

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay – Liturgy

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

Second Sunday of Easter - April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Call to Worship

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week ...Jesus came and stood among the disciples 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."

**Let our rejoicing be heard far and wide  
as we witness to our belief in the risen Lord.**

— written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on the [Liturgies Online](#) blog.

### Hymn

*Hail the day that sees Christ rise*

**265**

1. Hail the day that sees Christ rise, hallelujah!  
to the throne in paradise; hallelujah!  
Christ the Lamb for sinners given, hallelujah!  
enters now the highest heaven. Hallelujah!
2. Christ, for you high triumph waits, hallelujah!  
lift your heads, eternal gates; hallelujah!  
you have conquered death and sin: hallelujah!  
enter, Sovereign, enter in. Hallelujah!
3. See the nail-marked hands above, hallelujah!  
signs of God's redeeming love; hallelujah!  
hark, Christ's words our hearts assure, hallelujah!  
"I will send a Comforter!" Hallelujah!
4. Christ, for us still intercede; hallelujah!  
by your suffering for us plead; hallelujah!  
near yourself prepare a place, hallelujah!  
as the first-fruits of God's grace. Hallelujah!
5. Now, though parted from our sight, hallelujah!  
in the depths of starry night, hallelujah!  
may God raise us up again, hallelujah!  
heirs of your eternal reign. Hallelujah!

"Hail the day that sees Christ rise." Words by Anonymous, Thomas Cotterill, and Charles Wesley. Music by Robert Williams. Public domain.

### Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,  
we rejoice in this new day you have made.

We praise you for the abundant life with which you bless us,  
and for all the beauty that surrounds us as spring takes hold again.

We praise you for your Son, Jesus,

and the power of new life promised in his resurrection.  
We praise you for your Spirit at work in human history,  
to restore and redeem our hope with that power of new life.  
God of steadfast love,  
we worship you with the Spirit and the Son, and claim your gift of new life,  
even in the face of any doubt or danger within the world you love.

**O God of might and mercy,  
in raising Jesus from the dead, you showed us your power  
to defeat all that brings fear and sorrow to our lives.  
In his resurrection, Jesus promised to be with us everywhere and always.  
Yet we confess we are sometimes uncertain about your promises.  
We doubt the promise of resurrection for our own lives.  
Upheaval and anxiety eat away at our peace.  
Forgive us when we struggle to trust your goodness  
and your steadfast love for us.  
Help us to know your peace  
breathed on us through the power of the Holy Spirit.  
All praise, honour and glory be yours, O God, Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Second Sunday of Easter. April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Mission Awareness Sunday. Year C.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear and believe the good news of the Gospel.  
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free from sin and sorrow.  
In Jesus Christ, God offers us the gift of peace.  
May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts this day.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Second Sunday of Easter. April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Mission Awareness Sunday. Year C.

### **Scripture Reading John 20:19-31**

<sup>19-23</sup> 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."

<sup>24-29</sup> 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 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.”

<sup>30-31</sup> 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.

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## **Message** Receive the Holy Spirit

Where does one begin with a passage as rich and full as this one? There are so many words from Jesus, the first being “Peace be with you.” A phrase repeated three times in this short reading. The second time he says it he adds, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Then there all the actions, the first being Jesus standing among them. You see the doors to the room where the disciples hid out of fear, those doors were locked, and suddenly Jesus is standing there with them. No one let him in, but there he was as real as ever. And standing among them he said “Peace be with you.” After this he showed them his hands and his side.

Then after showing them that the scars were real, that he was real, as he gave them an instruction to go out into the world, he then “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.’”

Wow! That was already a lot to take in, yet when all this was going on another disciple was not with them. I really appreciate how professor and minister David Lose talks about Thomas who comes into the picture in a scene before Jesus shows up a second time. Lose writes,

Where was Thomas when Jesus first appeared? John doesn’t tell us. My own guess was that he was out and about getting on with his life. Why do I think that? Because Thomas was a realist. Let’s not forget: in chapter 11 [of John], it’s Thomas who recognizes that for Jesus to return to Judea is to face the threat of death, and it’s Thomas who *urges the other disciples to go with Jesus*. So while we don’t know where Thomas was when Jesus first appeared, we do know where he *wasn’t* — locked in the upper room for fear of the religious authorities.<sup>1</sup>

So often Thomas gets a bad rap because he says he needs proof for himself saying, “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.” It may have been that Thomas just longed to have the same experience of Jesus that the rest of them got. Who of us still wishes we could get the experience of seeing Jesus in the flesh with his wounds, with the proof that

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<sup>1</sup> Lose, David. [It's Not About Thomas - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#) Accessed April 25, 2025.

Jesus and the resurrection was not just some fabricated story but real thing, as real as the your touch.

Thomas was blessed with Jesus showing up in their midst a second time. That time he was there and he got to hear the words everyone else heard, “Peace be with you.” This time he says to Thomas, “Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”

David Lose continues in his writing with saying about Thomas,

When Thomas does see Jesus, of course, he makes the climatic confession of John’s Gospel, addressing Jesus as, “My Lord and my God!” Strikingly, no one else in John’s Gospel — or the other three for that matter — ascribes divinity so directly to Jesus. In doing so, Thomas affirms what the readers were told at the beginning, as he echoes the confession made in the first verse of the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>2</sup>

That line about do not doubt but believe is an interesting one, along with the one that follows, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” It seem to be that that statement may be directly linked to verse 30 and 31 where John writes, “Now Jesus did many other things 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.”

