



Prayer Concerns: Maggie McQuillen, Sharm Sisler, all facing issues from the corona virus: sickness or social isolation; and the family of Dennis Hansen. (Names will be removed from the prayer list after four weeks unless there is a change in the person's condition. Requests need to be made by an immediate family member.)

In recognition of our thanksgiving for the baptism that unites us in the Risen Christ, we will have a drive-up sprinkling rite from 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. this Sunday, April 19. The procession will be through the unpaved parking lot. Enter the main drive and exit next to the Lumberyard. Pastor Rodney will be standing near the Education Building sprinkling you in your vehicles with water blessed in our service this week. Please do not exit your vehicle. A box for offerings will also be available.

Jones County Food Bank: To visit the pantry or drop off food, call 462-4343 to make an appointment. **They are in need of canned fruit at this time.** To donate money make check out to Jones County Community Food Bank.

Apostolic Assembly Church, food pickup times: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday 10AM-12PM Drive in, tell them number in your household, they will put bag in your vehicle.

Next Forks and Friends "packaged/pickup meal" date is Thursday, April 23 from 5-6 PM. UMC will be preparing take-out meals with prepackaged items.

Camperships are still available. Please email CYFM if you have any further questions or to inquire about a Campership for your child.
cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com

If you want to be a little more intentional and traditional about the bread you use when breaking bread in your domestic church (home), try this recipe for unleavened bread.

COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup white flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp baking soda
- MIX THESE TOGETHER...THEN ADD:
- 2 heaping tsp oil and MIX...THEN ADD:
- 3/4 cup cold water
- 3 Tbs molasses/honey (I use 1 1/2 Tbs of each)

KNEAD 2 minutes on a floured surface
 DIVIDE into 3 or 4 equal parts
 ROLL into 6-7" rounds (thin)
 MARK with a cross
 BAKE at 350* for 10-12 minutes on ungreased cookie sheet (let cool, place in baggie, freezes well)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church is hosting the upcoming Anamosa Community Blood Drive!

Sign up today to help our community get through the pandemic crisis. The need for blood is high and will continue to be so throughout the spring!

Thursday, April 23rd 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
St. Paul's Lutheran Church – 201 N Ford St Fellowship Hall

To sign up online, https://login.bloodcenter.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/81092

You may also sign up with Trevor Hulett at thulett@fmbank.biz

Coronavirus Key Points:

- **Blood donation is safe!** Blood drives are safe environments where staff and donors are screened to be sure they are healthy and well and have not been exposed to the virus to be present. Individuals present to donate at staggered times and are processed through a safe and controlled environment.
- **Blood has a short shelf life and must be constantly replenished.** Red blood cells must be transfused within 42 days, while platelets and thawed plasma must be transfused within 5 days. We rely on donors to continue to ensure patients have what they need.
- **Please make (and keep) donation appointments to ensure an adequate supply.** Right now, we are working to prevent a national shortage of blood. The biggest risk to the blood supply is decline in blood donations from cancelled blood drives and loss in individual donations at donor centers.
- **The blood supply is safe!** There is no evidence this virus or related viruses (SARS-1 and MERS-CoV) can be transmitted by a transfusion.
- **We have implemented our Disaster Plan** and are following recommendations from local, state and federal health agencies to keep staff and visitors safe. Blood collection locations have always been regulated for health and safety and we are increasing communication with our teams and resources for cleaning to avoid spread of COVID-19. **NOTE: The CDC categorizes blood drives as an essential service to healthcare and are exempt from the restrictions being imposed nationally and locally.**

We need those who are healthy and well to continue to donate at our mobile blood drives so that we can keep a strong supply that supports our local communities and allows us to help in other areas during this crisis situation. All types are needed.

St Paul Staff Emails and Phone Numbers

Pastor Rodney	blumlwa@gmail.com	(319) 389-6153
Nancy Douglas	njldouglas@hotmail.com	(319) 551-3358
Kaileen Weaver	cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(951) 553-5728
Barb Wilson	cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(319) 480-6031
Lois Ocenosak	stpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(319) 721-9893

Please call us if we can be of assistance to you. PLEASE leave a message if we cannot answer and we will return your call ASAP. We may be separated, BUT we are not alone!

