

Sermons at  
First Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
Reggie Denton, Pastor

John 20:19-31  
April 16, 2023 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter)  
Holy Humor Sunday

Do you feel a little discombobulated? Imagine how the DISCIPLES felt? Out of sorts, inside, outside, upside down! Jesus was dead and in the tomb. And now they've JUST heard from Mary Magdalene that he's ALIVE. They didn't know WHAT to think. They didn't understand what was going on or WHY it was happening. They'd LOCKED themselves in the upper room.

This service is DESIGNED to give you a sense of how THEY felt that first Easter. Everything is all backwards and upside down. Maybe you've sort of locked YOURSELF up too.

But LOCKED DOORS can't keep JESUS out. "Jesus came and stood among them," it SAYS, "and the disciples REJOICED when they saw the Lord."

You see, JOY is what the CHURCH is supposed to LOOK like. You see it again and again in scripture. Jesus loves a good PARTY! He performed His first miracle at a wedding reception in Cana, turning water into wine. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus tells us that the overjoyed father threw a big party for his returning son. "We are going to have a feast, a celebration," the father declared, "because this son of mine was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:23-24).

I think that's one of the reasons the church grew so FAST in those first few centuries. The church was a JOYFUL place, and people wanted to be PART of a community like that.

Joy brings LAUGHTER, especially when it follows the RELEASE of a BURDEN. Ecc 3(:4) says, "There is a time to weep AND a time to laugh, a time to mourn AND a time to dance." Jesus said, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you WILL laugh" (Luke 6:21). So, considering the LOSS the DISCIPLES had experienced, I imagine there was A LOT of laughter in that upper room after Jesus appeared to them.

So today we celebrate Holy Humor Sunday. Jesus has the last laugh over death, so today we're going to SHARE some laughter – at least I HOPE so. Church members have been sending me your favorite jokes for YEARS, and today I want to share some of them with YOU.

Not surprisingly, most church member favorites are about kids. They're not jokes so much as "kids say the darnedest things." I know you will be good Lutherans and smile as loudly as you can.

**Now to start off, one of the things we love about our children is their innocence:**

A little boy opened the big family Bible with fascination, looking at the old pages as he turned them. Then something fell out of the Bible and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages. "Mama, look what I found," the boy called out. "What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked. With astonishment in the young boy's voice he answered, "It's Adam's UNDERWEAR!!"

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away. "Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer." said his mother.

"I don't have to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do," his mother insisted. "We say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's our house," Johnny explained. "But this is Grandma's house and she KNOWS how to cook!"

**Speaking of prayer, it's one of the first things we try to teach our kids, but be careful – they're listening:**

A woman invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother said.

The little girl bowed her head and said: "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, "So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?"

The little boy replied, "Every night she says, 'Thank God he's in bed!'"

A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

**Speaking of church:**

A little boy was attending his first wedding. After the service, his cousin asked him, "How many people can you marry?"

"Sixteen," the boy responded.

His cousin was amazed that he gave the answer so quickly. "How do you know that?"

"Easy," the little boy said. "All you have to do is add it up, like the preacher said: 4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer. That's 16."

It was Palm Sunday and, because of a sore throat, little five-year-old Johnny stayed home from church with a sitter. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm branches. The boy asked what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by," his older brother explained. "Wouldn't you know it," the boy fumed. "The one Sunday I don't go, He showed up!"

A pastor giving a children's message about the vestments asked, "Why do you think I wear this collar?" One kid answered, "Because it kills fleas and ticks up to 30 days?"

One little girl was the pastor's daughter. In a Sunday school class, and the teacher was telling the class how Jesus died. And the girl said, "I suppose my dad will have HIS funeral too."

One preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why.

"Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon."

"How come He doesn't do it?" she asked.

After the church service a little boy told the pastor, "When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money."

"Well, thank you," the pastor replied, "but why?"

"Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

A Sunday School teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be QUIET in church?" One bright little girl replied, "We need to be quiet because people are sleeping."

**Now one thing about Sunday School is sometimes the kids take us a little too literally.**

One Sunday School teacher asked her class to draw pictures of their favorite Bible stories. She was puzzled by one particular boy's picture, which showed 4 people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

"The flight to Egypt," he responded.

"I see, and that must be Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus," the teacher said. "But who's the 4<sup>th</sup> person?"

"Oh, that's Pontius, the Pilot."

At one Catholic elementary school, the children were lined up for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun had made a note posted on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching."

At the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

A Sunday School teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor" thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Another Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mommy looked back once while she was driving, and SHE turned into a telephone pole!"

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down like he was sick, and she said, "Johnny, what's the matter?"

Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a WIFE."

So remember, you don't stop laughing because you grow old; you grow OLD because you stop laughing. Don't stop laughing. Laughter is a gift from God. Amen.