



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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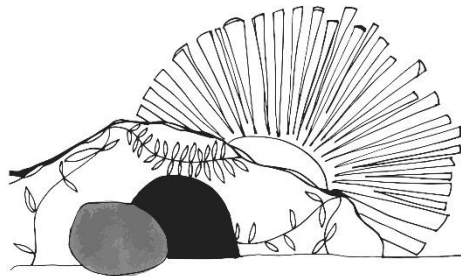
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Easter Day

April 9, 2023

Now the Feast and Celebration Hymnal Supplement 1991 (HS)

This is the day the Lord has made! Christ is risen, and through him all creation is made new! Indeed, “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34): Christ’s resurrection truly brings life to everyone. We sing hymns of praise, gather around sacred words, and proclaim God’s faithfulness, power, and love in the feast of holy communion. With the women at the tomb, we are astonished, elated, and grateful. We depart with joy to proclaim the good news of God’s endless love.

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 hən̓q̓əmin̓əṃ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP AND OPENING HYMN

refrain: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (#365) verse 1

PSALM: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-17

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good;
God's mercy endures forever.

²**Let Israel now declare,
"God's mercy endures forever."**

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and my song,
and has become my salvation.

¹⁵**Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous:
"The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!"**

¹⁶The right hand of the LORD is exalted!
The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!"

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

refrain: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (#365) verse 2

PSALM: Psalm 118:18-21

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

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

²⁰"This is the gate of the LORD;
here the righteous may enter."

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

refrain: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (#365) verse 3

PSALM: Psalm 118:22-24

²²The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

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

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

refrain: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today (#365) verse 4

REETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The grace of our resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of the God who resurrected him, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that puts this truth into action, be with you all.

And also with you.

NOW THE FEAST (HS p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ you broke the power of death and opened the way to eternal life through your grace and mercy that surpass all understanding. As the empty tomb stands witness to your triumph over death, make your church to be a bold testimony to the victory of love and life, that all we do may proclaim the joys of the good news of resurrection, through the same risen Jesus Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 10:34-43

A reading from Acts.

Peter's sermon, delivered at the home of Cornelius, a Roman army officer, is a summary of the essential message of Christianity: Everyone who believes in Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection fulfilled the words of the prophets, "receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

³⁴Peter began to speak to [the people]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how 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. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not 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. ⁴²He 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. ⁴³All 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.

SECOND READING: Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from Colossians.

Easter means new life for us as it first meant new life for Christ. His resurrection reshapes the entire focus and motivation for our lives since we are now hidden with the risen Christ in God.

¹If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (HS p. 8)

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:1-10

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Sorrow gives way to “fear and great joy” when two women are sent by an angel to proclaim the good news: Jesus is risen!

¹After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Almighty God, on this day of resurrection may the stones in front of our hearts be rolled away and your truth and grace be revealed as with us, through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour and Lord. Amen.

A few weeks ago I was telling you (those who were listening at least) how I don't really frequent social media anymore. After that day, I realised that isn't exactly true, as I often would have TikTok running in the background while I'm doing other things. I don't post anything on there of course, but I do scroll through it every now and then as sometimes there are some interesting or really funny videos on there.

One such interesting thing that caught my attention the other day was this young guy, whom I've never seen on the app before, talking about hidden gems where you can eat. I've seen a few of these, where a food reviewer or something would talk about a good but struggling restaurant and recommend it to their viewers, and then the place would blow up. Not literally explode, but their business would boom. Not literally boom, but... ah you get the picture. So I thought this guy would just be one of those. Turns out that he's local, too. Really local, in fact. The place that he was talking about, actually more like RAVING about, was a small sandwich shop about a minute away from the church. I'm talking this church, by the way, if you didn't catch that.

Anyway, this kid went on and on about how great this sandwich place is and how everyone needs to try it. He was so excited and had nothing but praise for this place. So sucker that I am,

I went to try it this past week and you know what? Daaaang he wasn't kidding. I've had some good sandwiches in my day, and let me tell you that was a good sandwich. 10/10, I'd go again. I recommend.

