

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We join together on this Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Please share the devotions below with others in your home, forward them along, or given someone a call and share them together.

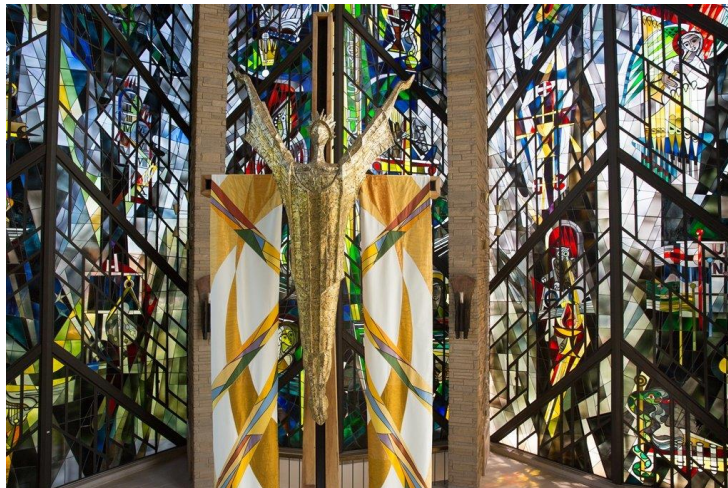
Note: You are also invited to join Easter Sunday worship service led from the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University in Indiana. You may join the WebEx broadcast of this worship service through your computer. (WebEx is similar to Zoom and other webcast tools.) The worship service will begin at 10:00 am. You will want to start a few minutes before that to make sure your computer has downloaded and installed the WebEx software. Valparaiso University is an independent Lutheran university with strong ties to both the ELCA and LCMS.

Please use the following link and access credentials:

[Valparaiso Easter Worship](#) (10:00 am Central Time)

Access code: 613 990 457

Password: chapel



Let Us Be Gathered

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are raised with him to new life.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning you created us in your image
and planted us in a well-watered garden.
In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched,
and you gave us water from the rock.
When we did not know the way,
you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.

At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side,
and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water,
for the water in our homes
and for all water everywhere.
Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.
Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give.
To you be given honor and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen.

Song

Let us join together in joy and celebration through song. The St. Olaf College Choir leads us in singing "Christ Is Arisen, Alleluia!" Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/AmWgMeD5cmg>.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption,
and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death.
Make us die every day to sin,
that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection,
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Let Us Hear God's Word

A reading from Acts:

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." (Acts 10)

*The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the Psalms:

- ¹Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good;
God's mercy endures forever.
- ²Let Israel now declare,
"God's mercy endures forever."
- ¹⁴The Lord is my strength and my song,
and has become my salvation.
- ¹⁵Shouts 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!"
- ¹⁷I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the Lord.
- ¹⁸The Lord indeed punished me sorely,
but did not hand me over to death.
- ¹⁹Open 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."
- ²¹I give thanks to you, for you have answered me
and you have become my salvation.
- ²²The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
- ²³By 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. (Psalm 118)

*The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.*

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." (Matthew 28)

*The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.*

Reflection on the Readings

In today's psalm, we hear the vow, "I shall not die, but live." It's a vow rooted in confidence in God's love, faith in God's victory over death, and belief that the Lord is acting in this world for good – for reasons worth joy and gladness!

These words from verse 17 are central to the whole psalm. Indeed, Martin Luther himself saw in this psalm the story of his own life and the purpose for his living. Because of this, Luther put these words on the wall of his study at Coburg Castle as his personal motto. These words, “I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord,” are still visible on the wall in Coburg Castle today.

Psalm 118 inspired Luther's radical faith. Of all people, Martin Luther certainly had cause to fear what mortals might do to him. Of this Psalm he wrote, “the dying live; the suffering rejoice; the fallen rise; the disgraced are honored. It is as Christ says, ‘He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.’” Luther further declared that whenever the scriptures “deal with God concerning comfort and help in their need, eternal life and the resurrection of the dead are involved.”

During Luther's time in Wittenberg, the bubonic plague (Black Death) returned once again to the city. It was one of the continuing flare ups of a disease that occurred in periodic outbreaks and killed vast numbers of people. Death by disease was a well-known experience in Luther's time.

Today, the whole people of the world are afflicted by a different disease. It may be different in its nature (viral, instead of bacterial) and not be quite as deadly as the Black Death, but it is nevertheless just as all-consuming in its impact on our lives. In such times, Psalm 118 retains the power to inspire us in the same way it inspired its original author and also Martin Luther.

Just as the Psalmist and Luther were both delivered by God, so now Christ also empowers us, comforts us, and snatches us out of the realm of death. All this is done, says Luther, so that we might proclaim the deeds of the Lord. Easter is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Hymn of the Day

Trumpeter Steffan Copenhaver and pianist Sharon Terbeek lead us this day with accompaniment for “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today.” Steffan and Sharon recorded this accompaniment last Sunday (April 5, 2020) at Faith Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Faith Lutheran is one of our sister congregations in the ELCA.

Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/-jVGKGPqeZs>.

(Turn it up loud and sing along as best you can! None of us will complain about any wrong notes. 😊)

Tip: Steffan gets just a tiny bit fancy with the trumpet in second stanza – just keep singing along with the piano melody!)

- 1 *Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!*

- 2 *Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all you heav'nly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!*

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of resurrection, from the very beginning you give the church the gift of women as your witnesses: as preachers, teachers, and leaders. Open our ears to their proclamation this day and always. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

All your creation praises you—the earth hums, the seas pulse, the stars shine, and the galaxies whirl in glorious harmonies to honor you. Let us hear and blend our voices in the song. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We still weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Cradle the fearful, the suffering, the ill, and the dying, assuring them of your loving presence, especially Vallie, LaVaune, Patty, Kathy, Frank, Lisa, Rita, April, Bev, Bob, Beth, Marlene, and all those we name. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Risen Lord, you went ahead of us into the grave and defeated the powers of evil. We remember those who have died. Inspire us to live our lives in this resurrection hope and draw us to you in our final days. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Merciful God,
our ordinary gifts seem small for such a celebration,
but you make of them an abundance,
just as you do with our lives.
Feed us again at this table
for service in your name,
in the strength of the risen Christ.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Let Us Be Sent in Service

Song

Joined to Christ and raised with him to new life, the resurrection of our Lord is an invitation for us to participate in the saving power of God's abundant, overwhelming love. Let us, through song, hear again today of God's love for us and of faith that Christ's love truly does bring us together and is even now transforming this world. The Conspirare Choir, based in Austin, Texas, and conducted by Craig Hella Johnson sings "I Love you / What a Wonderful Life."

Here is the video link: https://youtu.be/y_qfeEOTjyY.

*We can be together for now and forever,
I love you, I love you,
And when I'm praying I hear him saying, "I love you, I love you,"
People all over the world, they're opening up, they're coming around.*

*They're saying I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you.*

Craig Hella Johnson is a graduate of St. Olaf College, studied at Juilliard, the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, and Yale University, where he received a Doctor of Music Arts degree. He serves now as Resident Artist in Choral Music at Texas State University.

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead
raise you to new life, fill you with hope,
and turn your mourning into dancing.

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Dismissal

Christ is risen, just as he said.
Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!