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**Worship**  
**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**April 4, 2021**

**GATHERING**

**GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

**Call to Worship**

*P How good it is to celebrate the good news of God's love!*

**C We are called to be Easter people!**

*P Darkness cannot claim us!*

**C Fear cannot bind us!**

*P Christ has risen.*

**C Waiting for us to take notice.**

*P Christ has risen.*

**C Christ has risen indeed!**

**Opening Hymn**                    *"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"*

**Greeting**

*P The peace of the Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

*P May the risen Christ fill us with life, light, and hope.*

**C Thanks be to God. Jesus is risen. Alleluia! AMEN.**

**Hymn of Praise**                    *"Easter Alleluia"*

**THE WORD**

**First Reading**

**Acts 10:34-43**

**Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.**

**That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how 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. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not 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. He 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'**

*Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.*

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

## **Second Reading**

### ***Psalm 118***

**O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever!**

**Let Israel say,  
'His steadfast love endures forever.'  
The LORD is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.**

**There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:  
'The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted;  
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.'  
I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the LORD.  
The LORD has punished me severely,  
but he did not give me over to death.**

**Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the LORD.**

**This is the gate of the LORD;  
the righteous shall enter through it.**

**I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.  
The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.  
This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

*Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.*

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Response**

*“Let Us Rejoice”*

**Gospel Reading**

**Mark 16:1-16**

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.’ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterwards Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

*Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.*

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

**Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021. “Jesus is Loose!”**

There was a chill in the air as Mary Magdalene and the other women walked down the garden path to the tomb where Jesus lay. The sun was just breaking over the hills on the Eastern horizon. The bags that they carried were full of the spices that they would use to anoint the body of Jesus. They had been there just a couple of nights before when Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus down from the cross and put it in his own tomb. They had been there when the great stone was rolled across the entrance. The great stone! Like the rising sun, the memory of the sound of that huge stone rolling in front of the entrance suddenly flooded back into the minds of the women—and together they realized that there was no one who could or would move that stone away from the entrance for them! The guards certainly wouldn’t—the disciples were all gone. Who will roll away the stone so that we can anoint Jesus’ body, they said to one another? The stone in many ways was the symbol for the way things have always been the power of the state and those who hold power to do away with those who speak the truth to power, that it is those in power who hold the power of death over life; the power of doubts over the dreams that the people have. The great stone—yes, that is the way things have always been.

**Who will move the stone away for us? How do several women handle a stone weighting perhaps over a ton? As they got closer to the tomb, they saw in the dim light, that the great stone was gone! Fallen on its' side, cast aside from the entrance like a person would cast aside a pebble from their sandal! What was going on! Did someone steal his body! One last indignity they thought. How could they! Yet as Mary Magdalene went into the tomb followed by the other women, they were shocked for there was a young man all in white seemed as though he had been waiting for them. The women were terrified, but the man said to them: "Why do you look for Jesus here. He is not here, for he is risen!" How could this be! But the young man went on to tell the disciples and to remind them that Jesus had said he would rise from the dead and then meet them in Galilee. Well at first the women didn't say anything to anyone about what they had seen and heard at the tomb. They were too afraid. But finally, they gathered their courage and told the disciples what they had seen and heard and the world had not been the same since.**

**Indeed, all the women and the disciples and others would be encountered by the Risen Christ and they all were changed by that encounter. The proof of the Resurrection is not in the empty tomb by itself, but in the changed lives of people throughout the centuries. From the frightened women who found the courage to tell the disciples the words of the angel in the tomb; to the disciples who found in the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit, the courage to proclaim Him to Jerusalem at Pentecost; to Paul who persecuted the early Christians and through his encounter with the Risen Christ becomes the apostle to the Gentiles and spreads the Gospel across the Roman Empire and through Paul's New Testament letters, touches the lives of countless Christians down to our days. When we have encountered Christ, healing begins; hope is in the lives of the hopeless once more. For those who have lived in darkness, light comes. Life overcomes death, and lives are transformed. Lives are brought from mist of brokenness and doubt into the light of hope, light and faith. Jesus is on the Loose! He is on the Loose, here amongst us; amongst all who are searching for hope, peace, and courage, He is here ready to encounter you. Christ has Risen! He has Risen indeed! Amen.**

**Hymn of the Day**

***"Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds"***

**Affirmation of Faith**

**We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in a God of life; in the image of the Creator we are made. With God's Spirit woven into the fabric of our being we are called to be caretakers of the earth and to bear the life giving energy of the divine.**

**We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in Jesus Christ, sent by God to be a living example of God's desire for the world. We believe that in Jesus, the powers of darkness and death have no claim over us, that our broken lives find healing in God's compassionate mercy. Jesus is that compassion and mercy risen and alive in the world today.**

**We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in God's gift of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit empowers us be the light and life of Jesus in the world. This Spirit is the vitality of God's embrace active within us through what we do and what we say.**

**Thanks be to God for life and new life! Christ is risen! Alleluia! AMEN!**

**Prayers of the People**

*P Lord in your mercy,*

**C hear our prayer.**

**Offering**

**Offertory**

**Prayer of Blessing**

*P Let us pray:*

**C God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these gifts which we have received from your generous hand. Use them to bring your blessing into the lives of others. AMEN.**

**MEAL**

**A Brief Confession**

*P In the power of the risen Lord, we make our confession to God.*

**C Gracious and forgiving God, we seek your pardon for actions that have caused harm; for the lack of action that could have been an expression of your love. Forgive and heal us Lord.**

*P We rest in the mercy of a compassionate God. We are an Easter people; we are a forgiven people.*

**C Thanks be to God. AMEN.**

**Communion Dialogue**

*P The Lord is risen!*

**C We have seen the Lord!**

*P Lift up your hearts, people of God.*

**C We lift them to the Risen Christ.**

*P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**C We offer our thanks and praise to the One who gives us new life.**

*P On the night he was betrayed ...*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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, forever and ever. AMEN.**

## **Communion Verse**

***"Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!"***

**Christ is risen ! Shout hosanna!  
Celebrate this day of days!  
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:  
all creation is amazed!  
Break the bread of new creation  
where the world is still in pain.  
God the first and last is with us,  
Sing hosanna, every one.**

## **Communion Invitation**

*P Christ is risen! Let us break together the bread of love and life.*

**C We come to be fed in the presence of the living Christ.**

## **Communion Music**

***"Hallelujah is Our Song"***

**Erin/Kristan**

## **Communion Blessing**

*P Let us pray:*

**C We have been healed, renewed, and empowered to be life-giving servants of the Lord.  
As we have been fed with grace and mercy, send us out to be merciful agents of grace.  
In the name and power of Jesus we pray. AMEN.**

**SENDING**

## **Benediction**

## **Closing Hymn**

***"Alleluia! Alleluia!"***

## **Dismissal**

*P We are people of the resurrection!*

**C We live with hope and we serve with love. Thanks be to God!**

*(To watch the videotaped version of the worship service, click the link below)*  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt8qX94ICK-omDHSc71en4w>