

An open Bible is shown on a wooden stand, with its pages filled with text. The Bible is the central focus of the image. Overlaid on the top half of the image is a quote in white, bold, sans-serif font. The quote reads: "And as they thus spoke, Jesus himself stood in the middle of them, and said to them, Peace be to you." Below the quote, also in white, bold, sans-serif font, is the reference "—Luke 24:36".

**And as they thus spoke,  
Jesus himself stood in the  
middle of them, and said  
to them, Peace be to you.**

**—Luke 24:36**

Greeting and announcements

Sharing our Joys and Concerns

Welcome in the Name our Lord Jesus Christ; Who was, Who is, and Who will come

April 18, 2021 The Third Sunday of Easter: Jesus was Alive, in body, mind, soul, and spirit

**Prelude: Down to the River to Pray**

**Traditional American Melody arr. Mark Hayes**

## Pastoral Prayer

During this time of worship, center our hearts, our souls, and our minds on Your Presence with us as we lift to you the prayers of our hearts. We know You promise to hear our prayers, always, and with confidence, we come to pray for...

Our Church, for it's leaders and congregation

Our world and our country

Our loved ones - keep them: keep them in health, in safety, in comfort, in Your care. Keep us, also and send forth Your Holy Spirit of truth, of comfort, and of power.

We pray for any among us who feel constrained, or emotionally distressed by our time and era and for any who need to know Your love for them in this hurting world.

We also lift to You those who need comfort as they mourn their loved ones. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, The comforter, who would remind us of Your promises that Nothing in life, or in Death, things present, nor things to come, nor angels or demons within our lives, nor anything in all of creation will ever be able to separate us from Your love in Jesus the Christ, our Lord.

## The Lord's 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 power and the glory forever. Amen**

## Opening Hymn: Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain No. 315 vs. 1-2

1. Come, ye faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness; God hath brought forth Israel into joy from sadness; loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters, led them with unmoistened foot though the Red Sea waters.
2. 'Tis the spring of souls today; Christ hath burst his prison, and from three days' sleep in death as a sun hath risen; all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying, from his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

Call to Worship adapted from Psalm 4 (Pastor Sue and Chris Remick)

Pastor: May our righteous God hear our prayers;

**People: and answer us in our troubles.**

Pastor: May God have mercy on us;

**People: May God listen to our prayers.**

Pastor: Know this: the Lord takes personal care of the faithful;

**People: The Lord will hear us, always.**

Pastor: We can lie down and fall asleep in peace;

**People: Because You alone, Lord, let us live in safety.**

## Choral Anthem

### Unison Prayer:

**Righteous and Almighty God, in Your mercy hear us when we come to You and pray to You with the sincerity of our hearts. Your faithfulness was shown through Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Thank you for showing us Your victory over all things that we may encounter in our journey of faith. We yearn to trust Your power in our lives so our hearts rejoice in Your faithfulness to us. Send Your Holy Spirit to give us peace and joy in our lives. Help us know without doubt that we are precious to You, and You take personal care of us. We praise You knowing that You are present with us now, and forever more in the name of Jesus our Lord and in the power of Your Holy Spirit.**

New Testament Reading: Acts 3: 12-19

12 When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites,[a] why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant[b] Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. 14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus[c] has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. 17 "And now, friends,[d] I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah[e] would suffer. 19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, NRSV

Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 36b-48

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [a] 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. [b] 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah[c] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses[d] of these things. NRSV

Pastor: This is the word of God for the people of God.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

Message: Jesus was Alive, in body, mind, soul, and spirit

I have to admit I enjoy when we hear about the Disciples thinking they were seeing a “ghost.” It pops up in two stories of the Disciples “journey with Jesus.”

The first time was when they saw Jesus “walking on the water”—if you recall they were on a boat, in the midst of a horrendous storm, and saw Jesus walking towards them—not only were they terrified of going down in the storm, but then they saw “someone—Jesus” walking towards them, which they thought was a ghost, that only terrified them more. Peter mustered up enough courage to call out and say, (I’m paraphrasing) “Jesus if it is You, call me to come to You.” Jesus replied “Come on out, Peter!” So willingly, Peter got out of the boat, expecting “ground,” but realized there was only “water” and began to sink—crying out to Jesus “HELP!” Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of Peter and said “Why did you doubt? Why did you have so little faith?” Doesn’t that give us great hope?????? It only took Peter saying to Jesus “HELP!”

Today’s lesson is the second time the Disciples think they are seeing a ghost—you can’t blame them this time— they saw Jesus die, they KNEW without doubt that the Romans had done a thorough job of killing Jesus. Their response of “Ghost in our midst”, I believe, would be our response, if we saw a dead person standing before us. I have to admit to you, I don’t believe I’ve ever seen a ghost—never want to see a ghost, really. But let me just admit I, who leans toward scientific endeavors, try to keep my mind open about things. I, more or less, need proof for things.

