

Second Sunday of Easter, April 12

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer. The First Lesson, Second Lesson and Gospel will be read from the God's Word Bible.

The Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

14 Then Peter stood up with the eleven apostles.

22 "Men of Israel, listen to what I say: Jesus from Nazareth was a man whom God brought to your attention. You know that through this man God worked miracles, did amazing things, and gave signs. 23 By using men who don't acknowledge Moses' Teachings, you crucified Jesus, who was given over to death by a plan that God had determined in advance. 24 But God brought him from death back to life and destroyed the pains of death, because death had no power to hold him. 25 This is what David meant when he said about Jesus:

'I always see the Lord in front of me.

I cannot be moved because he is by my side.

26 That is why my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

My body also rests securely

27 because you do not abandon my soul to the grave

or allow your holy one to decay.

28 You make the path of life known to me.

In your presence there is complete joy.'

29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that our ancestor David died and was buried and that

his tomb is here to this day. 30 David was a prophet and knew that God had promised with an oath that he would place one of David's descendants on his throne. 31 David knew that the Messiah would come back to life, and he spoke about that before it ever happened. He said that the Messiah wouldn't be left in the grave and that his body wouldn't decay.

32 "God brought this man Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses to that.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 16

- 1 Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; *
I have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord,
my good above all other."
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, *
upon those who are noble among the people.
- 3 But those who run after other gods *
shall have their troubles multiplied.
- 4 Their libations of blood I will not offer, *
nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.
- 5 O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 7 I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the Lord always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.
- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *

in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 1:3-9

3 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! God has given us a new birth because of his great mercy. We have been born into a new life that has a confidence which is alive because Jesus Christ has come back to life. 4 We have been born into a new life which has an inheritance that can't be destroyed or corrupted and can't fade away. That inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 since you are guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

6 You are extremely happy about these things, even though you have to suffer different kinds of trouble for a little while now. 7 The purpose of these troubles is to test your faith as fire tests how genuine gold is. Your faith is more precious than gold, and by passing the test, it gives praise, glory, and honor to God. This will happen when Jesus Christ appears again.

8 Although you have never seen Christ, you love him. You don't see him now, but you believe in him. You are extremely happy with joy and praise that can hardly be expressed in words 9 as you obtain the salvation that is the goal of your faith.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: John 20:19-31

19 That Sunday evening, the disciples were together behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" 20 When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were glad to see the Lord.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 After he had said this, he breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy

Spirit. 23 Whenever you forgive sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."

24 Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, who was called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord."

Thomas told them, "I refuse to believe this unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my fingers into them, and put my hand into his side."

26 A week later Jesus' disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, and believe."

28 Thomas responded to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to Thomas, "You believe because you've seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me but believe."

30 Jesus performed many other miracles that his disciples saw. Those miracles are not written in this book. 31 But these miracles have been written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and so that you will have life by believing in him.

The Word of the Lord

On April 17 we celebrate the life of Emily Cooper, Deaconess. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

Emily Cooper was admitted to the office of deaconess in June 1873, in a service at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, New York. A widow at age 44, she had gone to Brooklyn from her home in Louisville, Kentucky, for two years of training.

Soon after her commissioning, the Bishop of Kentucky, Benjamin Bosworth Smith, called Cooper to serve in her home diocese. In 1880, she was named director of the new Home of the Innocents, a Louisville home for neglected, unwanted, sick, and abused children. Founded by the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky, the home initially served as many as fifty children at a time.

Cooper found that many children brought to the home were abandoned there, unnamed. She gave each of these children Christian names and over the years assisted at the baptisms of 244 children. Many of the children arrived at the home already too sick to be saved, and their parents, if known, were too destitute to provide for their burials. Over 200 of the children who died during Cooper's decades of service were buried in unmarked graves in two large plots in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery.

In 2005, the Home rediscovered the graves, and over the next four years, they identified the deceased children. Statues placed at the grave sites now bear the names of the children and commemorate Cooper's ministry.

Let us pray: God of the holy innocents, we thank you for the motherly witness of your deaconess Emily Cooper, who, in naming and baptizing, did not forget the children: Draw our hearts and minds also to the plight of little ones, always remembering your Son's teaching that in receiving a little child in his name, we receive Christ himself, who lives and reigns with you and the Spirit, as one, caring for ever and ever.

Amen.