

Worship in the Home: April 18, 2021

Posted on April 14, 2021 by ELCA Worship



Worship in the Home

Third Sunday of Easter, Year B April 18, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen.

Christ is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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 Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Acts 3:12-19

After healing a man unable to walk, Peter preaches to the people, describing how God's promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus. Through the proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection, God is offering them forgiveness and restoration in Jesus' name.

¹²Peter addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified Jesus, the servant of God, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though Pilate had decided to release him. ¹⁴But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And by faith in the name of Jesus, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. ¹⁷“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what had been foretold through all the prophets, that the Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 4

¹Answer me when I call, O God, defender¹ of my cause;
you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and¹ hear my prayer.

²“You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory;
how long will you love illusions and seek¹ after lies?”

³Know that the Lord does wonders¹ for the faithful;
the Lord will hear me¹ when I call.

⁴Tremble, then, and¹ do not sin;
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

⁵Offer the appointed¹ sacrifices,
and put your trust¹ in the Lord.

⁶Many are saying, “Who will show us¹ any good?”
Let the light of your face shine upon¹ us, O Lord.

⁷You have put gladness¹ in my heart,
more than when grain and¹ wine abound.

⁸In peace, I will lie¹ down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me¹ rest secure.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-7

God has loved us in order to make us children of God. Though we do not yet know the full details of our future existence, we trust that God will reveal it just as God revealed Jesus to take away our sins.

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know God. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when it is revealed, we will be like God, for we will see God as God is. ³And all who have this hope in God purify themselves, just as the Son is pure.

⁴Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that Christ was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in the Son sins; no one who sins has either seen or known the Son. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 24:36b-48

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In this account of an appearance after his resurrection, Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to understand him as Messiah. Jesus convinces them that he has been raised and sends them on a mission to proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness.

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, “Why are you

frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look 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." ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence. ⁴⁴Then Jesus 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." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

The author of Acts, in seeking to appeal to the Gentiles and exonerate Pilate, has Peter blaming "the Israelites" for the death of Jesus. Peter here does not even remember his own guilt. The Christian tradition has rather seen the death of Jesus, however it came about, as bringing the possibility of repentance and forgiveness to us all. The scriptures are closed to us when we use them to judge others for their sins, forgetting our own. But the risen Christ in the power of the Spirit opens our minds to understand the scriptures. In them, when they are truly opened, we see his wounds and encounter his resurrection. In them we see the risen Jesus eat a fish, that representation of the chaos of the sea — of death — made into life-giving food. Every Sunday, the scriptures are opened for us. And every Sunday, when we are able to gather, Christ gives us life in his meal. When we cannot gather, we eat his body and blood in the scriptures themselves, by faith. In word and sacrament we meet the author of life and are given forgiveness, made children of God, and sent with words of witness and forgiveness to others.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 383), "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 367). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this third Sunday of Easter, we pray for all in any need, responding to each petition with words echoing today's psalm, "Hear us when we call."

A brief silence.

Holy and righteous God, for the church, we pray:

for our own congregation,

for the churches of all our neighbors and around the globe,

and especially for Christians in Nigeria and wherever martyrdoms threaten.

A brief silence.

O God our Savior, bless your people, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

For the earth we pray:

for the well-being of terrains, plants, and animals wild and tame,

for the birds, especially songbirds whose numbers are decreasing,

and for this week's Earth Day, that good will come from the worldwide observance.

A brief silence.

O God our Creator, restore your handiwork, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

For peace we pray:
for the end of warfare, terrorism, and cruelty to the poor,
for a respectful treatment of refugees and all who are incarcerated,
and especially for Northern Ireland and other places of civil unrest.

A brief silence.

O God our Sovereign, bring peace to the nations, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

For justice we pray:
for the liberation of all who are oppressed,
for an end to ethnic and economic prejudice,
and especially for all court cases in this and every land.

A brief silence.

O God our Refuge, protect the vulnerable, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

For all who are sick and suffering,
for those who have no access to the coronavirus vaccines,
for the children afflicted with the virus variants,
for everyone who fears receiving medical advice and assistance,
for those who live with chronic pain,
for those whose pain is known only to you,
and especially for those we name here before you. . . .

A brief silence.

O God our Caregiver, heal the sick, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

For ourselves, when we believe and when we doubt,
and for our dear ones for whom we pray:

A longer period of silence.

O God our Comforter, hold us close, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

We remember before you all the witnesses of the resurrection,
the saints of old,
those who have died by violence or by the coronavirus,
and especially our relatives and friends.

A brief silence.

O God our Resurrection, give us life now and forever, and have mercy on us.

