

Order of Service for April 18, 2021 - Easter 3

GATHERING

Thanksgiving for Baptism

P - Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C - Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P - Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

[Water is poured]

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters in which you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.

We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

C - Amen.

Gathering Song - # 377, Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!

Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Trumpets resounding in glorious light!

Splendour, the Lamb, Heaven forever! Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

Refrain

Jesus is risen and we shall arise: Give God the glory! Alleluia!

Walking the way, Christ in the center, telling the story to open our eyes;

Breaking our bread, giving us glory: Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. *Refrain*

Jesus the vine, we are the branches; Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;

Heaven to earth, Christ to the people, gift of the future now flowing to me. *Refrain*

Weeping be gone; Sorrow, be silent: Death put asunder, and Easter is bright.

Cherubim sing, "O grave, be open!" Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. *Refrain*

City of God, Easter forever, Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,

River of Life, Saints and archangels, Sing with creation to God the I AM! *Refrain*

(All hymn lyrics printed under CCLI Licence # 11411292)

Greeting

The grace of our risen Lord Jesus, the love of the eternal God, and the communion of the life-giving Spirit, is with us all.

Easter Litany

P - New life is yours.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - Repentance and forgiveness is proclaimed in Christ's name.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - There will be one flock, and one shepherd.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - You have been cleansed by the word of Christ.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - Christ has appointed you to go and bear fruit that will last.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - Christ has sent us into the world.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

P - New life is yours.

C - Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Prayer of the Day

P - Let us pray. Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C - Amen.

WORD

Gospel Acclamation

P - Alleluia. Our hearts burn within us

C - While you open to us the scriptures. Alleluia

Gospel Reading Luke 24:36b-48

P - While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you--that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

The gospel of the Lord.

Sermon

Like many of you, we have a bit of a collection of movies on DVD and BluRay discs. One of these, which we have watched a fair number of times, is the original Pirates of the Caribbean movie. Johnny Depp and all that.

There is a scene in the Pirates of the Caribbean in which Captain Barbossa, the pirate captain, tells Elizabeth Swan, a newly captured hostage, the story of how this crew of pirates was cursed. And the way this curse is revealed is when the captain walks out on deck at night. He looks normal when inside, but when the moonlight hits him, he turns into a hideous, rotting skeleton. And just to drive home the point, he opens a bottle of wine and takes a big gulp, but since he's just rotting bones, the wine simply drains through his bones and onto the deck. He can't even taste the wine, because he's got no lips or tongue or taste buds left when he's in this skeletal form.

Such is the curse inflicted on this crew of pirates.

I don't know for sure, but I have a suspicion that the writer of this scene was at least *somewhat* familiar with today's gospel reading from Luke.

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, and in order to demonstrate that he's not a ghost, he asks if they have anything to eat. They give him a chunk of broiled fish, he eats it, and they notice that the fish does *not* fall through him onto the floor! So, he's flesh and blood. He's real. And it really is him. They recognize that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! And we all go home. Right?

Except...

I think this story is telling us something *more*. I think it is telling us more than just that Jesus is alive. In fact, I think this story is doing more than just telling us something about *Jesus*. I think this story is telling us something... about *us*.

The fact that Jesus has flesh and blood and skin and tastebuds is important, but I think that it is *just* as important that *we* have flesh and blood and skin and tastebuds. We, you and I, the way we are now, are carrying around, in our very humanness, the presence of the risen Christ. The fact that the risen Jesus has flesh and blood and skin, points us to the resurrection life which *we* have been promised, *now*, with our flesh and blood and skin and hair and toe nails!

I think it's very similar to what we are told in the very beginning of the Bible, in the creations stories in Genesis. Remember how it goes?

*God created humankind in God's own image,
in the image of God they were created;
male and female [and everything in between!] were created in that image.*

I think the story of the resurrection from Luke is reminding us of the same thing that the writer of Genesis was saying: We are made in the image of God.

You, as an individual, are the image of God, with all of your foibles and quirks. You, in all of your flesh and blood and skin and toenails, carry the image of your creator, *in* you, in your very *being*.

We, as a faith *community*, are the image of God. We, *together*, with all of our idiosyncrasies, with all of our failures; we, together, bear the image of God in us, in our very being, *together*.

I think it is crucially important for us to hold onto this promise, and share this promise with everyone we can, because this day, April 18th, this anniversary of the shootings in the Portapique area, is a reminder of what happens when we deny the image of God is us; when we deny the image of God in others.

When we deny the image of God in us, we can forget how valued we are. It can become too easy for us to be consumed with self-hatred and self-doubt. And when that happens, we can find ourselves lashing out in an attempt to inflict our rage on someone else, *anyone* else.

And when we deny the image of God in *others*, it can become too easy for us to *attack* those others, and try to make *them* responsible for our own feelings of worthlessness and helplessness. When we deny *their* value, we make *them* a target for our rage.

