

**SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**



**St. John United Church of Christ**

10207 Lincoln Trail

Fairview Heights, IL

Telephone 618-397-6323

e-mail– [stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com)

Website: [www.stjohnfairview.org](http://www.stjohnfairview.org)

Rev. Rosemary Captain

**Choir Director- Nancy Eisenhauer**

**Organist – Sharon Banjavcic**

**Liturgy – Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay**

*Ushers -*

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in bold print

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**PRELUDE: “The Easter Song” Rob Roy Perry**

**PENNIES FOR MISSION: Uni Pres Kindercottage**

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (INSPIRED BY PSALM 16)**

One: Let us say to the Holy One: You are our God, we have no good apart from you!

**Many: Holy One, you are our God, we have no good apart from you!**

One: The Holy One is our chosen portion and our cup; God holds our lot.

**Many: Holy One, you are our God, we have no good apart from you!**

One: The Holy One provides us protection and refuge, keeps us in pleasant places, and gives a good heritage.

**Many: Holy One, you are our God, we have no good apart from you!**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Gracious and Eternal God, you are the one who calls us together and the one who sends us out in the world. Remind us, as we gather, how good it is to dwell with

you and one another. Stir our hearts to love boldly, freely, and joyfully. Let us praise you with our whole lives and magnify your name by our works. We bless and honor you, O Faithful One, from generation to generation and from community to community. Speak to our spirits and receive our worship. Amen.

**\*OPENING HYMN: 43 “Love Divine, All Love Excelling”**

**\*UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

**Gracious and Eternal God, you never abandon us the way that we sometimes abandon you. We doubt your power and your compassion. We call upon your name, but too often without expectation that you will answer. We blame you for the things we have collectively caused or that life demands. Yet, we give ourselves credit for the good that comes our way. We offer empty apology devoid of real repentance. We want to be absolved without engaging in repair. Help us to cherish grace as a gift and mercy as a miracle. Have mercy on us, Holy One. Amen.**

**\*WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, the Redeemer of our souls meets us in our doubts, uncertainty, and questions. When we call, God responds. When we do not call, God remains present

with us. Receive the grace of God to trust the Holy One with our struggles, pain, and brokenness. Have life in the name of the One who came to us, comes to us, and will come to us again and again.

**\*GLORIA: Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat) (end) One God always here. One God always here.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS:**

**Isaiah 43:1-9**

43 But now, says the Lord—

the one who created you, Jacob,

the one who formed you, Israel:

Don't fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are mine.

<sup>2</sup> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

when through the rivers, they won't sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you won't be scorched and flame won't burn you.

<sup>3</sup> I am the Lord your God,

the holy one of Israel, your savior.

I have given Egypt as your ransom,

Cush and Seba in your place.

<sup>4</sup> Because you are precious in my eyes, you are honored, and I love you.

I give people in your place,  
and nations in exchange for your life.  
<sup>5</sup> Don't fear,  
I am with you.  
From the east I'll bring your children;  
from the west I'll gather you.  
<sup>6</sup> I'll say to the north, "Give them back!"  
and to the south, "Don't detain them."  
Bring my sons from far away,  
and my daughters from the end of the earth,  
<sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name  
and whom I created for my glory,  
whom I have formed and made.  
<sup>8</sup> Bring out the blind people who have eyes,  
the deaf ones who have ears.  
<sup>9</sup> All the nations are gathered together;  
the peoples are assembled.  
Which of them announced this?  
Who predicted to us the past events?  
Let them bring their witnesses as a defense;  
let them hear and say, "It's true!"

#### **Mark 4:35-41**

##### **Jesus stops a storm**

<sup>35</sup> Later that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the

lake." <sup>36</sup> They left the crowd and took him in the boat just as he was. Other boats followed along.

<sup>37</sup> Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped. <sup>38</sup> But Jesus was in the rear of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. They woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're drowning?"

<sup>39</sup> He got up and gave orders to the wind, and he said to the lake, "Silence! Be still!" The wind settled down and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Jesus asked them, "Why are you frightened? Don't you have faith yet?"

<sup>41</sup> Overcome with awe, they said to each other, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

#### **John 20:24-29**

##### **Jesus appears to Thomas and the disciples**

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, the one called Didymus, <sup>[a]</sup> one of the Twelve, wasn't with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger in the wounds left by the nails, and put my hand into his side, I won't believe."

<sup>26</sup> After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors **were** locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to

Thomas, “Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!”

<sup>28</sup> Thomas responded to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “Do you believe because you see me? Happy are those who don’t see and yet believe.”

### **MESSAGE: “Faith After Doubt”**

I’d like to start out with a quote from L.R. Knost. She is an award-winning author, a women’s rights advocate, and social justice activist.

The words of Ms. Knost, “Life is amazing. And then its awful.. And then it’s amazing again. And in between the amazing and awful it’s ordinary an mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful, and relax and exhale during the ordinary. That’s just living heartbreaking, soul-healing amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it’s breathtakingly beautiful.”

