



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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**Third Sunday of Easter
April 23, 2023
Now the Feast and Celebration
Hymnal Supplement (1991)**

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord's day.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and 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.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in love of our Lord, who has heard our voices and listened to our prayers and supplication whenever we call out to God's name. For even in our grief and sorrow our Lord enters our lives, lifts us up, and grants us salvation. So in fulfilling our vows to God, we are here in the courts of our Lord to worship, to praise, and to serve God and each other in thanksgiving for all that good that God has done for us, through Jesus Christ our risen Saviour and Lord.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN: Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table (ACS 977)



1 Look who gath - ers at Christ's ta - ble! Hear the sto - ries
2 Clouds of light sur - round the ta - ble; an - cient fol - low -
3 Their sad sto - ries are re - peat - ed in a thou - sand
4 Bring your joy and bring your sad - ness, and pre - pare to



that they bring. Some are weep - ing; some are laugh - ing;
ers ap - pear, saints con - fess - ing how they wres - tled
dif - f'rent ways, but they share one thing in com - mon:
be sur - prised by the host whose hands are wound - ed,



some have songs they want to sing. Oth - ers ask why they're in -
with their guilt, their doubt and fear. Pe - ter tells of his de -
they all end in thanks and praise for the host who has in -
who will o - pen wide your eyes when he bless - es bread and



vit - ed, bur - dened by the wrong they've done. Christ in - sists they
ny - ing Christ was ev - er in his sight; Paul re - lates his
vit - ed north and south and east and west to con - verge a -
breaks it— truth and man - na from a - bove!— and then pass - es



all are wel - come. There is room for ev - 'ry - one.
fruit - less ef - forts to ob - lit - er - ate the light.
round this ta - ble, where all life is fed and blest.
wine that wa - kens in your heart the taste of love.

GREETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The apparent grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very present love of God, and the fulfilling fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

NOW THE FEAST (HS p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, we know that our risen Lord Jesus Christ is made known through the breaking of bread and fellowship in your name. Open the eyes of our hearts that we might recognize your presence among us in our midst, granting us peace and salvation throughout our lives, through Jesus Christ our risen Saviour. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

A reading from Acts.

Today's reading is the conclusion of Peter's sermon preached following the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The center of his preaching is the bold declaration that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ.

^{14a}Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], ³⁶"Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

¹I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,
and listened to my supplication,

²**for the LORD has given ear to me
whenever I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me;
I came to grief and sorrow.

⁴**Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I pray you, save my life."**

¹²How shall I repay the LORD
for all the good things God has done for me?

¹³**I will lift the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.**

¹⁴I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people.

¹⁵**Precious in your sight, O LORD,
is the death of your servants.**

¹⁶O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

¹⁷**I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call upon the name of the LORD.**

¹⁸I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all God's people,

¹⁹**in the courts of the LORD's house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:17-23

A reading from 1 Peter.

The imagery of exile is used to help the readers of this letter understand that they are strangers in a strange land. Christians no longer belong to this age. Through the death of Christ we belong to God, so that our focus, faith, and hope are no longer on such things as silver or gold.

¹⁷If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

²²Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (HS p. 8)

GOSPEL: Luke 24:13-35

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The colorful story of Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus answers the question of how Jesus is to be recognized among us. Here, he is revealed through the scriptures and in the breaking of bread.

¹³Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who

was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”²⁵ Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O Lord, open for us your Word and set our hearts ablaze, that we might see the risen Christ in all that we do. Amen.

So this past week has been kind of tough on me for various reasons, and I figure since I have your undivided attention, I'll tell you about it. I guess the least severe thing that happened was on Tuesday when I couldn't get one of my Bluetooth earbuds to connect to my phone. The right one worked fine and was playing music through it and everything, but the left one just wouldn't turn on. After several frustrating tries and charging cycles I came to the conclusion that it's broken. That might not seem like much, but it was annoying because I've had these buds for less than a year, and while I have a plethora of headphones around our house, these have been my go-to ever since I've gotten them. And while it's likely to be covered under warranty anyway, it is still really frustrating.

