

These are written  
so that you may  
believe...and...believing...  
have life in his name. John 20:31

**Second Sunday of Easter**

**April 16, 2023**

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# *Zion Lutheran Church*

212 South Front Street

(513) 863-5774

Hamilton, Ohio 45011

[www.zionhamilton.org](http://www.zionhamilton.org)

*Rev. John Mittermaier, Interim Pastor*

*Patti Eaton, Associate in Ministry*

*Bill Seale, Music Minister*

*Julia Hilbert, Office Admin.*

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**WELCOME IN THE LORD'S NAME!** We are glad you joined us for worship today and hope that you will find this time of worship an inspiration and that you will feel renewed in the Holy Spirit, at one with God the Father and newly committed to Jesus.

**IF YOU DESIRE PRAYERS** for yourself or others, prayer cards are located in the pew racks. Simply complete the card and place it in the offering plate. You may also email [zionlutheranoffice@gmail.com](mailto:zionlutheranoffice@gmail.com) or call the church office.

As Lutherans, we believe in the Real Presence of our Lord in the communion bread and wine. All Baptized Christians are encouraged to receive the **SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**. Please approach the kneeling rail picking up an empty cup or cup of grape juice on the way. Then go either direction to receive the bread (wafer) and blood (wine or grape juice). Leave your empty cup in the holder on your way back to your seat.

Please take a moment to sign an **ATTENDANCE CARD** found in the pews.

A **NURSERY** is located in room 208/209 in the upper level of the education building and is available for children ages five and under but is unstaffed at this time. You may take your child and stay with them. There is also a "quiet" room in room 201.

**RESTROOMS** can be located by following The Great Hall to the elevator or going up the stairwell to the Fourth Floor. They are located just past the drinking fountain on the right of the hallway.

For more information about **PROGRAMS** offered at Zion, or general information, please review your bulletin, visit our website at [zionhamilton.org](http://zionhamilton.org) and "like" Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church on Facebook.

If you have **QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE**, please reach out to our ushers who are available at the back of the sanctuary.

**THANK YOU FOR SHARING THIS TIME WITH US!** May God's blessings be with you this week and we look forward to your joining us again.

**Reaching out with God's love.**

## Second Sunday of Easter

April 16, 2023

*Setting Two, LBW*

### **Introduction** (for silent meditation)

In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

### **PRELUDE**

(Use the prelude for quiet preparation for worship.)

*Stand*

*P Alleluia! Christ is risen.*

**C Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

*P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
by whose hand we are given new birth,  
by whose speaking we are given new life.*

**C Amen.**

*P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,  
we are welcomed, restored, and supported  
as citizens of the new creation.  
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.*

*Holy God,  
holy and merciful,  
holy and mighty,  
you are the river of life,  
you are the everlasting wellspring.*

*In mercy and might you have freed us from death  
and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead.  
In baptismal waters our old life is washed away,  
and in them we are born anew.*

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.*

*Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams.  
Honor to you for waters that wash us clean,  
quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures.  
Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism,  
the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.*

**C Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you.**

**Empower our witness to your resurrection.**

**Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.**

*P Satisfy the world's need through this living water.*

*Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment.*

*Where despair prevails, grant hope.*

*Where chaos reigns, bring peace.*

*We ask this through Christ,*

*who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.*

**C Amen.**

*Stand*

**HYMN** *Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain*

# 363



1 Come, you faith - ful, raise the strain of tri - um - phant glad - ness!  
2 'Tis the spring of souls to - day; Christ has burst his pris - on,  
3 Now the queen of sea - sons, bright with the day of splen - dor,  
4 Nei - ther could the gates of death, nor the tomb's dark por - tal,  
5 Al - le - lu - ia! now we cry to our Lord im - mor - tal,



