

**Worship on April 16, 2023** (CCLI: License Number #3156883)  
(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

**Sunday Order of worship**

**We Gather**

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 249 The day of Resurrection
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 78 This is the day

**We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32;
- Second reading: Psalm 16 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 20:19-31
- Sermon: The personal experience of God
- Prayer for the people of God

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 425 We praise you, O God vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 255 Now let the vault of heaven resound

**We Serve**

- Benediction

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As we come into the presence of our God, let us open our hearts and minds,  
and focus on our Lord and King.

**Responsive Call to Worship**

All things of God, all the heavens,

**Worship and praise your Maker.**

Sun, moon and stars; wind, rain and thunder,

**Worship and praise your Maker.**

Mountains and forests, streams and waterfalls,

**Worship and praise your Maker.**

Creatures beneath the seas, birds throughout the skies, all that leaps or crawls, all who walk or worry or wonder,

**Let us worship and praise our Maker together.**

**Praise song – BOP 249 The day of Resurrection**

**Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

God our Maker, we come giving thanks for all the wonder in your creation, the great theatre of your glory. We praise you for the detailed perfection revealed in a baby's tiny fingers, for the wisdom and growth that comes with age, for the strength to serve you, for your glory seen in the clear blue sky, and each sprouting spring flowers and plants. These details lift our hearts to praise

you. So let the details of the story the Risen Christ lift our hearts this day, that we too may discover him in our midst, making all things new with the springtime of your Spirit.

God our Redeemer, in raising Jesus from the dead, you showed us your power to defeat all that brings fear and sorrow to our lives. Yet when things go wrong, we confess that we are sometimes uncertain how to find him. Like Thomas, we are unsure if we can trust the promise of resurrection. Forgive us when we struggle with doubt about your presence with us. Breathe your Holy Spirit upon us and bring us the peace Christ promised.

**This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray:** (The Lord's Prayer:)  
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

Friends in Christ, the risen Christ is in our midst, speaking words of peace and forgiveness to us this day. Do not doubt these gifts are for you. Be at peace with God, and be at peace with yourself and with one another. Amen

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share this joy of the Risen Lord.

### **Prayer for children and youth**

Gracious and amazing God, how precious it is that we have the special right to call you our Father. Thank you. This time, O God, we are praying for our precious children and youth. Loving God, shine your light upon their lives. Let your glory be fall upon their hearts. You are the God who are worthy of all the praise and glory. You are the God who is Alpha and Omega. This entire universe is full of your presence and your power. Open the eyes of our children and youth and let them know you. Teach them your word. Teach them your love. Teach them your grace. Let them come before you with their whole hearts and lives in worship. Guide their lives to you. You are the purpose of our lives. Fill their hearts and guide their lives. In Jesus' precious and amazing name, we pray. Amen.

### **Praise Song: BOP 78 This is the day**

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

Gracious God, as we listen to the Scripture, increase our understanding by the power of your Holy Spirit. Shape our lives with your wisdom and inspire our love through Christ, your living Word. Amen

**First reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32;**

**Second reading: Psalm 16 (refrain 1)**

**Third reading: John 20:19-31**

**"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."**

**SERMON: The personal experience of God**

Today's sermon title is **"The personal experience of God"**

This word personal indicates it is for one person. It is intimate, and it's just what I need like custom-made suit. Today, we are going to talk about how Jesus cares for each person. He comes to us in the best way for each and every one of us.

When Jesus came to the disciples, what were they doing? V19, **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,**

It was the day Peter and John went to the tomb and witnessed the empty tomb. After that, Mary told the story that she met the Risen Lord. Therefore, they should be happy and confident that their teacher accomplished what he said. How did he know what would happen after his death! So, amazing! He must be God! But, they were hiding out of fear. They didn't know what to do. When you were in fear, what do you need? We need to be comforted. Not a surprise. Not a playful joke, humour, or delicious food. But, we need to be embraced, comforted, reassured, and relaxed. Jesus knew the disciples. Jesus knew their current condition. Therefore, when he came to them, this was his greeting. **"Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."** When they reunited, there must be the emotion of happiness, gladness, and thankfulness. Jesus showed them his wounds on his hands and on his side. Then, finally, the disciples rejoiced with their teacher. At that time, Jesus once again said this. **V21, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."**

Two peaceful greetings have different purpose. With the first "Peace be with you," Jesus comforted them when they were panic. They needed to stand firm first. Jesus prepared their hearts first.

The second "peace be with you" has some additional comment. **V21, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."** Jesus is commissioning the disciples. This peace goes into their future. **I am sending you to the world. On your ways, may peace be with you.** This is the second peace be with you.

Then Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit. **V22, When he 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.'**

It is such as shocking statement. Who can condemn us? Who is in the position to condemn us? Who can forgive? Only Christ! But, Christ is giving the authority to forgive to his disciples now! What does this mean?! It is, in peace, go out and preach my forgiveness. As the disciples of Jesus, at that time, the disciples needed the peace of the Lord. Also, today, as the disciples of the Risen Lord, we need his peace when we preach the good news of the gospel.

Then, the Bible talks about the absence of Thomas. Who is Thomas? We know him as doubting Thomas. But, Thomas was more than doubting. He did not believe in the risen Lord. Why not? Because he did not meet the resurrected Jesus. He said, **"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."** (v25). Very strong statement.

