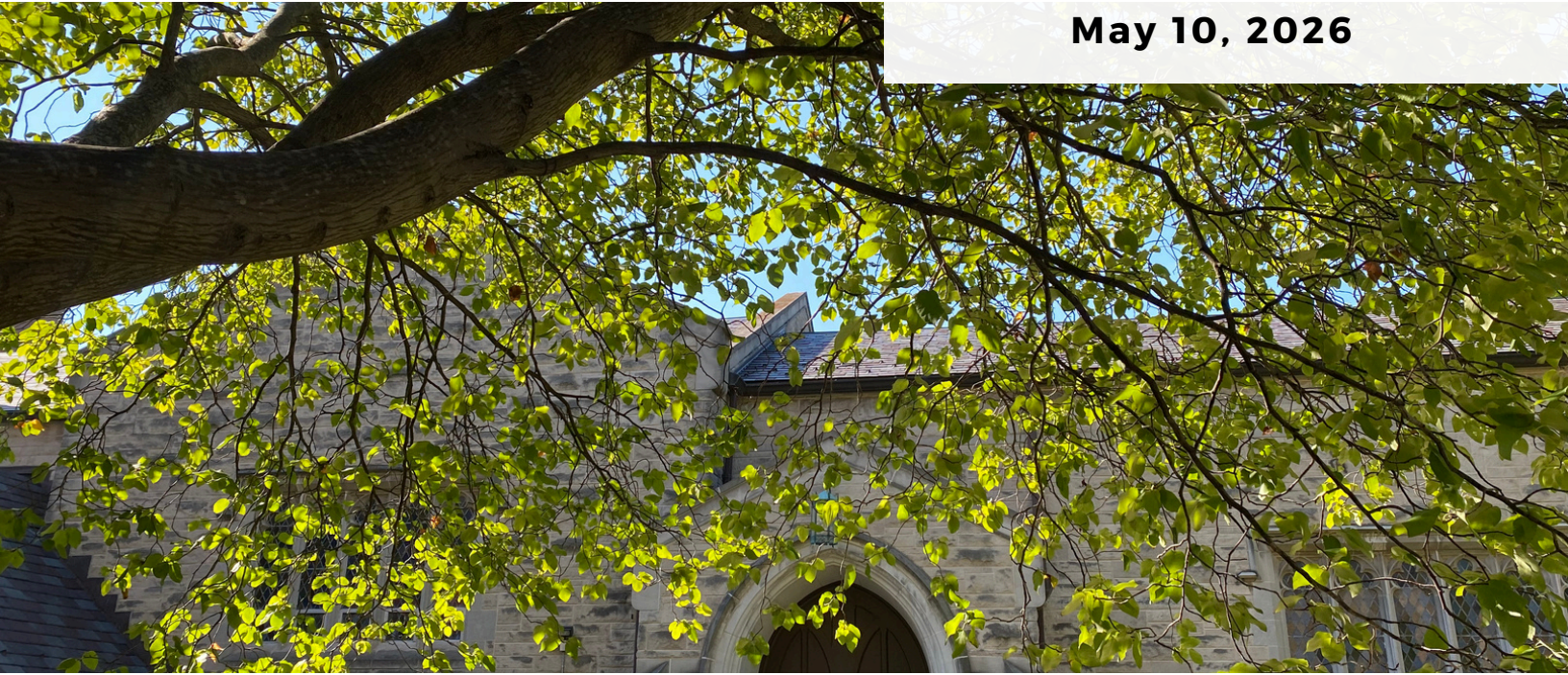


THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

May 10, 2026



KEEPING

the certainty we seek is in the doing

by Drew Downs

While the disciples are obsessing over certainty of belief, conviction, knowing what the future holds, where all of this following Jesus is going, and what God wants for the world, Jesus tries to assure them that they already know the way. They have what they need. And on top of that, they'll have the Holy Spirit with them. The promise of Jesus's presence. All of this is very good. And yet he wants them to get something else through their heads: do the work.

He tells them to keep his commandments. Which, remember, isn't a lot. It's love God and your neighbor as yourself. This isn't an exhaustive list, nor is it a terribly challenging collection of rules. It is, however, the center of our common gravity. And this alone makes it the heart of our faith.

So when Jesus says to keep his commands, it isn't as a taskmaster. He's reminding us that this is how we trust, how we love him.

EASTER

2026

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Rogation Sunday

One of the traditions of the church is to offer blessing to homes, farms, gardens, and spaces of new life during the Easter season. At a time when people plant tomatoes and annuals, till and seed the fields, we offer a blessing to the soil.

Jesus uses a lot of plant imagery in his teachings because it is one of the best examples we have of something we do with a promise that tomorrow, we hope to see the fruit of the work today.

The seeds go in the ground and it takes time for the plants to break through the soil and sprout. And no matter how much confidence and certainty we might have about the biological process, we still have to wait. We plant and wait and trust.

Doesn't this sound like life, though? Even as so much of life gives the illusion of instant gratification, direct consequence, and a certainty of realized effect. That, if we follow this five-step process, we'll see instant gains, like a bad infomercial promising a flatter stomach or younger skin.

Infomercials and quick-fix solutions rely on hope for the magical thinking. But they also prey on our impatience, our fear of failure, and a willingness to seek shortcuts to ensure we get there (wherever there is) faster.

This week, on the Sunday before Ascension Day, we celebrate Rogation Sunday, when we celebrate and bless creation with prayer and fasting. I encourage us to focus on what we do and what we hope will come. That our lives might be the seeds that, through the love of the gardner, may one day produce.

With love,
Drew+

EASTER

2026

FOR SUNDAY

Easter 6A

May 10, 2026

Collect

○ God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

John 14:15-21

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

EASTER

Reflection

We continue in the Farewell Discourse in John, where Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples at the Last Supper. Which always feels like a weird read for Easter. Like, this was all *before* this late unpleasantness. But I get it. Especially since Jesus is going to be going away again in the Ascension and this message of imparting on the disciples this sense of getting their work done remains relevant.

We continue this week from last week's reading, when Jesus was talking about The Way and Thomas asks how he's supposed to know he's doing this following the way right if he doesn't even know where he's going! And then Philip jumps in demanding proof and Jesus is like, *what do you think the last year way, my dudes!*

Modern Christians will no doubt have an easier time with this week's gospel reading. It seems like a defense of Trinitarian theology and a primer on the third persona of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. But I think it represents half of the assurance Thomas (and many, many followers after him) was asking for. How do we know the way? Well, the Spirit will guide you and help you know it.

In the 21st century, our relationship to certainty, truth, conviction, the Spirit, expertise, all of it, is complicated. We are drawn to evidence and systems which produce predictable outcomes and see in them a certainty we can't have in just trusting each other. And this constitutes are biggest challenge, I suspect. Because trust is our calling card and we'd better get better at it!

Perhaps an accurate, literal accounting of fact is essential. So is trusting God. That these often connect in surprising ways is a big part of faith. And something all of us can count on.

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