God has brought forth Is - ra - el in - to joy from sad - ness,  
and from three days' sleep in death as a sun has ris - en.  
with the roy - al feast of feasts comes its joy to ren - der;  
nor the watch - ers, nor the seal, hold you as a mor - tal;  
who tri - um - phant burst the bars of the tomb's dark por - tal;



loosed from Pha-raoh's bit - ter yoke Ja - cob's sons and daugh - ters;  
All the win - ter of our sins, long and dark, is fly - ing  
comes to glad Jer - u - sa - lem, who with true af - fec - tion  
but to - day, a - mong your own, you ap - pear, be - stow - ing  
Al - le - lu - ia! with the Son God the Fa - ther prais - ing;



led them with un - moist - ened foot through the Red Sea wa - ters.  
from the Light to whom we give laud and praise un - dy - ing.  
wel - comes in un - wea - ried strain Je - sus' res - ur - rec - tion!  
your deep peace, which ev - er - more pass - es hu - man know - ing.  
Al - le - lu - ia! yet a - gain to the Spir - it rais - ing.

Stand

## GREETING

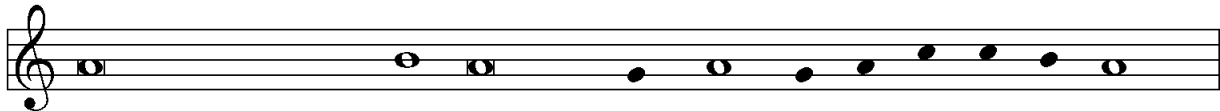
*P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C And also with you.**

## KYRIE



**A** In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



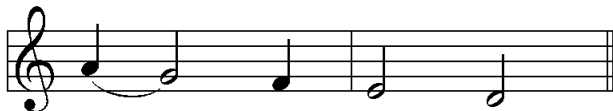
**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



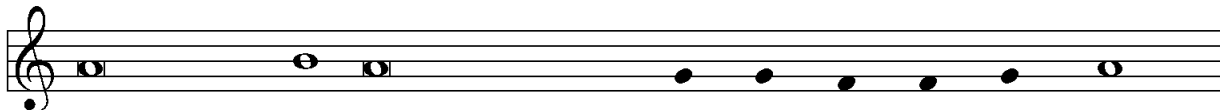
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord. **C** A - men

# HYMN OF PRAISE



**A** This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



**B** Wor- thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis- dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless- ing and glo - ry are his.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless- ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*P The Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

*P Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**C Amen**

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## THE WORD OF THE LORD

---

*Sit*

### FIRST LESSON

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

*After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.*

<sup>14a</sup>Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], <sup>22</sup>“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. <sup>24</sup>But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. <sup>25</sup>For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; <sup>26</sup>therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. <sup>27</sup>For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ <sup>29</sup>“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup>Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ <sup>32</sup>This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

*L Word of God. Word of Life.*

**C Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 16

(read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>*Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;*

**I have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.”**

<sup>2</sup>*All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,*

**upon those who are noble among the people.**

<sup>3</sup>*But those who run after other gods*

**shall have their troubles multiplied.**

<sup>4</sup>*I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,  
never take their names upon my lips.*

<sup>5</sup>*O LORD, you are my portion and my cup;  
it is you who uphold my lot.*

<sup>6</sup>*My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;  
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.*

<sup>7</sup>*I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel;  
my heart teaches me night after night.*

<sup>8</sup>*I have set the LORD always before me;  
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.*

<sup>9</sup>*My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;  
my body also shall rest in hope.*

<sup>10</sup>*For you will not abandon me to the grave,  
nor let your holy one see the pit.*

<sup>11</sup>*You will show me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures  
forevermore.*

## SECOND LESSON

1 Peter 1:3-9

*This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.*

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

*L Word of God. Word of Life.*

**C Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION





## GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

*P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twentieth chapter.*

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

*The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the 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.

*After the reading:*

*P The Gospel of the Lord.*

**C Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

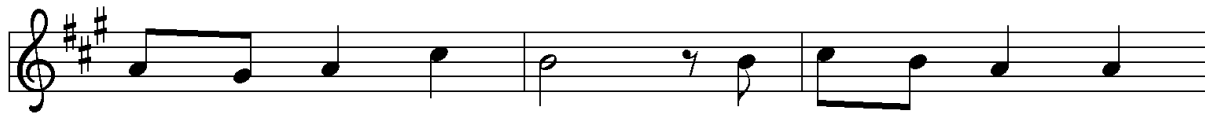
**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

**SERMON**

Having Doubts?



