Sermon Title: The Good News of Easter

- The Sunday after Easter is known as "Low Sunday," partly due to lower attendance and the emotional shift after Easter celebrations.

- Many find Lent easier to relate to than Easter because its penitential nature aligns with our experience of a broken world.

- After Easter, the world still seems full of grief, sin, and disappointment, creating an "empty space" between the Easter proclamation and lived reality.

- Thomas serves as a relatable figure: he doubts, isolates himself in his grief, and demands tangible proof of Jesus' resurrection.

- Jesus meets Thomas in his doubt, offering peace and an invitation to trust — a reassurance that faith is possible even amid brokenness.

- Christ's message is that where the world fails, he remains faithful; where the world wounds, he heals.

- Jesus continues to meet us in our doubts today, offering hope, calling us by name, and entrusting us with the work of his love and reconciliation.

- The call for us is to encourage one another, believe that life triumphs over death, and trust that through believing, we may have life in his name.

Questions

1. How does Jesus' greeting of "Peace be with you" to the disciples (including Thomas) shape our understanding of his response to fear, grief, and doubt?

2. Why do you think Thomas insisted on seeing and touching Jesus' wounds before believing, and what does this tell us about the relationship between faith and evidence?

3. What does Jesus' interaction with Thomas reveal about how he meets us in our doubts and struggles?

4. In what ways does the risen Jesus' appearance in a locked room challenge our ideas about his presence in our own "locked" or fearful places?

5. John writes that these signs are recorded "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God." How do the events of this passage strengthen or challenge your faith today?

6. What does it mean for us practically to "have life in his name" as John says, especially when the world around us still shows signs of brokenness?