So that was a good experience. The funny thing is that the TikTok kid wasn't even a food reviewer, I checked out his page. He just really liked the restaurant and wanted to recommend it to anyone who sees his video. And I guess it worked.

But isn't that just natural for us? Like how when we try something good, when we have an experience that is exciting or positive, when we encounter something worth sharing, it's like we can't help but to share it? Whether it be like that non-reviewer kid on TikTok or someone like me who can't cook worth a darn but knows what he likes to eat, we just want to tell others the good news that we have.

There is just an excitement of something news worthy, an elation of having witnessed something that you want others to know about, an enthusiasm in having some sort of knowledge that is so big that you can't help but just shout it out from the rooftops. I know, we're talking about just a sandwich, but honestly it was goood.

And that's the thing about this kind of news that we want to tell others about. We'll find that not everyone cares. Not everyone will want to hear it. Not everyone will even listen. But we share it anyway because to us, to us it matters. We just have to make sure that our message is the right one. Which in this case, is a pretty darn good sandwich. A little pricey, sure, but mmm-mmm Mylanta.

Which brings me to this Easter story that we get every year... on Easter. This story of an empty tomb, a shocked and bewildered group of Jesus' followers, a message that Jesus is alive. I mean, that in itself seems to be enough. That in itself is the whole gospel story. That in itself, we're told, is the foundation of our Christian faith.

Or is it?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that the resurrection didn't happen or the tomb wasn't empty or that the women were lying like how we hear the male disciples accusing them of doing. I'm not saying that Jesus' body was actually just stolen or the women went to the wrong tomb or that the whole thing was made up. I'm not even saying that Easter Day isn't the foundation of our faith. What I'm saying is, or perhaps what I'm wondering out loud is, is the message of the resurrection just about the resurrection? Is the good news only about the empty tomb? Is our faith based solely on Jesus being risen?

Well, yeah, obviously. That's what we've learned our whole Christian lives, is it not? It's what we believe, what we confess, what we claim to be witnesses of. As Paul tells us, if Jesus hadn't been risen then we who claim his name are the biggest saps that have ever sapped on this side of sap town (not in those exact words, by the way). So yes, Jesus is risen in some mysterious way that we cannot explain. Jesus is alive in ways that we cannot understand. Jesus is present here and now, with the women at the tomb, with the confused male disciples, and throughout all time.

But what I'm saying is that I noticed something else in the message the women was given and told to proclaim. Not only has Jesus been risen, but they will see him. In Galilee. In their midst. In the most common and ordinary places.

Jesus can be seen.

On the road to Emmaus. On the beach cooking some fish. Among friends and enemies alike.

Jesus can be seen in the garden, in the gardeners, in the love and care that we receive from the likely and unlikely places. Jesus can be seen in the confusion of life, in the surprising events throughout time, in the baffling displays of grace and mercy. Jesus can be seen in the healing of pain, the forgiveness of sin, and the endurance of relationship. Jesus can be seen in the joy of connections, the support in community, and the love that we can share collectively as a human race.

Jesus can be seen.

And I think this is the good news that we have this day, yes, Jesus is still risen of course, but what that means for us practically isn't that we should be able to see Jesus in the flesh, put our fingers in the wounds in his hands and side as gross as that sounds, and physically embrace him and take a hold of his feet and worship him. Rather, what that means for us is that we can see Jesus wherever we go, we can recognise his voice throughout our lives, we can feel his presence among us in our homes, in our communities, anywhere we might gather together. Just not physically but metaphysically. Jesus is with us.

This is the news that we have to share. This is the experience that moves us to tell others. This is what we witness and testify to. That we are not alone, we are not unworthy or without value, we are not forsaken or abandoned but dearly and wholly loved.

As the empty cross, the empty tomb, and the curtain in the temple torn in two tell us, God is not confined in the spaces that we construct. God is not trapped in the boxes that we build. God is not hidden behind the walls that we put up, out of reach, unable to be grasped. Instead, because of the example of forgiven evil that the cross represents, because of the steadfast grace shown to us with an empty tomb, because of the opening out of the holy of holies that was veiled by that previously untorn curtain, it is revealed to us that God is with us, loving us, and redeeming us with a mercy that surpasses all understanding.

