

**Central Lutheran Church**  
**The Resurrection Stories**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Wednesday, April 10, 6:00 pm**

**Welcome and Introduction**

For the next four weeks, we explore the Resurrection stories of Jesus. We delight in the story of the empty tomb listening to the words of the gardener, the angel and the women who announce that Jesus is not dead but alive. There is such joy and celebration in their experience, that we tend to stop and dwell there, sometimes missing that there is more to the story.

Each of the Gospels give an account of the resurrected Jesus. Matthew's account is brief – yet it contains some of the best known and remembered words in scripture. Mark, as we discussed in our last Bible Study, added text to account for the resurrection. Luke brings the beautiful story of Emmaus and John tells us of Thomas and Jesus' appearance on the beach.

In the coming weeks, we will explore each of the Gospel accounts and tend to the mystery of each. We will use the resurrection stories to inspire a deep listening for our own stories of resurrection.

**Attend Each Week, or When it Works – In person or via Zoom**

As always, these Bible studies are more holy conversations. No previous knowledge is expected, in fact it helps to seek to enter the study as if for the first time. You are invited to attend in person or via Zoom each week, but the invitation is always open for when it works in your schedule. Remember, always join the conversation, no matter if you had a chance to read the lesson for the week. For this study, your Bible will be helpful to have in front of you. The lesson will be printed here, but often there are sections that are jumped over for the sake of space.

Christ Care Prayers begin each lesson, it is a time when we pray for one another and the needs of the world. If you have a prayer concern that you do not want to share in front of the group, you can send a private chat to the pastor who is leading the study.

Thank you for joining this Bible study, these holy conversations.

## **Schedule**

**Wednesday, April 10 – John 20: 11-18 - Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene; John 20:12-31 – Jesus appears to the disciples.**

**Wednesday, April 17 – Matthew 28: 1-10 - The resurrection of Jesus; Matthew 28: 16-20 – The Great Commission.**

**Wednesday, April 24 – Luke 24: 13-35 - The Walk to Emmaus**

**Wednesday, May 1 – John 21: 1-19 - Jesus appears to the disciples at the Sea of Galilee**

**Resurrection Study for Wednesday, April 10**

## **Welcome**

## **Christ Care Prayers**

## **Overview this week's lesson**

Having just heard the story of Thomas in worship, this story seemed a good place to begin this week. One of the most important to elements to reading the gospels is to read them in context. In other words, it's a good idea to read around the text as well as the text itself. The stories for tonight's lesson are printed in this material, but reading the chapter before and the chapter after the learning text is often helpful, so when time allows, read around the assigned text as there are clues to the text's essence in that material.

Jesus' appearance to Mary echoes early phrases from John including 'whom are you looking for?' This is a common question asked by Jesus to help us recognize Jesus' unique identity in John, that is not as a baby born in a stable but God coming to us in human form.

## John 20: 11 – 18

### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look<sup>[a]</sup> into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew,<sup>[b]</sup> 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20: 19 - 31

### Jesus Appears to the Disciples

<sup>19</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.' <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

### Jesus and Thomas

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.' <sup>26</sup> 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.' <sup>27</sup> 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.’<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’<sup>29</sup> 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.’

### **The Purpose of This Book**

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> 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.

### **Conversation & Reflection**

1. What do you notice in Mary’s encounter with the risen Jesus? What do you imagine the community’s reaction was to her encounter?
2. Can you remember and name others who were believed to be at the tomb on Easter morning? Why the differences?
3. What do you make of Jesus appearance in a room behind a locked door?
4. Jesus breathed on the disciples and said ‘receive the Holy Spirit...’ How is this a different experience than Pentecost?
5. The Greek used to describe Thomas was not doubt, but *unbelief*. Are they different? If so, how? When in your life have you had an experience of unbelief that wasn’t doubt?

