

## Worship Resources - *All For One*

YouTube Service: [https://youtu.be/OetqZ\\_asB5E](https://youtu.be/OetqZ_asB5E)

Easter 2, Year B,

11<sup>th</sup> April, 2021

Acts 4:32-35 CEV / John 20:19-31 CEV

**Prelude**            *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

music by James Elliot, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/NUPjuvjJJz8>

### Intro / Call to Worship

In our uncertainty, **Christ goes before us**. In our doubts, **Christ remains with us**.

In our fear, **Christ surrounds us**. In our hope, **Christ is within us**.

In this time of worship **We strive to follow Jesus, who leads us into life**.

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather today let's reflect on the many relationships in our lives, and how we support one another as the body of Christ in this world, while we listen to our friend Mike Stern share his song, *Shadows*.

**Reflection Video**    *Shadows*

Mike Stern, used with permission

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLSGxKw23dc>

### Invocation

Everlasting God, we struggle with time. There is never enough, it is always fleeting, and moments we dread still last too long. Help us to understand Your time is not *chronos*, chronological time, but *Kairos* time, a time out of time. Help us to live into *Kairos* moments, where we stop looking at our phones and our watches and instead live into that space, breathing deep Your spirit, being thankful for those present and for what we have. Call us into Your pace of life, and help us to find Your rhythm, where we let go of busy-ness and instead live into Your sabbath gift. In the name of Christ, who called us to live differently, to become last of all, servant of all, to love one another and to live as Your children, we pray. Amen.

**We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.**

**In our reading from Acts today we hear how the early church lived in community with each other. As we listen to these words, let's reflect on how we live as a faith community and how that contrasts with the relationships among those early believers.**

## **Scripture Reading Acts 4:32-35 CEV**

The group of followers all felt the same way about everything. None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other.

In a powerful way the apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive. God greatly blessed his followers,<sup>[a]</sup>

and no one went in need of anything. Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money

to the apostles. Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it.

## **Scripture Video Acts 4:32-35 - *The Believers' Common Life***

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/ffMLhIaKBmw>

## **A Time of Prayer**

**Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: [vicarglenn@gmail.com](mailto:vicarglenn@gmail.com), and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.**

## **Joys and Concerns**

This morning, let's remember Myrna Latschaw in our prayers, as she has been suffering from back pain recently. May she find healing and comfort as she explores treatment.

We can also take joy in the many who are now getting vaccinated, making our in person gathering for Easter possible. May more make the choice of inoculation and the number continue to improve, so that we can return to a sense of security and normalcy.

Let's also pray for Bill and Sylvia as they travel over the coming week and may their travels be safe and uneventful.

**Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

Almighty God, the world reverberates with Your praise, resonating with Your love, and with the wonder of Your resurrection.

Death could not hold You, and in Your life is our life. Decay is not the final word, for You are the everlasting word, the eternal source of all goodness and all kindness, all mercy and all love.

Thank You that You sing over us this morning, quietening us with Your love, enlivening us with Your grace, encouraging us with Your tender care.

Remind us again to be grateful for all You are and all You have done, and for all You are doing through us and through others to bring Your kingdom closer.

Yet You know that sometimes we drown out Your song. We sing a different tune, of discord and division. We don't want to hear of Your harmony or Your help and turn down Your accompaniment in our lives.

Forgive us God, for the ways in which we hurt and harm those around us, the ways in which we hurt and harm ourselves, in word and deed, and damage the life of Your world.

Forgive us too for the ways in which we have failed to say and to do those things that would have brought life to ourselves and to others.

Cleanse us and restore us; refresh us and inspire us that we would realize again our need of each other and of You, that we might be Your community of the resurrection, abundant in Your grace and power to tell of Your wonder and sing of Your care. **Amen.**

**In our Gospel reading this morning, we hear the familiar story of Doubting Thomas, and the fearfulness felt by the disciples. As we listen to these words from John, let's reflect on our own faith, and the trust we place in each other and our savior.**

## Gospel reading

## John 20:19-31 CEV

The disciples were afraid of the Jewish leaders, and on the evening of that same Sunday they locked themselves in a room. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group. He greeted them

and showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they became very happy.

After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me."

Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive anyone's sins, they will be forgiven. But if you don't forgive their sins, they will not be forgiven."

