

May 10, 2020 Easter 5

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

Invocation

* The disciples have questions. They make demands.

They want Jesus to say things that make *sense*.

But Jesus doesn't do that. Instead, he points them... to promise.

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn (*Read or sung together*)

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 11411292)

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

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

Chorus

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

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

breaking our bread, giving us glory; Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. *Chorus*

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. *Chorus*

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. *Chorus*

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

river of life, saints and archangels, sing with creation to God the I AM. *Chorus*

For those of you reading this on line, this hymn may be heard by clicking here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kefG4V0-Pz0>

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

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

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel Reading

* The Holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come

again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

* “Life,” it is said, “is lived looking forward, but it is understood looking backward.”

I think there is a fair amount of wisdom in this statement.

That is a primary reason we are reading this particular story today.

This is technically not an “Easter story.” In John’s gospel, this conversation takes place the evening before Good Friday, on what the church now calls Maundy Thursday. Jesus has gathered his friends and followers together, they eat a meal, they talk, and Jesus lays some pretty heavy-duty theology on them.

The way John tells his story, the disciples are left scratching their heads. They seem incapable of wrapping their heads around what Jesus is saying. Thomas doesn’t “know the way,” and Philip demands that Jesus stop with all the fancy explanations and get to the point.

Unfortunately for Thomas and Philip, Jesus’ answers to their questions only raise more questions!

But here’s the thing. I think John was trying to get his readers (and therefore, *us*), to **look back** on these things, so that we can understand our life a bit more as we move forward.

Remember, John’s community already knew the ending of this story, just like we do. They already knew that Easter had happened, just like we do. They already knew about both the cross and the empty tomb, just like we do.

I think John wants us to read this story from the perspective of Good Friday and Easter. He wants us to listen to these past “conversations” using the lens of what we already know of the story.

In fact, that’s really the only way that John’s gospel can be understood.

It’s only on this side of Easter that Jesus’ promise to prepare a place for us makes sense.

It’s only on this side of Easter that Jesus’ statement that, by knowing Jesus we know the Father, makes sense.

It's only on this side of Easter that the Father being glorified in the Son makes sense.

I would suggest we try to remember this as we wrestle with our current, Covid-19 existence, the tragedy of Portapique, and everything else that seems to be coming at us like a runaway train.

A lot of this stuff isn't making sense. And we don't know how, or when, it's *going* to make sense. And, quite frankly, Jesus isn't answering *our* question the way we would like, either.

But in the risen Jesus, we catch a glimpse of the future. We catch a glimpse of *our* future. We catch a glimpse of the future of all creation.

Granted, this glimpse doesn't make everything make sense. But it does give us hope: hope that the future *is* in God's loving hands; hope that our present situation is encompassed by that same love of God; hope that the things that make no sense are not outside the new creation which has been begun in Easter; hope that points us forward, even here, even now.

So, even when things make no sense, we continue to proclaim together that Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.

Offerings

A reminder that offerings are being received by all of our churches via mail. You can also make an on-line donation to your congregation through the ELCIC website, secure.elcic.ca. Include the name of your congregation and its location in the "Personal Message" box. Additionally, Zion in Lunenburg can receive on-line donations through www.canadahelps.org. Thank you for your on-going support in these challenging times.

Prayers of the People

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

[*Short pause*]

God who embraces our past, we give thanks for your presence in the stories which our ancestors in faith have passed on to us. Continue to shine your light through these stories, that we may grow closer to you, and to each other. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God who fills our present, we give you thanks for your promise to be with us in our confusion. Give us wisdom to discern your call; but even more, give us faith to respond with love. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God who overflows into our future, we give you thanks for the glimpses you give us of life renewed, of creation restored, of hope reborn. Fire us with passion for the future you are bringing. Give us the grace to live it now. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God who gives insight, we give you thanks for the instruction you have given your people. Inspire your church to share the gifts you have given so generously, that the world around us may catch a glimpse of your loving presence. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God who gives hope, we give you thanks for your presence with those who suffer: those who are sick or isolated, those who grieve or are angry, those who serve others and are at risk, and those we name before you.

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

God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God who gives life, we give thanks for your continuing creation, your on-going salvation, your ever-presence companionship. Fill us with hope, so that, even when life makes no sense, we may provide a glimpse of your compassion. 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 yours, 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 # 11411292*)

You are the way; to you alone from sin and death we flee;
all those who search for God, you find and by your grace set free.

You are the truth; your word alone true wisdom can impart;
you only can inform the mind and purify the heart.

You are the life; the rending tomb proclaims your conqu'ring arm;
and those who put their trust in you not death nor hell shall harm.

You are the way, the truth, the life; grant us that way to now,
that truth to keep, that life to win, whose joys eternal flow.

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=dFD8XFAY92k>

Note - This version includes more verses than those which are printed here!

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 gives us a glimpse of hope,
bless us all, now and forever. Amen.

Go in peace. Trusting the promise.

Thanks be to God!

For Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!