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Apr

## Unless I See

Stories That Matter

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A

Thomas reminds us that the power of Resurrection is inseparable from its reality. This service invites worshipers to engage all their senses—sight, sound, touch, taste—to notice Christ’s risen presence among us and within us.

### REFERENCES

Exodus 15:1-18

Psalm 111

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

### COLORS

White

When I was dating my spouse (who is now a United Methodist deacon), we used to spend hours on the phone talking about theology, philosophy, and ethics. He was in seminary, and I was getting my bachelor’s degree in church music with a minor in religious education. That is to say, we had a lot of stuff to talk about. I distinctly remember when, during one of our evening conversations, he casually mentioned that there was a time when some theologians taught that Christians could believe in the power of Resurrection without the reality of Resurrection. Of course, I thought this was ridiculous. However, I often think about this conversation when I read the story of Thomas, because, for Thomas, the power is the reality. You can’t have one without the other. And although we give Thomas grief for wanting to see Jesus’ resurrected body, I think he’s onto something. How often do we worship and believe in the idea of Christ’s resurrection without expecting to witness real Resurrection in our lives, our communities, and our world?

As you plan worship, how will you guide your congregation to sense and experience Christ's resurrection? We tend to focus on sight in the story of Thomas, but what about the other senses? What does Resurrection smell like? Taste like? Sound like? How do we touch Resurrection? Embrace resurrection? How do we sing Resurrection to and with one another and our neighborhood? We may not see Christ's wounded hands in front of us, but how do we notice those hands at work among us and within us?

Take some time in worship this week to sit in silence and listen; open the windows and feel the breeze flowing through the space. Depending on the size of your congregation, you might set up sensory prayer stations with simple meditations on Resurrection paired with an exercise to engage one or more of the senses. If not during worship, Sunday school classes might engage these stations before worship and then have a time of reflection within the worship service. Consider planning a call-and-response hymn or prayer where one side of the room sings to or prays over the other. Prepare everyone to listen and receive the singing or blessing of others, even as they reciprocate the song or prayer. Engaging the senses to notice God at work—to witness the reality of Christ's resurrection—does not have to be complicated. We can begin simply by inviting the gathered body to pay attention to all the ways we engage our senses to worship the resurrected Christ who lives among us, to receive Christ's resurrection life within us, and to go into the world to share the good news as people of the resurrected Christ.

*Dr. Lisa Hancock, Director of Worship Arts Ministries, served as an organist and music minister in United Methodist congregations in the legacy Northwest Texas and North Texas Annual Conferences. After receiving her Master of Sacred Music and Master of Theological Studies from Perkins School of Theology, she earned her PhD in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University, where she researched and wrote on the doctrine of Christ, disability, and atonement. Lisa is also the co-lead of Growing in Grace: Accessible Worship for All God's Children.*

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