

## Order of Worship for April 5, 2026 (Easter)

### Prelude

P: Alleluia! 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:** *“They Took Hold of His Feet”* Matthew 28:1-10

If we stub our toe, how do we know it? It is because of the pain sensation sent from the toe to our brains via our nerves. Otherwise, we could do a lot of self-inflicted damage to ourselves before we knew it. But how do we know that pain represents something real? We can look at our toes and see the bruises that develop.

The women who went to the tomb on Easter morning were going there to finish the preparation of Jesus’ body for burial. They didn’t have time to do that on Friday because the Sabbath begins at sundown, when they are no longer supposed to be touching a dead body which would make them unclean. They didn’t find the body. Instead, they saw an angel who told them that Jesus was not there; He had risen from the dead! These women were both joyful to hear that news, but also frightened by what had happened when they ran into Jesus, Himself. Matthew in his Gospel tells us that the women ran to Him and “took hold of His feet.” They had heard that He was alive. They saw Him alive. But they also needed to touch Him. Doing that told them that He was real! He wasn’t some apparition or ghost that was fooling them. He was real flesh and blood, alive!

What is real in our world today? We flip through images and videos shown on the internet and often we can tell the difference between what is AI and what is real. But not always. So much has come out from the conflict in the Middle East that you could believe that the war will end tomorrow or that the US has lost all its aircraft carriers. The “Matrix” movies are science fiction, but how much of that will be fiction in the future. Even more confusing is the reality that is being described by those who explore the science of the whole cosmos and how it came to be. One of the best ways they can explain our universe mathematically is by saying that we are just bits of information from a two-dimensional disk that are projected like holograms. What we see and experience then, it is just images.

That may seem far away from our daily lives, but we do so much to control our senses so that we can make our lives seem better from the heat and air-conditioning that keep away being cold or hot to the medicines which dull our pains, to the images on screens that entertain us so we don’t have to have bad thoughts to the cars that turn hard effort into a little diversion to get from one place to another. So is what those women experienced at the tomb real or just something they made up to make their lives “feel” better?

If Jesus rose from the dead, we have hope beyond death. Death is no longer the end, but a transition to a new life and world. But is that real or just a story to make us feel better when we stand by the graveside of a loved one or consider that we too will die?

If reality is just what we experience with our senses, then we can never be sure. Is it really pain or comfort or just what our brains interpret from the message sent to it by our nerves? There has to be something we can anchor into, something that is true no matter what.

And that is what we have in Jesus. Those women grabbed Jesus’ feet. If they had made it up, then why would they have been so shocked about seeing the tomb empty? Why would they be so determined to complete the burial of a body that they knew was not there? No, they truly experienced Jesus risen from the dead. And we see that in how they reacted to Jesus—they grabbed His feet to be certain He was real and not a ghost, and then they worshipped Him. Matthew makes sure this is worship, not just obeisance to a great man. They realize the reality that Jesus is nothing less than the Son of God! In John’s Gospel we see Jesus appear first to Mary Magdalene. She first thinks He is a gardener. But when Jesus reveals Himself to her, she is all over Him. That is why He tells her to stop grabbing Him. It is not like He isn’t saying, “Don’t touch Me!” but “Don’t cling to Me.” She is both seeing that he is real and worshipping Him. She has found true reality.

Reality is found in Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God. It is the Word of God that created us as the crown of all God’s creation. It is the Word that brings us back to

God in Christ Jesus. We need something to cling to, we need feet to grab! That is what we have in Christ Jesus, the Word of God.

We tend to think of our Christian faith as involving “spiritual” matters. That tends to put it apart from our everyday, physical lives. But Jesus did not rise from the dead as some ghost-like image. He rose with a physical body which He still has as a human being. That is why the women could hold on to His real, physical feet. And what He promises to us is a real, physical resurrection on that last day so we can truly experience, not just pretend or dream, a real eternal life with Him.

C.S. Lewis wrote the book The Great Divorce to describe the difference between heaven and hell. In the transition between both people noticed as they went to heaven that what they saw there was not clouds and nothingness, but a world more vivid and concrete than what we see on earth now. The people walk on grass that is so real that it goes through their feet, which are unreal compared to it. And what makes it all so real is the God who creates and redeems, the God who gives us true reality in His Word, Christ Jesus.

“They took hold of His feet.” The women at the tomb experienced reality, not some dream or vision. It is what led them to go and tell Jesus’ disciples. It is what led them to continue to gather together as His people. It is what held them in love with each other even when they faced persecution. And it is what we can hold on to. We take hold of Jesus’ feet as we gather together to hear His Word, as we join in the supper of His true body and blood, as we hold on to the feet of other people to show our love to them knowing that what we do to them, we do to Christ Jesus. We take a hold of Christ Jesus and worship Him.

**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

**Words of the Lord:**

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

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

**Choir:** *"The Day of Resurrection"* – by Shelton Ridge Love

**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)

