

April 18, 2021 Third Sunday of Easter
Service of Word and Prayer

We are using parts of the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

The Gathering

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

Call to Worship: Creator of earth and sky, of endless space and burning stars, we come together in the belief that we are important to you. You created us; you sustain our lives; you fulfil us with hope. We give thanks for the miracle of spring and for the power of new life within us and our world; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 377 - WOV 674 - Alleluia, Jesus is Risen

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord be with you ~ and also with you.

Prayer of the day: Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

The Word

The First Reading is from **Acts 3: 12-19**

Psalm 4, is found on page 216

The Second Reading is from **1 John 3:1-7**

Please rise for the gospel lesson. ***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

Gospel: LUKE 24:36-48

This is the final chapter of the gospel of Luke. In the Sundays after Easter we hear the stories of Jesus appearances to the disciples.

Jesus predicted his Passion and resurrection three times before dying. On Easter Sunday, we heard of the women at the empty tomb. The women also ran and told Simon Peter. Then there is the familiar account of Cleopas and an unnamed companion encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus as they leave Jerusalem. (This account is not part

of our lectionary this year.) Last Sunday we heard of the risen Jesus appearing to the disciples and in particular to Thomas. In the scripture that I just read, we have a description of the meeting of Jesus and his disciples, again in the evening, again behind locked doors. They have heard many strange reports of “Jesus sightings”, and are trying to make sense of it all.

It feels like we are telling the same story over and over again. Each time the disciples unexpectedly meet the risen Christ, they do so with a mixture of fear, joy, disbelief and wonder. They think that he is a ghost! Even after all that had happened the disciples still did not believe.

Why?

I think it is because the resurrection takes time to sink in. They are not prepared when Jesus suddenly materializes. Fear is a natural human response. I think it would be our response. Jesus responds by saying “Peace be with you.” He meets the disciples where they are. Then, by inviting the disciples to touch him and see him, and by eating some fish, he encourages them to move beyond where they are. Death is transcended in Jesus. Then he tells them to be witnesses to all that has happened.

We cannot escape our own fears. Behind what locked door are you hiding? Our fear may be very personal, such as an illness. Other fears these days are loss, unemployment and loneliness. All of these fears are being played out today on our national level even on a global level. Underlying our fears is the one we cannot seem to talk about easily- the fear of death, our own, or that of someone we love. Our fears hold us captive. Hiding behind “locked doors” may help us feel more secure, but we are still left with our fears and mistrust. “How are we to be released from those fears to be a proper witness?”

Jesus opened the minds of the disciples for them to begin to see that death is not the final word. The hope of the resurrection is grounded in

the experience of those first followers. Christ plants the seeds of transformation.

We also enter the story. We gather together with our own doubts, confusions, fears and misunderstandings. Our faith community is the place where we can be encouraged in our Christian faith. Martin Luther once described the church as a place of “conversation and consolation of the faithful.”

Through worship we too unexpectedly meet the risen Christ. Perhaps this occurs through listening to the written scriptures and the preached word. Here we are offered an explanation, and a proclamation of what God has done and is doing.

We eat with Christ as we participate in Holy Communion, breaking and eating the bread of the resurrection in the Eucharist. In-between each breaking of the bread, we need to be reminded that we are known and loved in all of our brokenness and in all our self-absorbed concerns.

The Holy Spirit brings us enlightenment, by opening our hearts and minds. Christ, who holds us in love and grace and mercy forever, has also sent us out into the world, to be witnesses to this amazing news. Amen

Hymn: ELW 579 - WOV 756 - Lord You give the Great Commission

Our Response

OFFERING PRAYER Gracious God, receive our gifts as you receive us. You walk beside us and you meet us in hunger with bread from heaven. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ our saving grace. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People by Maureen Rueckwald

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the church embodies repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, like a master artist you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it is in need of restoration. Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and sustainable home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all, the nations hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Many call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the peace of Christ and give your lovingkindness to national, provincial, and local leaders of people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness *especially* Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving Parent, you have given us such love that we should be called the children of God. Reveal yourself to us so that we in this community of faith will become more and more like you in our mutual love and bold witness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all times and ages, those who have died in you now see you as you are. We thank you for their lives among us. Assure us of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always and also with you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **The Lord's Prayer:**

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.

Hymn: ELW 389 - LBW 363 - Christ is alive! Let Christians Sing

Benediction

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep you in peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Go in peace. and share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**