Another thing that happened this past week started a few years ago actually, when my dentist suggested that I look into getting braces. I'm not sure if you know this about me, but this chiseled, ruggedly-handsome, model face actually is ruined by this overbite that I have, and apparently it's pretty severe. I can hide it a bit by just intentionally moving my jaw forward, but my dentist said that won't prevent the problems that I'll have down the road caused by overbites that could lead to my teeth eventually falling out. Anyway, I finally went to an orthodontist just for a consult and he said I definitely do need braces. So bad is this overbite, in fact, that I don't just need braces, but I need like jaw surgery just to get it all under control. And after all is said and done, it's going to take almost 4 years of braces and procedures to

correct it all and it'll cost me around \$15,000. So um, yeah, I think I'll just look into getting dentures. Maybe go for some platinum teeth or something.

And the last bad thing that happened, the number one worst thing this whole week, what totally floored me and almost made me question if life was worth living or not... is that the place where I get my hair cut is closing down, and my hairdresser who I followed around for nine years now is taking this as a sign for a career change and may no longer be cutting my hair.

**Sniff sniff

I know, right? I'm just glad you're all sitting down for this news, because my knees are shaking right now just talking about it. I don't know if you all change who cuts your hair often or not, but I most certainly don't. While I've had random people cut my hair here and there for various reasons, they were all just one-offs and I've been pretty loyal to who I go to on a regular basis. In fact, I'd say that throughout my life I've only really had two hairdressers: some dude in Chinatown that used to cut my hair when I was a kid all the way up until I learned to cut my own hair by just shaving it all off, and then this lady that I started going to after my hair grew back out like 20 years later. Basically, I've been going to her for longer than our youngest child has been alive, so when she told me this news last week, I was a bit flabbergasted. I didn't know what to say, I just looked at her with a blank expression on my face and all I could blurt was "wow".

Wow.

Sometimes that's all we can say when we receive bad news. Sometimes it's only the monosyllabic words that reside among the pieces of our broken hearts. Sometimes anything else said is just not enough.

Yeah, I know, we're still talking about haircuts, but c'mon it's hard on me, ok? Yes I'll survive, but for now, this week has been tough as I was hit blow after blow and I was struggling to just maintain my sanity. But the point of me sharing this is that I'm thinking that this kind of blow to the heart, this type of earth-shattering news, this sort of mind-numbing awfulness, might be what those original disciples were going through. Ok, I know that back then they didn't have Bluetooth headphones or braces or even hairdressers for that matter, but emotionally, this was a whirlwind time for them. We should know, we just walked through it all as well in the church seasons thus far: from the hope of salvation in Advent, the joy of God with us through Christmas, the elation of recognising Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah in Epiphany, and then the difficult repentance of Lent, then the triumph of Palm Sunday and the sorrow of the Passion on Good Friday. And that all brings us here to this point. Easter. When they hear that Jesus is alive, the good news that he was telling them all along, and perhaps the uncertainty if any of it could be true.

I mean, they heard that people saw Jesus risen, the text is pretty clear that all of this was the same day. But that wasn't enough. The testimony of the women wasn't enough, the sightings by the main disciples wasn't enough, the experience of others wasn't enough. They needed more.

Like I said, this was a tough time for them. Times were pretty rocky as rocky times go. The thought of them not being able to see their teacher or hear his teachings anymore floored them. The idea that Jesus maybe not actually being the Messiah because he lost was

flabbergasting. The news of Christ crucified shook them and all those around them to their very core.

Well, everyone except for this stranger who apparently was living under some rock.

This stranger who was kind enough, but also kind of dull. This stranger that walked alongside them but seemingly had no clue as to where they were heading. This stranger that was to be the guest of their hospitality, turned out to be the Lord of hosts. This stranger, unassuming, unobtrusive, under the radar, who in my opinion seemed kind of annoying and maybe even a bit rude at first, ended up being the one who saved them all. It was in this stranger that they saw the Messiah, the Christ, the risen Saviour, alive and with them.

So while these disciples didn't recognise Jesus in person, they recognised his teachings. While they didn't realise it was him walking with them, they felt Jesus journeying with them all along. While they didn't know who they were inviting to stay with them, they were able to experience the living Christ in their midst, in their community, in the breaking of bread together.

This living Christ assured them that they were not alone but they had each other and will always have him among them whenever they gathered. They were reminded that the love of God isn't about following rules and having an easy life, but it is about loving and serving each other in community. It was revealed to them that as people of God we don't live in fear of bad things and death, but we live in joy and hope and resurrection.

