



Sunday, April 7, 2024

ELW 6

Second Sunday of Easter

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

**ELW p. 172**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

**GATHERING SONG** *Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain* **ELW 363**

- 1 Come, you faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness!  
God has brought forth Israel into joy from sadness,  
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters;  
led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.
- 2 'Tis the spring of souls today: Christ has burst his prison,  
and from three days' sleep in death as a sun has risen.  
All the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying  
from the Light to whom we give laud and praise undying.
- 3 Now the queen of seasons, bright with the day of splendour,  
with the royal feast of feasts comes its joy to render;  
comes to glad Jerusalem, who with true affection  
welcomes in unwearied strain Jesus' resurrection!
- 4 Neither could the gates of death, nor the tomb's dark portal,  
nor the watchers, nor the seal hold you as a mortal:  
but today, among your own, you appear, bestowing  
your deep peace, which evermore passes human knowing.
- 5 Alleluia! now we cry to our Lord immortal,  
who triumphant burst the bars of the tomb's dark portal;  
Alleluia! with the Son God the Father praising;  
Alleluia! yet again to the Spirit raising.

**GREETING**

**ELW p. 165**

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.**

**KYRIE**

**ELW p. 165**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation,

let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

## **CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

**ELW p. 167**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,**

**we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,**

**Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone  
are the Most High,**

**Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.**

**Glory to God in the highest, Amen, amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## CHILDRENS TIME

### CHILDREN'S SONG *This Little Light of Mine*

ELW 677

- 1 This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 2 Ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 3 Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

*While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.*

### FIRST READING: Acts 4:32-35

<sup>32</sup>Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. <sup>35</sup>They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 133

***How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity. (Ps. 133:1)***

<sup>1</sup>How good and how pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity!

<sup>2</sup>**It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar of his robe.**

***How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity.***

<sup>3</sup>It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the hills of Zion.

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life forevermore.

***How good and pleasant it is to live together in unity.***

*The core of the Christian faith and Paul's preaching is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the crucified and risen Christ appeared to the earliest of his followers, so we experience the presence of the Risen One in the preaching of this faith.*

## SECOND READING: 1 John 1:1--2:2

<sup>1</sup>We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—<sup>2</sup>this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—<sup>3</sup>we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; <sup>7</sup>but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is

faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

<sup>2:1</sup>My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**ELW p. 171**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

*The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.*

**GOSPEL: John 20:19-31**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

<sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in

his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** - Pastor Warren C. Nielsen II,  
B.C. Synod Roster Retired

What difference does Jesus rising from death mean to you? For the earliest believers, the Resurrection was life-changing. The Risen Jesus began appearing to his followers on Easter and after. It changed them. As we read in Acts, they were of one heart and mind and started sharing all they had so that none were poor. They cared for one another more deeply than ever. They moved from fear to faith. And with that faith, the first thing that the Risen one told them to do is offer forgiveness. And forgiveness continues to be a starting place to help people then and now.

On Easter evening Jesus appeared to the disciples as they hid in fear. He offered them peace. He showed them his wounds, and then they recognized him. Again, Jesus gave them peace and sent them as God had sent him. Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit and then told them

their work of forgiveness.

Disciple Thomas had not been there. The others told Thomas that they had seen the Lord. He said he would not believe it unless he could see and touch the wounds himself. Often Thomas has been described as doubting. I prefer to think of him as a person only wanting to see the Risen One himself just as the other disciples had already experienced. He was a seeker of truth with evidence more than words only.

Jesus appeared again a week later. This time Thomas did see and touch his wounds. Thomas exclaimed in faith, "My Lord and My God!" He stated clearly that he experienced God in the Risen One. A key observation was made earlier in this Gospel at Jesus' first appearance at the tomb when Peter and the other disciple realized and understood the importance that the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus had said he would rise from the dead, showing him to be the Messiah. Thomas now got it that the Risen One is God for us. Knowing the Risen Jesus as God for us they could hear and trust Jesus' command that a central part of belief is to offer forgiveness.

I experienced the amazing power of forgiveness in a new Canadian CBC television series called Allegiance. It is a story of policing in Surrey, BC. In the episode The Legacy (S1Ep7 first shown 2024-03-20) police encounter a situation where a white woman social worker has taken a new-born Indigenous baby from its mother, claiming the mother to be unfit. As the officers investigate, they find that the mother and father and extended family seem very able and wanting to raise their child. Finding the social worker leads to the discovery that she has taken many Indigenous babies and provided them to non-Indigenous adoptive parents. She states that Indigenous people are alcoholics, drug addicts and violent, and can't care for their children. She hadn't even tried to learn the truth of the loving capable family of the baby.



The police were diligent and finally able to get the baby back from the adoptive parents and return it to its Indigenous family. Earlier, in the hospital, the baby's mother had pushed and injured a nurse when the mother was desperately trying to find her baby. The courts were involved and agreed to a mediation circle with Indigenous elders and a judge. The Indigenous leader shared their tradition that there is no exact word for justice, rather a word meaning that for the persons involved in a conflict "you have been listened to, and your needs will be taken seriously." Several elder Indigenous women painfully told of having been taken from their families and never seeing them again. The mother described her anguish, her fear, and her love for her baby, and then she apologized for pushing the nurse and causing her pain. Then the nurse told of her many years of helping deliver babies, and that included delivering Indigenous babies into the foster system. She admitted her assumptions that accepted the words of the social worker that Indigenous mothers were unfit. The nurse wept, and forgave the young mother who had pushed her. Also, the judge said he learned things about the value of people being listened to and their needs taken seriously.

