Poor Thomas! His doubt has been judged as lack of faith. But Jesus sees his underlying need to experience the risen Christ in his own life. While asking him to trust him, Jesus gently, but firmly guides Thomas into an experience of recognition of the reality of Christ’s living presence. The Gospel invites you and me to acknowledge and explore our doubts! We sometimes forget that in Mark 4, Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not be afraid. Have you no faith? Thus, it appears that our scriptures tell us the true OPPOSITE OF FAITH IS FEAR—NOT DOUBT!

Jesus said to Thomas:
“Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don’t be unbelieving. Believe.”
In Need of Prayer or Home Communion?

St. Luke’s Prayer Ministers are available during the 10:30 AM service to pray with you. If you would like a name added to our Prayer Chain or someone who needs Home Communion, contact Beckie in the Church Office.

PLEASE PRAY FOR.........

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:
Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Scott, our Diocesan Bishop and for ALL the people and parishes in our diocese. Pray especially for The Bishop’s staff at the diocese as they fulfill the ministry of convention resolutions. And for all people within the world-wide Anglican Communion; pray for the people & leaders of The Anglican Communion in Japan.

OUR NATION & ITS LEADERS:
Our government leaders that they may live & work in a spirit of calm reason & cooperation on behalf of the common good.

THOSE WHO ARE FACING SUFFERING & HARDSHIP:
Robert++++ (husband of Iris Thompson), Rita++++ (Baden), Emmy++++ (granddaughter of Deedee Sihvonen), Jennifer++++ (Strachan) Tom++++ (brother of Joe Cordery) Randy and Jody++++ (brother and friend of Beckie Raemer) Phil & Robin++++ (parents of Cathy Callow-Heuser), Claudia++++ (wife of Lou Giacoma) Annett++++ (mother of Jane Hamilton) Sharon++++ (Christiansen) Kotsenburg Family++++ Jane+++ (friend of Leslie Wood) Urs++ (brother in law of Stacey Reko)

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD:
† For healing and recovery for all people effected by the bombings in Sri Lanka.
† For healing and recovery for the people effected by the car that hit pedestrians in California.
† Pray for our nation and the whole human community that we may find the wisdom to live in greater respect and harmony with each other and our planet home.
† For safety and recovery for all people effected by natural disasters throughout the world.
† For healing for every soul captured by fear, bigotry and resentment. May we all develop the ability to see the Sacred in those most different from ourselves.

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED……

PLEASE GIVE THANKS FOR…..
All of our Volunteers and their families.

For those having Birthdays this week:
Mary Hoener, Anne Lane and Kenzie Mick today.

If your birthday does not appear on our list, please notify Beckie in the office so that she can add it.

Our Parish Community Prayer list: ++ Please note that we will place a + after each name for each week the name is on our prayer list. After four weeks (++++) the name will be removed unless otherwise requested.
The Scriptures
Easter 2c - April 28, 2019

The Collect of the Day: In the minds of many today, in order to call oneself a Christian one has to agree to, as one author noted, “believe six unbelievable things before breakfast.” We earnestly seek and pray for an understanding of faith and religion in which love and reason find balance; in which rationality is saturated with compassion and mercy; with Jesus our Brother, Teacher and Lord. Amen.

From the Christian Tradition in the 2nd Century:
Our first lesson comes from the 5th chapter of the The Acts of the Apostles. The apostles were doing what they believed they were commissioned to do. Unfortunately, this conflicted with what others believed and how others lived. In this particular instance the apostles’ witness conflicted with the ideas of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Please read with me from the Christian tradition by reading the parts in bold print…..

When the temple police had brought the apostles, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." Here ends the reading.

From the Muslim Tradition:
There seems to be universal agreement among the major religions that God or Ultimate Reality is ineffable. Ultimate Reality is a mystery, not a thing that can be defined by form or a concept of being. In the monotheistic religions, God is beyond any human concept, hidden, and incrutable: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.' The prohibition of images is a statement about the utter transcendence of God, for to make an idol to represent God is to reduce the infinite to finitude. Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Taoism affirm the ineffability of Ultimate Reality in their assertions that no words or intellection can properly convey its nature. It is beyond all duality, e.g., all attempts to think of it as a "thing" separate from other things. Its nature is emptiness. Please read with me from the Scriptures of Islam by reading the parts in bold print….

