



Why Be a Christian?

**April 9, 2023
Easter Day**

GATHERING AND PRAISE

Liturgist: Tina Wilmoth (8:30) Susan Whitman (11:00)

Welcome

Prelude

Alleluiah!

Mozart

The prelude signals the beginning of our sacred time together. During the prelude, you are invited to prepare your heart for worship by focusing your attention upon God.

Call to Worship

Liturgist

The tomb is dark, but empty

The one you are looking for has overcome the darkness

The stone has been rolled away

The one you are looking for has overcome death

The burial clothes are put aside

The one you are looking for is alive!

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Let us worship our Risen Savior!

Opening Prayer

Liturgist

Giver of new life, we come this morning with our alleluias, our banners and flowers and music and song. We come to worship in beauty and in truth because we have faith that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, because we have hope that the resurrection will enter into each of our lives and transform them, and because, through Christ's Spirit, we have come to love one another. Accept our worship, gracious God. Be present with us as miracle, mystery, and as the tender hands of grace. Amen.

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Passing the Peace of Christ

Liturgist

Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and we share his peace. Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Call to Confession

Pastor Debra

Even the obstacle of death has been removed between us and God. If death no longer stands in our way, we can be sure that our sin does not either. Let us confess our sins that they may be washed away by the mercy of our risen Lord.

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Debra

"When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation."

Risen Lord, we have seen the empty tomb, and yet we sometimes act as if we have seen nothing. Why must we continue in fear? Why must we be afraid of death even after its defeat? Yes, this is a glorious day of mirth and song, but forgive us when we are quick to forget its Good News. Help us be a people of resurrection not just on this day but all days. Fill our hearts with your resurrection promise of life that we might turn from sin and be renewed. Eliminate from us the fear of sin that we might tell this glad story - that Christ is risen, he is risen, indeed! This we pray in the name of your Risen Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, hear the good news of the Gospel: the tomb is empty! Our Lord and Savior has risen from the grave! That which has been dead is alive! No barrier, none whatsoever, can keep us from the love of God! I announce to you this day that our sins are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!

Ministry of Music*Resurrection Glory*

Choir

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**Prayer for Understanding***All Praying*

Liturgist

Living God, today's Good News is so wondrous, so magnificent, that we struggle to wrap our heads around it. Give our hearts the wisdom to receive that which our heads cannot fully understand. Send your Spirit to fill our whole bodies with your resurrection promise. This we pray in your holy and good name. Amen.

Jesus Has Risen

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

8A trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

The earliest manuscripts of Mark's gospel, and some other ancient witnesses, end with verse 8A. Later manuscripts, added this second part to verse 8, although they do not include verses 9-20.

8B And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.

The following verses, verses 9-20, are found only in later manuscripts leading Biblical scholars to agree that these verse were added much later by an unknown person or persons.

⁹When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

¹²Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be

condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

¹⁹ After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Second Lesson

Galatians 5:22-26

Liturgist

The Fruit of the Spirit

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Sermon

Why Be a Christian?

Pastor Debra

Preparation for Prayer

O How He Loves You and Me

FWS 2108

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Morning Prayer

Pastor Debra

The Lord's Prayer

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. Amen.

Offertory Invitation

Liturgist

Jesus - alive from the dead - transforms us! As we are open to this transformation, we become people who are more loving, joyful, patient, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. May your giving today reflect this transformation! Give as you are able, as people ready and on their way to God-given transformation.

Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Great Peace is Mine

Wilson

**Doxology*

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

***Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

**Prayer of Dedication*

Liturgist

Risen Lord, thank you for taking our fears and transforming them into wonder! Bless our gifts today to transform the world for your sake and in your name. Make us bold to declare that new life is available to all. Amen!

GOING FORTH TO SERVE

Hymn

Crown Him with Many Crowns

UMH 327

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Benediction

Pastor Debra

When the world seems to crumble around you,
remember who you are...

We are his Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.

When despair would seem to squelch all hope,
believe in who you have become...

We are his Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.

When it is hard to persevere against all odds,
trust in the name God has given us...

We are his Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts.

Let us follow Christ into the world, to share the good news, and may God dwell in all we say and do and live as his people with Easter forever in our hearts.

In the name of the Father, of the Risen Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Choral Benediction

He Lives

He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!

He walks with me and talks with me

Along life's narrow way.

He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!

You ask me how I know he lives?

He lives within my heart.

Postlude

Song of Triumph

Wion

CHRIST IS ALIVE

*Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
His cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
His love in death shall never die.*

*Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
he comes to claim the here and now
and dwell in every place and time.*

*Not throned afar, remotely high,
untouched, unmoved by human pains,
but daily, in the midst of life,
our Savior in the Godhead reigns.*

*In every insult, rift, and war,
where color, scorn, or wealth divide,
he suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, though ever crucified.*

*Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and all creation ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.*

O HOW HE LOVES YOU AND ME

*O how he loves you and me!
O how he loves you and me!
He gave his life.
What more could he give?
O how he loves you;
O how he loves me;
O how he loves you and me!*

*Jesus to Calv'ry did go;
His love for sinners to show.
What he did there
Brought hope from despair.
O how he loves you;*

*O how he loves me;
O how he loves you and me!*

CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

*Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.*

*Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died, and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.*

*Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a scepter sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
and all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end,
and round his pierced feet
fair flowers of paradise extend
their fragrance ever sweet.*

*Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
those wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity.*