Normally, we hear a story from the Hebrew Scriptures in our first reading at Mass, but throughout the seven week Easter season, we hear reactions to Jesus' resurrection accounted in the Acts of the Apostles. Similarly, John's Gospel does not have its own year in the church cycle so we hear primarily from John the Evangelist during this joyous season. Easter was expanded into a seven week season because for the Church it is a week of weeks (49 days) so that the feast of Pentecost becomes the 50th day. In Jewish tradition, the 50th year was a year of sanctuary and jubilee in which all communal lands were redistributed, slaves were freed, and debts within the community were forgiven so families would have a new chance at dignity. New freedom was experienced among the people as they sought justice in their communal lives. As Easter people, we are called to just living and joyous celebration because our God has given us what we need.

First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ²² "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men {Gentiles}, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' {Psalm 16:8-11}

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

We are told that *Acts* was authored by the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke; it is the second book in the series and it deals primarily with the development of the early community of believers in Jesus as the Christ. They led a uniquely communal life which revolved around their mutual trust rooted in prayer and the breaking of bread as instructed by Jesus. In the first years of "the Church," believers gathered in the Temple or synagogues in accord with their Jewish customs and observed the Sabbath. Then they participated in an additional "potluck" meal ritual which they celebrated in their homes. This was not a formalized event with ordained leaders and books of prayers. It was more of an organic family gathering in which all participated, and we are told by Luke that it was with exultation and sincerity of heart that they gave powerful testimony. They would gather to celebrate the meal together, as Jesus had, recalling his teachings, miracles, and more significantly, his presence, when they took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it. Likewise, they did so with the wine. This early community of believers was so sincere that their actions even in the public marketplace and workplace attracted the attention of others and won over many hearts. Their actions spoke as loudly as any words, and people were heard to say, "See how they love each other."

Luke described an ideal community, and undoubtedly some will scoff because it seems so unrealistic, but it is a worthwhile goal even in our urban-mega parishes that we would be known more for our love of each other than our squabbling or pettiness or greed. Perhaps our exultation and sincerity can be experienced most profoundly in our homes or as we gather in small faith groups, and from there spill out into the public places.

Psalm 16 NIV

¹ Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

³ I say of the holy people who are in the land, "They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

⁵ Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷ I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸ I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,

¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Second Reading: The First Letter of Peter 1:3-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The author of this letter was writing around 75 CE from Rome to fellow Christians living in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey and western Syria) who had been labeled “visiting strangers” or “sojourners” or “resident aliens.” They were immigrants. These new believers were experiencing harassment in their new world. Having fled the destructive Roman presence in Palestine after 70 CE, the accents and differing customs would have caused residents of Asia Minor to look upon them with suspicion. These strangers were viewed as inferior and were allowed to fill only certain menial jobs and public roles. Their presence was seen as a threat to established peace and order and their needs deprived others of their goods. Because of this attitude, unsanctioned acts of discrimination were rampant in the culture. This letter addresses the native population and the incoming strangers because both would have to overcome numerous cultural stereotypes in order to create the community of believers modeled after the Apostolic community. It was not easy and the author was trying to encourage them to endure frustrations and misunderstandings for the sake of Christ. Christ had revealed their salvation through his own sacrifice, but it was only truly revealed if they chose to live and love like him. Trials were to be suffered with an eye towards hope and trust in

God's presence. Testing was to be endured for the glory of God whom they worshipped because through it they could express their loyalty and devotion.

The final line of today's reading is: “as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” The soul referred to here is best translated as “entire person, or self.” The author is not necessarily talking about some eternal spiritual nature detached from human reality. He is referring to all that God has given us to make us fully human: psyche, intellect, ego, body, will. All of these aspects make up the “soul.” One who lives in faith lives in the Spirit. Like Paul, the author is reminding the believers to keep their priorities straight. By living for Christ, they will not be controlled by the things of this world or solely by the flesh; after all, the goal of the spiritual life is balance. Their personal desires and wants will be placed second to the needs of the community of believers. In this way, they will save each other and their souls together.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

¹⁹ 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!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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.”

