

Readings for April 16, 2023
United Church of Strafford In Person and Zoom Service

Responsive Reading *adapted from Psalm 16*

Leader: Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
You are my God. I have no good apart from you.

People: **Holy ones can still be found in the land
upholding the law of love.
They are springs of delight in a desert.**

Leader: Those who bow down before the false gods
of selfishness, greed and ambition
create suffering and sorrow in this world.
They sacrifice the blood of the earth
to their own gain.

People: **O God, you are my chosen portion,
I sacrifice all I have to your service.
I place my life in your hands.**

Leader: The boundary lines fall in pleasant places for me—
a goodly heritage in you and in all that is holy.

People: **You give me counsel, O God, and I thank you;
in the night my heart instructs me.**

Leader: I keep you always before me;
because you are at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

People: **Therefore my heart is glad,
and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.**

All: **You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

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A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.