All praise and glory is due the Lord, whose worth cannot be described even by the greatest rhetoricians of all times... None can fully understand or explain His Being however hard he may try. Reason and sagacity cannot visualize Him. Intelligence, understanding, and attainment cannot attain the depths of knowledge to study and scrutinize the Godhead. Human faculties of conception, perception and learning, and attributes of volition, intuition and apprehension cannot catch sight of His Person or fathom the extent of His might and glory. His attributes cannot be fixed, limited or defined. There do not exist words in any language to specify or define His qualities, peculiarities, characteristics or singularities. Here ends the reading.

From the Christian Gospels: John 20:19-31
Priest: The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.
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." 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 my 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." 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.

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.
People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Offertory Sentence:
Priest: My brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, when you come to the Table of the Lord, come not only to receive the presence of the Lord, but also to give your life completely to Him. As Jesus said, the Greatest Commandments are these:

People: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

[Hebrew & Christian scripture passages are reprinted with permission from the World Council of Churches. Passages from extra-biblical sources are reprinted with permission from World Scriptures.]
What are the Conditions for Believing Something is True?
Easter 2c - April 28, 2019 - John 20:19-31

Today’s Gospel story takes us right into the heart of the tension between religion and science. It insists that we think about and wrestle with what it means to be a Christian in the 21st century; with what it means “to believe” in a spiritual sense. Now, I don’t know about you, but most of the sermons I have heard on this passage when I was growing up interpreted the meaning of this story to be that it is wrong and shameful if, before you accept the accuracy of a religious truth-claim or the historical precision of a religious story, you want some kind of evidence; some way of verifying the content of what is being said. Here are a few examples of religious truth-claims: (1) within the Muslim community: “The Qur’an was dictated directly by Allah (God) to the mind of Mohammed making its words the infallible words of Allah;” (2) among the people of the Island of Timor: “The ‘Lord Sun’ Usi-Neno, is husband of ‘Lady Earth’ Usi-Afu, and the whole world is the result of their union;” (3) for Buddhists: “The actions of each person lead to many, perhaps even millions, of new existences after death, in endless cycles called ‘samsāra;’” and within the Christian community, some are required by their church to believe: “Jesus was dead for a few days and is now physically/literally alive and well somewhere.” According to our traditional way of thinking, we are good and righteous if we believe what we are told without asking too many questions; without experiencing doubt and skepticism. You are naughty, spiritually weak and flawed if you do.

But is that what this story really means? Professor Richard Carlton of Luther Seminary offers some limited help. He notes that actually, the Greek word meaning doubt (distazō) never appears in this story (despite the mistranslations of NRSV and NIV in John 20:27). Distazō is completely absent in John 20. The story is about varied responses to the resurrection. Thomas' response (though quite vivid) is but one in an assortment of responses presented in John 20. Various initial responses to the resurrection in 20:1-18 include: Mary Magdalene's first response is one of consternation, because she concluded that Jesus' corpse was moved to some unknown location. She is upset that such an intrusion has taken place and it never occurs to her that Jesus had been physically resuscitated; that he was physically alive and walking around somewhere. Now notice that Peter’s response was quite ambiguous. He saw the immediate evidence that something had happened, but he came to no definitive conclusions. It did not seem to occur to him that Jesus survived his crucifixion and was still alive nearby. John, “the Beloved Disciple’s” response was to see and believe even without knowing the scriptural prophecy regarding Jesus' resurrection. But neither John, Peter nor any of the other followers of Jesus really knew or understood enough about what had happened, what was going on or what to do with it for it to have much impact on them in the short-term. It seems they all looked around, scratched their heads and headed back to the house to watch a football game.

Subsequently, between vs. 16 and 20 in the story, we get a hint of the real meaning of the story. Resurrection stories are symbolic stories about coming to see differently; not see with our physical eyes, but with our minds and hearts, that is, coming to think about and understand ourselves and the world differently than before. This resurrection story, like all of the others, is about finding oneself open to new priorities and values; open to a new and different understanding of what is of greatest importance in this life. Resurrection stories are, essentially, stories about what happens when we experience true and authentic repentance; when we encounter something or someone that changes us inside; when we find our thinking and our life moving in a new and life-affirming directions.

Later in his commentary, Dr. Carlson returns to an interpretive approach that shames and belittles those who seek evidence, but he does it with a little different spin. Carlton: “Thomas responds [to the stories of people having seen Jesus alive], not with doubt, but with definite and emphatic conditions for believing. The Greek construction of 20:25b is a clear ‘if… then…’ condition stated negatively. Essentially, Thomas is saying that if the conditions he establishes are not met, then he will definitely not believe. Rather than ‘doubting Thomas,’ the text presents ‘conditional Thomas.’ How often do we approach our faith relationship as a legal contract in which we seek to establish the terms by which we will respond with faith? ‘If I have historical proof…If I have a sign…If near-death experiences can verify…’ We replicate the folly of conditional Thomas each time we establish for Christ how Christ needs to operate in our lives and each time we ground our faith in what we demand from God, rather than in what God does in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.”