I’ll admit to you that the only time I received a “C+” grade for a term paper-ever-was on my John Wesley paper. We were supposed to ask a question about John and answer that question. My question about John was: “if John Wesley was influenced by the contemporary newspapers of his time that reported about “Spirits and Ghosts.” We know John Wesley acknowledged that a ghost haunted the parsonage where he, and his parents lived, and he spent time with the dying, trying to “catch sight of their spirit/ghost, leaving them. I thought it was an appropriate question to ask. Professor Heizenreiter, didn’t think it was a very scholarly question to ask. I did prove that John Wesley did like the “scientific approach” for much of his life, for medicine, theology—or his Practical Theology of ministry. Just to compare—my paper I wrote entitled “Attack of the yellow squash” I submitted to the professors of Practical Application of Ministry in the Parish” got a higher grade than answering my curious question about John did, go figure.

On a personal note, my sister and niece do believe in ghosts and follow all the ghost programs on TV. I would watch one or two just to discuss with my sister about things. Mostly, I just saw a lot of people scaring themselves thinking they might have seen a ghost. But one Thanksgiving, I didn’t have anyone over for dinner, as is my custom, and watched a series called ‘Ghost Mine.” Let’s just say, the hosts or ghost hunters if you would, were calm, quiet people—you heard what they heard-and they went where the “ghosts” led them to go next. It wasn’t until the one episode: The Chinese wall— BIG field with a rock wall. The camera man panned showing it was only the woman and he who were in

this BIG open field, standing on this rock wall that was created by the Chinese slaves who worked the gold mines.

The woman asked one simple question: Is anyone here? The field erupted with the sound of clacking rocks. OK—I'll admit—I'll never ask the question: Anyone here?

Here is why I brought these things up. We are so like the Disciples—confronted by so many unknown things in this world. We have to sort out fiction, from truth—what we see, what we experience. We try to make sense of our world.

In our Gospel lessons, our Disciples have to make sense of what they were seeing and experiencing with Jesus, who they saw die, standing there in front of them. The doors were locked, we know that from Gospel lessons about this time right after the crucifixion. And somehow Jesus was there.

Here is Jesus' response to their fear and interpretation:

Jesus begins with "Peace be with you." Most likely with the word "Shalom—a Jewish greeting meaning peace — שְׁלוֹמִים עִלְיָיְכֶם, shālôm 'alêkem. Shalom is more than peace or a greeting of "hi." The word Shalom means peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, prosperity, welfare and tranquility and can be used idiomatically to mean both hello and goodbye.

Then Jesus basically said (I like how one lectionary material I use phrased it) "Why are you freaking out????!" But it goes back to Jesus walking on the water story, Jesus asks "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" We, too, often have doubts about God's kingdom and Jesus' power in our lives—we know the end of the resurrection story, but not really, because we live in a fallen world where, sometimes Jesus and God elude us.

Jesus continues to show the Disciples that there is a difference between him being a "ghost," and being a resurrected - alive on the third day, by the power of God—person. He shows them his wounds and eats a meal with them, as was his custom throughout his ministry. The Disciples become the witnesses that God's promises, and power are true. Jesus was ALIVE, resurrected.

We can trust God. We can trust the Disciples as witnesses, because they are like us, having to forge into God's future with uncertainty and needing to learn to trust that God has victory over all things, including death, or our doubts, or our fears, and even some of our mis-interpretations of things around us.

As your pastor, I am thoroughly convinced that nothing in our lives can keep God's amazing love for us from surrounding us each day of our lives. God is able to show us God's victory over this fallen world we live in. That is the message of Easter, and the days that followed in the days after Jesus' resurrection.

We would not have that hope, had Jesus not been faithful to God's plan for Jesus the Messiah. Had Jesus refused to die on the cross, we would not know that God has power and victory even over what we call death. Because of Jesus' faithfulness, we know all of the LAW, The PROPHETS, The

WRITINGS of what we call the Old Testament was fulfilled. And the New Testament holds the witness's account of the truth of Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.

We can trust the Disciples account of Jesus' resurrection, because they were truthful about their initial reaction to what happened following the crucifixion of Jesus. But Jesus was able to convince them. Jesus and God can convince us, also. Nothing is impossible with God and Jesus. All things are possible with God and Jesus.

You have been reminded that Jesus Christ is your Lord and that you are God's servants- you are loved -you are forgiven -and you are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as God's faithful ones in this world.

### Closing Hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks to the Risen Lord No. 162 vs. 1-2

(Refrain) Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

1. Jesus is Lord of all the earth. He is the King of creation.

Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth: Jesus has died and has risen.

Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

Benediction: (Pastor Sue and Colleen Kelly)

Pastor: We know that Jesus lived our lives, and died our death;

**People: and was alive on the third day.**

Pastor: We can trust the witness of those who were Jesus' friends and family;

**People: They are just like us on our journey of faith.**

Pastor: We can Trust Jesus and God to keep us safe in all that happens to us;

**People: and we can trust Jesus and God with our loved ones.**

Pastor: God's promises are trustworthy of praise;

**People: Praise Jesus who showed us God's power even over death.**

Pastor: God and Jesus promise us the Holy Spirit who will bring us peace;

**People: May God's peace be with us and remain with us forever!**

Postlude: Benediction Melody

arr. Mark Hayes