

# THE SERMON SUPPLY



A Resource from  
Region 6



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## **Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A**

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Assistant to the Bishop for Emerging Ministers and Ministries  
Gospel Text – John 14:-15-21*

### **John 14:15-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

### **SERMON TEXT:**

Grace, mercy, and peace from our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

My name is Pastor Dan Forehand and I serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Emerging Ministers and Ministries in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. I bring you greetings from our Bishop Timothy Graham, the rest of our Synod Staff, and the 165 congregations, 7 campus ministries, and over 36,000 baptized ELCA followers of Jesus that make up our mission territory. Thank you for taking part in the Sermon Supply and joining me for worship today in this season of Easter where we celebrate not just on one day, but for a whole season the Good News that Jesus rose from the dead! Alleluia!

Pentecost is just two weeks away, but today we are going to talk about the Holy Spirit! Whoa! We are Lutherans, can we talk about the Spirit? We tend to find ourselves much more comfortable talking about the other two persons in the Trinity. God the Father, creator of heaven and earth. And Jesus, the Son, born from Mary, lived and taught among us, crucified, died, and risen for the life of the world!

But the Spirit? Ehh...we'd rather not talk about that. We'll leave that to others. And it's a shame, because the Spirit is an amazing gift given by God. The Spirit, we sometimes call her the breath of God, the wind of God, the Spirit has this unseen aspect to it, a breath...(blow a little air).

I have two kids who are still young enough to really love hunting for Easter eggs. Sometimes after the big hunt where we put chocolate and quarters and other little things in the eggs, they will take turns hiding the eggs for each other. Sometimes they'll put something in them, but most of the time, they will just hide the empty Easter eggs and cannot wait to give hints to each other.

And I wonder if an empty Easter egg, or an empty tomb for that matter, is really all that empty or if there's more than meets the eye. Though there may not be a candy in that empty Easter egg, there is a lot of energy, love, and joy that is contained in those eggs. And though the tomb on Easter is empty apart from a folded up sheet, there's a lot of energy, love, and joy flowing out of the tomb towards the world.

I imagine that in that seemingly empty space, it might be the Spirit of God that occupies it and flows from it. For in this reading from John today, we hear Jesus say, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you."<sup>1</sup> The Advocate or the Helper or the Comforter - all interchangeable words for this gift that flows from God the Father, is there to abide with us. To be in us. To be among us. As a free gift of love and presence.

If you are at all like me, there are times where you feel empty. You might feel spent. You might feel that you've got nothing left in the tank. The obligations of life. The stress of life. The challenges of life. All the different people we are holding. All the different ways that we are trying to be good and faithful and loving and just and all the things for all the people at all the times and in all the places can make us just feel so empty.

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:16-17 NRSVue

It can make us feel abandoned. Alone. Orphaned in some way. And these words that Jesus speaks in this gospel are so comforting and beautiful and transformative. Jesus goes on to say, "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live."<sup>2</sup>

I will not leave you. I am coming to you. You will see me. You will live because I live. What incredible promises these are to receive from Jesus. It's beautiful and breathtaking. And, yet, it can also be hard to believe.

Because the egg does look empty. The tomb does look like nothing is there. There seems to be this hole, this void, this chasm that I cannot comprehend. Blow, Spirit, blow.

Blow, Spirit, blow. And help me to remember that I am not orphaned.

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<sup>2</sup> John 14:18-19, NRSVue

Blow, Spirit, blow. And help me to remember that Jesus has not and will not leave me.

Blow, Spirit, blow. And help me to see Jesus.

Blow, Spirit, blow. And help me to live.

Help me to live a life that proclaims the Good News of Easter. That the resurrection of Jesus means that life has triumphed over death. That the grave cannot win. That sin will not get the last word, but that we have an abundance.

And we cannot proclaim that Good News without the Spirit. The Spirit to advocate for us. The Spirit to comfort us when the going gets tough. The Spirit to help us in our times of need - by transforming those empty spaces and filling them with love and life and hope and grace.

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