



First Impressions

Worship God, strengthen His people, and reach out
with the Love of Christ

Volume 18 Issue 5

May 2011

Thomas Moments – Before or After?

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:26-29

We Christians today live in a sea of doubt. And when you're swimming in doubt, it's hard not to get wet. Have you ever doubted? Have you ever wondered about this whole business of Jesus and the cross and the resurrection? Have you ever asked yourself if your faith is really only a superstition? Have you ever wondered, "Am I a Christian only because my parents were?" Often we're afraid to face our doubts because we're afraid of what we might find and what others might think. People might find out how weak our faith really is, so we keep our doubts to ourselves. And yet, our doubts don't go away – they're always there, like a cancer, slowly eating away at our faith, until we believe in Jesus less and less, and we become more and more skeptical, like Thomas, in our story for today.

What can you do to get rid of doubt? Nothing, because there is no cure on this earth that will take away your doubts. If they find Noah's ark up on the mountain, or they find the burial shroud of Christ, or all of your friends and family have the most amazing arguments in the world – none of those things can cure you of your doubt. However, there is one thing that can.

That one thing happened to Thomas a week later. Suddenly, Jesus appears right there in the midst of them. "Peace be with you," Jesus says again. And then he looks directly at Thomas and invites him to do what he said he wanted to do – to touch the wounds he had sustained on the cross. "Stop doubting and believe," Jesus told Thomas and He was cured of his doubt. Thomas responds, "My Lord and my God!" He had become a man of faith who believed in Jesus, even though everything he knew about the world told him otherwise.

The only solution to get rid of the doubt in your heart is to have moments with Jesus Christ, like Thomas had that Sunday after Easter. How are we supposed to have a moment like that? When does Jesus come to you, and speak to you, like he spoke to Thomas? When does Jesus chase away your doubts? When does he transform you into someone who strongly believes in him, like Thomas did after it was all over?

Today, Jesus comes to you in an invisible way, through his Word. Every time you hear the Word of God, Jesus steps into your life and says, "Peace be with you." Every time you receive the Lord's Supper, Jesus is right there, through his body and blood, and he chases away your doubts, and fills you with faith and hope and trust in him. Through the Word and the Sacraments, that's how Jesus appears to you and speaks to you, just as he spoke to Thomas.

Are you a Thomas who sees Jesus everyday? He's there. Go ahead, take a look.

"Peace be with you" – Pastor Tom

Mary Grace Whittington - 2nd
 Dean Mizzell - 8th
 Corrine Donahoo - 11th
 Victoria Sisson - 13th
 Makayla Rudd - 13th
 Brooklyn Wildrick - 16th
 Emily Hayes - 17th
 James Melton - 17th



Charles Hayes - 18th
 Hildegard Wesson - 21st
 Rachel Norris - 21st
 Bob Hunter - 21st
 Tammy Rudd - 26th
 Krista Wanat-28th
 Sophia Rotton - 28th



David & Dee
 Mayhew
 5/23/81



Check out the Library next Sunday! We have Luther's Works, Biblical reference, fiction, non-fiction, devotions, DVDs, and children's books. Drop by the library and sign up for your new online library card.

THE SECRETARY WILL BE ON VACATION AND THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM APRIL 29 THROUGH MAY 5 AND MAY 26 THROUGH MAY 31. PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THIS AND CONTACT YOUR DEACON IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.



The Southern District Church Extension Fund has moved from Slidell to Mandeville. Their new address is:
 Southern CEF
 P.O. Box 4657
 Covington, LA 70434
 888-493-5962 or 504-282-2633
 New website: www.southerncef.org

WORSHIP WORKERS



FIRST & EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- May 1 - Judy Drews
- May 8 - Kate Cahill
- May 15 - Carol Lackey
- May 22 - Pat Ryan
- May 29 - Kate Cahill

Readers:

- May 1 - Carol Lackey
- May 8 - Jim Campbell
- May 15 - Pat Thompson
- May 22 - Donna Speegle
- May 29 - Wilson Whittington

Altar Guild: Terry Lepp

Candles: Pat Thompson

Communion Assistant: Wilson Whittington

Ushers: Graham & Victoria Sisson and Pat & David Ryan

Worship Assistant: Toby Cahill

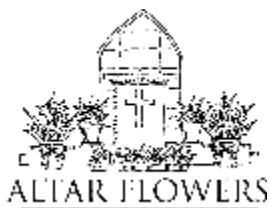
Nursery: Meg Callahan

Harvest - Graham and Victoria Sisson go through the Bible one chapter at a time.

Adult Bible Study - General Bible study taught by Pastor Tom.

Beth Moore Series - "Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman" taught by Judy Drews and Donna Speegle.

Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:
Early Elementary - for kids in 1st - 3rd grade with limited reading skills.



