**Easter 3- APril 18, 2021**

**Zion, Philipsburg and St PEters Linwood**

Welcome to worshipon this 3rd Sunday of Easter, April 18, 2021.How good it is to worship together this morning celebrating the resurrected Jesus Christ who shows patience, compassion, and love to all. We have had a mixed bag of weather this week, some much needed rain, some sun and even some of that white stuff! At least it did not accumulate like it did in Saskatchewan earlier this week!

I am sure all of you are aware of the rising Covid cases in our province and the extension of the stay-at-home order along with other new restrictions. It is hard to not lose hope and easy to get frustrated and afraid. This third wave is exposing the lack of concern and care for our essential workers, especially those who live in the larger cities and in intergenerational living spaces. Please pray for all who continue to be affected by the nightmare of Covid 19 and know that you are not alone in your feelings and emotions. We will get through if we all do our part. If you can, please reach out to your neighbours and congregation members to see how they are doing.

Coffee hour will take place today at 11:00. Have you considered joining us? All are welcome! Please remember that Zion relies on your contributions in these times. Thank you to all who continue to support and pray for our congregation.

**GATHERING**

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

**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.

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.**

**GATHERING SONG*Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!* (ELW 377)**

1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

Refrain
Jesus is risen and we shall arise.
Give God the glory! Alleluia!

2 Walking the way, Christ in the center
telling the story to open our eyes;
breaking our bread, giving us glory:
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. Refrain

3 Jesus the vine, we are the branches;
life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
heaven to earth, Christ to the people,
gift of the future now flowing to me. Refrain

4 Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent:
death put asunder, and Easter is bright.
Cherubim sing: O grave, be open!
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. Refrain

5 City of God, Easter forever,
golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,
river of life, saints and archangels,
sing with creation to God the I AM! Refrain

**WORD**

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

**FIRST READING: Acts 3:12-19**

A reading from Acts.

12[Peter] 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 him walk?13The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he 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 his name, 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 he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. 19Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

The word of the Lord.

**PSALM: Psalm 4**

1Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;
you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
2“You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; how long will you love illusions and seek after lies?”
3Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; the Lord will hear me when I call.
4Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.
5Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord.
6Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.
7You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine abound.
8In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me rest secure.

**SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-7**

A reading from 1 John.

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 him. 2Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.
  4Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. 7Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL: Luke 24:36b-48**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

36bJesus himself stood among [the disciples] 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 he 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 he 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.

**SERMON**

 I am a cradle Lutheran. I was baptized, confirmed, and married in my beloved home church of Trinity Sebastopol-Tavistock. I grew up with liturgy, that pattern of gathering or welcome, word, meal, and sending found within the worship service. It was all I ever knew, and I was comfortable with it. Sometimes I would find it repetitive but there was also familiarity in knowing what was happening each week. In all honesty, I thought that every church and denomination had some form of liturgy within their weekly worship service.

 When I first met my husband Greg, he often questioned why the Lutheran church had this elemental pattern or liturgy found within the weekly service. He grew up in the Mennonite church where liturgy is not used. He found the service to feel more formal and rote. For many years I could not answer his question on the Lutheran use of liturgy within the service, and admittedly I began to ponder the same question. Why do we do what we do in worship each week?

 It was not until I attended Martin Luther University that I began to learn and value the importance of liturgy and pattern within the worship service.

 Now some of you may be wondering where I am going with all of this. Why am I speaking about liturgy on this 3rd week of Easter, where our gospel shares the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection. He had already appeared to Cleopas and another unnamed person on the road to Emmaus and to Simon in the previous chapter of Luke. We continue with our reading today where the disciples are talking about all that had happened in the past few days. Remember the emotions of the women at the tomb that I spoke of a couple weeks ago? Well, the disciples would have felt many of the same feelings. There would have been fear (what would the Romans think, had they heard that the tomb was empty?), anger (their leader was dead and now his battered and beaten body was missing), grief ( at the sadness of losing a friend), and disbelief (Jesus couldn’t be alive, could he, if so where is he?).

 Suddenly Jesus appeared and is standing among them. He speaks to them offering peace and it leaves the disciples feeling well, a little bit freaked out. In the gospel of Luke, the disciples visited the tomb the day after the Sabbath and they had seen that it was empty, so they knew that something was going on. But seeing a dead man appear in front of you and begin speaking to you, yes, that would be disconcerting. Did they shake their heads and rub their eyes believing that a ghost was standing in front of them? Did they feel an urge to flee the scene out of their fear?

 You see, we know the story, we know that Jesus was resurrected. But the disciples did not, even though Jesus foretold of his death and resurrection. Jesus understands their fears and disbelief. He is patient and loving with them, reassuring them by allowing them to touch his wounds. He then goes a step further asking if they have any food to share and he eats with them further acknowledging the reality of his resurrection.

