

Monday

Read John 20:1-18

What we confess in the Apostles' Creed is the absolute core doctrine of our faith that Jesus was resurrected. Resurrected is different than resuscitated. Resurrected is not a repeat of what was but Jesus rising anew. It is the same Jesus and yet there is something different going on. The resurrected Jesus is different. Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' closest companions, doesn't recognize the resurrected Jesus and thinks he's the gardener. Two of Jesus' followers walk for miles with the resurrected Jesus and don't recognize him until Jesus chooses to be recognized. The resurrected Jesus can enter a room without going through the door to be in the midst of his disciples. The resurrected Jesus is the same Jesus but is also different. A resuscitated person is the same person; a resurrected person is the same person but yet very different. It is Jesus who arises and he arises anew.

It might seem that we have not gone a long way in describing what a resurrection body actually looks like. That is because scripture doesn't tell us precisely – but we have the stories of Jesus' resurrection appearances to try to create a sketch. It is more productive to say what a resurrected body/person is not and that is that resurrection is not resuscitation. Jesus rose again, Jesus rose *anew* and yet is still Jesus, not someone else.

Today, spend a moment of your prayer time thanking God for the resurrection of Jesus and for calmness of spirit to live faithfully in the mystery of what resurrection literally looked like for Jesus and will look like for us.

Tuesday

Read John 10:1-18

To live the resurrection life now, live that Jesus has dealt with your sin and holds onto you. You, little sheep, have a shepherd who knows your name and he knows your name. Jesus is a good shepherd, he doesn't lose track of his sheep. He also doesn't demand that his sheep keep proving that they are his sheep. He knows who you are. He knows your life. He knows your future. You are to live as a joyful sheep in the safe and trustworthy hands of your shepherd Jesus Christ. Think about it. You are a sheep in the flock of Jesus. Cast off the doubt of whether you belong, are a good enough person, or perform in all the right ways for Jesus to love you. He loves you anyways and he loves you already. He called your name and you recognize his voice. Praise be to God! Live as a joyful sheep in the resurrection life now!

Allow yourself to be transformed in your identity to deeply know that you are in the flock of Jesus permanently – he knows who you are and love you!

Wednesday

Read Matthew 25:31-46

How are you going to see Jesus every day in this resurrection life? The resurrection life is the core reality that we are in today and we can see Jesus often. A resurrection life sees Jesus in the face of each and every person you see – and especially the ones you turn away from and are prone to ignore. A resurrection life sees each life as beautiful and valuable, no matter how difficult, irritating, or sinful that life might appear to you.

Pray, open yourself, and allow Jesus to transform your mind, heart, and spirit so that you see Jesus in the faces of more and more people each day. As we are in a pandemic, you might need to be more creative in how you "see" people, but don't let obstacles stand in your way. What are creative, pandemic-safe ways you can see people and have compassion on them today?

Thursday

Read Mark 16:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-18

The resurrection of Jesus. This is where it is at. The whole world changed that day. Not just for those who believe, but for everyone. The resurrection is the central reality of the present and wraps up the future in the love of God. The resurrection life means that we can work for boldly minister for justice in the name of Jesus knowing that whatever evil may befall us for doing so that it will not overcome us because we belong and the future belongs to Jesus. The resurrection life also means that we do not need to worry, fret, and be fearful about the future. You can stop wringing your hands and shaking your head about whatever it is that you've decided to let consume you in worry. The resurrection life is a life of deep caring about the evil in the world today, but it is a life of deep assurance – a faith that passes understanding – that the future is safely, securely, and inextricably in the hands of Jesus.

What ministry in the name of God's justice and mercy can you take up knowing that the future is securely in Jesus' control? What worries can you release to Jesus knowing that the future is guaranteed?

Friday - please read and reflect upon John 5:21-24 and Acts 2:29-36 as we prepare for Sunday worship.

