

John 20:19-31  
April 23, 2017

Last week we gathered to hear the Easter miracle. We heard about how the 2 Mary's approached the tomb of Jesus' dead body and were overcome with fear. Fear as the earth shook and an angel descended and proclaimed, "Do not be afraid. He has risen and is going to Galilee where he will meet you." Fear as they women departed and then fear as Jesus met them on the road to Galilee. But also we heard they greatly rejoiced because of his presence. Because it was true that he was raised from the dead.

And then today, we see the disciples in fear. Jesus comes to them and utters, "Peace be with you." Three times the risen Jesus utters this to his disciples locked in a house. In their fear, he comes and bears forth his presence and utters these sacred and holy words. We, too, utter these same words today during worship. These are not simply words that we speak that have no meaning behind them. These are the very words of the risen Christ. It is as if we become the risen Christ to our neighbor. These words bear forth his presence. They are a ministry. They fill us, sustain us, and then move us to go forth and be vessels of that peace in the world.

At times we may not have eyes that can see the risen Christ on the loose in the world beyond the doors of the church building. That is why we gather as the church, the people of God. The risen Christ assures us of his promise to be present here where we can see him through each other, through the sacraments, etc. We can hear his word. We can taste the bread and wine. Feel the cool baptismal waters. We come so that our eyes may be opened to see Him in the world. We come so that we, too, may hear those words, "Peace to you" and then be sent, just as those first disciples, into the world and utter those same words, "Peace to you."