



# Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 22, 2018

### Third Place

John 10:11-18

Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ever been to Starbucks? The great gathering place in nearly every neighborhood we pass through; once in time, the best stopping spot for a rest room in Paris, The Latin Quarter. I still know the entry code. A place to be, a Third Place.

Not a new concept, but a moment in time between home and the place we find ourselves at work, at vocation. Again, a place to gather.

For the followers of Jesus; those first post-crucifixion folk, recall that the Third Place had been a room behind locked doors, out of fear; before the press of the news that Jesus had been raised.

Recall the past week's readings? It just seemed that everywhere they went; He would show up with the simple declaration "Peace be with you!" As if to say, "Let the mission continue, I am with you."

Then...out and about, after the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus ascended to the Father, and they were, as we are, the front line of mission.

Same names, (Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander); titled ones "rules, elders, scribes" who thought they were done with these rag-tag Galileans who followed the Nazarene.

Another interrogation: Fresh from jail; "What power have you, in whose name do you speak?" And there is Peter..."Here we stand, with the healed one, in the name of Jesus Christ, the One you killed, the One whom God raised! There is righteousness and redemption in Him." As if to say, "Nothing can keep us quiet and the world is now a Third Place where we are 1. **Resting in the Holy Spirit!**"

2. **Living in Love.** To rest in the Holy Spirit, in the world, our Third Place, is to be rooted in self-giving love, like that of God in Christ, which is action oriented with truth and boldness as we "believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another." Which is to abide, to believe, and to trust that the mission we have cannot be overcome, overwhelmed...domesticated by the headlines, the pace, the anxiety of the culture of fear, doubt, self-serving where we are tempted to forget we are named and claimed to be the Body of Christ in the world. Bearing with Eleanor and Thomas in the Sign that heals, redeems, grounds us in God's rest Life as Sabbath!) each moment of life.

We are the keepers of the vision and the life of Christ in the world. We do so as those who carry the love of Christ out of our circle of redemption; our place of reconciliation and relationships meant to continue the good news sending to the ends of the earth.

This past week our new Stewardship Committee met under the leadership of Andy Hogle. It was a Spirit-led time of sharing a common vision for us in the days ahead. Not one of us mentioned "dollars." As thoughts flowed, key words were "generosity," "sacramental giving," "responding." Then, the word WHY?" As in why do we do stewardship.

From that question came words like "relationship" and "friendship." All of which we agreed flows out of "worship."

For here is the vital center of our life together. Here in this place is THE place where we learn that our fellowship is lived through "The Shepherd, the good one" ...THE ONE, who words seal us ..."I know my own and my own know me." He is the One who laid down His life for us that we might live with Him, for Him, in Him forever."

Here is what it means to hold that 3. **Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**

- ✠ Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church is a gathering of those who believe, teach, and confess that God is in the midst of us and the center of our life together. And we are here as those forgiven and set free to be on the Way of love with one another, never alone, no fear, only a way to walk as one.
- ✠ Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church is a congregation of people who speak and act the truth in love knowing that we do not live by the model of perfection, but that we are knit together as those who hold deeply the bonds of relationship. We are, you are, brothers and sisters who find companionship in the One who guides us each day.
- ✠ Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church is a community which stands and lives for life. Thriving in creating places where all are led beside the still waters of a Font in which we are called to trust as foundational that "goodness and mercy shall follow us all of our days and we shall dwell as one in the house of the Lord forever."

In fact, the world is our THIRD PLACE and this is the place where we find all we can ever need to fulfill the mission goals of Christ that all might know that they are loved!

This Lord's Day, may we hear anew the call of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit reestablishing us as a colony of heaven on earth.

This time, our time, God's time to hear---

*Follow, come and follow me. Let my Spirit lead the way.*

*Follow, come and follow me. To the Kingdom's brand new day!*

*Follow me, follow me. Let my grace your soul anew.*

*Take my bread, and receive My Abundant life in you.*