1 We walk by faith and not by sight; with  
 2 We may not touch your hands and side, nor  
 3 Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; and  
 4 For you, O res - ur - rec - ted Lord, are  
 5 And when our life of faith is done, in



gra - cious words draw near, O Christ, who spoke as  
 fol - low where you trod; but in your prom - ise  
 may our faith a - bound to call on you when  
 found in means di - vine: be - neath the wa - ter  
 realms of clear - er light may we be - hold you



none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."  
 we re - joice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"  
 you are near and seek where you are found:  
 and the word, be - neath the bread and wine.  
 as you are, with full and end - less sight.

Text: Henry Alford, 1810–1871, alt.

Music: SHANTI, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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## NICENE CREED

*P* With the whole church, in every time and place, let us confess our faith.

**C** We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,  
 God from God, Light from Light,  
 true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made,  
 of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
 he came down from heaven;  
 by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and  
was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen**

*Kneel as you are able.*

## **THE PRAYERS**

*United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.*

*A brief silence.*

*God of rebirth, the good news of your resurrection brings refreshment to a weary world. Following the women at the tomb, empower us to boldly share your radical love through our words and our work. Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*As you breathed your Spirit into the disciples, breathe your spirit of healing upon all creation. Nourish the earth with sufficient rains. Strengthen us to counter the effects of pollution and destruction. Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*You prepared the disciples for their ministry by calming their fears and granting them your peace. Equip our communities' leaders (especially). Give them a spirit of peace and hearts that burn for justice, that their leadership reflects your love. Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*You come among us in unexpected ways. Send us to those who hide in fear or question your love. Be a healing presence for any isolated by addiction, incarceration, mental illness, chronic pain, sickness, or grief especially:*

Patrice Huston	Libby Brice	Bob Campbell
Maggie Brice	Steve Lantis	Donna Wolfe
Doug Edwards & Family	P Mark Finfrock	Joyce Donner
Jim Gronberg	Wayne Huston	Nicara Wilson Gibson
Ida	Jean	Cash Ramsey
Jeannie	Chloe Kim	Missy Muller
Lorna	Wanda Melford	Rob Green
Glen French	Ruth Ann Bowlin	Janet Menke
Emma Lauer	Dennis Steele	Earl Robinson
Willie Philhower	Donna Ward	Tam Weik
Joyce Edler	Juanita Tudor	Debbie
Bowman family	Waggoner family	Flo Coggeshall
Arlene	Rhonda & Tom	David
Patti Sroufe	Terry Shelter	Mallory Helton
Paul Johnson	Melissa Dietrich	Won Jae Kim
Jace Helton		

Family of Tom Wright: Tom entered into eternal life on April 9. Our sympathy is extended to Sandy, Sarah, and the rest of his family and friends.

Deployed: Captain Andrew Copas

*Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*As you met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, show us your presence along our journeys. Bless our doubts and questions. Provide trusting and safe relationships for all ages, to nurture our connection to you and one another. Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

*Oh Loving God, send your Holy Spirit to encourage and lead the members of our stewardship team while they are developing and implementing the "Zion Campaign for Ministries". Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*Resurrecting God, you bring us to new life every day. Thank you for blessing us with companions on our faith journey, especially those who now rest in your love especially Tom Wright. Strengthen us with the eternal peace of your promises. Hear us, O God.*

**Your mercy is great.**

*Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.*

**Amen.**

*Stand*

**PEACE**

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

**C And also with you.**

*The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

*Peace be with you*

**R: Peace be with you.**

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## HOLY COMMUNION

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### OFFERING

*The offering is received.*

### CHORAL VOLUNTARY

*Jesus, I Adore Thee, Stephen Caracciolo*

*Stand*

### OFFERTORY

*As the plates are presented, the appointed Offertory is sung.*



**Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of**



**bles-sing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be**



**fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -**



**nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your**



**pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.**

*P Let us pray. Generous God, in this meal you offer your very self. We give thanks for these gifts of the earth. In the breaking of this bread reveal to us the Risen One. In the pouring of this wine pour us out in service to the world; through Christ our Lord.*