Hear us when we call.

Receive these prayers into your heart of mercy for the sake of the holy and righteous one, Jesus Christ, our wondrous Redeemer.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "The Day of Resurrection" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 361), "Day of Arising" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 374), "Ayúdanos, oh Dios / Oh, Help Us, Save Us" (All Creation Sings 1055). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[The Day of Resurrection!](#)

[Ayudanos, oh Dios / Oh, Help Us, Save Us](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Praise to you, O God, for your Word of life:
creating a wondrous universe,
proclaiming freedom from captivity,
becoming the song of your people.

We praise you, O God, for your Word.

We praise you, O God, for your Word.

Your Word is made flesh among us:

with Mary in the garden, you call us by name.

With Thomas beholding your wounds, you call us to believe.

With sheep of other folds, we are gathered by your voice.

Your Word names our death and our life:

a seed that falls into the earth and dies,

rain and snow that come down from heaven to water the earth,

a vine in which we abide.

Through your Word, you appoint us to bear fruit, fruit that will last.

We bless you, O God, for your Word.

We bless you, O God, for your Word.

By your living Word, we are witnesses of these things.

Breathe into us your Holy Spirit.

Open our minds to understand the scriptures.

Give us wisdom to declare what we have heard,

what we have seen with our eyes,

what we have looked at and touched with our hands

concerning the word of life.

Fill us with strength to love, not in word or speech alone,

but in truth and action.

With every creature in heaven and on earth

and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them,

we join in the hymn of all creation, as

we thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word.

We thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

God of love, you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you. (Our mailbox has a lock on it, so is secure.)

Gathered into one 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.

Then speak the Blessing:

May our glorious God grant us a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,

Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen.

Christ is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Come Away to the Skies](#)"; "[Love Is Come Again](#)"; "[Jesus, Feed Us](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday (commemoration of Olavus Petri, priest, 1552; Laurentius Petri, Bishop of Uppsala, 1573; renewers of the church) Psalm 150. **Tuesday** 2 John 1-6. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, 1109) Proverbs 9:1-6. **Thursday** Psalm 23. **Friday** (commemoration of Toyohiko Kagawa, renewer of society, 1960). **Saturday** Mark 10:11-18. **Fourth Sunday of Easter** (Mark, Evangelist) Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. To purchase copies of [Evangelical Lutheran Worship](#) and [All Creation Sings](#) for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from [All Creation Sings](#) will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw.

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Thank you to those who provide you with these worship services.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Grubby Sunday, May 2nd, No potluck – hopefully next year.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein, Lois Goossen (Friend of Newgard's).

Pastor Bill Sass – Sermon for Sunday, April 11, 2021

PEACE BE WITH YOU

John 20:19 (RSV)

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"

Jerusalem had been filled with rumors the crucified Christ had been raised from the dead, and had been seen alive.

"Some of His disciples have stolen His body," sneered the skeptics. "Raised from the dead, indeed! There is no length to which these fanatics will not go, to gain an audience for their teachings."

If skeptics could have seen those fanatics! There they were, cowering behind closed doors—thoroughly demoralized, totally defeated, feeling utterly humiliated. They had put their faith in Him. Now He was dead.

Oh, they had heard testimony of the women. The body had disappeared. Who could have desecrated that sacred tomb? Yes, Mary Magdalene, Peter and Andrew were ready to go back to their father's boats to resume their trade as fishermen. Levi was perplexed. He had been a despised tax collector. How could he go back to that life, after walking nearly three years with Jesus? Others had not thought that far in advance. They only feared the present moment. Rumor had it Jewish authorities would next be coming for them. There they were—locked away behind closed doors, trembling with every sound. They were more like frightened children that night than fanatical zealots.

Suddenly, in the midst of their confused and doubting perplexity, stood Jesus. He was no longer in the grave. He was in the room with them. The testimony of women had not been an idle tale. There were scars in His hand, His feet, His side. He was alive!

Whether they touched Him or not, we do not know. They might have done so. But they were overjoyed. They were too glad to believe! They were full of wonder. The sight of Jesus was terrific. Could it all be a dream? No, it was real—more than anything they had ever experienced. He was alive!

At this point, Jesus delivered the first Easter sermon. The first Easter sermon was delivered to that fearful group gathered behind locked doors on the evening of that first Easter day. The first four words of that sermon are important to our fearful hearts as well. The first four words were these: "Peace be with you." That was Jesus' primary message to them.

It is said that Dante, wandering one day over the mountains, drew near to a secluded monastery. He knocked at the gate. It was opened by a monk. "What do you seek here?" the monk asked. Then with a gesture of despair, the poet summed it up in one word: "Peace."

