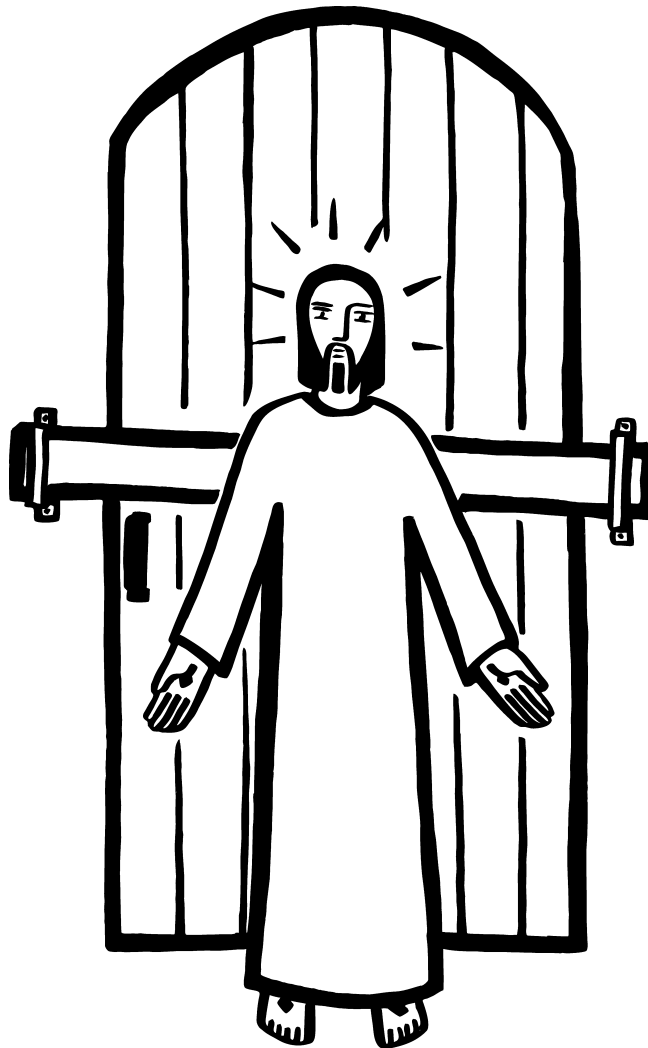


2nd Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2020



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026
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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and so for Easter the service will be pre-recorded from the Sanctuary. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

SERVICE OF THE WORD

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Worship Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Congregation: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Worship Leader: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the worship leader gives thanks.

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere.

Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

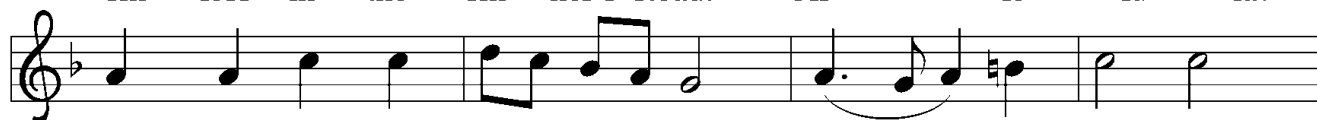
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia!



1 Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day; Al - le - lu - ia!
2 For the sheep the Lamb has bled, Al - le - lu - ia!



Chris-tians, has - ten on your way; Al - le - lu - ia!
sin - less in the sin - ner's stead. Al - le - lu - ia!



of - fer praise with love re - plete, Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!



at the pas - chal vic - tim's feet. Al - le - lu - ia!
now he lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!

EASTER GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Introduction to the Lesson: *After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.*

Reader: ^{14a}Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], ²²“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵For David says concerning him,

‘I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

‘He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 16

The psalm for the day is read responsively.

Reader: ¹Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;

I have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.”

**²All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

³But those who run after other gods
shall have their troubles multiplied.

**⁴I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,
never take their names upon my lips.**

⁵O LORD, you are my portion and my cup;
it is you who uphold my lot.

**⁶My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**

⁷I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night after night.

