

Order of Worship for April 9, 2023 (Easter)

Prelude

P: Jesus Christ is risen

C: He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Opening Hymn: *"Jesus Christ Is Ris'n Today."* - Hymn #457

Confession and Forgiveness, p.151

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm: *"Christ Is Arisen"* - Hymn # 459 (1-Soloist, 2- Choir, 3- All)

Kyrie ("Lord, Have Mercy"): Hymn # 944 (choir)

Hymn of Praise: "This Is the Feast" pg. 155

Salutation, p.156

Prayer of the Day:

P: Almighty God, through Your only Son You overcame death and opened for us the gate of everlasting life. Give us Your continual help, put good desires into our minds, and bring them to full effect; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 31:1-6

R: "At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans 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 adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers. 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 watchmen will call in the hill country of Ephraim: 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.'"

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson – Colossians 3:1-4

R: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia Hymn: “*Our Paschal (Passover) Lamb, That Set Us Free*” – **Hymn #473 (vs.1)**

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 28:1-10

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty eighth chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)

P: Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. See, I have told you.” So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and 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, and there they will see Me.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)

Sermon Hymn: “*I Know That My Redeemer Lives*”- **Hymn # 461 (vs. 1-6)**

Sermon: Fear and Joy – Matthew 28:1-10

Twice in the last week or so, we’ve experienced what we usually do in Iowa in the spring – severe weather. Wind and rain, thunder and lightning, hail and more. Warnings and watches came and went, trying to make sure we were properly afraid of the destructive power of the storms.

The challenge when weather events like that come to us is a way to balance the fear with the hope. Yes, you need to watch and make sure you’re not caught outside in a hailstorm or unprotected in a tornado. But you don’t need to be paralyzed by fear either.

We live in a world that makes us want to be afraid. What else is making you afraid? What keeps you up at night? Is it your finances? Maybe it’s the fear you get looking at your property assessment and being afraid of how much your property tax will go up. Maybe it’s that your tax refund isn’t going to be as big as you hoped, or you’ll have to pay in more than you thought. Maybe your fears are medical, waiting for test results or treatment plans. Maybe it’s fear for your children, after yet another school shooting, or watching them struggle in school. There’s a lot for us to be afraid of.

Fear is one of the devil's best tricks. Can you think of a single instance when fear led you to behave your best? Sometimes, it's even when we're feeling the most blessed that we're the most afraid. The more we have, the more we have to lose, and the more we fear losing what we have. When fear works like that, it leads to other problems. As Yoda said, "Fear leads to anger; anger leads to hate; hate leads to suffering."

Fear is a part of the Easter story, though we don't always think of it that way. We expect the joy on Easter, but sometimes forget the fear. On that first Easter morning, the disciples were afraid, hiding in the upper room, fearing that what happened to Jesus could happen to them, as well. Jesus had been crucified because, among other reasons, the Pharisees feared the popularity of Jesus, and Pontius Pilate feared the unrest that could occur. Fear was all around.

The women were afraid, as well. They were afraid of how their lives would change. They'd been following Jesus, and now that seemed over. Then, when they went to the tomb, felt the earthquake, saw the guards frozen in fear and discovered it was empty and saw the angel sitting on the stone, their fear changed. They were not expecting a resurrection. They were expecting what they were familiar with; death. They were expecting to go to the tomb and prepare Jesus' body as they would have had there been time after he died. They were expecting to continue to walk in their grief, to mourn their friend and teacher. They were expecting to continue to mourn the future they had been expecting, the future Jesus had promised. When Jesus died, it was as if they had lost their own lives, as well. Even though Jesus had told them what was going to happen, seeing the angel and seeing the stone rolled away was out of their normal experiences, and filled them with fear.

Fear is the reflexive human response to an encounter with the supernatural. There's a reason that the first words out of almost every angel's mouth are "Fear not."

When Jesus meets the women outside the tomb and shows them he is alive, their fear is overpowered by joy. Their lives are changed, but for the better! Instead of lives changed by death, they now live lives changed by resurrection. Jesus' resurrection has given them new life.