So this news of resurrection isn't just news of a new life. But it is news of a new experience, a new community, a new love that that is tangible, recognisable, and visible as it welcomes us all, lifting us up out of our shame and guilt, and reminding us that we are recreated to be God's people in the world, where we see, recognise, and proclaim through words and actions and our very lives that Alleluia! Jesus is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

May we continue to see the risen Christ in and around our lives, that we be inspired to serve, to live as God's anointed people, and to love as we have first been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen! (#377) verses 1, 4, 5

CREED (HS p. 11)

With all those living in the light of resurrection, 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 into God's eternal grace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "by your resurrecting mercy, O God" and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we give thanks to you, for you are good and your mercy endures forever. You are our strength and our song and in you we find salvation. Strengthen our mission and ministry to spread this gospel message to reach all people. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada, their bishops, priests, and all their members; for our own ELCIC and our bishops Kathy, Larry, Sid, Jason, Michael, and Susan; and all our congregations, particularly out of our BC Synod: for Dunbar Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Thomas Keeley, and all our Synod staff in their support of the work of our church. By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your right hand is exalted and has valiantly created the heavens and earth for us to live in and enjoy. Increase our stewardship of this planet, and restore its health that it can continue to be our home and house life. We pray especially for those living in areas prone to natural disasters and harsh weather, that they be safe from harm. By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you give and you take, and you are just and gracious as you open for us the gates of righteousness. Be with all world leaders and politicians as they learn to work together instead of against to bring out peace among all nations. We pray especially for the regions of the world that are facing war, violence, and turmoil; as well as for those that we've sponsored to come

into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children. By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you take us and renew us, lifting us up and restoring us into wholeness. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and let your love shine through us all. Especially we pray for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Bryan and Chona; Raj and the Prasad family; Sukhwant; Winn; John; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; William; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; and all those we name aloud or quietly at this time...
By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, this is the day that you have made, we rejoice and are glad in all that you do and give us, and especially for joining us with you and all the saints to live in your kingdom for all time. Give us confidence in this promise, that we can find meaning and purpose in our identity as your people for all time. By your resurrecting mercy, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your gracious and resurrecting love, made apparent to us through Jesus Christ our risen Saviour. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

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 has been risen from the grave to show us the depth and breadth of your love and grace, welcoming us all into your arms of redemption and salvation, giving us all purpose and new life. And so, as we are joined with all the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, we praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (HS p.15)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Yes Lord you are holy and mighty, and we bow before your greatness and mercy. You save us from our sin and you lift us up out of our guilt, and you show us a forgiveness that redeems us with your love. And you solidify this good news in the life and teachings of your Son Jesus, whom you sent to us as one of us, revealing to all the ways of your resurrecting grace.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his disciples 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 heavenly food that we share where we can see your loving embrace, O God, moving us to ponder the mystery 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 the resurrection that we celebrate on this glorious day, you have lifted us all up to reside with you and all the saints of all times and places in your kingdom of love, peace, joy, and hope, in Jesus Christ through whom all this is made possible, by the power of the Spirit that makes all things new, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (HS p.15)

Gathered into new life 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 God's unending and steadfast grace and love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS

Lamb of God (HS p. 18)

We Come to the Hungry Feast #479

Bread of Life from Heaven #474

As the Grains of Wheat #465

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we have been fed by your love and grace and you have revealed to us your faithfulness that does not end. May the resurrection that we celebrate today reenergize and invigorate us into new life with you and all the saints, as we live as your people in the world:

broken yet healed, sinner yet saved, dead in sin yet made alive by your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our risen Saviour bless you with new life and keep you in arms of love,
God our resurrecting Shepherd shine on you with unending grace and steadfast mercy,
God the reforming Spirit look upon you with favour and give you the peace that surpasses all understanding, now and forever.

Amen.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live the good news that Alleluia, Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

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