Dr. Carlson sounds very pious here….and perhaps he is correct. But I would like to suggest another possibility. If we took the professor’s counsel here and applied it to our whole life rather than only to our
religious thinking, we would not be able to function and we may not even live very long. Think about it.

Everyday of the week people say things to you that you must then evaluate; you have to decide whether what you are being told is true or false; wise or unwise; accurate or misleading. “Tide detergent will remove dirt and stains that Brand X leaves behind;” “You should invest in the ‘It-Will-Only-Go Up Mutual Fund’ because it is guaranteed to grow your money with little risk;” “Be sure to order the linguini….it’s the best in town;” or “The smart move is to drive on the same side of the road as everyone else.” Whether we are talking about laundry detergent, mutual funds or which side of the road to drive on, we have to have some way of evaluating the truthfulness and value of what we are being told; we have to impose conditions that must be satisfied before we can safely trust and believe a given statement. That’s all that “doubting Thomas” was doing. I suggest that Thomas was just being consistent with the rest of his life. Before his mind could accept that something fantastic and miraculous, something he had never seen or experienced before had indeed factually occurred, he wanted some evidence. If that makes Thomas some kind of spiritual failure or religious reject, then sign me up. I’m already a member of that club!

But perhaps the writer of John’s Gospel is a little off here (if taken literally). Perhaps wanting a little evidence, applying a little rationality and demanding that truth-claims bear some similarity to our cumulative experiences in life are not indications of spiritual weakness and sinful unbelief. Perhaps that are all indications that we have discovered that reason and wisdom go together; that our call is to integrate our love and compassion with rationality and logic. When someone tells you something is true, especially if that something is fantastic, you are wise to want evidence or some way of verifying their story. The point here seems to be that something happened to and within Thomas that enabled him to “see” what he could not see before and understand what was never understood. Something happened that opened his reason, rationality and logic to an infusion of love and commitment to compassion. I suggest that one of the methods of the spiritual path is the balancing of love and reason; the saturation of rationality with commitment to compassion and mercy. But that’s just me. Blessings!

Sources:
(2) Patterns in Comparative Religion by Mircea Elaide, Ph.D., p. 132.

THANK YOU FROM NANCY CONROW

Thank to the large number of helpers that became the team to prepare the church for Palm Sunday and Easter services. They showed up on various days doing everything from moving palms, picking up, unloading, trimming, watering and placing Easter lilies, changing table cloths and then cleaning up after all the work. Please thank them for their help:

Anne Bransford, Ashley Newhall, Abbey Cordery, Ann Fiery, Bob & Linda Lux, John and Karan Swanger, Myra Herzog, Sharon Christensen, and especially Ann Deyo who also waters plants and takes care of things throughout the year whenever needed.

And a special note of thanks to Steve Probst who did a masterful woodworking job to make and hang the beautiful new background frames for our stations of the cross. They now have more visible presence and fit to the surrounding church decor.

Executive Sabbatical Committee

(To help staff and parish respond appropriately if problems/needs arise.)

Linda Dugins - Jr. Warden 435-640-2525

Julie Fiscus - Vestry 435-214-7382

Steve Baker - Vestry 202-276-1341
Community Celebrations during Charles’ Sabbatical

Please help Beckie keep this schedule accurate. Let her know asap of any needed changes.

Thank you to those that have already stepped up.

May 5th - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Ann Deyo & Mary McEntire
10:30 AM Harriet Stephens & Susanne Burkett

May 12th - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Aimee Altizer - both services

May 19th - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Don & Leslie Wood
10:30 AM Iris Thompson & Jane Hamilton

May 26th - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Aimee Altizer - both services

June 2nd - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Ann Deyo & Mary McEntire
10:30 AM Pamela Davey & Harriet Stephens

June 9th - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Jessica Hatch - both services

June 16th
7:45 AM Ray Freer & John Hoener
10:30 AM Pamela Davey & Jane Hamilton

June 23rd - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Jessica Hatch - both services

June 30th - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Don & Leslie Wood
10:30 AM Pamela Davey & Harriet Stephens

July 7th - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Jessica Hatch - both services

July 14th - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Bob Casey & Don and Leslie Wood
10:30 AM Jane Hamilton & Harriet Stephens

July 21st - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Claudia Giacoma - both services

July 28th - Morning Prayer
7:45 AM Don & Leslie Wood
10:30 AM Linda Dugins & Steve Baker

August 4th - Holy Eucharist  The Rev. Charles Robinson - both services
THE ROAD HOME Comcast Cares Day is coming up on Saturday, May 4th from 7am-12pm!