But that's not the end of the story. The new life the women have in Jesus isn't just for themselves. They are told to go tell the disciples what they have seen. But when the women left to go tell the disciples, they didn't just leave in fear. They left in fear and great joy. They knew nothing would ever be the same, and that was a good thing. They knew that Jesus had defeated death, and they no longer needed to fear death. As they go in fear and joy, they know their lives will never be the same, but they don't know for sure how their lives will be changed.

How can fear and joy go together? We see fear and joy together in big, life-changing events in our lives. Approaching a wedding may bring fear that something could go wrong, but there's great joy at the celebration and the marriage beginning. There may be joy at a graduation, but fear at the unknown that comes next. There may be joy as you bring a child home from the hospital, but fear about if you can handle all of the new responsibilities. There may be joy in retirement, but fear about finding purpose.

It's in the midst of our fear and fears that Jesus comes. Jesus enters into our world of fear with hope and peace. Fear alone is paralyzing, but fear and faith drive us to Jesus. Then, properly emboldened, we return, no longer paralyzed but freed and enabled to show love to our neighbors. Easter is full of fear and joy.

We too, even when we live in fear, can live in great joy. We know that we no longer need to fear death because Jesus has defeated death. We know that the world was changed forever that first Easter morning. We know that Easter shows we no longer need to be afraid.

We often, I think, assume that great joy and fear are mutually exclusive, but Easter reminds us that they need not be. We can be both fearful and joyful. Yes, there is fear, about the economy, about politics, about war, about severe weather. We will leave this place and go home and the cares and concerns we have will still be there. The world will still be a beautiful and terrible place. But on this Easter Sunday we are also filled with great joy because we remember the promises of God. We know that God is faithful and is with us in our fears and in our joys. We know that Easter shows us God is at work making all things new, making everything right again,

We know that Jesus is risen, that death has been defeated. We know the empty tomb shows us that nothing can separate from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord. We live in fear and joy. Alleluia! Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Nicene Creed:

Offering & Voluntary

Offertory Hymn: *"He Is Arisen! Glorious Word,"* - **Hymn #488**

Prayers:

P: Holy, Triune God, on this day of resurrection, we praise Your name for the sudden surprise of life from death, for "the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

C: This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:22-24)

P: On this happy day of resurrection give us the hope of sin conquered through the cross of Christ and teach us to say:

C: "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God." (Romans 5:1, 2)

P: On this glorious day of new life bestowed, give us the hope of salvation and teach us to say:

C: "Since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. God has not destined us for wrath, but to

obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with Him.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:8-10)

P: On this wondrous day of death conquered through an open, empty tomb, give us the hope of triumph over death and teach us to say:

C: “But we would not have you ignorant, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.” (I Thessalonians 4:13, 14)

P: On this blessed day of victory over Satan’s powers, give us the hope of eternal life and teach us to say:

C: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope, through the resurrection of the dead and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:3-4)

P: When trials and suffering rob us of joy and lead us toward hopelessness, give us Easter hope so we may:

C: “Rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts.” (Romans 5:3-5)

P: When we begin to lose our zeal for You and our spirits grow weary in serving, give us Easter hope that we may know:

C: “What is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe, according to the working of His great might which He accomplished in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.”

P; (special concerns) . . .all this we pray in Your name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Sacrament

Hymn: “*Christ Jesus, Lay in Death’s Strong Bands.*” - **Hymn # 458 (vs. 5-7)**

The Lord’s Prayer:

Words of the Lord:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Hymn: “*Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia*” - **Hymn # 466 (vs. 1)**

Choir: Christ Is the King – arr. John Eggert

Distribution Hymns:

“The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done” - Hymn # 464,

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today.”- Hymn #463

Dismissal

Hymn after Communion: *“Scatter the Darkness, Break the Gloom”- Hymn # 481 (vs. 1)*

Prayer after Communion:

P: Almighty God, You give us the joy of celebrating our Lord’s resurrection. Give us also the joys of life service in Your grace, and bring us at last to the full joy of life eternal; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing:

P: Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“I Know That My Redeemer Lives” - Hymn #461 (vs. 7-8)*