**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new,

leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.

We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls,

like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.

Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.

Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God,

now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG- Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia-(ELW 364)**

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!

2 For three long days the grave did its worst
until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo,
and in its conquest his might did show. Refrain

3 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 graveclothes are lying there." Refrain

**Announcements**

Welcome to everyone on this Easter Sunday- April 4, 2021. Christ is Risen, Christ is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

How good it is to celebrate this day together, even if we are separated by a screen! This is our first video recorded service at Zion, we give thanks to Brenda Hoerle-Dale and Olivia Dale for recording and editing the service!

I ask that you keep Murray and Helen Hoerle in your prayers after the sudden passing of their daughter Marta Herron in California on Mar 17. We will remember Murray and Helen along with Grandma Esther Hoerle and Aunt and Uncle Brenda Hoerle Dale and Terry Dale in our prayers this morning.

Out Goto Coffee Hour takes place at 11:00 today. Please join us for some Easter celebrating!

Please remember that Zion relies on your continued support to meet our expenses during the pandemic. If you have not contributed lately you are invited to do so.

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. *A brief silence is kept before the 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.**

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Acts 10:34-43**

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.”

**PSALM: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

 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.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

1Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, 2through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.
  3For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

**GOSPEL: Mark 16:1-8**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

1When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint [Jesus’ body]. 2And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” 4When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6But 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. 7But 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.” 8So 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.

The gospel of the Lord.

**SERMON**

 As I was preparing my sermon for today from Marcus Borg. He stated, “Without Easter, we wouldn’t know about Jesus. If his story had ended with his crucifixion, he most likely would have been forgotten- another Jew crucified by the Roman Empire in a bloody century that witnessed thousands of such executions.”[[1]](#footnote-1) There would be no Holy Week, no resurrection story, no one would likely even remember his name. I wonder how different our world would be.

 Our gospel reading today begins with the same 2 women who ended our gospel reading on Passion Sunday last week, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Salome and Joses. We last read of them watching as Jesus’ body was laid in the tomb and the stone rolled in front. Their hopes and dreams were locked away behind the stone, just as Jesus’ body was. Their story had ended…..

 Our reading today states that it is early Sunday morning, the day after the Sabbath, a day and a half after Jesus’ death. The women would have risen very early or perhaps not even slept at all in order to journey to the tomb where Jesus’ body laid. The act of bringing spices to wrap him in was one last act of devotion to a man they loved, to a man who they believed would change the world, a man who brought light to their lives….now he is dead and buried in a tomb. I wonder how much of their walk was done in silence, the scenes of the last few days replaying in their heads and in their hearts over and over. This final act of love would bring them closure, not only personally but also closure on their dream of peace in the world. God’s reign in their eyes would no longer be taking place in the world.

 They took a few more steps and one of them asked the other, “What about the stone, how will we roll it away from the tomb?” Perhaps they travelled again in silence, not knowing an answer to the question, heads down in grief and disbelief. As they got closer to the tomb, their question became irrelevant as they saw that the stone had been rolled away. There was no explanation of how it might have happened. They step inside in the tomb in both terror and amazement and see a young man sitting close by wearing a white robe. He tells them to not be alarmed, that Jesus is not here, he had been raised. Jesus lives, the powers that executed him had not won, Jesus lives! God was in control and the systems and powers of our earthly world did not have the final word! The tomb could not hold him! Jesus was transformed by his death and resurrection into divinity, into something new! We are also transformed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ into something new. In the waters of our baptism, we die to our old selves and we are born anew. Every day is a new opportunity to start fresh! Evert day is a little Easter!

 The angel finishes his conversation with the women saying to them, “go tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee, there you will see him, just as he told.” The women leave the scene, fleeing with emotion, saying nothing because they were afraid and amazed.

 And that is how the gospel ends, which is frankly a little unsettling and sparse. The Mary’s have just received this wonderful and amazing news that Jesus is not dead, and they run away, not telling anyone. Is this really how this story of resurrection ends? Unlike the other gospels, we do not see the risen Jesus, we do not hear his voice. His only response is asking the disciples and the women to trust in him and head to Galilee where he would be waiting. I certainly do not blame the women for their silence and emotional struggle. I believe that if we were witness to the events of Jesus’ final days, we may have been silent and full of emotion as well. Gail O’Day notes that the women’s silence may have been well warranted, for it is in the silence when we are able to hear God’s voice and feel God’s presence.[[2]](#footnote-2) Jesus may not have been there, but God was, in the presence of the angel telling the women not to be afraid, to trust and know that there is still hope for the world. There was nothing that the women could have said to explain or make sense of the empty tomb, this was God’s handiwork, this was God’s doing and perhaps the women understood that. Their faith and hope had been restored. The revelation of God had been fulfilled. Death did not have the last word, Jesus was raised from the dead, he lives. Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

 So perhaps the unsettling ending of Mark’s gospel is an invitation for us, perhaps it is an invitation for us to recognize and live out our call as disciples in the world. Even though the disciples abandoned Jesus, he did not give up on them, and Jesus does not give up on us! We are perfectly imperfect, and we are loved! It is an opportunity for us to be a true servant of God, to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a tired and broken world.

