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**Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Sunday**

**April 11, 2021**

**Now the Feast and Celebration**

Christ is risen! Jesus is alive, and God has swallowed up death forever. With Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, we may feel astonished and confused, unsure of what to make of the empty tomb. But this is why we gather: to proclaim, witness, praise, and affirm the liberating reality of Christ's death and resurrection. In word and feast, we celebrate God's unending love, and depart to share this good news with all the world. Alleluia!

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

## GATHERING

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### JOHN 20 EASTER PROCLAMATION AND DRESSING THE CHANCEL

**Narrators 1 and 2:** The holy gospel according to John.

**Narrator 1:** Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

**Narrator 2:** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them,

**Mary:** They have taken the Lord out of the tomb! They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.

**Narrator 1:** Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

**Narrator 2:** He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

**Narrator 1:** Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

**Narrator 2:** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

**Narrator 1:** Then the disciples returned to their homes.

**Narrator 2:** But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb. She saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

**Jesus:** Woman, why are you weeping?

**Mary:** They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.

**Narrator 1:** When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

**Jesus:** Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?

**Narrator 2:** Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him,

**Mary:** Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.

**Jesus:** Mary!

**Mary:** Rabbouni!

**Narrator 1:** Which means "Teacher" in Hebrew.

**Jesus:** Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

**Narrator 2:** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples,

**Mary:** I have seen the Lord! I have seen the Lord.

**Narrator 1:** And she told them that he had said these things to her.

**Narrators 1 and 2:** The gospel of the Lord.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

This is the day the Lord has made,  
let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**GATHERING HYMN:** Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (#365)

### **GREETING**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom we are raised, the love of the God who raises us, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to which we've been raised, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**NOW THE FEAST** (p. 4)

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

We praise you, O God, for this glorious day even when we are still in pandemic, and we celebrate your victory over death through your saving love, that you remind us of through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. As you have raised him from the dead, you graciously give us the gift of everlasting life and love, that we may together in community worship and praise your holy name, through Christ our risen Saviour, by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## **WORD**

### **FIRST READING: Acts 10:34-43**

A reading from Acts.

*Peter crosses the immense religious and social boundary that separates Jews from Gentiles in order to proclaim the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, so that God's forgiveness in Jesus' name would reach out to all people.*

<sup>34</sup>Peter began to speak to [the people]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.

<sup>37</sup>That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

<sup>39</sup>We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by

hanging him on a tree; <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good;  
God’s mercy endures forever.

<sup>2</sup>**Let Israel now declare,  
“God’s mercy endures forever.”**

<sup>14</sup>The LORD is my strength and my song,  
and has become my salvation.

<sup>15</sup>**Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous:  
“The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!**

<sup>16</sup>The right hand of the LORD is exalted!  
The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!”

<sup>17</sup>**I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup>The LORD indeed punished me sorely,  
but did not hand me over to death.

<sup>19</sup>**Open for me the gates of righteousness;  
I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.**

<sup>20</sup>“This is the gate of the LORD;  
here the righteous may enter.”

<sup>21</sup>**I give thanks to you, for you have answered me  
and you have become my salvation.**

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup>**By the LORD has this been done;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.**

<sup>24</sup>This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*The core of the Christian faith and Paul’s preaching is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the crucified and risen Christ appeared to the earliest of his followers, so we experience the presence of the Risen One in the preaching of this faith.*

<sup>1</sup>Now 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, <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>and that he was buried, and that he was raised on

the third day in accordance with the scriptures,<sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.<sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.<sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.<sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.<sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (p. 8)

#### **GOSPEL: Mark 16:1-8**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*The resurrection of Jesus is announced, and the response is one of terror and amazement.*

<sup>1</sup>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' body].<sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.<sup>3</sup> They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"<sup>4</sup> When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back.<sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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."<sup>8</sup> 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.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON**

O God, may our eyes be opened and our hearts softened by the work of your Spirit, allowing us to see the new life given to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

So usually when big Sundays like today roll around, I look at my sermons of the past to see if I can plagiarize myself. Most of the time (actually all of the time), those sermons aren't really worth stealing from or ever mentioning again for that matter, but hey, one can always hope. Anyway, as I was looking through my past Easter sermon, I noticed something funny: about half of them reference movies of some kind. And half of those movies were usually Marvel movies. I know, commence eye-rolling.