**C Amen**

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## HOLY COMMUNION

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### GREAT THANKSGIVING

*P The Lord be with you.*

**C And also with you.**

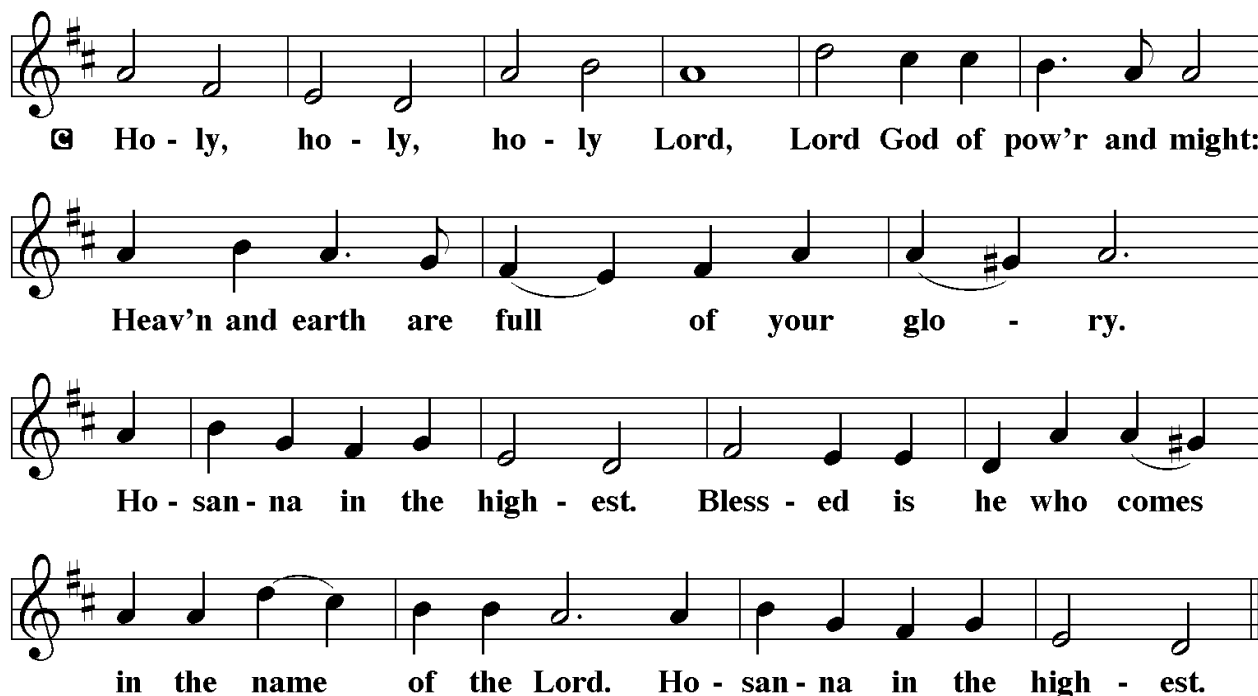
*P Lift up your hearts.*

**C We lift them to the Lord.**

*P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**C It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:  
Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

*Holy, living, and loving God,*

*we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.*

*We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood,*

*for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,*

*and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.*

*We give you thanks for Jesus*

*who, living among us,*

*healed the sick,*

*fed the hungry,*

*and with a love stronger than death,*

*gave his life for others.*

*In the night in which he was betrayed,*

*our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;*

*broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:*

*Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.*

*Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Remembering, therefore,  
his life-giving death and glorious resurrection,  
we await your promised life for all this dying world.  
Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup:  
carry us in your arms from death to life,  
that we may live as your chosen ones,  
clothed in the righteousness of Christ.  
Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church,  
both now and forever.*

**Amen**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

*P Lord, remember us in your Kingdom and teach us to pray:*

**C 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 and ever. Amen**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*P Come and know Christ,  
C broken and poured out for you.*