The past few months I will confess have been like a roller coaster ride. Perhaps you can relate. I’ve felt everything is going to be okay all the way to much doubt about everything in our world. Of its amazing and then its awful. It’s up and down, up and down, and sol go to the Psalms that refresh my soul and give me strength and hope again. Words that I love the most from Isaiah 43 and I go to the gospels for reassurance and hope. Thus I want to share with you the three scripture texts you just heard from Isaiah, Mark, and John.

The gospel texts are all about doubt and faith and the Isaiah text is about reassurance of God’s love. In the Isaiah text God reminds us when we go through stormy waters, God is with us.

In the story of Mak where Jesus Christ calms the storm, he shows us that even when the storm winds blow, even when the seas get rough, Jesus is always with us. He was sleeping in the back of the boat, but when the disciples woke him up, Jesus was able to calm the storm. This story reminds us that when we go through rough times, although it may feel like Jesus is asleep, if we ask for Jesus’ help through prayer, we are like the disciples who wake Jesus in the middle of the storm. They are afraid. But at the end of the story the disciples ask themselves; who is this man. . . even the wind and waves obey him!

And in our John text we see that even though Thomas had seen Jesus calm the storm, even though he had seen Jesus heal the sick; give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and all the miraculous things, since the calming of the storm, the disciples still had some trouble accepting that Jesus is the Son of God. How about us? Thomas was called doubting Thomas, but don’t we too often find ourselves in Thomas’ shoes?

The disciples had seen and experienced the biggest storm of all. They had witnessed the Son of God, whom they had followed for years, be crucified. Maybe

doubting Thomas is a reflection of us when we too go through deep waters?

The Isaiah text that was read reminded us of God's promises. "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you."

What do other people of faith say about doubt and faith?

Paul Tillich "Doubt isn't the opposite of faith, it is an element of faith."

Frederich Buechner, "Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith, they keep it awake and moving."

Brian McLaren, "Maybe faith was never suppose to be a fortress.. Maybe it was supposed to be a road and maybe it was a road that leads into the unknown. Doubt is not a dead end but as a doorway out of the fortress and onto the road. If we dare take that first step, we discover that faith can be a road, a doorway out of the fortress of certainty and into the adventure of living. Before us lies the unknown which is our life."

Richard Rohr, "A deeper and wiser faith is enriched by doubt instead of threatened by it."

We live in a world right now that has so much chaos so much hatred of the other, people hurting other people, so many children are without food and medicine because of the decisions being made by people in power. So much hurt and pain. So much anxiety and fear, fear of losing our social security or medicare. It is natural to have doubts to sometimes cry out to Jesus, are you sleeping? Can you hear me?

Isaiah reassures us – "yes, says the Lord, the One who created you, Jacob, the One who formed you, Israel: don't fear, for I have redeemed you I have called you by name; you are mine!!"

Jesus never promised to take all our pain and suffering away. What he did promise is to be with us through it; always with us no matter what – that's God's promise don't forget that. And don't forget to breathe , to pray and to be in silence because that's where you will hear God's voice.

We remember back to Mary Magdalene when she saw the stone rolled away and she saw his body was gone and she came back out of the tomb and didn't recognize him at first . . . but he called out her name, "Mary" and she recognized him, "Rabbi". And I think of the question of all of us today. It's simply this; will we recognize him when we see him in our daily life today? Will we recognize his voice as he calls out our name? Something to ponder in these days of the Easter Season.

Amen.

*I wanted you to know that the words of this message I shared with you today were given to me by a dear friend. She knew I was lost and she found me.*

**SPECIAL MUSIC: “Knowing You, Jesus” Video**

**OUR LORD’S PRAYER:**

**PRAYER RESPONSE:**

Remember me. Remember Me.  
O Jesus, remember me.

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:**

Through Christ, we receive “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” (1 Peter 1:4) Let us express our gratitude to God by sharing the gifts we receive. Let us bring our material offerings for tangible ministry to spread good news in our community and world.

**OFFERTORY: “We Walk by Faith” Bertha R. Frick**

**\*DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above you heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

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 praise. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN: 243 “Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven”**

**\*BENEDICTION:**

Beloved, as you go know that you have been sent  
By a Creator who endowed you with every gift you need  
By a Loving God who stays with you on the journey  
By a Sovereign God who protects and provides  
By a Purposeful God who has a role for you in the kingdom  
By a Merciful and Gracious God who understands and anticipates your mistakes  
By a Mighty God who offers refuge and hope in the raging storms  
By a Kind God who blesses us with community  
By a Challenging God who holds us accountable  
By a Risen God who laid the path that you might follow

In love and hope, empowered and equipped, for honor and glory. Amen.

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

**“O God of Love, O God of Peace”**

**O God of love, O God of peace,  
Make wars throughout the world to cease.  
The wrath of human wrong restrain;  
Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**POSTLUDE: “Easter Recessional” Chester Nordman**

**PRAYER LIST:** Bruce Wagner, Becky Ballard, Roger Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Nikki Chatman, Geralyn Gamon, Russ Hartmann, Lynne Knecht, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Terry Thorpe, Grandson Landon, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, our Beloved Country.