Now, those of you who know me more than just this pretty face and killer bod would know that I just love these Marvel Cinematic Universe movies. And for those of you who have seen one or two or all 23 of them would understand why it isn't hard to love these movies. I mean, on the

most part they are stellar in their casting (and re-casting), directing, and acting. They have exciting action scenes and amazing special effects that really add to their story telling. And the fact that these movies talk about many of the beloved comic book characters that I grew up reading and collecting and mimicking on a regular basis really is the icing on the cake. But overall, even above all of these reasons, I think I love these movies because they're all *connected*. They aren't sequels of each other per se (except for the ones that are labelled as such with a number beside the name), but they complement each other's stories in subtle ways, they have crossover cameos, and somehow all the individual movies in this large universe add up to a bigger plot that can't be contained in just one movie.

And once I saw the first connection in that first Iron Man movie and then that awful Incredible Hulk movie in 2008, I was hooked. I needed to see more of the story, hear more about the characters, learn more about this universe that is so fantastical but yet so realistic in its own way. And yes, it's *a* lot to watch, I think it takes more than 2 straight days to consume it all, but it is a lot of story. And so to me, missing any of the movies or supplement TV series is like leaving the story incomplete.

You know what I mean, don't you? That need for a complete story is in all of us. I mean, imagine the dissatisfaction you'd feel if the power went out during the final act of that really engaging movie you're watching on Netflix, or you find that the last chapter of that page turner book you're reading has been ripped out, or if I just said "amen" right now and ended this sermon. Well, I'm not going to do that last one perhaps to your disappointment but hey, at least you'll be satisfied in knowing how this sermon ends.

We see this need for a complete story in today's lesson out of Mark. Not in the lesson itself, mind you, but in the treatment of the whole book of Mark. As I've mentioned a few times in the past, the book of Mark very concise. No frills, just too the point and that's it. So we don't get a birth narrative, no played out temptation in the wilderness, no extra little details for a fuller story like the other gospel accounts have. Just look at today's text, and how it ends with "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." It's not much of an ending to a lesson at all, as it's so abrupt, so sudden, and the story doesn't really seem to be resolved. No announcement to the disciples, no Jesus in the garden looking like the gardener, no Jesus at all, actually. Just the women running from the tomb in fear.

But in this case, we might be ok with that, because we already know how the story unfolds. We know that the women do eventually tell people. We know that Jesus eventually does show up in that upper room, that road to Emmaus, and many other places that cannot be contained in one book. And we know that Jesus gives them a final goodbye as he is ascended into heaven. We know all that, so we're ok with today's reading ending a bit suddenly like it does.

Well, what if that was the ending of the whole book? What if we never hear of Jesus appearing in the upper room, to the others, or even at all? What if this story doesn't get resolved?

We'd probably want to write our own ending, fill in the blanks, so to speak. We'd give the missing details from what we already know from the other gospels, and all would be right and good. Well, that is exactly what happened because this actually is the end of Mark. At least, this is the end as we get in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts available. But we have

others that add a variation of other endings, in an almost obviously sloppy attempt to complete the story.

Every other gospel account known has more of an ending, so Mark should too. Every other gospel account has Jesus appearing at least once, proving that the bodily resurrection happened, so Mark should back that claim up too. Every other gospel doesn't leave us with an incomplete story, so Mark shouldn't either.

Right?

We aren't the only ones who would think this, as I said we have a couple alternate and more full endings of the book. But then I wonder, is it really that bad that it ends this way? Is it bad that we don't have Jesus appearing to the other disciples and in the wild and so we're left wondering what happens next? Is it really that bad that the written story seems incomplete, making it up to us to fill in the ending?

Well, not if you remember the other things we've talked about with Mark. Specifically, with how it starts. Remember that? We started the book in Advent and revisited the beginning again in Epiphany and again around Lent. So it's like the lectionary for this year was set up to get us to this point. See the book starts with, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Now, if you don't remember that and think, well of course it starts with the beginning, what else would it start with? What I mean is that it starts with those actual words, "The beginning." That tells me that this book, in all its short, action-packed 16 chapters, in all its no frills, no nonsense demeanor, in all its incomplete and unresolved story-telling... is just the beginning.

What happens after the tomb is found empty, is up for grabs. What happened with the disciples is up to the disciples. What happened to the centuries between then and now was up to those living at those times. What happens now is up to us.

So I do think that Mark was left intentionally as a cliff hanger like this, that we be enticed to continue the story. Not necessarily add it to the end of Mark, mind you, but to continue in the lessons and themes that we've learned from the ministry of Jesus. Lessons of care and compassion. Lessons of love and community. Lessons of grace and peace. All these lessons culminating on the cross upon which he was meant to die, but as that man dressed in white sitting in the empty tomb tells us, that death didn't stick. He is risen.