 It is an opportunity for us to share the Easter story, to share the good news of Jesus Christ that Jesus was dead, but now he was raised. God was revealed through Jesus Christ, the powers of our earthly world have no power over the radical love of God. Let the vault of heaven resound, let the choirs sing, Christ has risen, Christ has risen indeed, and the story continues. Thanks be to God. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds (ELW 367)**

1 Now all the vault of heav'n resounds
in praise of love that still abounds:
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear!
Repeat their song of glory here:
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Eternal is the gift he brings,
therefore our heart with rapture sings:
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Now still he comes to give us life
and by his presence stills all strife.
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with dauntless love;
set heart and will on things above
that we conquer through your triumph;
grant grace sufficient for life's day
that by our lives we truly say:
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4 Adoring praises now we bring
and with the heav'nly blessed sing:
"Christ has triumphed! Alleluia!"
Be to the Father, and our Lord,
to Spirit blest, most holy God,
all the glory, never ending!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love. *A brief silence.*

Praise to you for your power revealed in the resurrection! Fill your church with the power of your love that is stronger than death. Send us to tell the good news wherever death holds sway. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for your life at work in the resurrection! Fill all of creation with your life. Bring it to blossom and flourish; use it to remind us of your persistent grace. Cultivate our care for what you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the peace made possible in the resurrection! Fill the nations with your peace. Draw together people of all nations and languages; reveal new possibilities and inspire new beginnings. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the hope of the resurrection! Fill all in need with hope: those who are afraid or confused, those who are sick or suffering, those who are dying, and those who grieve. We especially remember Eddy, Elaine B, Susie, Donelda, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Mary Ann, Cheryl, Bonnie, Mary, Ruth, Tilly, Danielle, Kyle, Mila, and Theo, Nancy, Dave, the family of Marta Herron, and those we name in the stillness of our hearts. Assure them of your promises. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the joy of your resurrection! Fill this assembly with joy as we are called your beloved in baptism. Multiply that joy so that we share it at home, at work, and in our community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for your faithfulness revealed in the resurrection! Fill us with trust, that we join with all who have gone before us in proclaiming: “your mercy endures forever!” Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

 **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

 Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Proper preface**

It is our calling and our joy, to give thanks and praise to you, O Holy One.

You summon forth new life, from the silence of the grave, and abundant hope, where none was to be found.

And so with all living things and the earth itself, with the women at the tomb, the first witnesses of the resurrection, and with all your people of every time and place, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

**EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O Holy One,

for the universe beyond our knowing, for creatures, great and small, and for the wondrous web of life into which we have been woven.

We give thanks that, in your wisdom, you create all people in your image, yellow and brown, black and white, calling us to be caretakers of one another and of your world. In each generation, you deliver us through the flood, bring us forth from bondage, guide us through the wilderness, sustain us in exile and call us toward your land of promise.

You sent us Jesus, our brother and Lord, who embodied your will, who reveals your heart, and who teaches us what it means to be fully human and fully alive.

On the night in which he allowed himself to be handed over,

Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and gave it to his followers saying: “Take and eat. This is my body given for you.

Do this to remember me.

”After supper he took a cup of wine, gave thanks, and offered it to his followers saying, “Take and drink. This is the New Covenant, in my blood, offered for you and for all people.

Do this to remember me.”

So, on this day of resurrection and New Life, we remember...

we remember all whose blood is poured out in violence, in its countless forms...we remember all who offer up their lives in service to others...

and to you, and most of all, Blessed are you, O God, creator of all things.

By your power and love you continue to deliver your people from bondage,

thwart the designs of evil, show the way through the wilderness,

turn hardship into righteousness, and reveal your hand upholding the just. Amen

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The risen Christ invites us to this table.

Come, eat and be satisfied.

**COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 114)**

Wellspring of joy,

through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG*Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* (ELW 365)**

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 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!

3 But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
now above the sky he's king, Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

4 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!

**DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

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**Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds-**  Text- Augsburg Fortress

1. Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossman, The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus’ Final Days in Jerusalem, (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 190 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gail R. O’Day, “Mark 16:1-8” in in *Feasting on the Word: Year B, Volume 1,* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2008), [↑](#footnote-ref-2)