

## **The Sunday Missive – April 9, 2023**

### **Easter Sunday**

#### **Flowering of the Cross and Hymn 175 Hail thee festival day**

Hail thee, festival day! blest day that art hallowed forever,  
Day whereon Christ arose, breaking the kingdom of death

Lo, the fair beauty of earth, from the death of the winter arising!  
Every good gift of the year now with its Master returns: [Refrain]

He who was nailed to the cross is Lord and the ruler of nature;  
All things created on earth sing to the glory of God.

Daily the loveliness grows, adorned with glory of blossom;  
Heaven her gates unbars, flinging her increase of light.

Rise from the grave now, O Lord, who art author of life and creation.  
Treading the pathway of death, life thou bestowest on all:

God the Creator, the Lord, who rulest the earth and the heavens,  
Guard us from harm without, cleanse us from evil within:

Jesus the health of the world, enlighten our minds, thou Redeemer,  
Son of the Father supreme, only-begotten of God.

Spirit of life and of power, now flow in us, fount of our being,  
Light that dost lighten all, life that in all dost abide,

Praise to the Giver of good! Thou Love who art author of concord,  
Pour out thy balm on our souls, order our ways in thy peace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzk-2RManE8&t=106s>

**Greetings, one and all,** and welcome home to St. Peter's by the Sea on this Easter Sunday. Thank you for coming to church today and lifting your voices to join Christians around the world who celebrate and contemplate the triumph of Jesus over the power of sin and death.

**Let us pray:** Most gracious Creator, you made this most holy morning to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection: Stir up in your Church that spirit of adoption which is given to us in baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth. **Amen.**

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Celebrant** Alleluia, Christ is risen! **People** *The Lord is risen indeed!*

### **Hymn 460 – Verses 2 and 3**

Alleluia! not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;  
Alleluia! he is near us, faith believes, nor questions how:  
Though the cloud from sight received him,  
When the forty days Were o'er, shall our hearts forget his promise,  
"I am with you evermore"?

Alleluia! Bread of Heaven, thou on earth our food, our stay!  
Alleluia! here the sinful flee to thee from day to day:  
Intercessor, friend of sinners, earth's Redeemer, plead for me,  
Where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKoQ7LGgDPs>

### **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **Jeremiah 31:1-6**

At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus says the Lord: The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall take your tambourines, and go forth in the dance of the merry-makers. Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit. For there shall be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: "Come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God."

## **Psalm 118**

Alleluia! Give thanks to the Lord\* ***God's love endures forever and ever.***

I called to the Lord in my distress\* ***Who answered me and set me free.***

The Lord is at my side; I do not fear\* ***What can mere humans do against me?***

It is better to take refuge in the Lord\* ***Than to trust in humankind.***

It is better to take refuge in the Lord\* ***Than to trust in princes and wealthy men.***

I was thrust down, thrust down and falling\* ***But the Lord was my strength and my helper.***

The Lord is my strength and my song\* ***My savior in times of trouble.***

And so there are shouts of joy\* ***In the tents of the just and merciful, Alleluia!***

## **Acts 10:34-43**

Peter began to speak to Cornelius and the other Gentiles: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how 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. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not 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. He 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

### **Hymn 208 The strife is o'er, the battle done Vv. 1-3**

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The strife is o'er, the battle done, the victory of life is won;  
The song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,  
But Christ their legions hath dispersed:  
Let shout of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

The three sad days are quickly sped,  
He rises glorious from the dead:  
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ0mlOZzcMc>

## **Matthew 28:1-10**

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

### **Easter A**

**Hallelujah, Christ is risen!** The Lord is risen indeed! Welcome to church on this fine and glorious Easter morning. As the psalmist insists, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. For God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten child into the world to do whatever was necessary to appeal to humankind in the name of peace. Preaching wasn't sufficient, even healing wasn't sufficient. But overcoming death – now that made the joyful noise heard around the world, a sound that reverberates here in this place on this Easter morning and forevermore. "For you have been a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of enemies like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

What are these terrible storms and noisy enemies? All of us have our own lists. Christ crucified is all of the hidden, private, tragic pain of history made public and given over to God. And Christ resurrected is all of that private, ungrieved, unnoted suffering received, loved and transformed by an all-caring Benevolence. How else could we have any

kind of cosmic hope? How else could we not die of sadness for what human beings do to themselves and one another? We have seen the Moabites, and they are us. Jesus is the blueprint, the plan, the pattern revealed in one body and moment of history to reveal the meaning of all of history and thus the meaning of each of our lives. The cross is the emblem of what we do to one another and to God. The resurrection is the banner of what the Cosmos offers us in return.

