

**Community of Christ**  
**Fairbanks Congregation Happenings**  
**April 19, 2006**

The theme for this Sunday is "Peace Be With You"

**Blessed**  
**Everyday**

For a moment imagine a scene of peace.- close your eyes and imagine it - describe it to yourself is fully as you can - enter into it deeply enough to feel its glow -

Some of you may have pictured yourself dozing in the bottom of a rowboat on a calm and tranquil lake. Others may have seen yourselves looking at a little baby sleeping in her crib, or a cat napping on a sun soaked window ledge. Still others may have seen themselves in a landscape empty of people - but full of grain gently waving in a breeze or beside a stream in the woods with the water making music as it runs over and around stones lying in its course.

Whatever the picture you painted and entered into - chances are it was not like the kind of scene drawn by today's gospel text.

That text speaks of locked doors , of secret meetings by night - and of fear. None of these things makes a person normally think about peace - nor does the presence of one whose body is marked by the signs of torture and death.

It seems clear however that the evangelist wants us to see the two visits of Jesus to his disciples in the upper room as occasions of peace.

And perhaps they can speak to us about some dimensions of peace that we do normally think of - perhaps they can speak to us of peace in the midst of turmoil - of peace in the midst of fear - of peace in the midst of doubt.

False ideas about peace and joy abound in our society. These false ideas can distort our entire picture of what life is supposed to be about, and of who Christ is and of who we are.

A woman by the name of Lucy Bregman relates the story of how she once went to a worship service where the entire congregation was told

"If you don't have a smile on your face, you've got the wrong religion and shouldn't be here. Christianity is a religion of joy."

She fled that service in tears - because she did not feel at that time like she could smile - she was having difficulties and was looking for comfort. Instead she was told that she was not good enough for God because she was not smiling.

God never asks us to falsify our experience. - our risen Lord never waits until we are already happy in order to come to us - and he never wears a pasted on smile.

Think of this for a moment - Christ could have miraculously obliterated his wounds after he was raised from the tomb, but chose not to. He bore the marks of his wounds into the presence of his

disciples. In the same way Christ does not ask us to banish our wounds when we come into his presence - not even at Easter when we are supposed to be full of joy.

The risen Christ came to his disciples in the midst of their turmoil and fear. He came in the midst of their doubt and their sense of having failed both him and their own selves and said to them: "Peace be with you."

And when he said this he showed them his wounds - the holes in his hands and in his side - as if to say:

See these wounds - feel them and know that it is all right to hurt. Pain comes to us all - I was hurt as all people are hurt - but that pain and that hurt no longer has dominion over me - I live - as I said I would. I told you that I would suffer - and that you, if you followed me, would also suffer - but I told you too that after passing through various trials and tests - that pain and even death itself would lose its power - its power over me and its power over those who believe in me.

The three times that Jesus offers his peace to his disciples in today's reading - it is done in close connection with the wounds of crucifixion. The enemies of peace had already done their worst to him. They had made cowards and liars of his followers and had mocked his own words and actions. They had humiliated him in the city streets. They had violated his flesh and robbed him of his life. But their war against him failed. On the evening of the first day of the week he came to his disciples and showed them that he lived despite the worst that could happen.

The peace that Jesus offers can be described as the confidence his followers are able to take from his resurrected appearance. His return on that first day of the week signalled the fact that his life and promises will endure. His "peace be with you" was more than a greeting to be followed by another good-bye. It was the declaration of a persistent fact. Because Jesus lives nothing can separate his followers from him and from life in him.

The disciples realized this fact and in realizing it received the peace that Jesus offered - the peace that only Jesus could offer - for without him they would have been left to continue alone in the darkness and fear of their locked room.

The confidence that the disciples received when Jesus came and said to them "peace be with you" is demonstrated in the response of the disciples to his appearance. Peace showed itself in their rejoicing - and in Thomas' confession of faith - "My Lord, and my God."

And peace showed itself - confidence showed itself - inner security showed itself - later when the disciples left that room and went into the world to proclaim the love and forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ - the risen Lord.

But my friends - notice that none of the external circumstances of the disciples changed when they received and accepted the peace that Christ offered them.

They believed in him - they had confidence in him - they knew that nothing could separate them from God's love after he appeared to them - but they still had to face the same situation they faced before he broke into the room they had locked because of their fear. They still had to face authorities. They still had to risk going out on the streets, they still had to deal with the crowds who had mocked and crucified Jesus. They still had to face trials and tribulations - as do we.