Two references of the Bible shows his characteristics. John 11:7-16. **7 Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.'** **8 The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?'** **9 Jesus answered, 'Are there**

**not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10 But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.’ 11 After saying this, he told them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.’ 12 The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.’ 13 Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. 15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’ 16 Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’**

This shows the temper of Thomas and his loyalty to Jesus. Thomas trusted Jesus with his life. If he was doubting Thomas, would he lay down his life for Jesus?

Another one. John 14, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going.”**

If you were the disciples of Jesus and you just heard this. Would you be able to know what Jesus meant? Now we know that he is talking about preparing the kingdom of God in heaven. But, if we were the disciples at that time, I don’t think we would understand what Jesus meant.

Immediately after Jesus said this, V5, **Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’”**

V6, **“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

From this passage, we can learn what he’s like. He has a sane mind. If he didn’t understand, he questioned. He doesn’t know, he stops the teacher. He wants clarity.

So, Thomas was devoted to Jesus. He gave his life to him. He’s loyal to Jesus. Also, when he wants to know, he wants explanation. He wants proof.

The other disciples told Thomas, Jesus is risen and he came to us and showed us his nail marks and wounded side. Imagine that you were Thomas. Would you be able to trust this non-sense!?! Human cannot live again after dying. Thomas simply needed solid proof!

V26, “A week later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.” This time, Thomas was with them. **“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 came to Thomas and gave him the proof in the way he wanted.

This is Jesus. Jesus comes to us when we need him.

From when I was fourteen, I wanted to trust Jesus. But, I couldn’t. I just couldn’t believe the Bible and the stories in it. But, I wanted somehow. So, I prayed for three years for faith. One day, long story short, I heard the story of Jesus’ crucifixion. I knew the story already. I could give a sermon on it because I had heard it so many times. But, that evening, it was different. Jesus died for the sin of all human being. That’s what I knew, but that night, Jesus died for me. Jesus bore all my pains and sins and shames. All of the sudden, faith came to my heart. I can’t explain how. But, all of the sudden, Jesus became my Lord and my God.

Jesus prepared my heart for three years and came to me when I was ready to accept him personally.

Jesus is building personal relationship with us. Jesus wants to know you personally. Jesus wants the one on one relationship with each and every one of us.

This congregational worship is the place we come and celebrate each of our personal relationship with God and we encourage each other to build deeper relationship with God. Our ultimate goal as the disciples of Jesus is to know him.

**Mark 3:13-15, “[Jesus] went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also names apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons.”**

This is when Jesus called his 12 disciples. Why did Jesus call them?

There is a list. **To be with him, to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have the authority to cast out demons.**

When there is a list in the Bible, the order is very important. What comes the first? **TO BE WITH HIM.** I pray to become God’s hands and feet. This means, I want to become the means of the proclamation of the gospel. I want to serve him by doing things. I pray for you too to become the channel of the gospel. BUT, that is not all the reasons why Jesus calls us. That’s the one of the reasons. The most important purpose of calling us is to be with him. Being with us is the goal of Jesus. And this personal relationship with God is the purpose of our lives.

Let us stay close to Jesus and let him work in us. Our God is the personal God who desires one-on-one relationship with each of us.

This is the word of the Lord for us today.

### **Prayer for the people of God**

Gracious and amazing God, your love is so great. Your love is amazing. You said what’s going to happen to your disciples so many times, but they were in fear. So, you came to them in peace. But, one missing. For Thomas, you came to them again. Like this, you come to us in the best way we can understand you. In the best way, and in the best timing. Thank you God. We praise you for your faithful love and tender loving care for each and every one of us.

After Easter Sunday, last week, we celebrated your life giving love. God, help us have you in our hearts and in our daily lives. We are the Easter people! Let the world know that there is good news that Jesus is risen! Our belief is not in vain, but we are living in truth. Give us courage and wisdom, so we can spread out this good news to our surroundings and to the world. Holy Spirit, give us right words in our mouth, when we begin to talk about your truth.

Let your light shine through our lives.

We pray for our church. Thank you for giving us life and thank you for calling us your children. Thank you for purchasing us with your precious blood. As yours, help us love one another and take care for each other. We remember those who are suffering with physical illnesses. Gracious God, be with them. Place your hands upon their body and with your healing power, heal them. Recover their health. Use their medicine, use their medical visits, and give doctors and nurses and all the staff your wisdom and power, when they take care of them, let your healing power may flow from them. Also, there are people who are struggling with their relational issues. Loving God, the Prince of peace, help them. Guide them with your wisdom and love. Heal their hurts. Provide them good people around them. Surround them with your love and goodness. Embrace them and encourage their hearts. Also, there are people who are having difficulties with their own lives. God of mercy, have mercy upon them. You know our hearts. Come to each individual with your personalized grace and love.

God of love, because of your love, we are here. Because of your grace, we have life. Fill our hearts with you constantly. We want to love you and worship you all through our lives. Watch over us through the week. Guide us and walk with us. Thank you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This is the time for offering. The Risen Christ invited Thomas to touch the wounds in his hands and his side. When we give our gifts in Jesus' name, we can touch the wounds of the world with his healing power. Give, knowing you will make a difference for Christ's sake. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

**The Doxology (BOP 425)**

**Offering prayer:**

God, Giver of every good and perfect gift, in Christ we see the power of sacrifice, and trust the hope of resurrection he offers. Receive our gifts given in gratitude for all we have received in him. Bless all that we give so that his healing work in the world may continue. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 255 Now let the vault of heaven resound**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God comes to us personally. God knows the best way how to make personal relationship with each of us. Let us open up our hearts to him and daily walk with him.

**Benediction:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.