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THE CHURCH**

ST. LUCAS UCC

*Transforming lives
as the hands and feet of Christ*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

April 7-8

“The Spirit Connection”

By Rev. Keith Herron

What Is This?

This brief guide is intended for use individually, or in small groups. It's your chance to dive deeper into the issues raised in the weekend sermon and to connect a Biblical story with your daily life.

Revisit the Text

John 20:19-31; <https://bit.ly/2Jq67tr>

Big Ideas Raised

- The season of Easter are those weeks after the resurrection (the post-resurrection days) but before the ascension of Jesus and the experience of Pentecost when the Spirit took up residence in the church.
- The Easter story begins and ends in a tomb. It begins with the story of Jesus' betrayal and cruel death. They laid his lifeless body in a borrowed tomb and rolled a huge stone over its entrance to seal it. But that's not the only tomb opened on that first day. Besides the tomb where Jesus' body was placed, there was also the tomb where the disciples hid themselves. This is a foreshadowing story as it illumines Jesus' own experience in the tomb. Everything about Lazarus is true about Jesus.
- Jesus found them the evening of that first day alive from the dead. John's gospel tells us they were gathered together (all but Thomas) behind locked doors, when inexplicably he stood among them. Imagine that, Jesus had to break out of one tomb and into another to get his message out into the world!
- Jesus gave these sequestered disciples 4 gifts to strengthen them: 1. "Peace be with you" (his typical post-resurrection greeting), 2. God-breath, he vivified them with his breath, 3. The power to forgive, and 4. Acceptance in spite of our faith or our doubt.

Questions Meant to Dig Deeper

- Why did the disciples hide themselves? Why the locked doors? Why were they hiding?
- They seemed stunned by Jesus' appearance. Is that how you would react?
- How does the story of faith continue in a new direction after the resurrection? What is it that's new in how we think about faith? What difference does the resurrection make?
- Which of the four gifts are most meaningful to you as you live out your faith?

Revisit the Sermon

For a recording or a manuscript of this weekend's sermon, please visit:

<https://www.stlucasucc.org/sermons-resources>