

**Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I among them.” – Matthew 18:20**

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMC)
Springfield, GA
Home Worship Bulletin
Sunday, April 12, 2020
Easter Sunday**



GREETING

L Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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

C **And also with you.**

1 Corinthians 13:13

THE KYRIE

- L You raise the dead to life in the Spirit: Lord, have mercy.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
L You bring pardon and peace to the sinner: Christ, have mercy.
C **Christ, have mercy.**
L You bring light to those in darkness: Lord, have mercy.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
L May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
C **Amen**

SALUTATION

- L The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- L Let us pray.
C **Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened for us the gate of everlasting life. Give us your continual help; put good desires into our minds and bring them to full effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

+LITURGY OF THE WORD+

FIRST READING: Acts 10:34-43

³⁴So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

- L The Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALMODY: Psalm 16

¹ Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;*

I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

² **All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land,***

upon those who are noble a- | mong the people.

³ But those who run after | other gods*
shall have their troubles | multiplied.

**⁴ Their libations of blood I | will not offer,*
nor take the names of their gods up- | on my lips.**

⁵ O LORD, you are my portion | and my cup;*
it is you who up- | hold my lot.

**⁶ My boundaries enclose a | pleasant land;*
indeed, I have a | goodly heritage.**

⁷ I will bless the LORD who | gives me counsel;*
my heart teaches me night | after night.

**⁸ I have set the LORD al- | ways before me;*
because he is at my right hand, I | shall not fall.**

⁹ My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spir- | it rejoices;*
my body also shall | rest in hope.

**¹⁰ For you will not abandon me | to the grave,*
nor let your holy one | see the pit.**

¹¹ You will show me the | path of life;*
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for- | evermore.

**c Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the
beginning is now, and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

SECOND READING: Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

L The Word of the Lord.

c **Thanks be to God.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 28:1-10

L The Holy Gospel comes to us in the Word according to St. Matthew.

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and 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, and there they will see me.”

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



THE SERMON

Rev. Dr. James L. Cavanah, II

The question before us on this Easter Sunday is this: “If a man dies, will he live again?” Death is the great enemy. We don’t like to talk about it. We don’t like to discuss it. It makes us uncomfortable. It makes us uneasy. The subject of death makes us uncomfortable and uneasy because we know it is the one thing in life we have absolutely no control over. It comes and it comes when it wills.

The year was 1789. Benjamin Franklin was 83 years old and the Constitution of the United States had just been ratified. In a letter to Jean Baptiste Leroy, a French physicist and author, Benjamin Franklin wrote these words: “Our Constitution is in actual operation. Everything appears to promise that it will last; but in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.”

But the great question is this, “If a man dies, will he live again?” Perhaps we should really ask, “If I die, better yet, when I die, will I live again?”

On this Easter morning, as we are separated from one another because of the Covid-19 virus, we need to consider life, death, and life beyond this world. Over one million in our world are sick and the virus has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands. So, the question before us this morning is more than academic. It is real. It is personal. It is Scriptural.

As we worship in our homes today, we are called to remember this on powerful fact. No event in all of human history has shaped the world like the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. History and our own experiences teach us that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is an absolutely undisputable fact! “If a man dies, will he live again?” He most certainly will because when God created us, He also gave us souls that cannot die.

The first truth of the Gospel revealed the reading today is this, the POWER OF THE GOSPEL. Matthew wrote, “Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:1-4)

The historical record is clear. The facts are clear.

- The women had watched as Jesus was nailed to the cross.
- They witnessed His agony, His pain, and His suffering as He hung upon the cross.
- They listened as the chief priests and the religious leaders mocked Jesus
- They watched the Roman soldiers gamble for the clothing of Jesus.
- They heard Him cry: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- They heard His last words, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit!”
- They saw Jesus die and His lifeless body placed in a tomb.

Then, early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, these women who had watched Jesus suffer and die and His lifeless body placed in a tomb, made their way with spices they had prepared to anoint His body. Their only expectation was to complete one final act of devotion and love.

The Scriptures reveal that as the women arrived, they saw firsthand the power of the Gospel. As Matthew reveals, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”

The power of the Gospel is seen in the empty tomb! The women had absolutely no expectation of finding an angel, an empty tomb, and a risen Jesus. They experienced the power of the Gospel.

“If a man dies, will he live again?” (Job 14:14a). Yes, Jesus rose from the grave! Now, back to making this personal. What about you and me? Peter Marshall (Scots-American preacher, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC and Chaplain of the United States Senate) wrote: “*We speak of the resurrection, but have we seen it? We try to disguise death with flowers – flowers on the casket, wreaths on the door, flowers heaped on the cold grave. We embalm the body to make it look lifelike. We color the cheeks and tint the pallid face, as though to deceive ourselves. We even dress the body in the departed tenant’s best clothes, but after we are finished, it is still a dead body, without any life.*”

This is what the women were expecting. They had no idea they would experience the power of the Gospel before their very eyes. Yet, they witnessed a great earthquake, an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, the stone in front of the tomb was rolled back, and the guards trembled and became like dead men. This was their experience of the power of the Gospel and they couldn’t keep it to themselves!

