**ST. JOHN’S and ST. PAUL’S UCC**

**Second Sunday of Easter**

**April 27, 2025**

RINGING OF THE BELL

 THE PRELUDE

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (UCC Worship Ways)

ONE: What if we told you we come to this sanctuary because there is no safety behind locked doors.

**ALL: Jesus speaks peace among us. We do not carry this all alone.**

ONE: What if we told you we gather together to remember that fear can’t keep love from showing up.

**ALL: Jesus breathes the spirit among us. We do not carry this all alone.**

ONE: What if we told you worship is a place where we touch the wounds this world makes in us.

**ALL: Jesus reaches out his hands to us. We do not carry this all alone.**

ONE: What if we told you we join our hearts in prayer and praise to practice moving disbelief toward recognition.

**ALL: Jesus tells truths among us. We do not carry this all alone.**

ONE: What if it was all true?

**ALL: My Lord and my God! Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

\*UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION(UCC Worship Ways)

**In the midst of our overwhelm and fear, Tender God, we do not expect to meet you. Yet you are here, among us, holding out your hands to us, breathing Spirit over us, showing**

**us again and again that nothing can separate us from you. Surround us with your peace in this moment, Jesus; let our fears rest in you. Amen.**

SONG #288 – Let It Breathe on Me

 THE READING OF SCRIPTURE: St. John’s: Patty Stuckmann St. Paul’s: Karen Ebert

Acts 5:27-32 Prioritizing Obedience to God (NRSVUE)

When they had brought them, 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.”

John 20:19-31 Jesus Appears to the Disciples (NRSVUE)

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.” 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 that are not written in this book. 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.

FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

THE MESSAGE – The Presence of Peace

SONG (on monitors) [In Christ Alone](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKKJqaaDyS8) – Mercy Me

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*Joys and Concerns*)

THE LORD’S PRAYER (St. John’s: *debts/debtors;* St. Paul’s: sins/sin against us)

**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*/sins), as we forgive (*our debtors*/those who sin against us). And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY (Adapted from UCC Worship Ways)

 **These days place before us many reasons to be afraid. Violence and injustice seem to be growing unchecked. Like the disciples, who similarly faced so many reasons to be afraid, we might be drawn to lock our doors and look for safety by closing ourselves off from others. But today’s scripture reminds us that real safety comes with the flourishing of all people. Even in the midst of our fears, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and sent out. So let us unlock our hearts and unclench our fists, offering what we have in this moment as a symbol of our commitment to go out and be the presence of Love in our world.**

BRINGING OUR GIFTS TO GOD #785 (*While the offering is brought forward*)

 **We give you but your own, what-e’er the gift may be; all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

UNISON OFFERTORY PRAYER (UCC Worship Ways)

 **In the presence of fear, may these gifts bring hope. Where doors are locked, may these offerings open new possibilities. Where there are wounds, may these gifts honor their truth. In the presence of despair, may these offerings testify to a new world rising up. To this collective liberation, we dedicate ourselves and our offerings. Amen.**

SONG #253 – Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*THE BENEDICTION (Adapted from UCC Worship Ways)

 ONE: Hear the resurrection blessing Jesus offered his disciples when they were dwelling in fear:

 **ALL: I am here. We are here together. Peace be with you. Amen.**

\*THE POSTLUDE