



ELK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

March - April 2018

From the Pastor's Study...

Diane Roth is a Lutheran pastor in Texas. She tells a story about a friend of hers who, though from Texas, apparently wasn't familiar with the Spanish language. The friends and her husband were traveling in Spain. They visited a number of cathedrals there, sometimes while services were being held. Their guides had warned them to beware of thieves, so she was holding her purse fairly close. She grew alarmed inside one church when a woman approached her. Primed to expect the worst, the Spanish woman approached the American visitor, stuck out her hand, and spoke some words she didn't know. She shrank away.

It wasn't until afterwards that she realized what those words were: "*La paz de Dios.*" The peace of God. She was sharing "the peace." Or trying to, anyway...

I haven't decided whether to use it or not, but soon after Easter one of our scripture readings is the story of the disciple Thomas, who would not believe Jesus was back until he touched him. It was Thomas that Jesus invited to place his finger in the wound Jesus received from the guard at the crucifixion. Jesus was gone, and then he wasn't.

But it's not that reappearance I want to emphasize here. Notice that in this story (John 20:19-31), Jesus' first words to Thomas are, "*Peace be with you.*" Why say that? Not, "How ya doin'?" "What's up, Thomas?" None of the usual greetings. Just, "*Peace....*"

How often have we all recoiled when somebody approached us, and our instincts took over, the urge to protect and to preserve. The unfamiliar plays on our deepest fears, and the past reminds us of what we hate.

Yet Jesus offers here, in four words, the antidote. "Peace" can mean a lot of things, like the absence of conflict. But what he means with the words "*Peace be with you*" is something more, something truly rare: peace as reconciliation. He means that whatever may have separated us from each other in the past is no more.

That kind of peace is truly rare. I'm not a fan of the cross. I recall that it's an instrument of torture and execution, and that's bad enough. I also know that today people act as though if they talk about the cross enough, then everything for them will

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

March

Burghardt, Brian	5
Losinski, Coral	6
Evans, Donna (Duerson)	8
Sissie Sharp	8
Chewning, Doug	10
Schultz, Darrell	10
Klingenberg, Bob	10
Hawkins, Joe	11
Polonsky, Stan	12
Smith, Makenzie	12
Pitcher, Kelly	14
Vaughan, Joey & Clorese	16
Kidd, David	20
Brown, Dottie	22
Shoop, Bruce	23
Hart, Gay Anne	24
Ward, Mindy & Doug	26
Robertson, Pam	27
Wendt, Cheryl	29
Wendt, Howie	29

April

Edmonds, Larry	04
Hupp, Janis	05
Ward, Matthew	05
Mason, Phillip & Linda	10

Koslow, Lori	11
DiFranco, Michele	13
Stahl, Norman & Lee	13
DiFranco, Michele	13
Anderson, Sharon	25
Sherred, John	28
Vaughan, J.B.	29
Keefer, Robbin	29
Wilson, Sandra	30



Together in Christ.

Alana Frazier