 So, if we recap our gospel reading from Luke this morning, we read that Jesus appears and offers peace and welcome to the disciples. He shares a meal with them, he teaches and shares the word with them, opening their minds to understand scripture and then he sends them out to proclaim His name to the nations beginning with Jerusalem. Do you notice anything familiar?

If you read carefully you can observe that there is something familiar in the actions of Jesus that is similar to the liturgy found in our weekly worship service. I had never picked up on that before, and I give thanks to Pastor Tanya and our Tuesday morning bible study group for the revelation. At our weekly worship service, whether it be in person or online, we greet and welcome one another, we listen to the word which opens our minds to the meaning of scripture in our context, we share in a meal, and then we are sent out into the world to be in mission for others, to share our love of God and our love for our neighbour. The love, compassion, and teaching that Jesus showed to the disciples is the same love and compassion that is shown to us each week. The disciple’s world was out of control. They were oppressed. They were confused and afraid of what the future might have held, but they were not alone, God showed up in the person of Jesus Christ, to comfort them, to feed them, to ease their troubled minds and give them peace.

 When our world feels out of control, when we are fearful and afraid of what our future may hold, when we worry about disease and illness, financial obligations and the myriad of other issues that happen in our lives, God shows up! God shows up in welcoming us, God shows up in the word, God shows up in the bread and wine, and God shows up in sending us out to take care of one another, to calm one another fears, to love one another as we are so dearly and completely loved. The familiarity of our liturgy brings us comfort in an ever-changing world, it offers hope and forgiveness, and it is filled with the gift of grace and the love of Jesus Christ given to us through his life, death, and resurrection. It reminds us that the ugliness of the crucifixion had no power over the beauty and glory of the resurrection. It reminds us that God is alive and at work in the world, commissioning us to share the mission and gospel as witnesses of Jesus Christ.

 Jesus met the disciples where they were at, in the fear, in the anxiousness, and in the oppression of the times. Their minds were opened, and they were transformed. We too are met right where we are at, and we have the opportunity to be transformed by the word, grace, and welcome of God expressed to us in the liturgy that brings us comfort and peace in these continuing times of uncertainty. Let it be so. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY*Lord, You Give the Great Commission* (ELW 579)**

1 Lord, you give the great commission:
"Heal the sick and preach the word."
Lest the church neglect its mission,
and the gospel go unheard,
help us witness to your purpose
with renewed integrity:

Refrain
With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us
for the work of ministry.

2 Lord, you call us to your service:
"In my name baptize and teach."
That the world may trust your promise,
life abundant meant for each,
give us all new fervor, draw us
closer in community: Refrain

3 Lord, you make the common holy:
"This my body, this my blood."
Let us all, for earth's true glory,
daily lift life heavenward,
asking that the world around us
share your children's liberty: Refrain

4 Lord, you show us love's true measure:
"Father, what they do, forgive."
Yet we hoard as private treasure
all that you so freely give.
May your care and mercy lead us
to a just society: Refrain

5 Lord, you bless with words assuring:
"I am with you to the end."
Faith and hope and love restoring,
may we serve as you intend
and, amid the cares that claim us,
hold in mind eternity: Refrain

**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.*

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the church embodies repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, like a master artist you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it needs restoration. Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and sustainable home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all, the nations hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Many call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the peace of Christ and give your lovingkindness to national, provincial, and local leaders. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and you answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness. Be close to the hearts of the lonely, the isolated, and the grieving. We ask your presence with all who are affected by Covid 19; those who are sick, ICUS’s that are filled to overflowing, families who are separated, nurses and doctors who are overworked and worn out, and essential workers who have not yet received the vaccine. We also remember Eddy, Elaine B, Donelda, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Mary Ann, Cheryl, Bonnie, Mary, Ruth, Tilly, Nancy, Robert, the family of Daunte Wright, the victims and their families of the shootings in Tennessee and Indianapolis, the families of the victims of the mass shooting one year ago in Portapique, NS., and those we name in the stillness of our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving Parent, you have given us such love that we should be called the children of God. Reveal yourself to us so that we in these communities of faith become more and more like you in our bold witness and our mutual love for one another. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all times and ages, those who have died in you, now see you as you are. We thank you for their lives among us. Assure us of the peace you have promised that we may join them in everlasting life. 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.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **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.**

**SENDING**

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

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

**SENDING SONG*Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing* (ELW 389)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Rgr3E6dxIg>

1 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.

2 Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching ev'ry place and time.

3 In ev'ry insult, rift, and war,
where color, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

4 Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

5 Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

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