Having described the power of the Gospel, Matthew goes on to the PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL. It is this promise that addresses you and me. This promise of the power of the Gospel makes it personal for you and me.

Matthew wrote, “But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you” (Matthew 28:5-7).

On March 23, 1992, *Newsweek* magazine published a letter from the Greenville County, South Carolina, Department of Social Services. The letter was written and addressed to a person who had recently died. That’s right, the letter was sent to a dead person. Part of that letter read, “Your food stamps will be stopped effective immediately, because we received notice that you have passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances.” The Greenville County, SC Department of Social Services actually wrote a letter to a dead person and said, “You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances”!

Matthew wrote, “But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay” (Matthew 28:5-6). Jesus experienced a real, radical, and dramatic change in His circumstances via the power and promise of the resurrection!

Matthew doesn’t stop there. He goes on. He tells us what happened next. “So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.’”

Not only did Jesus experience a real, radical, and dramatic change in his circumstance, moving from death to life, so did the women. So do ALL who accept in childlike faith the promise of the Gospel. The experience is a change in understanding; a new perception of reality, a spiritual reality. Like the women, like the disciples, like untold numbers down through history, we have all had the experience, by faith, of encountering a dead man walking. This new reality changes lives forever both in this world and in the world to come.

In our Second Lesson, Paul wrote these words to Christians in Colossi, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

This was the experience of the women and the disciples as they too proclaimed in truth, “We have seen the Lord!” (John 20:18). This is our affirmation as well. This is the reason we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ wherever we may be. In churches, in homes, in secret places. All who embrace the promise and the power of the Gospel have embraced the Risen Lord and His victory over Satan, death, sin, and the grave. This is the assurance of our complete victory as well. Because He lives, you shall live also! That is the promise and power of the Gospel!

One by one, the disciples experienced the reality of the Resurrection. One by one, the power and the promise of the Gospel has gone out into the world and has come to us. Today, the whole body of Christ in heaven and on earth shouts in joyous praise, “Jesus is alive! Christ is alive! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

He is risen! **He is risen indeed. Amen!"**

APOSTLES' CREED

L Christians, what do you believe?
**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.*
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

**Or, He descended to the dead*

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, You raised Your Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead and we proclaim Him as our Living and Reiginng Lord, our Saviour and our King! Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, You have secured Your victory over Satan, sin, death, and the grave. Empower us to live as witnesses to His resurrection. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Holy Spirit, establish the Church on earth, the body of Christ, in the power and promise of the Gospel. Fill us with Your strength that we share His good news to all creation in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Church Universal and especially the LCMC. We pray for our sister churches, Bethel, Bible, Laurel Hill, and Winggard Memorial, their pastors and congregations. We pray for our partners in the Gospel: World Mission Prayer League, Mission on the Move, Treutlen House, Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, God's Mission House, Tartu Theological Academy, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, and all who faithfully serve You in proclamation of Your One True Gospel. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our nation and all of our elected and appointed officials in all levels of our government and for all those who serve in our courts. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our nation's military and especially all who are deployed. Holy Father watch over and protect all of our First Responders, and all our medical workers as they labour against the Covid-19 virus and all other disease and sickness. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, hear our prayer for so many in need. People are out of work. They have lost their jobs. They have families to support; those who depend on them. Make a way where there seems to be no way. Provide for them and for their needs according to Your riches in glory. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be with all our students and teachers and those who work in our educational institutions. Give to them diligence, wisdom, understanding, and motivation to complete their studies. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Great Physician, pour out Your blessings upon our members and friends. Meet the needs of each one and our own needs as well. You know us better than we know ourselves. Visit us with Your healing hand and lift us up to serve and praise Your holy name. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, hear our prayers and receive them for the sake of the crucified and risen One, Your Son our Lord, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GREETING OF PEACE

L The peace of the Lord be with you always.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

C **And also with you.**

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Serve the Risen Lord.

C **Alleluia.**



Announcements

Lenten Services 2020

Our 2020 Lenten journey has ended. The Pastor and Council extend to you their thanks for your support during these difficult days. We kept a good Lent. Thanks be to God!

Easter Baskets—Thank You

This year, we helped four families in our area. The Outreach Committee wishes to thank those who gave and to those who helped pack the baskets for distribution.

Sunday School Convention – Suspended This Year

Sunday School Convention will NOT be held this year due to the national health crisis.