

EASTER SUNDAY
March 31st, 2024 – 10 AM

WELCOME



Christ is risen! Jesus is alive, and God has swallowed up death forever. With Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, we may feel astonished and confused, unsure of what to make of the empty tomb. But this is why we gather: to proclaim, witness, praise, and affirm the liberating reality of Christ's death and resurrection. In word and feast, we celebrate God's unending love, and depart to share this good news with all the world. Alleluia!

- ✝ Preacher – The Rev. Wes Smith
- ✝ Officiant – Pr. Rudy Schneider

GREETING and CONFESSION

Christ is risen! **The Lord is risen indeed!**

Glory and honor, dominion and power be to God for ever and ever. **Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

Let us pray: **God of all ages, the shadows and gloom of Good Friday have been dispersed by the light and color of Easter. We rejoice in your power that turns our sorrow into joy, our despair into hope, our defeat into victory and evil into goodness. Help us on this Easter morning to burst out of the tombs that have trapped us; tombs of selfishness, sinfulness, greed, pride and prejudice. Let now a new life of divine grace and love burst forth from us this Easter Day, through the grace of Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.**

OPENING HYMN: ELW# 367 – Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds

Prayer of the Day - 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.**

GOD'S HOLY WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; ⁸he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The Word of the Lord...**Thanks be to God!**



Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God's mercy endures forever. ²**Let Israel now declare, "God's mercy endures forever."**

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.

¹⁵**Shouts 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!" ¹⁷**I 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.

¹⁹**Open 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." ²¹**I 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. ²³**By 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.**



HOLY GOSPEL

A Reading from the Holy Gospel of John 20:1 – 18; **Glory to You, O Lord!**

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of the Lord...**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!**

SERMON – The Reverend Wes Smith

"The Easter Blessing"

HYMN: ELW#376 – Thine is the Glory

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news. *A brief silence.*

Holy God, we pray for the body of Christ, the church. Where the church is persecuted, protect it. Where the church is privileged, grant it humility. Where the church is fractured, heal it. Guide us all to embody Christ's love in the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Life-giving God, we pray for the earth, your good creation. Join our prayers with branches lifted in praise and roaring waters of new life, that together we may proclaim Easter hope. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, we pray for all peoples and nations. Free oppressed communities from occupation, exploitation, and abuse. Teach leaders your way of justice. Empower peacemakers and all who work to end violence and strife. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Liberating God, we pray for people everywhere who long for good news. Roll away the stones that keep people from living with dignity and wholeness. Breathe new life and hope into people struggling to make it through each day. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for this community of faith for your Spirit in our midst. Feed us at your Easter table and fill us with your wisdom, that we may serve and care for others. We especially remember those from our families and community in greatest need of your blessings....*(please name persons silently or aloud)* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, we remember those who have gone before us in death. Renew our trust in your promises, that we live with joyful courage and compassion. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING and PRAYER

Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Invitation to Communion – The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table.

OUR TIME OF COMMUNION WITH THE LORD!

COMMUNION HYMN 1: Majesty

Majesty, worship His majesty.
Unto Jesus be all glory, honor, and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority
Flow from His throne unto His own
His anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.
Majesty, worship His majesty,
Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.

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COMMUNION HYMN 2: He is Lord

He is Lord, He is Lord,
He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Ev'ry knee shall bow, ev'ry tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.

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Closing Prayer - Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

Blessing – Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ✝ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: ELW# 382 – Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

Dismissal: Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Barnegat Light NJ