



KENILWORTH UNION  
CHURCH

**Kenilworth Union Church**  
**Second Week After Easter**  
**April 13, 2021 at 12:15 p.m.**

[Connect to Mid-Day Prayer Here](#)

*Faith sees the invisible,  
Believes the unbelievable,  
And receives the Impossible.*

Corrie Ten Boom

### **Opening Response**

Revised Common Lectionary Prayers

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ,

**All: God invites us to bring our doubts and fears,**

Leader: our joys and concerns, our petitions and praise,

**All: and offer them for the earth and all who dwell here.**

### **Psalm Reading**

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!

**It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.**

It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.

**For there God bestows God's blessing,  
even life forevermore.**

### **Scripture Reading**

John 20:24-29

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called The Twin, 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 nail prints in His hands, and put my finger in the nail prints, and put my hand in His side, I will not believe."

After eight days His disciples were again inside with the doors shut, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at My hands. Put your hand here and place it in My side. Do not be faithless, but believing."

Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and have yet believed."

### **A Connected Church**

edited from John Shelby Spong

#### Tales of Jewish Mystic

The phrase "doubting Thomas," which comes from the book of John alone, has entered the vocabulary of the world and is used in common conversation, in political discourse, and in sermonic proclamations with no need to cite the source.

Thomas does not accept the witness to an experience he has apparently not had. He wants a personal experience, a physical demonstration. Resurrection cannot be hearsay for him. He will come to belief in Jesus only when he is able to see the evidence for himself. He insists on touching the wounds. Thomas is demanding a sign.

If resurrection was to be understood as the physical resuscitation of a three-days-deceased body, it was as hard for people in the first century to believe as it is for the people of the twenty-first century. Thomas was a “show me” kind of man. Give me the proof. Produce the evidence. You said that have seen him alive, Thomas says: well I haven’t, and until I see him with my own eyes I will not believe.

The text is clear. Jesus says; “Put your finger here and see my hands, and put out your hand and place it in my side. Thomas apparently does neither suggested action but instead utters a confession, in effect: I have seen God in the presence of Jesus; I have seen the word made flesh and dwelling among us. Thomas has come to understand that when we see Jesus, we see God. The crucified one is the presence of God among us. He is the God who is the source of life, and his call to us to live fully.

To have life—not to become religious, not to achieve moral purity, not to win the contest to gain doctrinal orthodoxy, but to have life—that is the function of Christ. That we “might have life and have it abundantly”—that is what Jesus is about; that is what Jesus brings. To be a Christian is not to **believe** that message, but to **live** that message, and we are left with the spirit that empowers us to be the body of Christ doing the work of Christ in every generation.

### **Prayers of the People**

O God of us All—believers **and** doubters, how grateful we are that you receive us, both as we step forward in faith, and also when we struggle with disbelief, confusion or arguing rebellion. We limit you, O God, with **our** limited, human understanding. Help us please, to live joyously inside the message of Jesus—to trust and believe you intend us to have abundant life, to live fully, to experience freedom and expanded humanity as a result of our faith and because of you. We remember you are present with us in our joys and struggles and we pause to listen for you in this time of silence: \_\_\_\_\_ (*90 seconds of silence*).

We thank you for this church, for the sacred quiet of our sanctuary, and we give joyous thanks that we can pray together again inside these walls. We longed for and prayed for this time a year ago, and we thank you God for the answer to that prayer.

We continue to pray every week for the members of our congregation by name. Today we pray for the following of our members, for their health and faith: Glenn & Ann Dalhart, John & Gail Danielson, Tom & Julie Danilek, Jeffrey & Paula Danoff, Ted & Jenn Davidson, Dru Davis Jr., Inge Davis, Jill Davis, Bill & Karen Davis, Peter & Meredith Daw, Scott & Carla Dawson, Linda Day, Richard Day & Henrietta Saunders, Bob & Jane Dearborn, Mike & Cheryl Del Campo, Charles & Kristen Denison, Julia Devos-Ford & Keith Striegl, Jay Dewitt, Laura Dewitt, and Jeremy & Carrie Diamond.

We pray Merciful God, for your grace, and presence for the people known to us, who need you.

Every week in the past year, O God, we have poured out our many worries and uncertainties here; our very real concerns as the Covid virus became a worldwide pandemic. And so, in this moment, Holy One, we pause amidst our list of concerns, to thank you for your providence: for the truly miraculous development of highly effective vaccines, all researched, developed and distributed in one year. We thank you for the intelligent minds and compassionate hearts in science, who collaborated across the globe, on best practices for a deadly scourge that no one knew anything about treating a year ago. We thank you for individuals and agencies who organized to feed, support, and offer community to the already vulnerable, and to those who were struck down physically and financially as the result of the pandemic. While we acknowledge the tragedy, terrible loss and unspeakable hardship for so many at this time, we offer alongside the heartbreak, our heartfelt thanksgiving to you for the ways such adversity has been met—with perseverance, faith, brilliance, strength, thoughtfulness and ingenuity—all gifts from your Gracious Hands.

We confess we have all, at times, been Doubting Thomases, O God. We prayed our doubts to you here in the past year. We are so deeply grateful for the gift it has been to meet here, in this space, with these people, whether on zoom or in person. What a respite amidst pandemic, to speak our fears, our hopes and thanksgivings to you, Our God, and for your divine answers to our prayers--for delivering us through--for glimpses of joy, of hope, and of possibility and renewal.

We pray all these things to you, God, in the name of the Risen Jesus, with us in Spirit, and with thanks for this prayer:

**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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass 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.**

### **Blessing**

Edited from John O'Donohue

May you listen to your longing to be free.

May you arise each day with a voice of blessing whispering in your heart.

May you find a harmony between your soul and your life.

May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world  
to gather you, mind you, and embrace you in belonging.