

Second Sunday of Easter Year A  
Sunday, April 12, 2026

Welcome:

Good morning, and welcome to worship here at St. Paul United Church of Christ. Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

As you can see, like in October, today's service is different. This time, Pastor Jim, his wife, and family are with us this time.

Just a few announcements.

1. Fellowship hour after today's service.
2. Towards the end of the service, I will take 3-4 hymn requests from the congregation.
3. Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, will be our Church Family Picnic, TBD on the time.
4. Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, will be our Spring Trivia. Those who would like to attend are asked to bring a non-perishable item to help support our food pantry. Doors open at 5:30 pm, and the game will start at 6 pm.
5. Next Sunday's Bible Study will discuss Acts 12:1-24

Are there any other Announcements? If there is none, let us worship the Lord.

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Prayer 1:

Risen Lord,

During this Easter season, we thank You for the hope and new life You bring. As we gather for this hymn sing, let these songs remind us of Your victory, Your presence with us, and the joy that can never be taken away. Bless every voice – singing or silent – and let this music renew our faith. Send us out strengthened by your resurrection love.

In your name we pray.

Amen.

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Reading of Hymn: We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

While searching for appropriate music for this Sunday, I wanted something that complemented today's scripture, John 20:19-31. During my research, I came across the hymn "We Walk by Faith," written in 1844 by Henry Alford, an English clergyman and scholar who later became Dean of Canterbury. Alford lived during a period of church struggles with modern ideas, doubt, and the tension between evidence and trust. His hymn reflects that era—similar to ours—where faith often means taking a step into the unknown.

Alford wrote the text as a reflection on the believer's life, who must trust in Christ without physical sight, echoing 2 Corinthians 5:7. However, the hymn also conveys another clear meaning: the story of Thomas, the disciple who wanted to see and touch the risen Jesus before believing.

When reading the scripture, the disciples are gathered behind locked doors—fearful and uncertain about what lies ahead. Into that fear, Jesus appears with a word of peace. He shows them His wounds, breathes His Spirit upon them, and sends them into the world. But Thomas is not there. When he hears the news, he cannot accept it. His heart craves more. His faith needs touch.

A week later, Jesus returns—not to shame Thomas but to meet him and give him what he needs. His goal is

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to guide Thomas from doubt to trust. Then, Jesus delivers a blessing that echoes through the ages, reaching everyone who follows: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

This is the blessing Henry Alford wrote into his hymn. It's the blessing we sang today.

The hymn acknowledges doubt— “our faith is weak”— but it doesn't leave us there. It reminds us that Christ meets us in our longing, strengthens us in uncertainty, and guides us with grace. Faith isn't denying doubt but journeying through it, led by the risen Lord.

When we sang “We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight,” we joined Thomas and the first disciples in that locked room. We acknowledge our own need to see, understand, and find reassurance. And we once again embrace the peace of Christ—the peace that meets us where we are and sends us to where we are called.

The hymn becomes our prayer: that Christ would be near, that our faith would be strengthened, and that we would walk into the world not with certainty of sight, but with the courage of trust.

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Prayer Request:

As we enter our time of prayer, are there any special prayer requests?

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Prayer 2:

Risen Christ,  
You come to us just as you did to the disciples—  
in the midst of fear,  
behind our closed doors,  
speaking peace that calms our hearts.  
Let that peace rest on us now.

God of mercy,  
hold our doubts gently and strengthen our faith with  
your quiet presence.  
Where bodies ache, bring healing. Where spirits are  
weary, bring renewal.  
Where hope feels thin, breathe life again.

We lift to You the prayers of this community —  
the names spoken aloud,  
the needs carried in silence,  
the joys that remind us of Your goodness.

We pray for [prayer requests]

Gather all these prayers into your compassion, oh God.  
And we offer them in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord,  
who taught us how to pray.

“Lord's Prayer” (Debts / Debtors)

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Offertory:

Generous one,  
may these gifts be a blessing to those in need,  
a source of hope for those in despair,  
comfort for those who grieve,  
encouragement for those who doubt,  
a balm for those in pain.  
May our generosity reflect our gratitude, and our giving  
be another source of blessing and praise.

Amen

As usual, our offering plates are placed at the front and  
back of the church.

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Benediction:

Go now in the peace that Christ still offers to fearful hearts. May the God who is your refuge show you the way of life. May the Risen One meet you in your doubts and bless you in your faith. And may the Spirit send you out with the living hope that Peter proclaimed and the psalmist trusted.