The first responsibility that the Risen One gave the disciples was forgiveness. The healing circle described is one example of a process that helped people get to genuine forgiveness. Forgiveness, love, and compassion being shown is to be appreciated and learned from anywhere, whether in Church or an Indigenous Circle.

What about the social worker who didn't seek the truth first before acting wrongly with a horribly harmful taking of babies from their mothers. I think of Thomas as a model of how important it is to ask for evidence to know the truth. There are so many people in our world today who believe all kinds of lies and untruths. Believing things that are not true causes much suffering and hurt and wrong actions.

I commend the learning of critical thinking, of finding reliable sources, evidence, and information to discover the most accurate truth as can be known at that time. An example is how I have learned from discussions about truth and critical thinking with my youngest daughter as a first year University student and from her High School International Baccalaureate studies and her school team winning Canada's Ethics Bowl by persuasively presenting ideas with researched factual sources.

It is also essential that we keep open to new discoveries that show us that previous assumptions thought to be true may not be true at all. An example is the Church persecution of Galileo when he first used a telescope to discover that the Earth was not the center of the Universe. Very sadly, it took a long time for the Church to officially revise its thinking on that. Another immediate example is research showing human use of water for what we have seen as good purposes such as irrigating to grow food and making electricity from water flow has contributed to changing the cycles of evaporation and therefore rain and drought patterns, leading to such problems as wildfires. Unintended consequences reveal the need to revise what we think is true so that the world, God's Creation, can be sustained. I am not suggesting we should stop all irrigation and hydropower, but we may need to consider changes with that and other human actions that interfere with the ability of the Earth to be sustained. Helping see and heal the wounds in nature is another place to live our belief.

Jesus' statement "blessed are those who believe and yet have not seen," is offered for all of us believers or seekers that now live after Jesus' resurrection appearances. We might still say today, I want to see the wounds in order to believe because I need to know that God brought life from death. How can we believe now today? I am helped to believe

because I saw the wounds being healed with the forgiveness shown in the circle with the Indigenous and the nurse, and it reminded me of many times I have seen forgiveness give people new life.

We can believe when we see the wounds experienced in churches that give themselves for others. We can believe as the church reaches out to help with all kinds of needs that come from wounds. We can see followers of Jesus giving of their time, resources, and compassion to care for others. We can know the Risen One as we also take part in welcoming and listening to the alienated and hurting, and as we feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, comfort the grieving, and care for Creation.

Like Thomas and the other disciples, we can believe because we have seen the wounds. Even though we cannot touch the wounds directly of the Risen One in that first Easter season, we can indeed believe now as we experience the wounds of others through helping as Jesus helped, and when we see the Church at work serving God's wounded world.

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     *Thine Is the Glory*

**ELW 376**

Refrain:

*Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;  
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!*

1     Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;  
      endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!  
      Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
      kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.     *Refrain*

2     Lo, Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb!  
      Lovingly he greets thee, scatters fear and gloom;  
      let his church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
      for the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting!     *Refrain*

3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conqu'rors, through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. *Refrain*

## **CREED**

Gathered with all people on earth, let us confess our faith:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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.

Your church cries out, O God, and you listen. As you drew near to the disciples, draw near to us this day. Breathe on us your Holy Spirit, that our faith is renewed and we witness to your love.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation cries out, O God, and you listen. Nurture trees, crops, wildflowers, and all growing things. Guide farmers, gardeners, arborists, and others who tend the soil and nurture plants into life.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your world cries out, O God, and you listen. Guide police, firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders to work for the well-being of communities and the dignity of every person, that no one may need to live in fear.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your children cry out, O God, and you listen. Hear your people crying out for justice, for an end to racism and other oppression, and for a world where all are fed and safe. We pray for all who cry out in suffering or pain *especially Melanie, Heather, Oscar, Sandy, Kerra, Bill, Doris, Claire, Jean, David, Jean, Annette and those whom we name in silence or aloud.*

*(Pause).*

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, the Spirit of all the living, bless *Karen* on her birthday. Grant her your grace and care as she rejoices in your faithfulness.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your congregations cry out, O God, and you listen. Renew pastors, deacons, musicians, and other staff, administrators, and volunteers who facilitated Holy Week and Easter worship. Open our hearts to discern where God calls each of us to serve.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Accept our gratitude, O God, for the lives of those who now rest in you *(especially Dietrich Bonhoeffer and all whose lives have been given in faithfulness to the gospel)*. Grant us your peace amid our fears.

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

### OFFERTORY HYMN

ELW 206

#### *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

Thankful hearts and voices raise; tell ev'ryone what God has done.  
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and bear Christ's holy name.  
Send us with your promises, O God, and lead us forth in joy  
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia.

### OFFERING PRAYER

ELW p. 172

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.  
**Amen.**

### LORD'S PRAYER

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

### BLESSING

ELW p. 174

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

## SENDING SONG *Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia*

ELW 364

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!*

1 Christ has arisen, alleluia. Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.  
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,  
even from death, dispelling its gloom. *Refrain*

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*

4 "Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.  
He has arisen this world to save.  
Jesus' redeeming labours are done.  
Even the battle with sin is won." *Refrain*

5 Christ has arisen to set us free.  
Alleluia, to him praises be.  
Jesus is living! Let us all sing;  
he reigns triumphant, heavenly king. *Refrain*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

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