

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Easter 2 - April 19, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #142 - *“Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain”*

**Come, you faithful, raise the strain
Of triumphant gladness!
God has brought his Israel
Into joy from sadness.
See the spring of souls today:
Christ has burst his prison
And from three days' sleep in death
As a sun has risen.**

**All the winter of our sins,
Long and dark, is flying
From his light, to whom we give
Laud and praise undying.
Neither could the gates of death
Nor the tomb's dark portal
Nor the watchers nor the seal
Hold him as a mortal.**

**But today among his own
Christ appeared, bestowing
Blessed peace, which evermore
Passes human knowing.
Come, you faithful, raise the strain
Of triumphant gladness!
God has brought his Israel
Into joy from sadness.**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them: “Men of Israel, hear these words! Jesus the Nazarene was a man recommended to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know. This man, who was handed over by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, you killed by having lawless men nail him to a cross. He is the one God raised up by freeing him from the agony of death, because death was not able to hold him in its grip. “Indeed, David says concerning him: I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon my life to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. “Gentlemen, brothers, I can speak confidently to you about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would seat one of his descendants on his throne, he saw what was coming and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, saying that he was neither abandoned to the grave nor did his flesh see decay. “This Jesus is the one God has raised up. We are all witnesses of that. (EHV)

Psalm 16:

Refrain: **I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.**

**Keep me safe, O God,
For in you I take refuge.**

**I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord;
Apart from you I have no good thing.”**

**I have set the LORD always before me.
Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.**

Refrain: I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

**My heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
My body also will rest secure,**

**Because you will not abandon me to the grave,
Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.**

**You have made known to me the path of life;
You will fill me with joy in your presence**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain: I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. Through faith you are being protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time. Because of this you rejoice very much, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various kinds of trials so that the proven character of your faith - which is more valuable than gold, which passes away even though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet by believing in him, you are filled with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with

glory, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
(EHV)

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

Gospel: John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you." After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whenever you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." But Thomas, one of the Twelve, the one called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe." After eight days, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Take your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue to doubt, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, did many other miraculous signs that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #161 - "*Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands*"

**Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands
For our offenses given;
But now at God's right hand he stands
And brings us life from heaven.
Therefore let us joyful be
And sing to God right thankfully
Loud songs of hallelujah. Hallelujah!**

**It was a strange and dreadful strife
When life and death contended.
The victory remained with life;
The reign of death was ended.
Holy Scripture plainly says
That death is swallowed up by death,
Its sting is lost forever. Hallelujah!**

**Here the true Paschal Lamb we see,
Whom God so freely gave us;
He died on the accursed tree -
So strong his love - to save us.
See, his blood now marks our door;
Faith points to it; death passes o'er,
And Satan cannot harm us. Hallelujah!**

**So let us keep the festival
To which the Lord invites us;
Christ is himself the joy of all,
The sun that warms and lights us.
Now his grace to us imparts
Eternal sunshine to our hearts;
The night of sin is ended. Hallelujah!**

The Sermon: 1 Peter 1:3-9
“It’s Great To Be A Christian”

Very often **new** Christians express their faith with great **enthusiasm**. They bubble over with joy and excitement. “**It’s Great To Be A Christian**,” they exclaim. Why is it that we **seldom** hear those words from those who have been Christians for many **years**? Don’t they **believe** that being a Christian **is** great? Have they changed their **minds**? I don’t really think so. Perhaps their emotions have just settled down a little, or at least in **some** cases, maybe a **lot**. After all, it’s **natural** that our feelings will be different toward a **newfound** friend than they will be toward a friend we have known for a **lifetime**. But we dare not use that as an **excuse** to put all **emotion** and **action** aside. In reality, our feelings toward a **lifelong** friend should run much **deeper**, because they have had a chance to grow and mature. When that lifelong Friend has been **Jesus**, and we have had the opportunity to experience His **love** for us in providing us with forgiveness and life day after day, year after year, then it will be easy for **us also** to say, “**It’s Great To Be A Christian**.”