And so, even though this week wasn't the greatest in my books, I know that the problems we face will eventually end, headphones can be replaced, teeth can be fixed, there are other people who can learn to cut my hair just as well. I know that even in the difficulties, we aren't alone in this journey of life as we have each other in this congregation, our family, and our community for love and support. I know that our gathering together in the name of Christ is good because he promises to be here among us when we do. I know that the love of God for each and every one of us is bigger and stronger than anything we can throw at it, that even death or really bad weeks can't hold it down.

This doesn't take away our hurt, I realise. This doesn't automatically heal our pain. This doesn't make the bad go away and leave us an easy life. But this community of God to which we belong helps us to see how we are supported through the hurt, pain, and hardships of life. This relationship that we're invited to have with God and all the saints helps us weather the storms and those terrible, horrible, no good days. This invitation to be part of God's family helps us to recognise Christ in the world, even in the most unassuming, as Christ walks with us, journeys with us, and is present among us in our gathering, in our worshipping, and in our breaking of bread together.

As we continue on in this season of Easter, may we have our eyes and hearts opened to the presence of the risen Christ in our midst, that even in the difficulties of life we can be encouraged and strengthened and feel the love of God, now and always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: God Is Here! (#526)

CREED (HS p. 11)

In recognition of Christ with us, 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

Led to see Christ walking with us on our journey, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your ever-present mercy, O Lord," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Lord, in our love for you, you hear our voice when we call out to you and you save us from our sin. Give us confidence in this good news that all those we encounter might experience your love through our actions and ministry, together building up your kingdom and community. We remember in prayer the faith communities close to us both in proximity and in mission; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishops Kathy, Larry, Sid, Jason, Michael, and Susan, and all assistants to the bishops, pastors, and congregations of the ELCIC, and our companion congregations here in the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Oakridge Lutheran Church in Vancouver and the leadership and ministry that they receive; and for Redeemer Lutheran Church also in Vancouver and their pastor Katrina Vigen. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Lord, you have given and done good things for us, and provided for us this vast planet upon which we can live and call our home. Strengthen our stewardship of this creation that you've entrusted to us, that you continue to be seen in the beauty of all that you have made. We pray especially for the safety and security of those living in areas of harsh weather and natural disasters, and the coexistence of all living things. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer**.

Lord, we around the world call on your name and you fill our cups with your gracious salvation and love, even in the midst of grief and sorrow. Be with all the nations as we navigate our differences in culture and religion and policy, that we might find peace in the midst of strife. We pray especially for those areas of the world that face war, violence, that hope be not lost in their minds. We also pray for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana

Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we are your servants and you have declared us as precious. You are with us on our journeys and you heal us in our need. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn and shine your love throughout your kingdom and community. We pray especially for Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Sukhwant; John; Winn; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Chris; William; Larry; Walter; Piet; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, you welcome us into your presence in the courts of your house, and we rejoice with all of the saints. May our thanksgiving be clear in your midst, that your love always be proclaimed throughout our journey of life. By your ever-present mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast and eternal presence with and among us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

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, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who walks with us and talks with us, leading us to join all the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (HS p. 15)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy and almighty God, we give you thanks for all that you have done, all that you are doing, and all that you will do for the good of the world. You fill our cups to overflowing with your blessing, and you lift us all into your salvific grace and peace. And when the time was right you sent to us Jesus to be among us to journey with us throughout life and beyond, leading us toward your kingdom full of forgiving love.

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

Then after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we can see the risen Christ in our midst and continually leading us further into community and relationship, moving us to fully believe in this our basis of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for in you there is love, joy, and hope, moving us further into community and peace, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (HS p. 15)

Journeying with each other while united by the 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 our connection to each other by God through Christ.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (HS p. 18)

Let Us Go Now to the Banquet (#523)

As We Gather at Your Table (#522)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding us and nourishing us with all that you are and give, lifting us up to see you in the world and strengthening us to proclaim your love. Continue to be with us in our journey, that we be inspired and informed by your love and grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God who cannot be stopped by death bless you and keep you,
God who loves us with an unending grace shine on you and be gracious onto you,
God who walks with us and feeds us look upon you with favour and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (#392)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, walk in the joy of resurrection.

Thanks be to God.

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