



## The Resurrection! Easter Sunday April 4, 2021

St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR

Celebrants: Bishop + John Thornton with Janylee Thornton

**Parking Lot Church** - Please park facing the church, and stay in your cars. If you plan to run your car engine to keep the radio going, please park with the back to the cherry trees.

**Tune your car radio broadcast to 92.1 FM.**

**Note:** There is an earlier recording --see link below and which will be available on our Facebook page and website. [https://youtu.be/x\\_EZly7EIXg](https://youtu.be/x_EZly7EIXg)

### Greeting

**Easter Acclamation** (say together 3 times)

**Presider:** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

Celebrants: The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

**Hymn: "Jesus Christ is risen today"** (we can sing in our cars!) (Hymnal #207)

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
who did once upon the cross Alleluia!  
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing Alleluia!  
unto Christ our heav'nly King, Alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!  
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!  
now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!  
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above Alleluia!  
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!  
praise him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

**Easter Collect** (*please say in unison*)

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The First Reading: Paul's Letter to the Corinthians [I Corinthians 15:1-11]**

I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you--unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them--though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

- Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people
- *Thanks be to God*

## **Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; \*  
his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let Israel now proclaim, \*  
"His mercy endures for ever."
- 14 The Lord is my strength and my song, \*  
and he has become my salvation.
- 15 There is a sound of exultation and victory \*  
in the tents of the righteous:
- 16 "The right hand of the Lord has triumphed! \*  
the right hand of the Lord is exalted! the right hand of the Lord has triumphed!"
- 17 I shall not die, but live, \*  
and declare the works of the Lord.
- 18 The Lord has punished me sorely, \*  
but he did not hand me over to death.
- 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; \*  
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord.
- 20 "This is the gate of the Lord; \*  
he who is righteous may enter."

- 21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me \*  
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The same stone which the builders rejected \*  
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the Lord's doing, \*  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- 24 On this day the Lord has acted; \*  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

### **The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, According to Mark 16:1-8**

- *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

- This is the Gospel of the Lord
- *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

**Hymn:**

**"Amazing Grace"**

**(Hymnal #671)**

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace first taught my heart to fear  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we first begun.

**Sermon** *“Why are you looking for the living among the dead?”* Bishop + John Thornton

It's Easter Day. My head is full of nostalgia today. There are things I miss about Easter Day when I was a kid. Please, promise not to repeat this. I miss Bing Crosby's singing “In your Easter bonnet with all the frills upon it/you'll be the grandest lady in the Easter Parade....” I know, it's a corny song – but I like to sing it anyway. And I miss all the Easter cards, the chicks – I mean little chickens – and the bunnies and the sunbeams on the Risen Christ. And I miss the Easter egg hunts, the candy, though not so much the colored hard-boiled eggs. And I miss going to the First Congregational Church at the corner of Villa and East Chicago in Elgin, Illinois with my mother and brother and sister. The church was catty-corner from the K of C (Knights of Columbus) Hall, where Catholic men had some kind of ritual and pancakes on Sunday morning...and a block away from the Baptist church, just east of ours, with only an apartment house between...and down a block and across the street, on the west, from the Episcopal church, which was across the street, on the south, from the Methodist church and across the street, on the west, from the E and R (Evangelical and Reformed) church, which was up the street, on the north, from ours. And there was a Lutheran church a couple of blocks north of the Methodist church. They all functioned as separate and unequal religions. We were all WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants), loosely organized by socio-economic sub-classes (some lower, like our family, a lot in the middle and a few upper) of the Middle Class. We all had snide things to say about each other. I suppose we doubted that the Risen Christ could ever rise in any church but ours. If there was an Ecumenical Movement, it didn't get to the corner of Villa and East Chicago in Elgin, Illinois. Or, at least, it didn't get to my awareness. It was the worst possible spiritual formation for a kid like me – but, of course, what did I know? Oh, and I miss the extravagance of potted lilies heaped around the pulpit on Easter Day, so that the preacher seemed half-way risen in a field of them. To keep the memories alive, I'll eat a dark chocolate rabbit throughout the day, starting with the ears.

Easter was a special day. It was a good day, cards and candy and lilies and Bing Crosby singing “In your Easter bonnet” and church and all of it. I miss it. But I'll tell you what I don't miss. I do not miss being subjected to American-style biblical literalism. It has a way of limiting your vision, of shutting your eyes to what's beatific about ordinary human beings.

I was a skeptical kid. That Resurrection thing didn't make a lot of sense to me; but, of course, I didn't know better than everybody else. I was left with the impression, the

popular belief, that the dead Jesus just woke up, wiped himself off, walked out of the tomb, went back to Galilee and.... Then what? Lived to old age, only to die again? Nobody made it clear to me that we're not talking about the resuscitation of a corpse. Nobody. Well, maybe somebody did; but I couldn't hear it. The myth just kept getting reinforced with the Church's language. It wasn't proper to doubt, to ask questions, to object, to appear unfaithful.

Each of the Gospel-writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) has a resurrection story. Each has a different way of telling it. It's hard to know what's historical and what isn't. Scholars spend lifetimes poring over ancient manuscripts, puzzling over a word or phrase or sentence that might give them a clue that would confirm some historical event. There is one historical fact we know for sure, one historical fact about which there is no dissent: Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. Jesus of Nazareth died. Jesus of Nazareth was buried. That's it. It's in the Nicene Creed. All the rest, for me, is the poetry of the realization that, in Jesus of Nazareth, was seen what a human being can be, what any human being can be, what you and I, when moved when moved by the Spirit of Christ, can be. I'll repeat that.