Our text leads us in that direction, pointing out five great **blessings** which we have as Christians. We have a living **hope**, a permanent **inheritance**, the shield of God’s **power**, a precious **faith**, and a glorious **joy**. In our text Peter writes, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a **living hope** through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead*” Through the free gifts of **Baptism**, the Lord’s **Supper**, and God’s precious **Word**, Jesus has given us a **living hope** - an **active** hope. We certainly don’t **deserve** that hope - not when we consider what our human race has **done** to God’s perfect creation - nor when we consider what **we ourselves** have done in continually breaking God’s commandments. By persisting in sin we have become **dead**, but by believing in **Christ** and His **resurrection** from the dead, we have been brought back to **life** again. It’s a new lease on life - a fresh start - and it’s all ours because of **Jesus**. In that new life, filled with **hope**, we will want to show others that **It’s Great To Be A Christian**, because we have been given a second chance - a chance which we did not **deserve**.

Peter also tells us, “*God has given us a new birth into an **inheritance** that is **undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.***” Inheritances are of great interest among people. Generally the reading of a Last Will and Testament will bring out all sorts of **long-lost** relatives. It may also bring out some different **attitudes** among **others** - attitudes of **greed** and **mistrust**. Many people who have received large inheritances are not as **happy** as they **thought** they would be. Now that they have a degree of **wealth**, they spend much of their time **worrying** about how someone might try to take that wealth **away** from them. That’s unfortunate, because **earthly** inheritances, **regardless** of their dollar value, are not **worth** all that much. They are not **permanent** - and by spending too much time worrying about **earthly** wealth, we may **neglect** our **permanent** inheritance, just as the rich young fool did in Jesus’ parable.

That **permanent** inheritance, eternal life in **heaven**, is a gift of God’s **grace**. We have nothing to do with obtaining it. We were simply born into the right family - the family of **believers**. **It’s Great To Be A Christian**, because we have an inheritance which we **can** take with us - one which will never perish, or spoil, or fade. That’s **real** security, and we are privileged to have it even in a time when many **other** blessings seem so **threatened** and **insecure**.

That leads us to the **third** blessing listed in our text - the shield of God’s **power**. Peter writes, “*Through faith you are being **protected** by God’s **power** for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time. Because of this you **rejoice** very much, even though now **for a little while**, if necessary, you have been **grieved** by various kinds of **trials**.*” **Protection** is a basic human need. We spend a lot of time and money to **provide** it on a large scale, even though we realize our tanks, planes, missiles, submarines, and even “Star Wars” defense systems, will never provide us with **complete** protection. In Peter’s day they didn’t have all those complex forms of defense - they had **shields**. The shield in the left hand of a soldier was just as important as the **sword** in his right, because without that **shield**, he was **defenseless** against the sword, or spear, or arrows of his **enemy**.

How **wonderful** it is to know that we are protected by **God’s power**. With His power as a **shield** in our left hand, we have no need to even carry an **offensive** weapon in our right hand. Through **God’s power**, the Christian becomes **invincible**. **It’s Great To Be A Christian**, because we don’t need to be afraid of anyone or anything. In his great Reformation hymn, A Mighty Fortress, Luther wrote, “*This world’s prince may still **scowl** fierce as he will. He can **harm** us **none**. He’s judged, the deed is **done**.*” Satan, death, and any **other** enemies which exist out there, are **powerless** against the Christian - because we are **protected** by

the shield of **God's** power.

Oh, it's true God sends suffering, and grief, and trials at times - but not to **harm** us - not to **destroy** us. In our text Peter continues, "*You have been grieved by various kinds of trials so that the proven character of your **faith** - which is more valuable than **gold**, which passes away even though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*" Our **faith** is compared to **gold**, and gold in **any** form is very **valuable**. But **pure** gold - **refined** gold - is **extremely** valuable. Yet, even pure gold, gold which has been refined by fire, will someday **perish**, while our **faith** will **not**. Our **faith** is more precious than all the gold in Fort Knox, or all the diamonds in South Africa. And our faith keeps getting more and more valuable each time it is **tested**. It gets **stronger**, and **purser**, and more **active**. **It's Great To Be A Christian** because God **gives** us **faith**, and then He keeps that faith **strong**.

