

AUGUSTANA

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

EASTER 2020

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn Jesus Christ Is Risen Today # 365 (two verses – 1, 2 & 4)

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!

Hymns of praise then let us sing. Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

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!

Pastor: This is the Good News – the grave is empty, Christ is risen.

All: HALLELUJAH!

Pastor: This is the Good News – the light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out.

All: HALLELUJAH!

Pastor: This is the Good News – once we were no people, now we are God's people.

All: HALLELUJAH!

Pastor: Christ is our peace, the indestructible peace we now share with each other.

Prayer: 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 fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN.**

This is our story ... today's story is our story. You could say this is our family story: our family being the family of God. We read our in the Gospels' of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But we also hear it throughout the rest of the New Testament as well: Peter told our story to the people gathered for Pentecost and later on to a group of outsiders, Paul traveled many miles and told the story in many settings. Tradition tells us that all the disciples spread out telling this story. This is our story. Today we hear it from the Gospel according to St. Matthew chapter 28. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then 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.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

The Gospel of our Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ**

Meditation - part 1

The first words we say on Easter morning are triumphant: Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! But in our Bible reading the first words of Easter were "don't be afraid." That's quite a difference between our usual happy Easter greeting and the greeting on that first Easter morning.

It's a bit easier this year for us to relate to that first Easter phrase, "Don't be afraid."

Talking this week with a dear person who was waiting to hear about their covid 19 test ... there was fear in my prayer of "Dear God, please don't let this be" The great joy on the hearing the negative result did fit with this mornings Alleluia's.

This year – in common with those first followers of Jesus – we welcome the good news of the resurrection from behind closed doors. They and us behind closed doors for protection – a different reason behind our isolation, but still both hearing the good news behind a closed door.

Hymn “Be Not Afraid” # 388 ELW

Be not afraid, sing out for joy! Christ is risen, alleluia! (repeat)

Meditation part 2

Though I love every bit of Easter celebration at church, the beauty of the sanctuary, the festive music, the good food and company, the children ringing their bells – I love to watch the children as they concentrate on hearing and greeting every “Alleluia” with a bell ring. It makes me happy just thinking about Easter past. But I am thankful for the reminder this year that Easter is not in a church building – no matter how beautiful that church is decorated ... no matter what yummy treats there are ... no matter the beautiful music

Easter is not in a building. Easter is in our hearts. Easter is in our very lives ... the good news of Easter is the story of our life in the family of God.

Our story is cannot be shut out by closed doors or isolation. It is part of our lives across cultures, over long distances, behind closed doors. Nothing can stop our story: “Do not be afraid He is not here; for he has been raised.”

Hymn “ Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia” # 364 ELW

Christ has arisen, alleluia
Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,
Even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Refrain: Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death’s fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!

The angel said to them, “Do not fear.
You look for Jesus who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.
Only the grave clothes are lying there.” /refrain

Prayers

As we celebrate the new dawn of hope that comes to us this resurrection morning we give thanks:

- For the love of God that was embodied in our risen savior Jesus ...
- For all gifts of healing and forgiveness, especially we thank you for those who use their gifts to help us through the covid 19 pandemic
- For the gifts of relationship with others. Although we are called to maintain our physical distance from one another, we give thanks for the relationships that bring support and warmth to our lives
- For the communion of faith that goes beyond the walls of our church building

Loving God, as we celebrate the resurrection, bring healing and renewal to our world. Heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord.

Especially we pray –

- For those who govern nations of the world during challenging times
- For all people in countries ravaged by strife, warfare or illness ...
- For all who strive to save the earth from carelessness and destruction ...
- For the church of Jesus Christ in every land ...
- For all who are most vulnerable during this pandemic: refugees, the Iqbal and Alhamad/Wahid families; people living in poverty or crowded conditions, the elderly, those who already struggle with health issues ...
- For those in need of care and healing especially: The Stauffer family as they grieve the loss of Mark's mom Muriel and for all who grieve this Easter. And we pray for Jennie, Logan, William, Marcus, Brody, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Earl, Janet, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Jennie, Inger, Deanna, Carol, Wilma, Mary, and all who name ...

Merciful God, your strength and courage pour forth to sustain the witness of your people. Awaken in us the humility to serve wherever creation is broken and in need, that we may follow in the way of our brother Jesus, die as he did to all that separates us from you, and with him be raised to new life. Knowing that God loves us as a mother and father we pray in the words 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 this day 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.

Hymn "Christ Is Alive" #389 ELW

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring,
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and ev'ry age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring with joy
with justice, love, and praise

Easter Blessing & Dismissal

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.**

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