All through the Bible, in both Torah and Gospels comes the message of blessing: That it is the vocation of the people of God to bless as well as to be blessed; to turn away wrath with a soft answer—a softness that is not weakness, but which has the power of humility. Easter is the most brilliant of all blessings. It is almost too brilliant to be contemplated, lie looking directly into the sun. We are burned and blinded by unending life.

The confirmed and corroborated and celebrated sightings of Jesus by his followers change only one thing in the nature of our existence, but that one change changes everything. It's said that all we really want is something to do, someone to love and something to look forward to. Jesus gives us all of this. Our earthly lives are God's commodity, God's currency. How much of this precious substance is misspent in sadness, self-destruction and violence – each day's news brings us stories of more. But today we know for certain that the power for goodness continues beyond earthly life. It is not gone from our hearts, even when things are out of our hands. Because Jesus was lifted up, so can we be also. We can become citizens of a different society, another culture from the one we have grown used to. Our desire to be connected with that which is timeless is fulfilled in the living Christ. Our hearts now have a sense of connectedness and hope, our voices can now sing psalms that say, "We shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

So, whether we rise up saying, as they ambitiously do in Poland: "Chrystus Zmartwychwstał" or hereabouts, "Welcome happy morning," the truth of this day persists beyond our imaginings: Hallelujah, Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed!

Let us pray together: Source of all goodness and life, on this day, we name you in gladness, we ponder the world you call good, we

relish your gifts and your tasks, and we marvel in amazement, yet again at the wonder of Jesus, who has died and yet is alive among us. Now we are homeward bound; when we arrive there, it will be as it was this morning, with anxiety and demand, maybe conflict and even inconvenience.

Except that all things will be – yet again – made new. Let us know that you will make them new by your spirit: the church where we live; the public possibility of justice among us; the practices of compassion in our neighborhoods and every new every enterprise of peace in our violent world. Make all new, and we will be in Easter joy: unafraid and unwearied, your glad people, carrying among us the marks of the death and of the new life of Jesus in whose name we pray. ***Amen.***

### **The Prayers of the People**

Truth-telling, wind-blowing, life-giving spirit, we present ourselves now for our instruction and guidance; breathe your truth among us, breathe your truth of deep Friday loss, your truth of awesome Sunday joy. Breathe your story of death and life, that our story may be submitted to your will for life. We pray in the name of Jesus crucified, and him risen to new life. ***Amen.***

Gracious Creator, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve all who are ill, recovering from surgery, in mourning or otherwise suffering this day, especially those we name now, silently in our hearts or fervently with our voices. Give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that all for whom our prayers are offered may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care. I ask your prayers especially for loved ones who have died; may their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, by the mercy of God rest in peace. ***Amen.***

Source of all goodness and life, through this day, we have named you in gladness, we have pondered the world you call good, we have relished your gifts and your tasks, and we have marveled in amazement, yet one more time, at the wonder of this Easter Jesus, who has died and is alive among us. Now we are homeward; and

when we arrive there, it will be as it was this morning, with anxiety and demand, maybe conflict and even inconvenience.

Except that all things will be – yet again – made new. Make them new by your spirit; make new the church where we live; make new the public reality of justice among us; make new the practice of compassion in our neighborhood; make new every surge of peace in our violent world; make new the policies of our government and the workings of the church. Make all new, and we will be in Easter joy: unafraid and unweary, your glad people, carrying among us the marks of the death and of the new life of Jesus in whose name we pray. *Amen.*

### **Hymn 207 Jesus Christ is risen today**

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!  
unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

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!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
praise eternal as his love, Alleluia!  
praise him, all ye heavenly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBNamFYN\\_6E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBNamFYN_6E)