We are hoping to recruit 350 volunteers to help us at our various facilities. Volunteers can be any age for most projects! You will be helping us deep clean, landscape, paint, etc., and will be provided breakfast, lunch and a free T-shirt. The Road Home will receive a financial grant from Comcast for every volunteer that participates. This will be a great service project to do with a group or as an individual.

Please sign up at the links below:

Palmer Court (999 South Main Street):  https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084dacaf2aa2f94-comcast4
Wendell Apartments (downtown, 204 West 200 North):  https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084dacaf2aa2f94-comcast5
Midvale (529 West 9th Avenue, about 7300 South):  https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084dacaf2aa2f94-comcast3
Candy Cane Corner Storage Project (CubeSmart on 304 South Redwood Road):
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084dacaf2aa2f94-comcast6

Feel free to contact us at volunteer@theroadhome.org with any questions about this awesome event! Or, you can contact Teresa McMillan, teresa.b.mcmillan@gmail.com
You can now make a donation directly from your mobile phone, computer or a tablet. Go to our new website: www.stlukesparkcity.org
to make a one time donation or set up a recurring donation from a credit card or checking account.
You can also text the word "Give" to 385-219-4489 to make a donation right from your phone.

Exciting Happenings

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:
You will find info about our church and what to expect when you visit. www.stlukesparkcity.org. There is information about our missions, finances and programs. You can view previous sermons through a link to You-Tube on your phone or home computer. Go to You Tube, St Luke’s Episcopal Church Park City, UT.

SPRING CLEANING:
As you do your spring cleaning this year, please consider donating items to the St Luke's Mission table located in the coffee hour area of the main church building. Last year we raised $909.00 for our Mission Fund through the items you donated. We would like to continue this important ministry, but donations have been slow so far this year. If you have any items to donate, they will be greatly appreciated! Just leave them on or below the Missions Table. Donation receipts are available: just contact Beckie Raemer (church administrator) or Bonnie Brown. Thank you! (PS: please no electronics. We often end up having to pay to recycle them when no one wants them)

A COURSE IN MIRACLES:
Our ACIM Study Group meets every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. in the St. Luke’s Library. A Course in Miracles is a curriculum focusing on forgiving grievances, leading to a change of perception (the Miracle), which leads to inner peace. Feel free to join us. For more information, call or text Ann Fiery, 304-617-5714

ST. LUKE’S CARE GUILD:
If you or someone you know has any requests or needs, please contact Katherine at katherinemartz@comcast.net or Harriet, harrietmstephens@gmail.com, (435) 655-1888.

CENTERING PRAYER:
Meets Friday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Library. Please join us in this contemplative practice of Holy Silence.

CONSIDERING JOINING THE ST. LUKE’S COMMUNITY? JUST WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH? Our rector would be delighted to make an appointment to meet with you. He will do his best to answer your questions and to help you to feel welcomed and included at St. Luke's. When you are ready to have a conversation, just let him know at either: pastor@stlukespc.org or 435-901-2131.

AUTUMN GOSPEL GROUP FOR WOMEN 50ish & UP:
Autumn Gospel meets the fourth Saturday morning of each month from 10 to noon, in members' homes. We use books as a springboard to share and discuss our own spiritual journeys at this stage of our lives. We are reading "Character is Destiny: Inspiring Stories Every Young Person Should Know and Every Adult Should Remember" by John McCain and Mark Salter (2005). Please join us for coffee, fellowship and a lively discussion! For more info please call Nancy Conrow, nancy.conrow@gmail.com or 435-640-0556.

TAI-CHI:
A new round of Tai Chi and Qigong begins on Wednesday, May 8. Whether you are in peak shape or haven't done much physical exercise other than lifting the remote, Tai Chi for Health and Arthritis for Fall Prevention is something you should consider, especially if you are concerned about falls and/or high blood pressure, to name just two. We also offer simple qigong exercises to benefit overall health. Registration for new students closes on May 15. Classes are held at the church each Wednesday from 5:10 to 6:00. A donation of $30 is requested for six classes. We have instructors there to assist beginning students along with our continuing ones. We can accommodate most mobility issues. We have two basic rules, Be Safe and Have Fun. If you have questions, please email Bob Casey at bob@journey4healthnow.com or call him at 740-398-0489. If interested, simply show up on either May 8 or 15.

WOMEN'S GATHERING:
We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM. Please bring a drink or a dish to share.