That brings us to the closing verses of our text, and to a glorious **joy**. We read, "*Though you have not **seen** him, you **love** him. Though you do not see him **now**, yet by **believing** in him, you are **filled** with a **joy** that is inexpressible and **filled** with **glory**, because you are receiving the **goal** of your faith, the **salvation** of your souls.*" Did you ever get the feeling that Christians, especially WELS Lutherans, are not supposed to be **joyful**? So many times we walk around with our bottom lips dragging on the ground - moping and moaning, or worrying and complaining about someone or something. But who says we have to develop a permanent case of the "frownies" in order to be a follower of Jesus? Certainly not **God!** He is the one who has **removed** depression from our lives. He has **healed** our wounds, **revived** our broken spirits, and **forgiven** all our sins. And as today's sermon text has shown us, He has provided us with a living **hope**, a permanent **inheritance**, the shield of God's **power**, and a precious **faith**. Certainly, these are **all** things for which we can be **joyful**. So let's **be** joyful, and let's let that joy **show**. If we don't, then others may never even **imagine** how **Great It Is To Be A Christian**. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Prayers:

O precious Savior Jesus Christ, there is no work or sacrifice **we** can do to turn away God's **wrath** from us. But thanks be to **You**, through Your **suffering** and **death** on the cross You have won full **pardon** for our sins, and established **peace** with God on our behalf. God **announced** this peace to the whole **world**

when He **raised** You from the dead. Now peace and forgiveness will **always** be ours, because You live **forever** to make intercession for us in heaven. O ever-living Lord, this peace which You brought to us sinners fills our souls with a holy **joy** because we know that whenever we meet **God**, we shall stand before Him **un-accused, un-condemned, and unpunished**; and at the last we will be received into the everlasting joys of **heaven**.

Heavenly Father, the reminders of Your **curse** on sin are still evident; in the **thorns, thistles, and weeds** that plague the ground; and in the **toil, pain, and death** that are so much a part of our temporal life. Pour Your **strength** into us, keep us **faithful** to You, **hear** us when we pray, and remove all things which **distress** us. And, so that we may experience the **peace** which surpasses all understanding, **pardon** our sins and offenses, as we daily plead the merits of Your **Son**.

O Holy Spirit, we thank You for giving us our **faith**, to receive God's offer of peace through **Christ**. Help us to remain **steadfast** in our faith, so that we may never lose our **redemption** which was purchased with the Savior's blood. Cause the peace which God has declared through Christ to rule our hearts so **bountifully**, that we will serve our God in **all** we do, and live in **peace and love** with our fellow man. **Broadcast** throughout the world that blessed message of pardon and peace in the crucified and risen Christ, and draw the hearts of sinners to the **Savior**, calling them to **repentance**. Amen.

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 and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn # 165 - "O Sons and Daughters of the King"

**O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing,**

**Today the grave has lost its sting!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**On that first morning of the week,
Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**An angel bade their sorrow flee,
For thus he spoke unto the three,
“Your Lord will go to Galilee.”
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**That night th’ apostles met in fear;
Among them came their Lord most dear
And said: “Peace be unto you here.”
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**When Thomas afterwards had heard
That Jesus had fulfilled his word,
He doubted if it were the Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**“Thomas, behold my side,” said he,
“My hands, my feet, my body see;
And doubt not, but believe in me.”
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
“You are my Lord and God,” he cried.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Blessed are they that have not seen
And yet whose faith has constant been;
In life eternal they shall reign.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**On this most holy day of days
To God your hearts and voices raise**

**In laud and jubilee and praise.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hymn #162 - "Welcome, Happy Morning!"

"Welcome, happy morning!"

Age to age shall say;

"Hell today is vanquished;

Heav'n is won today!"

Lo, the Dead is living,

God forevermore!

Him their true Creator,

All his works adore.

Refrain:

"Welcome, happy morning!"

Age to age shall say;

"Hell today is vanquished;

Heav'n is won today!"

**Maker and Redeemer,
Life and Health of all,
God from heav'n beholding
Human nature's fall,
Of the Father's Godhead
You, the only Son,
Mankind to deliver
Manhood did put on.**

Refrain:
“Welcome, happy morning!”
Age to age shall say;
“Hell today is vanquished;
Heav'n is won today!”

**He, of life the author,
Death did undergo,
Trod the path of darkness,
Saving strength to show.
Come, then, True and Faithful,
Now fulfill your word;
This is your third morning -
Rise, O buried Lord.**

Refrain:
“Welcome, happy morning!”
Age to age shall say;
“Hell today is vanquished;
Heav'n is won today!”

**Free the souls long prisoned,
Bound with Satan's chain;
All that now is fallen
Raise to life again.
Show your face in brightness;
Shine in ev'ry land
As in Eden's garden
When the world began.**

Refrain:
“Welcome, happy morning!”
Age to age shall say;
“Hell today is vanquished;
Heav'n is won today!”