

# **At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing**

Words: Latin Hymn (6th cent.) Tr. by Robert Campbell (1849)

Music: George J. Elvey (1859)

# **Old Orchard Church**

**Third Sunday of Easter — May 4, 2014**

See print copy for artwork.

**If you confess with your mouth  
Jesus as Lord,  
and believe in your heart that  
God raised him from the dead,  
you will be saved.**

**— Romans 10:9 —**

## **Credits**

**Cover art:** "Doubting Thomas." From the St. Albans Psalter, early 12<sup>th</sup> century, England.

# Celebrating Jesus as the Community of Resurrection Faith

Having seen the risen Christ,  
The disciples were filled with peace  
And strengthened in faith.

Yet they wait in Jerusalem till clothed with power from on high,  
The Holy Spirit's power:

Power for believing the truth,  
And for courage to speak it;  
Power for living Christ's resurrection life  
In the form of love, animated by faith.

And we who have trusted their eyewitness testimony—  
They who heard his voice,  
Who saw him alive,  
Who handled the resurrected flesh of the Word of Life—  
Are filled with the same Spirit.

O risen Lord, increase our faith  
And fill it with power!



## Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Habakkuk 2:1-4

Gospel Reading: John 20:24-29

Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 11:1-12

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## Christianity in Ephesus, Christianity in St. Louis Series Sermon

"What Marriage Is—And Is For" (Part II)  
Ephesians 5:21-33

Ron Lutjens, Lead Pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

# Faith and What We Know

[Consider how] the disciples come to know Christ. Compare it also with your own conversion. Jesus appeals to sense perception guided by an authoritative interpretation. Jesus asks about John the Baptist, "What is it that you saw?" as he teaches the people who John (and who He Himself) really is (Matt. 11:7-9). Peter sees the empty fishnet suddenly fill with fish (Luke 5:6), the disciples see the winds and waves calm at a word (Matt. 8:24-27).

At other times it feels more like an unreasonable choice and is accompanied by doubt. John the Baptist doubts that Jesus is the one who is to come (Matt. 11:2), especially as he himself faces execution. Thomas doubts that Jesus has risen from the dead (John 20:25).

Jesus responds with evidence, but never claims that we will see it as evidence without some supernatural eye-opening. Jesus says, "Tell John what you've seen and heard" (Matt. 11:4-6). Jesus lovingly makes Thomas eat his words: **"Put your fingers here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe"** (John 20:27). My favorite: the two crestfallen disciples talk theology with the risen Jesus they have not recognized, and then suddenly we witness Scripture's most wonderful, Spirit-prompted, "Oh! I see it!" moment (Mark 16:12-13).

"Stop doubting and believe" aptly expresses the epistemic act [the act of knowing]. Jesus tells us to put our trust in what He tells us and we will perceive aright. Scripture also makes it perfectly clear that only if the Holy Spirit graciously opens our eyes—eyes disposed to rebel against their Maker—will we grasp the truth.

Sometimes trusting God feels like the magic-eye picture—sudden recognition. Sometimes it feels like...trusting the surgeon.... These are divergent points on a spectrum.... The degree of doubt does not disqualify the act [of knowing]. God continually demonstrates His patience with the doubts of crabby psalmists and cocky disciples.

Can we be certain of anything? Yes, if by certainty we mean the confidence or trust we put in a person's word on the basis of his character.... I believe my husband's words because I know him to be truthful. Even more, I believe God's Word because I have put my trust in His steadfastly perfect character: **"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced (certain, confident) that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day"** (2 Timothy 1:12b).

If certainty is trust, and God is who He says He is, our proper epistemic [=knowing] confidence must be placed in God alone. To do otherwise is idolatrous, not to mention misguided. It is a resolve I can maintain even when I doubt. And in its light, He promises me that I will apprehend truth. I will know the One who is Truth. *Credo ut intelligam*: "I believe in order to understand."

—Dr. Esther Meek (1999)