**⁸I have set the LORD always before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.

**¹⁰For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**

¹¹You will show me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures
forevermore.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction to the Lesson: *This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.*

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done (chorus)*



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL LESSON

John 20:19-31

Introduction to the Gospel: *The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord!*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 20th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

A Rip in the Seams

Rather than saddling him with a disgraced reputation and besmirching his character by dubbing him “the great doubter,” would it not be nearer the truth to reconsider and rightly recognize Thomas as a “most sincere believer”?

It was an easy and unsurprising move for Jesus’ disciples to seize upon the idea that following their Nazarene teacher would make them great. After all, nothing and no one seemed able to put a stranglehold on his triumphs: not hunger, disease, or storm; neither demons nor priests. He was God-sent, God-empowered, God-blessed.

But there was a rip in the seams that held all the pieces of those disciples’ gathered hopes together: Jesus’ unstoppable talk of least and last, served and suffering, freeing and forgiving, dying and departing.

So, when their imagination of who God is and how God acts failed them; when priests and courts condemned and soldiers killed their would-be king, Jesus; when Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped his body and buried his corpse, and Mary Magdalene’s unimaginable announcement, “I have seen the Lord” (John 20:18), left them doubtful and frightened—they locked their doors. The Lord they imagined—the way of God they had hoped for—was dead.

If Jesus’ miraculous entry somehow through closed and bolted doors and his spoken word first revived the doubting disciples’ faith, it happened differently for Thomas, who was not with them. The disciples reported to him what had happened, choosing the same words spoken by Mary Magdalene that, just days before, had left them doubtful: “We have seen the Lord” (John 20:25). Courageously honest, inviting pious disrepute through the ages, Thomas dared to say that he believed Jesus’ own predictive words about serving and suffering, dying and departing. Thomas trusted that the Christ would bear the marks, embody the scars, and retain the wounds of an unimaginable God. A week later, on seeing the risen Lord, Thomas’s belief was confirmed. In sincere faith indeed he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

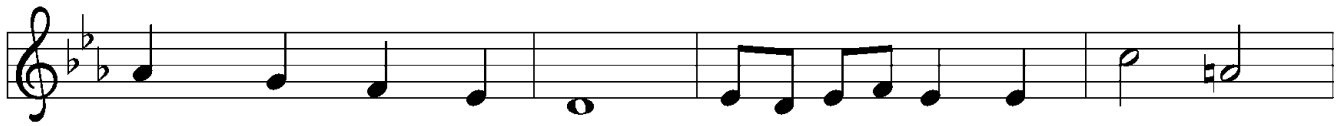
Thine Is the Glory



1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring Son; end - less is the
2 Lo, Je - sus meets thee, ris - en from the tomb! Lov - ing - ly he



vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won! An - gels in bright rai - ment
greet thee, scat - ters fear and gloom; let his church with glad - ness



Refrain



where thy bod - y lay.
death hath lost its sting! Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-qu'ring



Son; end - less is the vic - t'ry thou o'er death hast won!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: Open the doors we close, O God, when we fear those who worship you in different ways. Guide us to unity and harmony so that we may come to respect and cherish our commonalities. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Open the rooms we lock, O God, to those who live without a homeland or place of safety. We pray that generous nations offer refuge and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Open the hearts we close, O God, to the cries of those in pain. We pray for those isolated physically or emotionally through incarceration, addiction, mental illness, chronic suffering, grief, and all in need *especially* Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Pastor Bruce Edwards, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Eliezar Granados, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, the family and friends of Phyllis Clark, and those suffering from natural disasters, violence, and terror (especially the those impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, those in harm's way while serving in the military, Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Open the ways of love, O God, in the pursuit of peace throughout the world, and bless the efforts of missionaries, healthcare professionals, activists for

women and children, and relief workers, especially those who find themselves in harm's way. (*Here other worldwide ministries may be named.*) Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Open the way to eternal life, O God, as we remember those who have died in faith, especially Phyllis Clark. Free us from the fear of death, that we embrace the peace you have promised. Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.
Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. **You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.***

OFFERTORY



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872-1958

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

BLESSING

Worship Leader: May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re - sounds
2 E - ter - nal is the gift he brings,



in praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has
there - fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has

in praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has
there - fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has
tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Sing, choirs of
tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Now still he
an - gels, loud and clear! Re - peat their song of glo - ry
comes to give us life and by his pres - ence stills all
here: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"
strife. "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God’s Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Congregation: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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