



April 19, 2020
2nd Sunday of
Easter
Holy Humour Sunday

*A family of faith ministering together
in the name of Jesus Christ*

Ministers: Each of us Assisted by Rev. Mark Perry
Organist: Kathy Limon

“Thomas the Astute”

911 operator. Is this the authorities?

Yes. What is the nature of your call? I want to report an attempted scam.

You say attempted. I take it that the scam was unsuccessful? Yes.

Who was the intended victim of this scam? I was, Thomas.

I see. Can you tell me about the nature of the scam and the perpetrator?

Well, you see, a few days ago my Lord and Master was crucified by you Romans, at the insistence of the Jewish Sanhedrin. My master was a great teacher and he had a group of students who followed him everywhere. I was one of his students. There were twelve of us, only, one of us, Judas Iscariot, has killed himself. Anyway, we scattered and went into hiding for fear of meeting the same end as our master because we were his students. A few days after his death, all of the other students, except me, got together and met. They are trying to convince me that our master is not dead, but that he lives. They say that he appeared to them, that he showed them his perforated hands and side, and now they want me to believe that this man that was dead is alive. I'm not that gullible. I haven't seen him, and unless I were to see him, I wouldn't believe it was even possible. It's nothing but fake news!

Poor Thomas was really caught in a bind. He didn't see what the other disciples saw, and he couldn't believe what they were telling him, and so we call him doubting Thomas, and we say it in a derogatory way. But if Thomas had believed without seeing, would we be standing around two thousand years later calling him Gullible Thomas. Poor sap, if he'd believe a report about a resurrection, he'd believe anything.

In grade school, we had a kid in our class who was gullible. He'd believe anything. If you told him that two plus two was five, he'd believe it. If he caught a snake during recess and you told him that snakes were our teacher's favourite thing, he'd put it in the drawer of her desk as a gift. But if you showed him a piece of blue paper and told him it was yellow, he knew you were lying to him. You see, he wasn't stupid, he just wasn't good at abstract thinking. Many of us are not good at abstract thinking. If you tell me to paint a room a certain colour and to add this and that to the room and organize it in a particular way and to use certain fabrics, I couldn't imagine what it might look like until I completed things. And then I might not like what the designer decided would look nice.

If I'd tried to tell you BC (Before Coronavirus) that we would be meeting online for worship on Easter Sunday you would have looked at me like I had two heads, wouldn't you? But then, last week we met for worship online, and we listened to a virtual choir from South Africa, and we celebrated the sacrament of holy communion, isolated in our own homes, yet together, as one. As the old saying goes, seeing is believing.

In order to see something we need light. That reminds me,

How many Calvinists does it take to change a light bulb?

None. God predestined when the light will be on.

How many Baptists does it take to change a light bulb? Change?

How many TV evangelists does it take to change a light bulb?

One; but in order for the message of light to continue, send your donation today.

How many Liberal theologians does it take to change a light bulb?

At least two, as they need to debate whether the light bulb exists.

How many United Church members does it take to change a light bulb?

This statement was issued: "We choose not to make a statement either for or against the use of a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern liturgical dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb (or non-dark resource) and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence."

Would you cry, 'fake news,' if I told you that the way to find deep joy was to graciously and generously give all that you have; time, energy, money, perhaps even a little blood? Yet, truly I tell you, when we let go of all that we have, when we refuse to be controlled by protecting what we think matters most, we discover the things that truly matter. I hope that, as individuals and as a society and as a global community, we discover during this pandemic that the thing that matters most is life itself. I hope that we discover that what befalls one of us, befalls all of us. I hope that each of you discovers that the best thing in life is to see the joy of another who has been blessed by you, for that is our calling as the body of Christ, to be a blessing to the world. What I hope most is that people rediscover that we are both physical and spiritual beings and that our spiritual health is as important as our physical health. Speaking of spiritual and physical health, did you know the...

Ten differences between a Doctor and a Pastor

by Pastor Flosser

- * The Doctor charges outrageous fees and you complain but you come back the next time you are sick.
The Pastor preaches that you should tithe and you leave the church.
- * The Doctor checks how much you weigh and you don't complain.
The Pastor asks how much you pray and it's none of her business.
- * The Doctor gives you a nasty tasting pill and you take it.
The Pastor feeds you the Word and you say, "No, thank you."
- * The Doctor's office closes at a certain time.
The Pastor is to be available, awake and ready twenty-four hours a day.
- * The Doctor tells you how to change your lifestyle to lower your blood pressure.
The Pastor tells you how to change your lifestyle and it raises your blood pressure.
- * The Doctor tells you we need to run more tests, so you make an appointment.
The Pastor says we need more Bible Studies and you are too busy.
- * The Doctor says, "There is nothing more we can do", and you search high and low for one who can help.
The Pastor says, "God can help you", and you give up and say "What's the use."
- * The Doctor prescribes a treatment, and you have the faith to say, "OK," and you do it.

The Pastor offers you the promises of God but you don't have the faith to try it.

* To the Doctor, you are one of many sick bodies.
To the Pastor, you are a part of the family.

If the body of Christ is to survive, it must give up worrying about its survival and start living the life it was given to live; to be a servant to the community. I know, that's like asking you to believe in the resurrection without any solid proof in front of you. In order to do that, we first need to take stock of who we are. That is part of the work that the Unified Board will be tackling; taking stock of who we are. When we think about who we are, we start to see what it is that we do for others, we start to realize our own value, and that gives us both energy and a realization how much there is need of us, need of the body of Christ. When we think about who we are, we turn the abstract into the real.

Thomas' doubts weren't bad. Thomas, just wasn't into abstract thinking. And when he saw Jesus, Jesus showed Thomas his wounds, exactly as he had shown his wounds to the other disciples. Jesus even invited Thomas to touch his wounds. Jesus gave Thomas what Thomas needed in order to believe.

And God has given us what we need in order to believe. There is still a United Church in Union, 200 years after it was founded, because for 200 years there have been people of faith in the community. For 200 years, the people of Union United have served the community and the world through the mission of the national church. For 200 years, people have believed in the resurrection of Christ because they have seen that resurrection happen over and over again, through the ministry and service of the congregation. And over the last couple of months we've seen that we can gather for worship virtually; we can be dispersed and a community at the same time. We come to see it because believing is seeing.

When Thomas saw, he believed, and then he confessed, "My Lord and my God!" We have seen. The real question is, how will we respond PP (post pandemic)?