### **FOR THOSE COMMUNING AT HOME**

*The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

*The communicant may say: **Amen***

*Sit*

### **COMMUNION**



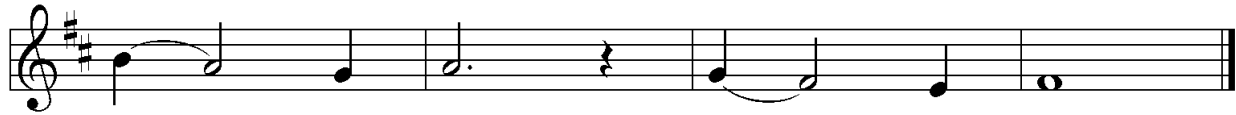
**☪ Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.**



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

### COMMUNION HYMN *O Bread of Life from Heaven*



1 O Bread of life from heav - en, O Food to pil - grims giv -  
2 O Fount of grace re - deem - ing, O Riv - er ev - er stream -  
3 We love you, Je - sus, ten - der, in all your hid - den splen -



en, O Man - na from a - bove: feed with the bless - ed sweet -  
ing from Je - sus' wound - ed side: come now, your love be - stow -  
dor with - in these means of grace. Oh, let the veil be riv -



ness of your di - vine com - plete - ness the souls that want and need your love.  
ing on thirst - ing souls, and flow - ing till all are ful - ly sat - is - fied.  
en, and our clear eye in heav - en be - hold your glo - ry face to face.

Text: Latin hymn, c. 1661; tr. Hugh T. Henry, 1862–1946, sts. 1, 3; Philip Schaff, 1819–1893, st. 2; alt.  
Music: O WELT, ICH MUSS DICH LASSEN, Heinrich Isaac, c. 1450–1517

*As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:  
The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

*The communicant may say: **Amen***

*Stand*

*P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ  
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

**C Amen**



## CANTICLE



**C** Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

*P* Let us pray. Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

**C** Amen

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## SENDING

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## BLESSING

*P* The God of all,  
who raised † Jesus from the dead,  
bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit  
to live in the new creation.

**C** Amen



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re - sounds  
 2 E - ter - nal is the gift he brings,  
 3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with daunt - less love;  
 4 A - dor - ing prais - es now we bring



in praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has  
 there - fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has  
 set heart and will on things a - bove that we  
 and with the heav'n - ly bless - ed sing: "Christ has



tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Sing, choirs of  
 tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Now still he  
 con - quer through your tri - umph; grant grace suf -  
 tri - umphed! Al - le - lu - ia!" Be to the



an - gels, loud and clear! Re - peat their song of glo - ry  
 comes to give us life and by his pres - ence stills all  
 fi - cient for life's day that by our lives we tru - ly  
 Fa - ther, and our Lord, to Spir - it blest, most ho - ly



here: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 strife. "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 say: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 God, all the glo - ry, nev - er end - ing!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

**DISMISSAL**

*P* Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

**C** Reaching out with God's love.

**POSTLUDE**



## A Wild, Skeptical Hope

“Doubting Thomas” is nearly always meant as a pejorative, but Jesus shows up for him. It’s easy to forget that Thomas is asking for nothing more than what Jesus has already provided to his friends—showing up for them, in the flesh. When he does the same for Thomas and Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28), Jesus responds, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” (John 20:29). It’s easy to hear this as if Jesus were chastising Thomas while he blesses the rest of us, but he does no such thing. He can show up for Thomas and bless the rest of us all at the same time.

Can you even imagine what those days must have been like—those days between the crucifixion and resurrection, and then the days that followed, full to the brim with confusion and grief and rumors and wild, skeptical hope? Two thousand years can make us forgetful, as if those who were present in those moments had the luxury of knowing the entire story all at once, the way we do.

But they didn’t. Regardless, Thomas believed in a God big enough to carry his doubts and uncertainty. He trusted that God was big enough to hold all his questions and his hope.

What are the big doubts you carry? What are your questions? What kind of wild, skeptical hopes do you have, that you hardly dare to utter out loud, even to your closest friends? Do they feel any different when you stop to wonder about letting God carry them with you?

Here, at the beginning of the Easter season, God has shown us that very little is truly impossible. Thomas believed as much, and he had the courage to ask for it. Jesus shows up in response to Thomas’s bold ask, and through this witness, he blesses the rest of us.