Easter 3 B 2024 St Aidan’s ~ *The Rev. Julie H. Smith*

[Acts 3:12-19](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#ot1); Psalm 4; [1 John 3:1-7](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#nt1); **Luke 24:36b-48**

🕈

Repetition, repetition, repetition . . . . .

Whether it’s learning a new sport, a particular movement, memorizing something, or learning a new language, we have to do it over and over again.

We have to get the golf swing down, or the yoga pose into our muscle memory. We have to learn just the right touch for kneading bread dough or pruning those special bushes. We have to remember how to edit a photo on our phones or to play a YouTube video. I still have trouble remembering how all three of our remotes work. . . for the TV

Repeating helps us to learn and master things. Repetition is part of building faith, too.

In this Easter season, one sighting of the resurrected Jesus isn’t enough. One conversation between him and the disciples won’t do.

So Jesus keeps showing up and showing up so the disciples could understand what he was there for. It takes a while for it all to sink in.

Luke’s gospel story finds us on Sunday evening, the day of resurrection, with Jesus busy continuing to make appearances to the people he loves.

All four gospels have appearances outside the empty tomb. Just last week we had the story of his appearance in John’s version of this gospel story and the witness of Thomas. But in this week’s gospel from Luke has the disciples in Jerusalem fearful, hiding, and locked in, but still where it all happened.

Our culture is all about the tangible, the real, and what we can see and hold onto. And the same is true of the disciples. Jesus himself, who shares bread and wine, the hands-on healer, the foot washer shows up went in person, after his resurrection.

He wanted his friends to know, without a doubt, that he was real and alive in the physical body.

The stories go out of their way to tell us that this was not a ghost or a hallucination. The body of Christ is central to the stories — to Thomas believing when he touched Jesus, to the others who needed to feel and see him, even Jesus eating a piece of fish to show them his presence.

There is a body of Christ still in the world. We — the church, communities of faith, the people gathered now— are the enduring body of Christ. These gospel stories have something to tell us, the living body of Christ, about our life of faith.

First, the body of Christ is persistent.

Jesus kept showing up to his friends. One appearance wouldn’t do it. This is the second story set on Easter night in Luke, and there are other gospel stories of his appearances.

Until Jesus feels the job is done and the good news is revealed, this living body of Christ keeps showing up.

Second, the body of Christ meets needs.

The people who need to see Jesus to make it all real will somehow receive it.

In my work as a chaplain . . . I’ve been asked by patients and loved ones if they will see their mother or spouse again when they pass away. One person wondered if his mother would come to him in a dream or if he would feel her presence. When responding to such an inquiry I must take my time to gather my thoughts with what I believe will be most helpful to the person asking me about such things.

I can’t guarantee anything to this young man asking me if he will see or encounter his mother again after death.

However, in my past experiences there is a pattern that occurs. Some people see dead relatives before they die, others have had appearances in a dream or in a vision of people who have passed away, to name a few.

I said to this young man I believe each of us gets what we need. Whatever assurances people need will come to them, somehow. If you need that, I told him, you’ll receive it.

I think this is the same with the disciples when Jesus showed up. They needed a reminder about the scriptures, and what Jesus told them would happen. People who need a second chance will get it. People who needed to touch him were offered that. How many times, in the gospel of John, did Jesus tell Peter to feed his sheep? …Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep…

…Three times, as if to redeem each previous denial. Peter needed healing, and he got that from the risen Christ.

Third, the body of Christ points outside itself.

The disciples were not meant to sit around reminiscing, but to go out and share what they knew. The body of Christ looks outside itself. The body of Christ resists locked doors. Like those disciples, we, too, can lock ourselves away.

We close off part of our lives, we don’t take chances, seeing people with suspicion, and think nothing better is possible. We close our hearts or lock away our future plans. If we can just seal things up tightly enough, maybe we can fend off any future disasters or more grief, or any other pain.

We can lock our spiritual doors too, if our vision is too small… our prayers too limited... our hope too tiny. God is the one who opens doors.

Jesus can’t resist a closed-up place, something walled off, or a locked door. That’s the place where God comes in and Jesus asks us:  *“Why are you frightened, why do doubts arise in your hearts?”*

The body of Christ is an antidote to fear.

When we feel afraid, anxious, worried, weak, the body of Christ is medicine for that. “Be not afraid,” Jesus says over and over in his ministry, and the risen Christ says it again in this Gospel. “Peace be with you,” it’s not just a greeting, it’s a remedy for fear. “Peace be with you,” we say, and we’re given encouragement and hope and strength from each other for this work of being the body of Christ in the world.

Peace in Hebrew translates as Shalom, Shalom is more than sharing the Peace sign **✌** with one another, its true meaning is “ May you be full of well-being, may health and resources be bestowed upon you.” To restore a sense of completeness or wholeness. This includes your family and community.

What we can’t do alone, we can do together — as a body of faith.

We may be wounded and frightened, scarred, and scared, trying to lock ourselves away from pain and fear, and yet we are also called to resurrection living.

We have been touched by the body of Christ, and now it’s our turn to be that living body in the world.

Jesus’ scars tell the story of refusing violence in favor of peacemaking and returning love in the face of hatred. The truth is the scars by which Jesus’ disciples know him captures the life he lived.

Richard Rohr says, “If we don’t transform our pain we will most assuredly transmit it.”

The risen Christ allows his pain to be transformed and, as a result, allows healing and hope to flow from his wounds to his disciples and to you and me.

We are the body of Christ, it bears repeating . . .

We are the Body of Christ is in this world,

let us be healed, restored, transformed.

Shalom!

*Amen*.

Sources: Sermons.com,

Christian Century