

Proper 26 – October 31, 2021 – 10:00 AM

*Covenant is an accepting, welcoming community sharing the glory of God's love with all.*

Prelude

Sonata in G, Movement 1 and 2

B. Marcello

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayer Requests

\*Call to Worship

Candle

Leader: Let us gather in the name of our Loving God.

**People: Amen.**

Leader: Thomas said:

**People: “Unless I see the mark of the nails and put my hand in his side, I will not believe.”**

Leader: We are often skeptical people, even cynical ones. Distrust is so common today. We are tempted to only rely on that which we can hear, see or prove.

**People: God knows this but asks us to see the invisible divine hand, to trust in the spirit, and to have faith.**

Leader: Sometimes we get carried away by our emotions, our fears or by popular trends that pull us in.

**People: Lord, help us to be bold in our beliefs, but also careful as Thomas was. Move us beyond mere trust in ordinary things and open our eyes for spiritual realities.**

Leader: Jesus said: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

**People: Let us worship our God, the One who is pure wisdom, love and grace. Amen.**

\*Hymn #44 “Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us”

Ribbon

1 Like a mother who has borne us,  
held us close in her delight,  
fed us freely from her body,  
God has called us into life.

2 Like a father who has taught us,  
grasped our hand and been our guide,  
lifted us and healed our sorrows,  
God has walked with us in life.

3 Though as children we have wandered,  
placed our trust in power and might,  
left behind our brothers, sisters,  
God still calls us into life.

4 When we offer food and comfort,  
grasp our neighbor's hand in love,  
tread the path of peace and justice,  
God still walks with us in life.

Prayer of Confession

Cross

**God, it is amazing how many ways we find to doubt you. We may keep believing in your existence, but there are still plenty of things we allow to erode our faith in you. When life gets rough, we often fool ourselves into believing that our ways are better than yours. We let uncertainty cloud our trust in you. And, most importantly, we doubt that all you are doing is the result of your great love for us. Help us to hold on to you and build our lives upon the foundation of your love. Thank you for your endless grace and patience. Amen.**

(Silence for Personal Confession)

Assurance of Pardon

Confessing our sins means that we uncover the wrongs, the mis-steps, and the foolish actions that we have done and call them what they are according to God's loving standards. Sometimes we fear that our sins are so huge that God cannot forgive us. So instead of running towards God, who endlessly offers forgiveness and healing, we allow our doubt and guilt to cause us to run away from God. But listen: God is bigger than our doubts and our fears. God is not threatened by any question we might ask, any lack of understanding, any intellectual challenge. Our responsibility is to bring our doubts and questions to God and ask for the grace to find resolution. God is faithful to not only forgive, but to help us feel reassurance in the midst of doubt, heal our guilt and lead us to wisdom.

Hymn #581

"Glory Be to the Father"

Ribbon

Passing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer for Illumination

Cross

The First Reading--Proverbs 4:6-7

Notepad

6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Talk With Children

Erin Wise

Hymn #188

“Jesus Loves Me”

The Gospel Reading—John 20:24-29—Linda Mercadante

Notepad

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” 28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

“Is It Wrong to Have Doubts?”

The Rev. Dr. Linda Mercadante

Hymn #250

“Hymn of Promise”

Ribbon

1 In the bulb there is a flower;  
in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise:  
butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter  
there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

2 There's a song in every silence,  
seeking word and melody;  
there's a dawn in every darkness,  
bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future;  
what it holds, a mystery,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

3 In our end is our beginning;  
in our time, infinity;  
in our doubt there is believing;

in our life, eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection;  
at the last, a victory,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

#### Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray for all the needs of the world, saying,  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the church of Christ and for people of faith  
who call upon God by other names,  
that where there is need and division,  
your Spirit will bring understanding and reconciliation.  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For Earth, for minerals, bacteria, microbes,  
and all that lives and breathes in every size and shape;  
for the healing of all Earth's scars and toxins;  
for wisdom to deal well and equitably with every landscape.  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For nations, leaders, armies, town councils,  
peacekeepers and peacemakers,  
legislators at all levels of government;  
for voters and for people who work toward democracy;  
for those who fight against change  
and those who fight for changes in the name of justice.  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For children and for those who are raising up children  
in this complicated world,  
that in the midst of their common struggles  
there will be times of great joy and happiness.  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who daily show us how to live well  
and in accord with your commands.  
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who suffer in our land from hunger,  
homelessness, poverty, and illness,  
especially those we name before you . . . [silence].

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all else we hold in our hearts this day,  
spoken aloud or in silence . . . [silence].

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In thanksgiving for those who have taught us faith,  
we ask you to hear our pleas and our words of gratitude.  
Keep us in your care and bring us to the feast that has no end,  
through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying, Our Father...

Invitation to the Offering

Offering

Notepad

Offertory                    "O Love" arranged by Hagenberg

\*Hymn #606                "The Doxology"

Ribbon

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures here below;  
praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Cross

\*Hymn #702                "Christ Be Beside Me"

Ribbon

1 Christ be beside me;  
Christ be before me;  
Christ be behind me,  
King of my heart.  
Christ be within me;  
Christ be below me;  
Christ be above me,  
never to part.

2 Christ on my right hand,  
Christ on my left hand,  
Christ all around me,  
shield in the strife.  
Christ in my sleeping,  
Christ in my sitting,  
Christ in my rising,

Light of my life.

3 Christ be in all hearts  
thinking about me;  
Christ be on all tongues  
telling of me.  
Christ be the vision  
in eyes that see me;  
in ears that hear me  
Christ ever be.

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

Reprise of "Christ Be Beside Me"

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Assisting in Worship Today:

Cherie Brooks – Director of Music  
Katie Wynkoop–Assistant Director of Music, Organist/Pianist  
Linda Gabel – Liturgist  
Erin Wise – Director of Children's & Youth Ministries  
Allie Garner–Vocalist  
Cora Kuyvenhoven– Cello  
The Chancel Choir  
Brian Biller – Media Production Specialist  
Rev. Dr. Linda Mercadante–Guest Preacher  
Rev. Joel A. Esala–Pastor