

Thursday Connect group | May 1, 2025

Welcome and gathering

Let's get to know each other. *Tell us a little bit about yourself and how things are going with you.*

Opening prayer

Creator God, be with us as we gather to hear your word and make it alive in our heart and our lives. Guide us as we actively listen to each other and share our own thoughts and questions. We ask this in the name of Jesus who became Christ the King. **Amen.**

Almighty and ever living God, in tender love for all our human race you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take our flesh and suffer death upon a cruel cross. May we follow the example of his great humility and share in the glory of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Building a patchwork prayer quilt together

We creating this prayer using the prayer lines you contributed. We will use this prayer from week to week in this Connect group.

To date, this is our prayer. Email eabeecham@gmail.com when you feel moved to add a line:

Teach us, God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, to pay attention to each other as you do for us when we speak to you. Teach us, God, to listen to one another, to share with each other, to pray together, to hear your word and to grow in faith as a community.

May we feel your love, support, and guidance in every pause, every laugh, and every truth spoken. **Amen.**

Gospel reading

John 20:19–31

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion of Scripture Passage – Touching the wounds and Thomas’ doubts

<p>1. Jesus appearing twice to the disciples in the locked house, first without Thomas there and then when he was present.</p>	<p><i>Where do you find yourself in this story?</i></p>
<p>2. The disciples remain in a locked house in fear of reprisals. Jesus shows them his wounds and breathes the Spirit upon them and sends them out.</p>	<p><i>Have you ever felt the fear and doubt of the disciples to listen to the call and commission to go out to love and serve the world?</i></p> <p><i>How does the Spirit work in you to go beyond doubt and fear?</i></p>
<p>3. Thomas needs to see, touch and feel the wounds.</p>	<p><i>When have you heard the term “Doubting Thomas” before?</i></p> <p><i>Why do you think Thomas needed proof?</i></p> <p><i>Why do you think others did not?</i></p>
<p>4. On Sunday, Rev. Sr. Connie suggested that a line from the Gospel reading could be another Beatitude: “blessed are those who have not seen and who have believed”. Beatitudes have two parts, like these examples (Matthew 5:5–8): ⁵ Blessed are the meek: <i>for they shall inherit the earth.</i> ⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: <i>for they shall be filled.</i> ⁷ Blessed are the merciful: <i>for they shall obtain mercy.</i></p>	<p><i>What words do you think would come next to complete it?</i></p>

<p>⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: <i>for they shall see God.</i>"</p>	
<p>5. Jesus did not call Thomas "Doubting Thomas." We gave him that nickname. The Bible is full of characters experiencing doubt (like John the Baptist and Peter).</p>	<p><i>Why do you think we called him "Doubting Thomas"?</i></p> <p><i>Has there been a time in your life when you needed to see, touch and feel to believe?</i></p> <p><i>Has Thomas and this story meant anything in your life?</i></p> <p><i>What does Jesus' reaction to Thomas tell us about God's relationship to us?</i></p>

Closing prayer

God of radiant light,
 Your love illumines our hopes before we know them,
 And our needs before we ask.
 Kindle your flame within us that in our prayers and service,
 We may know your transforming presence at work in the world around us. **Amen.**

Closing blessing

When it takes hold, resurrection does not let go,
 It shakes the dead awake,
 It shakes the darkness from the light,
 And it wrestles death from all that is dying.
 Let us go out into the world,
 And in the upheaval of resurrection
 Seek out this new life.

And may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
 Be upon you, body, mind and spirit,
 As you go out into the world filled with the Easter promise. **Amen.**

We look forward to connecting with you again next Thursday, May 8, 2025.