Peace be with you - is the word of Jesus to us. Peace be with you and blessed are you when you have not seen, as the disciples saw, and yet have come to believe.

Blessed are you

- not because life will be plain sailing for you,

Blessed are you

- not because you will always want to smile and will never have to suffer.

But blessed are you because you have linked yourself to a power  
greater than yours;

to a power that wants to sustain you and will sustain you,

to the power that raised Jesus from the dead,

to the power that will bring you to the inheritance

that Jesus has won for us,

that inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,

kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God  
through faith.

Finally - I leave you with these words of Jesus -

They are the words Jesus spoke to his disciples just before he went out to the Garden of Gethesame and onward from there to his cross and his death.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you,

Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Believe in God, believe also in me.

Amen.

(Above excerpted from: Rev. Richard J. Fairchild - Spirit Networks, 1999 - 2006 please acknowledge the appropriate author if citing these sermons)

### **Announcements:**

Second and fourth Sundays of each month – Coffee Talk and Continental Breakfast- Warm hearted conversation and loving each other is the purpose of the gathering. Got an idea for the future of Fairbanks? This is your opportunity to express yourself. Coffee Talk is scheduled for the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. Give yourself a treat and be there!

Choir practice on Saturdays at the church and make a happy noise.

**April 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>**- Mens Retreat – See CoastalBendMC.org for details

**May 7<sup>th</sup>** – There will be a combined service with North Houston. The service will take place at Fairbanks at 11:00 o'clock.

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** – Silent Auction Talent Show Fund Raiser – North Houston- Benefits the school supply program for a local elementary school. See announcement that was forwarded under separate cover on April 12<sup>th</sup>. There are many ways to help and participate - Contact Dorothy Hibbard or Teri Portz.

**July 30<sup>th</sup> – Aug 4<sup>th</sup>** – Congregational Leaders Workshop – Lamoni, Iowa – See Mission Center or World Church webpage for details.

**August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>** – Witnessing Community seminar. Make plans now to attend this event.

**See Mission Center web page for more information**

**April 22- 23<sup>rd</sup>**- Sionito Work Party

**April 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>** – Texas Men’s Retreat – Livingston Mission – John Wight – Guest Ministry

**May 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>** – Young Adult Reunion – Sionito- Contact Diane Solario.

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled to deliver the message for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. This is not the “official list” and is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the worship schedule in the fellowship hall for changes.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Sue Turner

April 30<sup>th</sup> – Carole and Leo Caesar

May 7<sup>th</sup> – Doug White

May 14<sup>th</sup> – Gary Chatburn

May 21<sup>st</sup> - John Reimer

May 28<sup>th</sup> - Jeff Whitehall Sr

The nursery schedule cannot be posted in the family center for January through March 2006. Please contact Andrea if you are interested in volunteering in the nursery this quarter.

Nursery Schedule:

**We need volunteers for the nursery. Please see Andrea Watson.**

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Leo Caesar with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Leo Caesar if you wish to add/remove someone from the list.

**Calendar & Mission Center News:**

The Coastal Bend Mission Center is proud to announce that the Coastal Bend web site is up and running! You can visit the site at [www.coastalbendmc.org](http://www.coastalbendmc.org)

The Coastal Bend Mission Center (CBMC) has established a Youth Campership Fund to assist youth attending summer youth events. This program is not tied to any local congregational campership program. Any youth, member or friend of Community of Christ, residing within CBMC, may apply for one (1) campership per youth event (Sionito Youth Camp, IYF or Spec). Each eligible camper will receive up to \$50 per event, depending upon demand for camperships. To receive the campership, the youth must complete the application information shown below.

Please complete the application information by April 30, 2006 and forward to the Mission Center President and Financial Officer, Mark Euritt.

The options for completing and forwarding the application are:

1) online using the [website](#) form

2) send a copy you can get [HERE](#) via mail to:

Mark Euritt, Coastal Bend Mission Center  
311 West Annie  
Austin, TX 78704

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at Fairbanks. Please let me know if your e-mail or other contact information changes.

Mark your calendars and **participate, enjoy, reach out!!!!!!**I pray that everyone have a safe and happy week.

*Martha Romig*