Although Thomas the Twin was one of the twelve disciples, he wasn't with the others when Jesus appeared to them.

So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But Thomas said, "First, I must see the nail scars in his hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into his side. I won't believe unless I do this!"

A week later the disciples were together again. This time, Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were still locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples

and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and have faith!"

Thomas replied, "You are my Lord and my God!"

Jesus said, "Thomas, do you have faith because you have seen me? The people who have faith in me without seeing me are the ones who are really blessed!"

Jesus worked many other miracles<sup>[a]</sup> for his disciples, and not all of them are written in this book.

But these are written so that you will put your faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. If you have faith in<sup>[b]</sup> him, you will have true life.

## Scripture Video

## John 20:19-31 |

### *Beholding The Wounds Of The Risen Christ*

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/SFaQuedDmuw>

## Message – *All For One*

All for one and one for all. It's a phrase I'm sure we've all heard before. It's the rallying cry of the three musketeers, their pledge of unity to each other in the face of adversity. We often think of that sense of common purpose and unity in situations like theirs, when a group needs to act together to pursue a common goal or fight a common enemy. Not only in the armed forces, but also in team sports, we encourage each other to put our own aspirations aside to work together as a unit. Indeed that's the hallmark of the most successful teams in sports, and that aspect is certainly immortalized in many popular films. But does that pan out in all aspects of our lives? And should it?

Well, we do have some guidance in our reading from Acts this morning. Here we have a snapshot of the early Christian community and how they dealt with facing their challenges together, as a team. Luke tells us in Acts of how they shared their resources, making sure that all were provided for. A lot has been made of this passage over the years, from different points of view. It could be argued that this description of the early church is an argument for a socialist way of life, where all property is shared in a common pool for the use of all, based on need. Others have argued that people still retained their property, but were willing to part with it to meet the needs of others. Regardless, there was this sense of wholeness, of being part of one unit, and ensuring that all were cared for. Some may have still had money, but they didn't obsess with attaining wealth. After all, it's not money, but the love of money that is the root of all evil. What's important is that they had a sense of a common purpose. You could even say, on this first Sunday after Easter, that they were living into the resurrection of Jesus, as were the apostles in our gospel lesson from John today.

The old has passed away and been reborn as something completely different and new. The old ways of living: the importance of one's honor and standing in the world, of wealth and prestige, are gone. The disciples are no longer students of the rabbi, but apostolic teachers and evangelists in their own right. When Jesus appears among them in the locked room, it's no small detail that the first words from his mouth are "Peace be with you." We may think of it as a nice greeting, but the implications are much deeper than that.

The Hebrew word for peace, shalom, means much more than the absence of conflict. It implies a desire for wholeness, well-being and prosperity. It is wishing someone divine grace. So in that simple phrase, the risen Christ is implying the ideal community his message has promoted consistently throughout his ministry. Your neighbor is just as important as yourself, in fact, ideally you should be their servant. This mindset carries forth into their ministry together as we see in Acts.

The kin-dom they promote is not one built on power and prestige, but one of concern for the other, for there is no true outsider, all are our neighbors. But just as importantly, Luke tells us in Acts that this new community was unified in "one heart and soul." This doesn't

mean that they voted unanimously at a congregational business meeting or successfully implemented a consensus model of decision-making, but rather that they shared the same purpose, mission and core values. That kind of unity rarely appears in the human story, much less church history.

This idyllic image of togetherness is beautiful, but it doesn't necessarily imply that all differences ceased to exist. If they all were of the same mind on everything, we'd only have one gospel with one focus instead of four with different perspectives. We wouldn't have needed the first Council in Jerusalem to sort out differences. There were different interpretations then as there are now on some of the theological details, I'm sure. But the difference then was that "great grace was upon them all." They were given grace by those around them, and they gave grace in equal measure. While they may have had some differences in perspective, they were unified in what was important, the good news of the resurrection and their mission to witness that gospel to the rest of the world around them.

A.W. Tozer observed in his book *The Pursuit of God*, that if you tuned one hundred pianos to the same tuning fork, they are automatically tuned to each other. They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers meeting together, each one looking to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship. Whether it is a political party, a sports team, a family, or a church, unity is found when they have something that they rally around. As you seek to have the same attitude Christ has about me, and I seek to hold the same opinion Christ has about you, we will grow in harmony.

