

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 11, 2021

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA



PRELUDE *O Sons and Daughters of the King* Setting: Timothy Shaw

WELCOME

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

ENTRANCE HYMN #471 *Sts. 1, 4-8 O Sons and Daughters of the King*

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| <p>1 O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave has lost its sting!
Alleluia!</p> <p>4 That night the apostles met in fear;
Among them came their master dear
And said, "My peace be with you here."
Alleluia!</p> <p>5 When Thomas first the tidings heard
That they had seen the risen Lord,
He doubted the disciples' word.
Alleluia!</p> | <p>6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,
And look upon My hands, My feet;
Not faithless but believing be."
Alleluia!</p> <p>7 No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"You are my Lord and God!" he cried.
Alleluia!</p> <p>8 How blest are they who have not seen
And yet whose faith has constant been,
For they eternal life shall win.
Alleluia!</p> |
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INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we come into the Lord's presence on this day, it is right for us to examine our lives in light of the will of God, to confess our sins, and to ask for God's forgiveness. We do this in the sure and certain hope that God will keep His promise and give us the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation for the sake of Jesus Christ. Let us then take time to recall the ways we have failed to uphold God's Law this week and confess these sins to Him.

(We observe a moment of silence for self-reflection.)

Most merciful God,

We confess our inability to be faithful in our promises to you and to walk in the way of Christ. We have neglected to serve others and have sought our own well-being rather than good for all. Acknowledging our sin, we look to you for mercy and healing. Strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and guide us in the path of humble service. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

THIS IS THE FEAST

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Power, riches, wisdom and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation.

Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Almighty God,
grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated) Acts 4:32-35

The full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 148

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
 praise him, all his hosts!

Praise him, sun and moon,
 praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
 and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the LORD!
 For he commanded and they were created.
And he established them forever and ever;
 he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth,
 you great sea creatures and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and mist,
 stormy wind fulfilling his word!

Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars!
Beasts and all livestock,
 creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and maidens together,
 old men and children!

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND LESSON 1 John 1:1-2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 20:19–31

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 20th chapter
Glory to You, O Lord.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy

Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (ESV)

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON

For all of us who are used to thinking that capitalism is the best form for a society, that it is thoroughly Christian, and that communism is atheistic and anti-Christ, this first of Eastertide's readings from Acts will unnerve us: **"..no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common."** And Luke wasn't done with that brief description of the first Christian Community. He goes on to describe the Apostle's powerful witness to Jesus' resurrection, and then as his explanation of **"great grace coming upon them,"** he adds, **"There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the Apostles' feet and it was distributed to each as any had need."**

To say that the resurrection of Jesus upended the world is not overstatement. The disciples took Jesus' command to **"love on another"** very seriously. That the Church chose to have us read this as our 1st Lesson on the 2nd Sunday of Easter is also important. What our Christian mothers and fathers thought it meant when Jesus said, **"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust cannot harm, and thieves cannot break in and steal,"** was actually put into practice. Please keep this uncomfortable idea near as we focus on today's Gospel and the story of Thomas.

On Easter evening the disciples were locked in what they hoped was a secret place, because they were afraid the Leaders would come for them next. There is no indication in any Gospel text that the Eleven had yet said, **"Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia."** The temperature in that locked room was fearful and disheartened. But, please note, not 11 but 10 of them were locked in with some others who were still part of Jesus' followers, like the Mary's and Cleopas from Emmaus. Ten. Because Thomas was out and about in the city when Jesus came.

John never explains Thomas' absence. He reports it to underscore that Jesus, bodily alive with the marks of the nails and the spear on His body, that Jesus was the means to faith for each of them. Thomas was clearly loved by the Ten, because they witnessed to Him what none of them had believed before, **"We have seen the Lord."** The death and resurrection of Jesus are the lynchpins of our faith, and the disciples were stumbling into grasping what was to be the center of the Gospel.

But I want you to imagine Thomas on the move that first Easter evening, which points to what would be a hallmark of his later ministry: he risked going beyond what was safe. I don't know where

Thomas went on Easter evening, perhaps to see to the well being of a member of the company who was not in the safe room. Perhaps to see if he could find Judas, whose betrayal must have deeply pained them all, and whose suicide was surely not yet known. I don't know where Thomas went, but he went. And He is the only one of the Apostles who went big, went all the way to India with the transforming power of the resurrection.

I am not saying that Thomas was convinced by his colleague's witness. He wasn't. Just as none of them had believed the witness of the Mary's on Easter morning, Thomas dismissed the story of the ten. It must be said that the road to resurrection faith for every one of the Eleven, and of Matthias, whom they would add to their holy number, it must be said that none of them came to resurrection faith except through the hands on appearance and ministry of Jesus. Jesus was patient with them all, just as He had been patient when they seemed to ignore every one of His predictions of His death. So patient that He came back on the 2nd Sunday of Easter just for Thomas. So patient that He exposed those nail marked hands and His spear pierced side. The point of everything is, **"Be not faithless but full of faith,"** that is believe that I am among you, just as I said.