5/29 - CELEBRATING THE BIRTHDAYS OF DAVID CYBUL (27TH), KRISTA WANAT (28TH), AND BERNIE CYBUL (29TH) - DADDY'S 90TH!



Prayers

Assisted Care: Leona Boehme, Lucille Cooper, Edna Grund.

Recovering: Julie Cvengros, Delores Goehler, Flo Fischer, Hildegard Wesson.

Mourning: Annie Harrell, Billie Gardner (Pat Thompson's mother), and John Stopchinski (friend of Krista Wanat).

Illness: Ethan Melton, Norma Jefferson, Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby (brain tumor), Steve Malone of RMCS (pancreatic cancer), Arnold Hardin (stomach cancer).

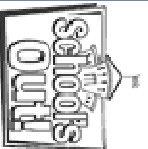
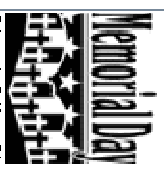
Intercession: For the people of Japan, Libya, and Haiti.

Missionaries: Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary (India).

Members who have lost their jobs.

Those Serving in the Military: Mike Golchert, Joel Lackey, and former member, Walt Mattil in Afghanistan.

MAY 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Church Office Closed Festive Turn out of Flowers 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>2 Church Office Closed 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>3 Church Office Closed 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>4 Church Office Closed</p>	<p>5 Church Office Closed 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>6 Church Office Closed 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>7 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT Service</p>
<p>8 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>13 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>14 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT Service</p>
<p>15 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>18 Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p>19 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>20 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>21 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT Service</p>
<p>22 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>25 RMCS St. George Day</p>	<p>26  Church Office Closed RMCS LAST DAY OF SCHOOL 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>27 Church Office Closed 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>28 Church Office Closed 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT Service</p>
<p>29 Church Office Closed 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>30  Church Office Closed</p>	<p>31 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Catechism 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>3 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	<p>4 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT Service</p>

“Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.” Luke 21:34 These words that Jesus spoke on the Mount of Olives point to the importance of considering the day when we all will stand before God. Before we face that day, let us be sober-minded enough to consider letting Christ into our hearts.

Someone I met pulled an Alcoholics Anonymous medal out of his pocket and said “This medal represents 11 years of sobriety. You can not understand how much the AA meetings at First Lutheran Church have meant to me or what a living hell it is to be an alcoholic.”

No, I can not understand. Yet the AA website states the following: AA is not affiliated with any sect or denomination or cause other than helping people get sober, stay sober, and then helping others to do the same. I do not speak for AA, but I do know in my 15 years at First Lutheran, AA has met over 1500 times. What a privilege it is to have the Holy Spirit work in and through us to bring healing to those alcoholics and their family members who live and work and worship in our community.

Allow me to thank all of those at First who have donated their time, talent, and treasures to establish and maintain this church. I hope you will continue to pray for those who are afflicted with the disease of addiction whether it is a substance or practice.

Mike Twiss has been working hard at establishing a Narcotics Anonymous group at First. If you know anyone who could benefit from such a fellowship, please let Mike know.

Again, thank you for your three T's and you prayers.

May God richly bless you,

Jim Campbell



Welcome to the month of Yam! Wait a minute, you might say, Yam is not one of the twelve months of the year! And you are right, but if you reverse those three letters you have the month of May. You can have some fun reversing words, like your name or the names of others or

whatever triggers your imagination.

However, we sometimes get important things reversed and that is not good. For example, we Americans often think of ourselves as “owners” instead of “managers.” That runs contrary to what the Bible clearly teaches in passages like Psalm 24:1 which state that **“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”** All things belong to God because He is the Creator and therefore the Owner of all things, including us. What are we then? We are managers, trustees or caretakers of that which belongs to someone else. For example, Genesis 2:15 states that **“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”** The garden belonged to God, but He chose to have Adam work the garden and take care of it. If Adam would have thought that the garden belonged to him, he would have reversed the truth.

If we are not clear on the proper distinction between Owner and manager we will have major struggles with Christian stewardship. We will conclude that all the things we surround ourselves with belong to us and, therefore, we can use them in any way we choose. That assumption is a misconception of what the Bible teaches. It is also opposed to the first Article of the Apostles Creed which says **“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”** We could also add **“and Owner”** between “Maker” and “of.”

For several decades our church has defined **Christian stewardship as the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God’s family, the church, in managing (not owning) all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes.** That definition clearly distinguishes the important difference between owning and managing.

So, in this month of Yam, oops, May, resolve to grow in your understanding and practice of what it means to be a Christian steward. There is an old saying that **“April showers bring May flowers.”** During this Easter season with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we can grow like beautiful flowers that give witness to the beauty and glory of our Father in heaven. To God be the glory!



First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

8:00 AM Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children & Adults
10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship and Communion Service

5:00 PM Saturday Evening - Twilight Song

First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

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