He is risen above all the hatred toward him. He is risen above those who shunned him because he didn't fit their expectations. He is risen above all the selfishness, the condescending piousness, and the downright evil that would rather have him dead. He is risen.

He is risen so we can see just how powerful God's love for us is. He is risen so we can learn of God's radical grace and unending mercy in the world. He is risen so we can be empowered to proclaim this good news, forgive as we've been forgiven, and continue this story throughout our lives.

See the resurrection connects us all to a greater universe, as our stories have been connected to *his story*. The resurrection didn't lift Jesus up to just appear to the disciples, but to appear to

all of us in our communities, relationships, and everyday lives. The resurrection doesn't end with Jesus ascending into heaven, but continues on in each and every one of us and always.

In this Easter season, may we see the new life and love of the resurrection, that we might be lifted up with Christ to continue God's story of grace and forgiveness. Thanks be to God.  
Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY:** Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (#392)

**CREED** (p. 9)

With all those celebrating the resurrection and new life this day, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's 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 catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Called to live a life in celebration of resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your resurrection grace, O God," and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your resurrection grace, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we give thanks to you for you are good and your mercy endures forever. You raise us to new life with Jesus your Son, and you empower us as your children. Remind us always of your unending love, that it might strengthen us throughout this pandemic and always. By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are our strength and our song as you save us from death. May we always lean on this truth in our communities and ministry, that all can find comfort in its promise. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan; and our companion churches of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Spirit of Life Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Aneeta Saroop; and North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in Barriere and Clearwater and their Anglican pastor Bruce Chalmers. By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you exalted hands have valiantly created all the world and everything in it, and you have entrusted it to us to live in and care for. May our stewardship of this planet be pleasing to you, that its beauty and resourcefulness be maintained for the generations to come. By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you do not punish our wrongdoings with death, but you deal with us with righteousness and grace. Teach this righteousness and grace to all world leaders and politicians, that their judgements be fair and just. We pray especially for Solyana Amanuel; Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children: that they all might arrive into our country soon. By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you answer our calls and you become our salvation for all that ail us and you bring us back into wholeness. Be especially with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that we all might see and lean on the strength of your salvation. Especially we pray for Beulah; Paula; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Henry; Charlotte; those who have contracted or been affected by COVID-19; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...  
By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we rejoice and are glad in this day that you have made, for it is full of your grace, mercy, and love and your remind us of all your promises of resurrection and everlasting life with you and all the saints. May the hope that these promises bring lift us up out from despair, and lead us into the community of faith and love that you so graciously give. By your resurrection grace, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your saving grace and everlasting mercy, seen in the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERATORY HYMN:** As the Grains of Wheat (p. 10)

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Holy God, we give you thanks for reminding us always of the wondrous resurrection in our lives, in our communities, and even in this food before us. Bless these reminders and make them recognisable for us, that we be empowered to love you and neighbour always, through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

### **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,  
the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin;  
who in dying has destroyed death,  
and in rising has brought us to eternal life.  
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection,  
with earth and sea and all their creatures,  
and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 11)**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

O Lord we give you thanks for your goodness and forever enduring mercy. You are our strength and song and your salvation leads us into rejoicing. For even in our sin, you do not leave us in death but you raise us up into righteousness with Jesus your Son, the stone that the builders have rejected but ended up becoming the chief cornerstone, that you have sent to reach, teach, and preach.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread and with thankfulness in his heart, he broke and shared it and said, "take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After they ate, he took the cup, and with the same thankfulness he shared that saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this food that we see the marvellous acts that you have done, giving us hope in this mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

We rejoice and are glad, O Lord, in this day that you have made that reminds us of resurrection, eternal life, and your salvation through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER (p. 13)**

Gathered into salvation by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,**

on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see the righteousness of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN:** Lamb of God (p. 14)

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy God, we have been fed by your love, your grace, and your mercy, and you have redeemed us into your salvation forever. Empower us as your Easter people to live a resurrection life proclaiming your goodness to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our resurrected Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

#### **SENDING**

#### **BLESSING**

Now may the truth of the empty tomb,  
the love of a merciful God,  
and the power of a forgiving grace  
surround you and guide you with blessing,  
this day and forevermore.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** We Know That Christ Is Raised (#449)

#### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, live as in resurrection.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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