

April 12, 2020, Easter Sunday

Parts of this service marked with an asterisk () may be led by one person.*

Invocation

* On the Sabbath, they rested, according to the commandment.
But on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb,
and discovered... that the empire... had lost.
Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn *(Read or sung together)*

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 731166-A)

Christ is Risen. Hallelujah! Risen our victorious head.
Sing his praises, hallelujah! Christ is risen from the dead!
Gratefully our hearts adore him, as his light once more appears,
Bowing down in joy before him, rising up from griefs and treads.

Chorus

Christ is Risen. Hallelujah! Risen our victorious head!
Sing his praises, hallelujah! Christ is risen from the dead!

Christ is risen! All the sadness of our Lenten fast is o'er,
Through the open gates of gladness he returns to life once more.
Death and hell before him bending, see him rise, the victor now,
Angels on his steps attending, glory round his wounded brow. *Chorus*

Christ is risen! Henceforth never death or hell shall us enthrall;
We are Christ's, in him forever, we have triumphed over all;
All the doubting and dejection of our trembling hearts have ceased,
'Tis the day of resurrections! Let us rise and keep the feast. *Chorus*

For those of you reading this on line, an instrumental version of this hymn may be heard by clicking here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdwQV54AEk4>

Prayer of the Day *(Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress)*

* Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Let us pray.

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fulness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading

* The Holy Gospel according to John.

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. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then 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. 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. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and 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. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘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.”’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

* Easter changes everything.

But let’s be honest. Saying this is..., well, it’s predictable. It’s obvious. It’s so obvious, in fact, that it hardly needs to be said.

But it does. It needs to be said. It needs to be said loudly, and clearly, and then it needs to be said again.

If nothing else, it needs to be repeated again and again..., for *us*! For the church! For believers. *We* are the ones who need to hear it over and over again.

Martin Luther himself said, “I need to hear the gospel over and over, because I forget it over and over.”

We, as individuals, forget. We live in a *world* which forgets. And quite frankly, there are forces out there which *want us* to forget. Because people who forget can be convinced to do things which benefit those forces.

If we forget that our identity is given by God, we will be open to thinking that our job, or our nationality, or our race tells us who we are. So we will compete instead of love.

If we forget that our value is declared by God, we will be susceptible to suggestions that our wealth, or lack of it, is the truest indicator of our worth. So we will compare instead of love.

If we forget that God's promise surrounds us, we will be vulnerable to anything that comes along promising safety. So we will buy guns. Or drugs. Or bigger defence budgets. Or outrageous security systems. So we will hide instead of love.

So. For the sake of life, we will repeat, over and over again, that Easter changes all of this.

Easter says that our identity *is* given by God. So we can love instead of compete.

Easter says that our value *is* declared by God. So we can love instead of compare.

Easter says that our security is grounded in God. So we can love instead of hide.

Easter changes all of this.

Easter changes everything.

Ultimately, Easter changes *us*!

Which is why *we* say, over and over again, that Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.

Prayers of the People

* Celebrating the victory of love over death, we offer our prayers to God.

[Short pause]

Living, loving God, you have revealed new life to our dying creation. Your love wins. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

Living, loving God, you bring your new life to us through the new life of Jesus, and promise that this is who we truly are. Your love wins. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

Living, loving God, the powers with which we contend have been rendered powerless. Your love, your life, your presence proclaim our identity. Your love wins. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

Living, loving God, reassure your church of your on-going guidance during these days of pandemic. Strengthen our faith to bridge the gaps created by our need to separate. Make us one in the living Christ. Your love wins. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

Living, loving God, your new life comes specifically *to* our dying world. Use your people to bring joy to those who are hopeless, to bring riches to those who are poor, and to bring healing to those who are sick, especially those we name before you.

[Names of those who are of special concern may be offered.]

Your love wins. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

Living, loving God, because of Easter, we can live in hope. Open our eyes to see how everything has changed. Your love wins, even here. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

We pray this in the name of our risen and living Saviour, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray,

Our Father....

Lord's Prayer (*Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress*)

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.

OR

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 your, now and forever. Amen.

OR

To pray with the leaders of our local congregations, you may click here -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D7r99aSnzg>

Hymn (*Read or sung together*)

(*Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 731166-A*)

Thine is the glory, risen conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

Chorus

Thine is the glory, risen conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!

Lo, Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets thee, scatters fear and gloom;
let his church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth' death hath lost its sting. *Chorus.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors, through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. *Chorus.*

For those of you reading this on line, a choral version of this hymn may be heard by clicking here -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaoV5w2Qfag>

Benediction (*Read together*)

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 reminds us who we are, over and over again,
bless us all, now and forever. Amen.

Go in peace. Everything is changed.

Thanks be to God!

For Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!