We always have to remember that the gospels are not play by play accounts of Jesus life, death, and resurrection. These gospels were written for specific audiences, in a specific time and place, yet each transcends their own time. The gospels are written in retrospect and after time of reflection and discernment. John is writing for people who will never get to experience Jesus in the flesh in either his earthly body or his resurrected body. John is hoping that what he has shared through his lived experience, and that of those who lived through that time with him, that it will be enough for all of us to know that Jesus is real, that what they experienced with him was real. It was enough for them to live out their lives, come hell or high water, knowing that it was worth it because Jesus was life. They did all of this with the experience and blessing of Jesus having breathe on them and saying to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

So here we are thousands of years later, still worshipping the same God as those early disciples, still reading the stories as was told through their words and seen through their eyes. We still doubt and at the same time still believe. No one, even at that time, thought for a moment that Jesus was going to come back from death. Each person who encountered the risen Christ had had doubts before that encounter. Of course, they did, and of course we do too. The thing is that faith and doubt can co-exist. They are not

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

opposites. We can live in faith without having everything figured out and we can do that because we see evidence of God at work in nature and in people. We experience it in the way we can feel the Holy Spirit working in and through us, in and through others, and in and through the community of faith that is the church.

We can be faithful people and still have questions and still wonder, because it is all a lot to take in. Yet we have the witness of those whose stories continue down through the ages, not because they are perpetuated by a church that wants to survive, but because these stories have proven to be true in themselves in how they were lived out. These stories, these people we read about who walked with Jesus continue to witness to the hope we have in Christ, but also the power of Christ to transform lives.

We don't get to touch Jesus or speak to Jesus as they did, but we can trust that these accounts are true because the people who wrote them didn't gain wealth and prosperity from their encounters with Jesus, but rather they found a life-giving message of hope, grace, forgiveness, justice, and love that went beyond anything they had known before and they wanted to share that good news and that amazing grace with anyone who would welcome them.

Jesus continues to breathe life into us with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is something that, just like the disciples, we may not recognize until we have had time to reflect and discern, but the work of God is not done, it continues in and through us. Be transformed, believe the Good News of God's love for the world through Christ who died, was buried and on the third day rose again. And because of that, the world has been changed forever. Hallelujah, praise God for the amazing gift of life and life abundant in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ. Amen.

## **Prayers of the People**

In the evening when the disciples meet

Frightened behind locked doors

You come to them with words of peace.

For wicked plots have failed,

And the cruelty of the world has come to nothing,

And the betrayal and the denial of friends have not prevailed.

Life-giving God, we give you thanks for Jesus has risen.

He comes to us with words of peace

Come to us today...

In government rooms where politicians meet

In city board rooms where executives plan,

In court rooms where lawyers debate,

Come with words of peace.

In hospital rooms where people are waiting,

In prison cells where people are afraid

In homes where people struggle to make ends meet,  
Come with words of peace.

Come to us whenever we are afraid  
Whenever we are grieving  
Come to us now we pray in silence  
For those we care for and are worried about...  
Despite the strong and solid doors we lock  
To protect ourselves  
To shut out the world  
Come to us with words of peace.

This Easter breathe on us again  
With your Spirit  
For you have overcome evil  
And wicked plots fail  
And the cruelty of the world comes to nothing  
And the betrayal and denial of friends do not prevail.

Renew us in the power of your Spirit  
That we may open the doors and go out into the world  
To bring words of peace to the people we meet.

Renew us in the power of your Spirit that we may have life in your name  
and go wherever you send us in Jesus' name as we pray together...

~ written by Susan Miller (alt), and posted on the Church of Scotland's *Starters for Sunday* website. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

## 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**

## Invitation to the offering

In this season of Easter, we celebrate God's most precious gift to us in Christ's dying and rising. As we present our offering today, let us give with thankful hearts, trusting that God can do amazing things through the gifts we offer in Jesus' name.

There are various ways that people give to this congregation for our work as God's people, through signing up for a monthly donation, or sending an etransfer.

Check out the opportunities to support St. Andrew's ministry at our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

## Hymn

### *Send me, Lord / Thuma Mina*

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1. Send me, Jesus; send me, Jesus; send me, Jesus; Send me, Lord
2. Lead me, Jesus; lead me, Jesus; lead me, Jesus; lead me, Lord.
3. Fill me, Jesus; fill me, Jesus; fill me, Jesus; fill me, Lord.

"Send me, Lord/Thuma Mina," Words: South African (Zulu) traditional. Music South African traditional; arrangement, Anders Nyberg. All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877

## Benediction

Blessed are those who saw the risen Lord.

Blessed are we who have not seen, and yet have believed.

Go now, in the strength of the one who conquered death,  
so that we might have life in his name,  
and live that life in all its fullness.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

[Ps 118, Rev 1, John 20:1 – The Reflectionary](#)