experiencing the peace we have found in you. Forgive our unbelief, calm our fears, and help us be instruments of your peace. Amen.

Words of Grace

Beloved, Jesus comes to us with grace, telling us we can believe. Because we believe, we can also be empowered to do the work of justice. Yes, the world is heavy. No, the work will never be done. But because we know Christ's peace, we can share it with others.

**We believe in the grace and peace of Christ. We are forgiven.
Alleluia!**

Epistle Reading

1 John 1:1 – 2:2 NRSV

The Word of Life

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— **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— **3** what we have seen and heard we also declare to you so that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** We are writing these things so that our^[a] joy may be complete.

God Is Light

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. **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; **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. **8** If

we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Christ Our Advocate

2 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 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

John 20:19-31 NRSV

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

TH #497

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, 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.”

Jesus and Thomas

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 that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* “*Lo He Comes, With Clouds Descending*”

CH #754

Today's Message

* *The Apostle's Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

Sung Response

“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”

TH # 501

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

**God of the Resurrection, help us use these gifts to offer hope
where there is sorrow, peace where there is chaos and love
where there is fear. We can do incredible things because
your Spirit lives within us. Amen.**

* *Closing Hymn*

“Trust and Obey”

CH #571

* *Benediction*

Beloved, go in peace, and go be peace! Receive the Holy Spirit
deep in your being, and share your new life in Christ with the
world! Amen!

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Peace Be With You: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Easter were written by Rev. Jacob Nault, Pastor of Union-Congregational Church in Waupun, WI. He also works alongside the UCC's Disabilities Ministries Board to provide music, liturgy, and other resources on issues of disability justice.