But now come back to that troubling text from Acts. Resurrection is beyond everything. The dead are buried, and their tombs remain. To this day you can visit the ancient catacombs, the cemeteries of the era in Jerusalem and Rome. Only one rose. Only one has the holy marks of the nails yet stood alive among them. The world tipped upside down that day. And the Apostles changed their way of living in radical ways to show the resurrection to all the world. I will always remember the words of Nietzsche who measured Jesus by the 19th century church: ***"You Christians have to look a lot more redeemed if I am to believe in Your Christ."***

The Apostles and the Body of Believers in Jerusalem became very physical about how to be a resurrection community. It meant that the old *"getting as much as is legal for me"* was no longer a way for them to live. Because Jesus said to love even our enemies, the Apostles planted their example in the center of Jerusalem. They lived like no other Jews lived. They were arrested and often jailed, but they said, **"We must obey God rather than men."** That was resurrection living in the 1st century - so was pooling resources and sharing so that none had too much, and none went without. Those unnerving ideas from Acts 4 shout, **"Jesus is risen and coming again."** The fact that the poor of Jerusalem and Rome could receive food from the Christians, but not from the capitalists, meant something. Resurrection had changed how they lived, and the world knew it.

A far cry from the communal solution of the Jerusalem Church, but a huge step towards incarnating resurrection in your thoughts and deeds, would be to consider the things of the world and ask, *"How can I use this to help another?"* rather than *"How can I maximize my portfolio?!!"* Another is a way Pope Francis lived as Archbishop: no longer passing by the poor and homeless, but doing something for them. Or choosing to live in a simple hotel apartment rather than the Papal Palace. One of our members doesn't leave home without some paper money to share with the homeless that all of us see every day. That is resurrection shining in everyday life. What that homeless person does with that money is far less important than that we choose resurrection living every day.

For **"Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia!"** is not just a refrain, but a mission statement. Rejoicing in Him means a whole lot more than singing about it. Grasping after things, accumulating wealth and property are part of the kingdom of this world, and moth and rust do consume them, and thieves do break in and steal. How we use the things of the world is an important part of rising up each new day as a Baptized child of Christ.

Thomas went long. But His outreach wasn't a Hail Mary, a chance that maybe this will work. He rooted Himself in Jesus when he confessed, **"My Lord, and my God."** He was transformed by those Holy wounds. We still are.

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| <p>1 Let us ever walk with Jesus,
Follow His example pure,
Through a world that would deceive us
And to sin our spirits lure.
Onward in His footsteps treading,
Pilgrims here, our home above,
Full of faith and hope and love,
Let us do the Father's bidding.
Faithful Lord, with me abide;
I shall follow where You guide.</p> <p>2 Let us suffer here with Jesus
And with patience bear our cross.
Joy will follow all our sadness;
Where He is, there is no loss.
Though today we sow no laughter,
We shall reap celestial joy;
All discomforts that annoy
Shall give way to mirth hereafter.
Jesus, here I share Your woe;
Help me there Your joy to know.</p> | <p>3 Let us gladly die with Jesus.
Since by death He conquered death,
He will free us from destruction,
Give to us immortal breath.
Let us mortify all passion
That would lead us into sin;
And the grave that shuts us in
Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
Jesus, here with You I die,
There to live with You on high.</p> <p>4 Let us also live with Jesus.
He has risen from the dead
That to life we may awaken.
Jesus, You are now our head.
We are Your own living members;
Where You live, there we shall be
In Your presence constantly,
Living there with You forever.
Jesus, let me faithful be,
Life eternal grant to me.</p> |
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APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

OFFERING *Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus* Setting: Paul Manz

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, by the resurrection of Your Son You adopt all who believe in His salvation. Receive us as Your children and nourish our faith by the pure spiritual milk of Your Word, that we may dwell in Your presence forever. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You have declared peace between God and man in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Receive our thanks for the authority given to Your Church on earth, and grant that the ministers of Your Church would faithfully carry out their office of announcing the forgiveness of sins upon all who repent. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, as Your people are united in the common life and love of our Savior, grant that we would share that life and love with those in need, doing so with great faith and with eyes opened to the great grace you shower upon your children. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, Your peace flows from the risen and glorified wounds of Christ through Your Church and into the lives of all Your faithful people. Bless and direct Christian parents and caregivers, that Your forgiveness would be freely shared in their homes and that each family would live together in Your peace. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You appoint rulers and officials for the sake of order and peace. Bless those You have placed in authority over us in government and give to them the will to serve with integrity and honor for the benefit of all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, we praise Your Son's resurrection from the dead and draw strength from His ascension before You where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. On this day we ask for your special care and healing upon those who are struggling with their health and well-being, especially our brothers and sisters Paul, Lois, Arthur, Pat, Tor and all those who are on our prayer list, as well as those we name before you in our hearts...Graciously receive our prayers of intercession and hear them for Jesus' sake. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that out of Your indescribable grace and for the sake of Your Son You have given us the Holy Gospel and instituted the Holy Sacraments, that through them we may have comfort and the forgiveness of sin. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Your Word, and through the Holy Sacraments establish our faith day by day, until at last we obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.
The Lord make His face shine on us
and be gracious to us.
The Lord look upon us with favor and ✠ give us peace.

SENDING HYMN #478 The Day of Resurrection

**1 The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad,
The passover of gladness,
The passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From sin's dominion free,
Our Christ has brought us over
With hymns of victory.**

**2 Let hearts be purged of evil
That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal
Of resurrection light
And, list'ning to His accents,
May hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,
May raise the victor strain.**

**3 Now let the heav'ns be joyful,
Let earth its song begin,
Let all the world keep triumph
And all that is therein.
Let all things, seen and unseen,
Their notes of gladness blend;
For Christ the Lord has risen,
Our joy that has no end!**

**4 All praise to God the Father,
All praise to God the Son,
All praise to God the Spirit,
Eternal Three in One!
Let all the ransomed number
Fall down before the throne
And honor, pow'r, and glory
Ascribe to God alone!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE The Day of Resurrection Setting: John Eggert

Acknowledgments

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