## **Resurrection Study for Wednesday, April 17**

### **Welcome**

### **Christ Care Prayers**

### **Overview this week’s lesson**

This week, we move from the Gospel of John to the Gospel of Matthew. Like the other Gospels, the first witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection are the women. Matthew writes of a great earthquake brought about by an angel descending from heaven and rolling back the stone. Once seated on the stone, the angel speaks to the women, telling them not to be afraid because the one they are looking for is not there.

One has to ask themselves, why are there such differing accounts of the resurrection experience? As we will continue to see, each of the gospels tells a

little different story as to what happened that first day of the resurrection. One possible answer to that question is that people were looking for different things. How might Matthew have understood the resurrection and its impact on the community he lived in? What kinds of details did he include to assure the reader that Jesus was truly raised from the dead?

In Matthew's resurrection narrative, he tells of Jesus commissioning the disciples – charging them with the responsibility to 'go and make disciples of all nations'. How? By baptizing them and teaching them to obey Jesus' commandments. This is transforming work – it is the continuing work of living a resurrection life. How does this impact our lives and our faith?

## **Matthew 28: 1-10**

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

**28** After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' <sup>8</sup> So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

## **Matthew 28: 16-20**

### **The Commissioning of the Disciples**

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

## Conversation & Reflection

1. What do you make of the earthquake and angel in Matthew's Gospel? Does the angel appearance bring back memories of other Jesus stories?
2. It's the women once again who went to the tomb early. What does that tell you about the women? The disciples? The authorities?
3. In Jesus' Great Commission, he tells the disciples to *go and make disciples*. How is the church continuing to do that work now? Where do you see it happening?
4. How do you imagine that commissioning as resurrection life?
5. How do you experience resurrection as something other than the dead returning to life?

Lauren Daigle, Christian pop musician, wrote a song a few years ago called *Still Rollin' Stones*. In its lyrics, the song talks about many of the things we think about as lost or dead. Her interpretation of resurrection is that it looks like stones continuously being moved – rolled away so that new life can emerge.

## Resurrection Study for Wednesday, April 24

### Welcome

### Christ Care Prayers

### Overview of this week's lesson

This week, we open Luke's gospel to read what he had to say about Jesus' resurrection and the days that followed. Like Matthew and Mark, there is an account of what happened when the women went to the tomb. It is similar to the account from Matthew and yet no one mentions an earthquake. Luke also reports that the disciples did not believe the women when they told the disciples that Jesus was not in the tomb. Luke is the only gospel that gives us the story we call the Walk to Emmaus. We will dwell in the story of Emmaus for a good portion of class – especially as it relates to our expanded vision of what resurrection looks like.

Finally, Luke is where we get a vision of what the ascension might have been. In its original form, Mark did not contain an account of the ascension and Matthew simply reported Jesus words, "I will be with you to the end of the age."

As you read the following passages, note the differences between what Luke writes and what we have read in the other gospels.

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

### **The Walk to Emmaus**

<sup>13</sup>Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body

there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **The Ascension of Jesus**

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup> and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

### **Conversation & Reflection**

1. What do you hear differently in Luke?
2. Why do you suppose Luke makes the statement that the disciples did not believe the women about what they had seen at the tomb?
3. The Road to Emmaus is a beautiful account of the relationship between Jesus and the people he meets on the road. What characteristics of this story stand out for you?
4. What is a place or who is a person who has been for you like Jesus on the road to Emmaus? When has your faith been right in front of you?
5. Luke describes the ascension at Bethany. How does it leave you feeling for those gathered to witness such an event?



## Ascension Day

It could have been a magic trick,  
a one-man show:  
Now you see me, now you don't.  
But this rising has been a gift  
for the whole creation.

We have put our fingers in his scars  
And felt the breath of peace.  
We have recognized him calling our name  
and in the baking bread.  
He joined us on the road  
and cooked breakfast by the fire.

Our senses know something has changed,  
and it will not be kept in isolation.  
So when he give us to each other,  
when he goes to prepare a place for us,  
there is good reason to hope:  
We will all be together in paradise.

Meta Carlson

## **Resurrection Study for Wednesday, May 1 (coming soon)**

**Welcome**

**Christ Care Prayers**