Peace—that is a prized commodity in any age. Peace for our hearts, our families, and our world. Those were the first four words of the first Easter sermon: "Peace be with you."

Peace concerning Jesus Himself. That is why churches bulge on Easter Sunday morning. In every heart—regardless of how neglectful of God the rest of the year—there is longing to be reassured the great good news of Easter is really true. He is alive. He has conquered death.

We know that He is alive because of change that occurred in the lives of His disciples. He unlocked not only the doors of their room that night—He unlocked the doors of their hearts and minds. They became what they never dreamed they could be. Just as we may not be able to see the wind, but can see its impact on trees, so we see the effect of the risen Christ on those down-hearted, and thoroughly defeated men.

He can have the same effect on our lives—if we let Him. The tragedy of our lives is that many of us want to have simply a casual relationship with Christ. We want to know Christ is there—just in case we have an emergency—but we do not want to share our lives with Him.

Ernest A. Fitzgerald tells about a plow sent to Africa some years ago. It fell into the hands of a primitive tribe in the interior of the continent. The people had never seen such an instrument before. Not knowing what to do with it, they set it up in their fields, and worshipped it. Each day they would interrupt their work for prayers. The plow, of course, was designed to cultivate soil, and provide food. However, instead of being used as a means of deliverance for the people, it became an added burden in their lives.

For many, that is where our faith stands. We believe with our heads that Christ is alive, but He does not live in our hearts. We miss the joy of resurrected living. We are like those disciples with curtains drawn, and doors barred—living troubled and uncertain lives. It is to us Christ speaks those words—"Peace be with you."

Those first disciples did not remain disciples. After they experienced the risen Christ, they became apostles. A disciple sits at the feet of a great teacher. An apostle is sent to tell the story.

We can stay in school only so long. Many can look back to those happy days of school life. We might want to stay in school forever—Sooner or later, though, we have to graduate.

Many would be content to spend our lives as disciples, but never apostles. Yet it is clear from Jesus' first Easter sermon that He intends for us to go tell the story. Listen to the other part of His message: "As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you."

Christ's plan for peace of the world is centered in His people. That's us. If the world is to have peace, then we must be peacemakers.

Corrie Ten Boom puts it in a beautiful way. She writes: "An astronaut was drilling to see if there was something deep in the crust of the moon. The drilling was hard work, and he asked the leader on earth if he might stop. His leader said 'no.' The astronaut did not argue, but worked on until he found what he was seeking."

Isn't that a good example of what we must do? We ask, "Lord, may I stop?" the Lord says, "No, go on." We must trust that, in obedience. We will reach the goal.

When General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, went blind, his son Bramwell broke the news to him. "You mean that I am blind?" said the general. "I fear we must contemplate that," his son answered. "I shall never see your face again?" asked the general. "No," said Bramwell, "probably not in this world." The old man's hand moved until it grasped his son's. "Bramwell," he said, "I have done what I could for God, and for the people, with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can for God, and for the people, without my eyes."

General Booth had no time for self-pity. He wasted no energy with inner turmoil. He knew God called him to make a difference in the world. God has called you, and me, to make a difference, as well.

Peace be unto you—peace concerning Christ; peace concerning ourselves. Then—through us—peace for Christ's world.

AMEN.

S.D.G.

Pastor's mid-week message, April 14, 2021:

The recent death of Mark Pavelich, 63, was so sad. His death was ruled a suicide at a treatment facility in Sauk Centre. He'd been suffering from delusions and paranoia, causing him to assault his neighbor in Lutsen almost two years ago.

Who was he? Mark was the speedy center from the Iron Range who assisted Mike Eruzione in scoring the winning goal in 1980 against the Soviet hockey team. That U.S. Olympic win is still called the "Miracle on Ice."

I heard Mike interviewed on TV after Mark died March 3. Mike said he was thankful the U.S. did not boycott those Olympic games as we did previous ones several years before, as a protest against the Russians.

Sports can bring people together, as politics can tend to divide us. I mention this as some people call the USA to boycott future Olympic games in China. This would be a mistake. Athletes train for years and years to compete at a world-class level to represent our country.

Back in 1936 in Berlin, Adolf Hitler just knew his Aryan Germanic champions would be victorious over so-called "lesser races." Ha! An African-American from Alabama, Jesse Owens, won three Olympic events. More recently we've seen Simone Biles from America show other nations how to win in gymnastics. Suppose they'd never had the chance to compete.

This current Easter season gives us good reason to win the world for Jesus Christ. He is our spiritual champion. Our gold medal is the crown of life eternal in His glorious name. Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Pastor Bill Sass