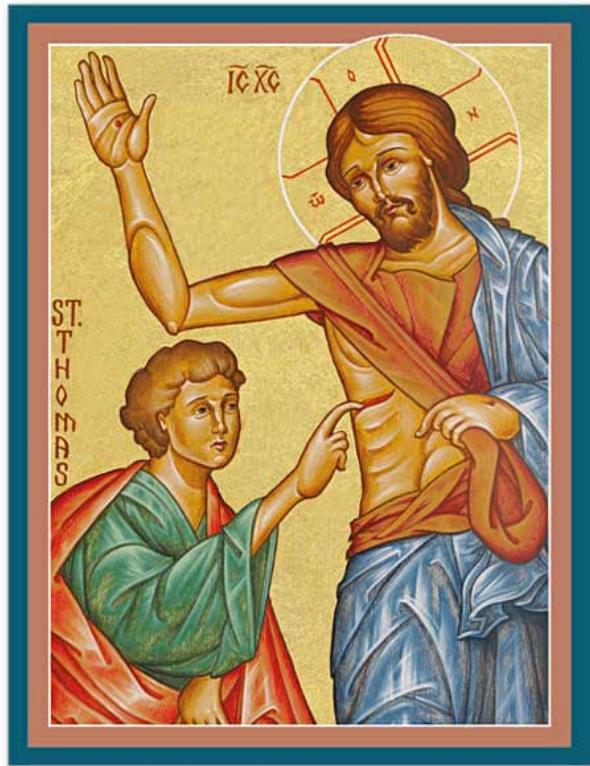


FROM PASTOR MARC'S DESK

This past Easter Sunday following our worship service here at Oxford Presbyterian Church, I came across a reflection written by the Rev. Matthew J. Skolnik, the General Presbyter of Muskingum Valley Presbytery (my old stomping grounds) here in Ohio. The reflection included the image of a mosaic of the resurrected Christ appearing before his disciple, Thomas, who reaches out to touch the wounds in his side.



“The resurrected body may be whole,” Rev. Skolnik writes, “but it is not perfect by any means. The resurrected body carries wounds, deep into the flesh. Resurrection is not about perfection. It can’t be. Resurrection is, however, about sharing our wounds with others and touching the wounds of others with wonder and love.”

I’ve been pondering this image this past Easter season. What does it mean to share our wounds with one another with wonder and love? I will confess to you, I probably don’t do a very good job of this during big holidays like this. For me, Easter Sunday has so often been about perfection. Flowers arrangements laid out immaculately. Family pictures taken in front of the Easter cross. My finest suits cleaned and pressed for church on Sunday. Maybe even getting the house all cleaned up for company coming over.

I cherish all of these things because Easter is a season of joy, and these are some of the ways that we express our joy and our celebration of the resurrection. However, this year I have also found myself coming back to that image of Thomas. How can we also honor our honesty, our

vulnerability, our authenticity, and even our wounds with one another with wonder and love? What does that look like? Is this also part of resurrection?

This past week, I was reminded of the stories that Kent Peterson and Anne Bailey shared with Pastor Lawrence during worship over the last few Sundays. Like many of you, I was very moved by their honesty and the courage to share their stories in such a public way - even the chapters that were more vulnerable. I appreciated Pastor Lawrence's willingness to be a conversation partner with them as they modeled what this looks like for the rest of us. I wonder if I would have been brave enough to do the same.

Sharing our stories like that so publicly is not for all of us. Not all of us may necessarily feel so comfortable sharing in quite that way. However, I do hope that we can be a community for one another where all of us can find someone we can talk to - and where we can also be that person for someone else. Maybe it's a trusted friend or a family member. Maybe it's one of the pastors or elders, or maybe it's someone here in the community whom you know and trust.

Putting the "Sunday finest" parts of our lives out there is a wonderful way to express our gratitude for the gift of this life, but I hope that we can also be a community that can hold space for the more vulnerable realities of life, too. Because if we can be that reliable community that holds one another up and does not let us fall, then the truth of the resurrected Jesus truly becomes alive, and the Easter news becomes real. That is really, truly Good News.

Peace today,
Pastor Marc