**2 Easter, April 12, 2015, Acts 4:32-35; Ps 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31; Rev. Mary S. Trainor**

The NYC show is called "Alive: 55+ and Kickin" and were reported about on a CBS "60 minutes" segment earlier this year. Oh my, what fantastic singing voices with gospel, jazz, R&B, and pop music! You can hear them on YouTube. "Alive and Kickin" is a show that was created by a theater producer and former disc jockey named Vy Higginson. Higginson's goal is to preserve a special part of American culture, and she found her extraordinary singers in everyday places: churches, amateur groups. None of the singers are famous, all of them are over 55, and each of them has a story to tell. The publicity for "Alive and Kickin" show says: "Real people, telling real stories! They are a pool of untapped talent that is now shining brightly.

If someone says to you, "I am alive and kicking" what are they telling you? The phrase "alive and kicking" has been around since 1801, when crab fishermen used it to convince customers of the freshness of their crabs. This idiom, "alive and kicking" is used to let others know that you are alert, active. I have used it at times in my life, like after I had my appendix out, and was recovering nicely. People who have recently gone through a tough time use the phrase, to reassure their friends they are OK.

Today is an "alive and kicking" sort of day in church. On this first Sunday after Easter, we focus on living into and out of the resurrection. We see, in the Gospel of Thomas before Jesus, that Jesus is very much alive and kicking. We are **alive**, because Christ rose and defeated death and gives us new life in Him. We are **kicking,** because we are actively living out the resurrection sharing God's love. We see, in our other three readings, that we are being asked to be alive and kicking in terms of how we live every day with each other. In our Acts reading this morning, we heard about what life was like in the early church: "***the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul...everything was held in common....There was not a needy person among them***." Professor Timothy Sedgwick, of the Virginia Theological Seminary, says this in his book "The Christian Moral Life:"**In the early church the development of faith did not begin narrowly in worship but in joining a group of seekers who were taught the story of faith as a way of life....an alternative community...A new life was experienced....the church formed disciples, followers of this way**." In our lives as Christians, we learn to live out our faith in Jesus' footsteps little-by-little every week.

Easter is a season in the church where we are particularly to focus on how we are living out the resurrection. In our opening hymn (#182), "Christ is alive," we sang these words: "**Christ is alive! His Spirit burns through this and every future age, till all creation lives and learns his joy, his justice, love, and praise**." We are the ones to live out Jesus' "**joy, justice, love, and praise**."

In today's Gospel, the disciples were not out there sharing God's "**joy, justice, love, and praise**" -- but rather they were locked inside a house because of fear. We too like to hide behind closed doors or hide behind our feeling of inadequacy; we tend to go it alone, relying on ourselves alone and not inviting Jesus to be with us. It is sure a whole lot easier to talk about Jesus here in church than it is out there! But out there is where we are called to serve God. Here are two of our dismissals, that send us out at the end of our worship with this charge (BCP p. 366): "**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord**," "**Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.**" The disciples sure went out boldly into the world after they saw the risen Christ, after He breathed His Holy Spirit upon them. Jesus understood their doubts and uncertainties, and He met them there, as they were. Jesus meets us where we are, then fills us with His Light, empowers us with His Spirit. Acts 4: 33 says, "***With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all***."

And we are to: "Go **in peace -- to love and serve the Lord**." Peace is the word Jesus uses three times in this morning's Gospel to make our being "alive and kicking" in Him possible. "Peace" means that Jesus is at work in us, in the world; it means resurrection. It means that with the ***breathe*** of Christ in us we can share God's love. If we have God's "***peace that passes all understanding***" (Philippians 4:7), then going out there living out our faith comes naturally. The word "peace" sounds like a passive word, a "sitting in your lounge chair" kind of word....and yet it is not that at all. It is very active.

It is spring, and we will be out playing in the parks before we know it. In our parks there is a range of playground equipment. Think about teeter totters. Living out our faith with God's peace that passes all understanding is bit like a teeter totter. They can be calm playground equipment: sit and quietly balance. Even in this calm balancing state, being on a teeter totter is an active thing - balance requires lots of muscles and focus. Teeter totters can be kicking too! Interacting with a partner on the other side can be challenging: your partner can leave you hanging, or bang you down to the ground, or even lift you off your seat. As we go about our lives serving God, this way of life can be exciting, unpredictable, require balance, require interacting with others....just like that teeter totter.

When we live every day out of the peace of God, from a place of inner peace caused by Jesus living inside of us, we are "alive and kicking" about our faith. Our 2nd reading this morning (1 John 1:7) said, "***if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.***"

Live out your faith from God's energy or strength, filled with Christ's light and love. The new life that Jesus ushered in through the resurrection is a world of support, of generosity, of blessings. **Breathe in God's peace, and go forth "alive and kicking" in the risen Christ. The Lord is risen, indeed! Alleluia. Amen.**