We learn to truly model the grace we ourselves have been given. How often have we lost sight of this concept, and suffered the consequences for it? One could argue that we all could still be part of that one catholic (with a small c) and apostolic church the Nicene Creed speaks of, if we were better at sharing grace with each other. Will we still have differences in theology and doctrine? I'm sure. But if we can focus on our common goals and mission, and the value that Christ places on those we may disagree with, it's hard to be divisive. Sadly, we have often lost that shalom perspective as Christ's body in the world. Look at where we are today. We fight over morality details and political agendas. We fight over biblical interpretation and the validity of people's identities. Where is the concern for the wholeness and well-being of another when we question their very legitimacy?

Where is the love we claim to embody when we feel we can exclude others, when we question their value as human beings? The results of such quarreling are clear to see. We wonder why our pews are empty when the public face of the church carries such an ugly visage. It's not a case of people being less spiritual, or having a lack of faith. It's more the

case of not wanting to be part of the religious institutions that so poorly represent that faith. It's not wanting to support groups that have lost their focus and sense of mission.

Our own denomination is experiencing some splintering, largely because we can't get past our petty squabbles and regain our focus on what our mission should really be, on shalom, on seeking the wholeness, integrity, and spiritual health of our neighbors, or in other words, everyone else. You may argue, but pastor, those aren't petty issues. My response will always be, do those concerns weaken our message of love, of grace, of unity of purpose? If so, then we need to readjust our focus and our priorities.

When I think of focus, I'm reminded of the sunflower. The sunflower is probably one of the most amazing flowers God created. They literally follow the sun. Now I don't know about you, but one the most amazing things I have seen is a field of sunflowers. Watching one follow the sun through is cute. Watching hundreds in absolute unison follow the sun is actually quite incredible. Something I found out recently, is that sunflowers continue tracking the sun's direction long after the sun has set. Through 360 degrees they ensure that they are always oriented in the direction of the sun. Their unity is totally dependent on one thing, their relationship to the sun.

As we travel together in our resurrection journey together this week, what is our relationship based on? Is it likewise focused on the resurrected Son, or is it more focused on priorities of a lesser importance? Are we living in shalom with each other, or does our mutual grace have limits?

The early Christian community had it right. They really got the concept of grace, of shalom, of truly loving their God and their neighbor above all else. They grew in numbers as they witnessed to those core values, because the life they modeled was one of wholeness, of integrity. I hope and pray that we as a congregation, and as a Church with a capital C, can find our way back to those humble beginnings, to model the kin-dom of unity and resurrection that Christ represents, and witness that kin-dom way of life to the greater world around us. We just might find our numbers increasing as well. May it be so, Amen.

## **Call to Serve.**

**God invites us to bring the fullness of who we are into worship and to share the fullness of who we are with the world. So it is God's holy invitation that asks us to pause and wonder what we want to offer of ourselves to the world. Time? Presence? Kindness? Financial support? Prayers? In these moments of reflection as we listen to the following selection played by Annie, let's reflect on: what is it that you have to offer this day to bring about God's peace on Earth?**

## A Time for Reflection

### Reflection on the Word [Video]

### ***New Earth, Heavens New***

written by Harris J. Loewen,  
performed by Annie Center,  
used under CCLI license 20261246

<https://youtu.be/fUVejfA9Pvo>

## The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Jesus, teach me to be generous, to serve you as you deserve: to give without counting the cost, to fight needlessly of the wounds, to work and not seek for rest, to toil and not seek for reward, save the reward of knowing I am doing your will. Amen. — *St. Ignatius of Loyola*

## Blessing/Assurance

The psalmist says, *“I am sure I shall see the goodness of our God in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”*

Know that you do not wait alone. God has given us one another for this journey of faith, to help one another. Know that you do not wait alone; Christ is with us. Be encouraged, and encourage one another. Go and share the Good News. Amen.

**As we extinguish this candle, carry its divine spark into your lives this week, sharing God's love and light with all you encounter. Amen.**

## Postlude

### ***My Faith Looks Up to Thee***

music by Lowell Mason, arr. By Cindy Berry,  
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Played by Annie Center

[https://youtu.be/r\\_NoasN8ifk](https://youtu.be/r_NoasN8ifk)