²⁶ 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!” ²⁷ 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.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰ *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* ³¹ *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.*

“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Put yourself in the place of one of Jesus’ followers. You have just witnessed the horrendous murder of your friend and teacher. Or perhaps you were too afraid to stay near the cross but you sought details about it from others who were there. It is now the first day of the week, Sunday, and you’re with other disciples locked in the upper room to protect your lives, afraid that other acts of violence will be perpetrated against your group. You have been told that Jesus’ tomb is empty. Has someone stolen his body? Why is he missing? Who took him: the Romans or the Apostles or the Jewish leaders who opposed him? And now, there emerges these reports about him being raised and alive. People have supposedly seen him. What are you to make of it all?

Suddenly, shockingly, Jesus is standing in your midst. He proves it is him by showing you his hands and side, the wounds of his crucifixion. He is recognizable, yet he is different. At first you are terrified because you think it is a ghost, and when people come back from the tomb, you’ve been told it is judgment day. But when you realize it is him, you rejoice as if your own life has been given back to you. You run up to him desiring to embrace him, but he stops you with a wave of his hand.

It seems abrupt as he stifles my desire for security in an embrace, but next you hear Jesus giving you a mission; it is formal, being handed down from his Father. In order to remove your fear, he gives you his *shalom*, a peace rooted in the creative presence of Holy Spirit. Like Yahweh God who was present at the creation of this world as RUACH, “breath,” Jesus begins the creation of a new people of faith by breathing on you. He gives you Holy Spirit so you can leave the upper room and fearlessly live a gospel life. His gift of Holy Spirit is offered to you and the whole community of believers, including the eleven men called apostles, and the forgiveness of sin is intended to be an action of a community who lives in love. Through your fearless faith-filled actions, others will be forgiven their sin of disbelief and come to know God through Jesus the Christ (failure to believe in Jesus as the one sent by God is the sin being addressed by John in his gospel because it leaves one separated from the community of believers. He is not talking about individual acts of immorality/sins. That will be developed by community members at a later time. *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, pg. 983). You will draw others into the community of believers, and for John, that is the goal. In the story today, Thomas becomes the first example (twin) of one who is moved from

doubt to belief through loving encounter. Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Taking it home:

What fear keeps you from trusting God or the Church? {rejection, God’s anger and judgment, feeling all alone, not having fun in life, hypocrisy, facing your own weaknesses, won’t fit in, lack of clarity, weakness....} Ask for help overcoming that fear.

Make a pact with your family or a couple of close friends to “get together” on a specific day at a specific time to just offer prayers of petition for other people. Everyone has to offer at least one and it can’t be for yourself.

Recall a time you expressed forgiveness to another without being asked for it. If you have never done this, imagine what it might be like to forgive someone without their desiring it. Might you become a fascinating person to another? Would you cause that person enough confusion that s/he would wonder what made you do that? Could you speak of the love of God and your desire to be like Jesus?

Discuss: would you rather be Thomas or Peter? Why? Whose Twin do you think Thomas was?

Think back five years. What T.V. shows, movies, and songs were popular? With what activities were you involved? Write down the ten things and people that were most important to you then? Compare to today. How have things changed? Are the same people and things important to you? Have your priorities changed?

Ask someone who knows you well what s/he thinks are your most important things and people. Compare your lists.

For anyone celebrating Holy Hilarity Sunday:

Today's Hymn

Reverend Adams was completing his homily in St. Vitus Church about the dangers of alcohol and the need for moderation and temperance.

He announced at the end of the sermon in a loud, clear voice, 'If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.' With even greater emphasis he added, 'And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.' Finally, he intoned in an extremely serious manner, 'And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.'

The Reverend Morgan then sat down. Jerry, the leading chorister stood up and announced with a smile, 'For our closing hymn this Sunday, let us sing together number 109: 'Shall We Gather at the River.'