ALL THE REST, FOR ME, IS THE POETRY OF THE REALIZATION THAT, IN JESUS OF NAZARETH, WAS SEEN WHAT A HUMAN BEING CAN BE, WHAT ANY HUMAN BEING CAN BE, WHAT YOU AND I, WHEN MOVED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, CAN BE.

The Gospel-writers were not fabulists. They were realists, and they did everything they could to make us understand that, even though Jesus of Nazareth was killed, the Christ was not. The Christ is alive, eternally. Really. The "angel" at the tomb in Luke's Gospel asks Mary Magdalene and the women with her, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" That's *the* existential question. That's what Luke wants us to keep asking ourselves. Why are we looking for the living among the dead? And Mark, in his Gospel, has an "angel" tell Mary Magdalene and the women with her – I'll paraphrase the Greek text – If you're looking for Jesus, this is not where you'll find him. He's out of here. He has gone down the road. You'll see him. Don't be surprised.

At the end of Luke's Gospel is the story editors call "The Road to Emmaus." Two of Jesus' followers, one named "Cleopas," are shuffling along the road to Emmaus, a little village about nine miles away from Jerusalem. A total stranger comes up behind them, then walks along with them for a while. He senses that they're sad about something. He asks them what they're so sad about. Maybe they figured it was none of his business and snapped, "Are you the only person in the world who doesn't know what happened in Jerusalem last Friday? They crucified Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet if there ever was one. He was our friend. We believed in him. We loved that man." So the stranger explained the Scriptures to them, all the way from Moses to Zechariah and how what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem was predictable and, actually, the fulfillment of it all. They were all ears. They wanted to know more, but it was getting late and they were hungry. They begged the stranger to stay and have supper with them in Emmaus. He agreed to. At table, he took a loaf of bread...then he blessed it...then he broke it...then he shared it. At that very instant, they recognized him, the Lord of their lives. In a split second, he was gone, vanished. There's no way to slow the Spirit of Christ down, no way to make the Spirit of Christ sit still, no way to corner the Spirit of Christ, no way to make the Spirit of

Christ do our will. The Spirit of Christ is perfectly free, for us to praise the Lord, as we say, or to scandalize us. That's what Luke and all those first Christians want us to know.

Luke says that “their eyes were opened.” The Greek text is awkward, but clear. “Of them were opened the eyes,” it says, speaking of Cleopas and the other person with him. Luke wants us to know that the opening of our eyes to see the worth of persons, to see the Christ in them, is a resurrection experience. It's that double-take we have to learn: It's she, but it's not she. It's he, but it's not he. (The Spirit of Christ has no particular age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic condition, though, as it says in a Medieval poem, *Piers the Ploughman*, pursues us “in a poor man apparel.”) That's how it works: Now you see her; now you don't. Now you see him; now you don't. It may be only a glimpse of the Risen Christ, then gone. It may be the fullness of the Risen Christ, then fading. You just have to keep your eyes open all of the time. Your heart too.

In the Second Century appendix to Mark's Gospel there's a story about Mary Magdalene. Good ol' Mary Magdalene. Just as faithful as a wife would be. The Risen Christ “appeared” to her. She got it. He's not in a tomb. He's alive in her. And she tries to explain that to the disciples, but they don't get it. In that culture, no woman could ever be a witness to something so unimaginable, so stupendous. Shortly after, however, the Risen Christ “appears” to two of the men – now here comes one of the most important phrases in the whole series of resurrection stories – *en hetera morphe(y)* – that's *hetera* as in “heretical” and *morphe(y)* as in “morphology” – translated “in another form.” Another form... and another...and another...and another...and a million, million others. There's no entombing the Spirit of Christ. In every act of compassion, it's the Spirit of Christ. In every act of generosity, it's the Spirit of Christ. In every act of mercy, it's the Spirit of Christ. In every act of forgiveness, it's the Spirit of Christ. In every act so simple as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and visiting the sick and those in prison, it's the Spirit of Christ. It's love always at the edge of awe, forever raising us from our deadness and summoning us to be what we can be. The Spirit of Christ is unbounded and hilarious and quickly heads for the heart that's breakable . And though you'd never say so, never, never say so, in your modesty, never even think so, the form in which the Risen Christ appears is often in the form of you.

Christ is rising. *Alleluia.*

**In place of the Creed, let us say together:** *"Jesus Christ is Lord."*

From the **Baptismal Covenant: Renewal of Vows**

BCP p. 293

**Presider:** Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Celebrants: *I will, with God's help.*

**Presider:** Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Celebrants: *I will, with God's help.*

**Presider:** Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Celebrants: *I will, with God's help.*

**Presider:** Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Celebrants: *I will, with God's help.*

**Presider:** Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

Celebrants: *I will, with God's help.*

## Intercessions and thanksgivings

BCP p. 291

*Let us pray.*

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **The Lord's Prayer -- Sung!!**

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,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**



### **The Peace**

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*And also with you.*

*(Just wave from your car!)*

## Easter Blessing

**Closing Hymn:** "How Great Thou Art"

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

*[Refrain] Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze

*[Refrain]*

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in  
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing  
He bled and died to take away my sin

*[Refrain]*

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration  
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

*[Refrain]*

**Dismissal:** Let us go out into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Risen Lord!

- *Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

