

# CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 3, 2026

*Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5,15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; Saint John 14:1-14*

***In nomine Jesu!***

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

I've really wanted to lighten up in this pulpit on these Easter Sundays, but our times and our gospel texts do not permit that. This is particularly true of all our readings today, especially the Gospel, which contains two sentences from Jesus which have been and continue to be misused down to this very day. Used appropriately, these words are nothing but Good News, not just for us Christians, but for every person in the world. Ripped out of context and willfully misused – as they are today – these wreak untold devastation, diminish the name and the work of Jesus, and turn the mission of Christ's Church into a mockery of all that Jesus did and said.

To avoid this misuse, the context in which Jesus speaks is important.

We are today, once again, gathered at table with Jesus and the disciples in the context of the upper room. It is, as it will be for the next two Sundays, "the night in which Jesus was betrayed." Feet have been washed. Bread has been broken and shared. Judas has left the building. It is night. Disciples, then and now, are afraid; and with good reason. They knew and we know that uncontrollable forces of destruction have been unleashed. To comfort them so that "their hearts be untroubled," Jesus speaks these words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Meant as comfort to those in closest relationship to him, these words – especially that last sentence ripped from their pre-crucifixion context – have been misused to exclude, expel, and ultimately exterminate – in the name of Jesus – those "no ones" who have not "come to the Father through" Jesus. As if "bringing others to faith in Christ" is the same as "defending Christendom against its enemies." There are numerous historical examples of this; just as today, there are those who assert that this is exactly what Jesus had in mind.

Yet in the light of the Gospel, let us be clear: **No violence or war, not even a just war, can be waged in the name of Christ.**

For it is in that upper room "on the night in which he was betrayed," that we hear Thomas ask Jesus the question "How can we know the way?" And it is in that same upper room, on the Second Sunday of Easter, that Jesus shows Thomas, the other disciples, and all of us "the way, the truth, and the life" Jesus had in mind: "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side." The way, the truth, and the life of Christ and the wounds - "the marks of the nails and spear" of Christ - are one and the same.

The crucified and risen Christ bears these wounds after the resurrection, after Christ's ascension "to the right hand of the Father," into the future. Now the disciples will bear them as well. As we heard in our first reading today, Stephen is stoned to death, just as Jesus was crucified. As we continue to hear from author of First Peter every Easter Sunday, for the Christian community, "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" to fulfill our mission to "proclaim the excellence of the one who called [us] out of darkness into [Christ's] marvelous light", these wounds must be included in the Christian community's identity and self-understanding too. Just as Jesus saves humanity as one with firsthand experience of the world's pain, Christ's Church must mirror this also. We are a community-of-wounds that, like Christ, lives in solidarity with, and not in dominion over, all who are hurt. Jesus calls us into relationship with those on the margins, where Christ himself is found. Christ's people - Christ's body - must continue to reflect that. It is through this solidarity with the wounds of Christ - through Christ's cross - and not through wars of choice or imperial violence - that our mission, the mission of the Risen Christ must continue to unfold.

At this Table, the bread that is the Body of Christ is broken and shared. In our world, we who are the Body of Christ are broken and shared too. So that all the world may join us and say,

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

And know that with us, they are God's chosen people too.

Amandus J. Derr  
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