

New Hope Lutheran Church

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April 24, 2022

The 2nd Sunday of Easter

Coming Events

- | | | |
|--------|--------|--|
| Apr 26 | 1:30 | Finnish Bible Study Impola Room |
| | 7:00 | English Bible Study Zoom |
| Apr 27 | 10 - 1 | Kahvi Time Regent St |
| Apr 28 | 6:30 | Finnish Bible Study Zoom |
| May 1 | 10:00 | Finnish Worship † Voima Hall
(installation of council) |
| | 2:00 | English Worship † Regent St
(installation of council) |

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

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.

Psalm 118:14 – 29

- ¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.
- ¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
- ¹⁶ The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
- ¹⁷ I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
- ¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.
- ¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
- ²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.
- ²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.
- ²² The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
- ²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- ²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.
- ²⁵ LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success!
- ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- ²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.
- ²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.

²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

First Reading "Acts 5:27 – 32"

27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. **28** "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." **29** Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" **30** The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. **31** God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. **32** We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Second Reading "Revelation 1:4 – 8"

4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, **6** and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. **7** "Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen. **8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel "Luke 20:19 – 31"

Glorify to you, O Lord.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them

and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting
"Scars"

It seems that pretty much everyone has scars of one kind or another. Most of us got them in our youth, possibly doing something that we would never dream of doing now, and we carry them as badges of honor -- or stupidity. Those scars are a reminder to us of another time, and they tell a story, telling others something about us, who we were, and what we were about. And

when we show them during the telling of our story, most people have no qualms about taking a good look at them, giving them a proper examination.

For that reason, I find it hard to believe that when Thomas was invited to take a good look at the scars of Jesus in our gospel lesson, he turned it down! I mean, who doesn't want to take a look at the holes in someone's hands, or have a good examination of some severe wounds on the mend? Our human curiosity usually gets the better of us, even if we might be a little grossed out at first.

What might be even more surprising is that Jesus - the one who healed all kinds of ailments regardless of what they were - hadn't healed himself. Have you ever wondered just why Jesus kept appearing with his wounds still intact?

It must have been a bit awkward at times trying to do things with holes in the hands. Next week we hear about Jesus fixing a breakfast for the disciples who'd been out fishing all night. According to that reading, he made them bread and fish. So how does one handle flour and dough when you have gaping holes in your hands? Wouldn't some of it be going right through?

Now I know it's possible that -- as time went on -- the wounds of Jesus healed up somewhat -- as they do with any human, but one would think he would still have some impressive scars. Much of the artwork of the risen Jesus portray him with wounded hands. We might wonder why.

I suspect that -- similar to the scars we carry on our bodies -- the presence of scars on the resurrected body of Jesus also tell a story that we don't want forgotten. If Jesus would have appeared to the disciples looking like he'd just recovered from plastic surgery with all his parts perfectly formed, they probably would have had a tough time believing it was actually him. They may have thought it was just somebody who looked like Jesus. But showing his scars and wounds -- as ugly as

they might have been -- just proved beyond a doubt that this actually was the same person they had all seen die on a cross.

Now I know we don't all like to imagine gory wounds, but in this case, they serve a useful purpose for the disciples, and for us. They remind us that we really shouldn't sugar-coat what happened to Jesus, as if it were an everyday thing to be tortured and executed in a most despicable way. Those scars on Jesus remind us of several things.

First of all, they remind us that an incredible price that was paid for our sins. The forgiveness of our sins is never something that we should shrug off as if they are something minor. By now we should be aware that sin causes a lot of hurt and harm in this world, if not all of it. As Luther pointed out in the small catechism, simply calling another an ugly name is on par with murdering them. You have killed something inside that person.

And even if we feel that we hardly sin, the sin we do can easily contribute to wider sin being allowed to roam free. If we just shrug off the thought of millions of refugees who flee from war because of someone else's sin, aren't we just participating in that sin? Standing by, saying and doing nothing, has been shown in history to contribute to the wider sins of society. Our sin is expensive, so expensive that there is nothing we can do or give to pay the price for it. We just aren't capable of it. So, the price paid is massive. Jesus' scars remind us that a price was paid for our sin.

Secondly, because those scars are on someone who returned from the dead, we are reminded that such a thing is not only possible, but for all believers it is probable. This is the promise we hang on to through the good and bad parts of our lives. Whatever else may come of us, we are assured, through those scars, that eternal life is ours for the taking. No more can death be considered a brick wall we hit at the end of our life journey, but rather a doorway to pass through to an

even greater way of existing. Those scars remind us of that.

So, while we may not like them, scars tell a story. In Jesus case, it is the story of the magnitude of a price paid, as well as the promise of eternal life for all who accept that expensive forgiveness. For this reason, let us never turn away from those scars and, in seeing them, remember the story they have to tell, a story that affects all of us as we journey with Christ to our own resurrection.

Amen.

Prayers

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.

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, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear our prayer.**

Uphold your children who cry out to you. Wherever people are overcome by the fear of death, breathe into them your life and peace. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Inspire those who lead your people in worship and praise. With joyful motion and sound, send us forth with praise that we cannot keep to ourselves. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear our prayer.**

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

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.**