And let's not pretend that this was a one-time event. We are confronted with dehumanizing, image-of-God-denying forces every day of our lives. Every time we turn on a TV or computer, or open a newspaper, we are confronted with commercials which tell us that we don't measure up unless we buy this kind of car, or cover our human smell with some kind of artificial scent. We are confronted every day by political forces which tell us to be afraid or "those people," which denies the image of God in us and them at the same time.

Which is why this resurrection story is so important.

We need constant reminders that we are made in the image of God. And when we have received those reminders, we are then sent to the people of this world who *also* need constant reminders that they, *too*, are made in the image of God.

We need to find a way to remind ourselves to share the image of God within us. So when we are paying for groceries, we can remember that the cashier is *also* made in the image of God. So when we are standing in line to pick up our medication at the drug store, we can treat the people in line 6 feet ahead of and 6 feet behind us as bearers of the image of God. So we can recognize those temptations to deny the image of God, in ourselves, and in others, as the temptations they are.

We are made in the image of God. *You*, as an *individual*, are made in the image of God. *We*, as a *community*, are made in the image of God. Jesus comes to us, as flesh and blood and bones and skin and toenails(!), to remind us of this truth. *And*, Jesus *sends* us, as flesh and blood and bones and skin and toenails(!), to remind everyone *else* of this truth.

The image of God surrounds us, and fills us, and is real, *in us*, because Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn of the Day - # 579, Lord, You Give the Great Commission

Lord, you give the great commission: "Heal the sick and preach the word."

Lest the church neglect its mission, and the gospel go unheard.

Help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity:

Refrain

With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you call us to your service: "In my name baptize and teach."

That the world may trust your promise, life abundant meant for each.

Give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community: *Refrain*

Lord, you make the common holy: "This my body, this my blood."

Let us all, for earth's true glory, daily lift life heavenward,

Asking that the world around us share your children's liberty: *Refrain*

Lord, you show us love's true measure: "Father, what they do, forgive."

Yet we hoard as private treasure all that you so freely give.

May your car and mercy lead us to a just society: *Refrain*

Lord, you bless with words assuring: "I am with you to the end."

Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend

And, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity: *Refrain*

Prayers of the People

A - Trusting that new life is ours today through the risen Jesus, we offer our prayers to God.

[*Short pause*]

A - Gracious God of resurrection, in the risen Jesus we discover authentic humanity. Give us the faith to trust that your promise is *indeed* given to *us*. God of new life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Gracious God of resurrection, in the midst of death, you bring new life. In the midst of division, you bring reconciliation. Open our eyes to see *you* among us. God of new life,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Gracious God of resurrection, you reveal the image of God in the risen Jesus, but **also** in us.
Enable us, not only to *see* it, but to actively *look* for it in the people around us. God of new life,
C - Hear our prayer.

A - Gracious God of resurrection, we trust your Easter promise, but we live in a Good Friday world which denies the image of God, in each other and in ourselves. We pray for those who died a year ago in the Portapique area: Tom Bagley, Kristen Beaton and Baby Beaton, Joy Bond, Peter Bond, Greg Blair, Jamie Blair, Corrie Ellison, Gina Goulet, Frank Gulenchyn, Lilian Hyslop, Alanna Jenkins, Dawn Madsen, Sean McLeod, Lisa McCully, Heather O'Brien, Jolene Oliver, Heidi Stevenson, Aaron Tuck, Emily Tuck, Elizabeth Thomas, Joey Webber, Jeff Zahl.
Strengthen the resolve of your church to engage with this hurting world, that we may be numbered among those who are struggling for life, peace and justice. God of new life,
C - Hear our prayer.

A - Gracious God of resurrection, use your people to extend your healing in this world: bringing food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, welcome to the stranger, support to the addict, and care for the isolated. We especially pray that we may be your healing presence for those we name before you. God of new life,
C - Hear our prayer.

A - Gracious God of resurrection, in the risen Jesus we discover authentic humanity. Give us the faith to trust that your promise is *indeed* given to *us*. God of new life,
C - Hear our prayer.

P - Hear us, gracious and loving God, for the sake of our gracious and living Saviour, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray,
C - Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C - 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, and 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.

SENDING

Benediction

P - May almighty God,
The Father who created us to live in love,
The Son (†) who died and rose to bring us new life,
And the Spirit who sends us to *share* new life,
bless you all, now and forever.
C - Amen.

Sending Song - # 389, Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. His cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring. His love in death shall never die.
Christ is alive! No longer bound to distant years in Palestine,
he comes to claim the here and now, and conquer every place and time.
Not throned above, remotely high, untouched, unmoved by human pains

but daily, in the midst of life, our Saviour, with the Father reigns.

In every insult, rift and war, where colour, scorn or wealth divide,
he suffers still, yet loves the more, and lives, though ever crucified.

Christ is alive! His Spirit burns through this and every future age,
till all creation lives and learns his joy, his justice, love and praise.

Dismissal

P - Go in peace. New life is yours.

C - Thanks be to God!

P - For Christ is risen!

C - Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Remember to visit our Facebook page and our Website, <https://zionlutheranlunenburg.ca>