

Sermon – John 14:1-14
David R. Lyle
Grace Lutheran Church
5 Easter – Year A
3 May 2026

“Show Me”

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!**

Friends in Christ, grace be unto you and peace in the name God the Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. I've never been to Ireland, which is a shame considering I lived right across the sea in Scotland for a year. But I do hope to go one day, if only to live out the old joke in real life. Perhaps you know the one. I'd like to get lost and ask a farmer, "How do I get to Dublin?" Hopefully, the farmer would know the punchline: "Well, if it's Dublin you're wanting, I sure wouldn't start from here!" Sometimes the problem isn't where we're trying to go, it's where we are right now. That's certainly the issue for Thomas in that upper room in Jerusalem on the night before Jesus' death. Jesus, having shared a meal and washed their feet, now tries to get his friends ready for what's coming next. Do not let your hearts be troubled; yes, I'm going away, Jesus says, but I go with a purpose. To prepare for you a dwelling place. You'll know how to follow. Thomas, trapped like the rest of us in the dead end of sin and death simply cannot see a way forward. Dwelling places, Jesus? Sounds nice, but I don't think we can get there from here.
2. While I don't keep statistics, I'd guess that I've preached on this passage, or the first half of it, anyway, more than any other from the gospels. Perhaps you wondered why it sounds familiar, or perhaps you made the connection right away. John 14 is often chosen to be read at funerals and memorial

services, and with good reason. In the midst of deep sorrow and grief, Jesus' words cut through with great comfort. In the face of death itself, Jesus proclaims that our hearts need not be troubled. He has come to make a way for us. Just yesterday, these words gave comfort as we gathered in this room to give thanks for Rhea's life, and to proclaim that in the face of death, life wins out. But sometimes, I think, we make the promise too small. Yes, Jesus makes a way for us to get from here to there, but we are left wondering if *there* has anything to do with *here*. The promise of eternal life is at the very heart of the gospel, but it is not the gospel in its entirety. When the Good Shepherd describes the life he has come to give to his sheep, Jesus does not say that he has come to bring life eternal. Instead, as we heard last week, he brings life abundant.

3. Thomas, uncertain of how anything good can come out of the suffering and death in which they live, gives voice to our wonderings and doubts. Even on this side of Easter, we have our questions. It seems, after all, as if so much remains the same. Violence and war rage on. Sickness and suffering endure while health care becomes more elusive for many. Material abundance is all around us, but life feels somehow harder than before. For some, our calendars are so full that life is an endless logistical puzzle, leaving little time for real connection. Others have been forgotten, neglected, leading lives of isolation and loneliness. J.R.R. Tolkien, through one of his characters, speaks for us: We feel thin, stretched, "like butter spread over too much bread." And the truth of the matter is that we have brought ourselves to this point. We like to imagine that we have the power to chart our own course, create our own destiny. But we have lost the way. How to get there from here?
4. The *how*, it turns out, is a *who*. Jesus enters our suffering, assumes our sin, endures the consequences to our actions, to show us that our ways can never lead to life, let alone to the abundant life God desires for us in both this world and the next. Our old lives go with him to the cross and are left behind in the

tomb. We cannot, Jesus makes clear, find our own way to God, to life. We are simply too far gone. But Jesus makes it equally clear that we no longer have to find our own way. Jesus is the way. The destination has come to us. The earliest Christians were known as the people of “the Way.” Frederick Buechner, musing upon what a Christian is, writes of this way: Jesus “said that it was only by him—by living, participating in, being caught up by, the way of life that he embodied,” that we would come to know the life and presence of God. The gift of eternal life is promised to you. It cannot be taken away. In this promise is an invitation to reflection. How is your life a life on the way today? This, to be clear, is not a question of demand, a turning of gospel into law, as if you need to do anything. It is, rather, the joyful question that arises when the stone has been rolled away. It is the question that takes seriously Jesus’ promise that we will do great works in God’s name. Christ, who was dead, is alive. You are alive and on the way with him. What now will you do?

5. This morning, we recognize and celebrate Dean and Beverly Lueking, who welcomed into their home and family more than thirty children who were part of the foster care system. What a faithful embodiment of the abundant life of Easter. In welcoming these children into their lives, their home became a sign of God’s home, in which there is room enough for all and a dwelling place for each. It is work that is still needed today. Last year, Lutheran Child and Family Services helped foster families care for nearly 2,000 children, a fraction of the total children in need of loving, caring homes in Illinois. Perhaps this is work to which you are called. Perhaps there are other means of embodied care and ministry to which you are called. What is God speaking to you? How does God intend the life of Easter to be manifest in your abundant life? What will you build upon the stone that was rejected but has become the cornerstone of a whole new world?

6. Today, Jesus speaks promise to us. We no longer need to worry about the destination. One day, we will in great joy discover the life of the new creation. Can you imagine? And we, on earth, give thanks that our beloved ones are already safe on that bright far shore with Jesus. But Jesus is with us, too. Jesus makes God's home with us here. The truth of the matter is that he is the only way to the life God intends. And the gift is that this life has already begun for you. If it's God you're wanting, starting right here will do fine. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!**

And now may the peace that passes all understanding keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus, this day and forever. Amen.