

resurrection
REALity

THE LIVING LORD GIVES PROOF AND PEACE

Second Sunday of Easter/Confirmation

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

April 7, 2024

SERIES THEME: RESURRECTION REALITY

St. Paul writes, “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Big word: Indeed! Paul is stressing that we must not think of Jesus’ resurrection like a happy ending to another epic fable. The resurrection is not legend. It really happened. Easter is not just a holiday. Easter is history. On time’s infinite line, Jesus’ resurrection is the punctiliar moment that defines reality for us all. If Christ remained dead, he is a fraud and failure. But Christ has indeed been raised. So, the reality: Jesus is exactly what he claimed to be—the Son of God, our Lord and Savior. If Christ remained dead, then the grave is the final, ugly, rotten end of us all. But Christ has indeed been raised. So, the reality is Jesus’ resurrection proves that “all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). The reality of the resurrection does not just change our future, but the way we look at life now. The greatest theologian of the early church, Augustine, called the season of Easter “a joyful week of weeks”—seven wonderful weeks, each seven glorious days long. In this glorious season, let us meditate upon the breath-taking implications of the resurrection reality.

THEME OF THE DAY: THE LIVING LORD GIVES PROOF AND PEACE

In most world religions, the alleged foundational event was experienced by only one person. A self-proclaimed prophet would allege he alone had some special encounter with God. “No really! Just trust me. It really happened.” The resurrection reality is so very different. In the Great Resurrection Chapter (1 Corinthians 15), St. Paul writes an entire paragraph listing all the people to whom Jesus appeared after he rose, including a group of over five hundred at one time. It is like St. Paul is telling skeptics, “You don’t need to take my word for it. Hundreds of us saw Jesus back from the dead.” The proof of Jesus’ resurrection brought peace and strength to those early believers. They knew there was more to their existence than just their time on earth. They knew the reality that eternal life was theirs, a gift from their living Lord. It gave them incredible joy and courage. May the resurrection reality give us the same.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Karma Ridpath

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting Two (page 172 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 510 In Christ Alone



1 In Christ a - lone my hope is found; he is my
2 In Christ a - lone, who took on flesh, full - ness of
3 There in the ground his bod - y lay, light of the
4 No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the



light, my strength, my song; this cor - ner - stone, this sol - id
God in help - less babe; this gift of love and right - eous -
world by dark - ness slain; then burst - ing forth in glo - rious
pow'r of Christ in me; from life's first cry to fi - nal



ground, firm through the fierc - est drought and storm.
ness, scorned by the ones he came to save.
day, up from the grave he rose a - gain!
breath, Je - sus com - mands my des - ti - ny.



What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are
Till on that cross as Je - sus died, the wrath of
And as he stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ev - er



stilled, when striv - ings cease! My com - fort - er, my all in
God was sat - is - fied; for ev - 'ry sin on him was
lost its grip on me; for I am his and he is
pluck me from his hand; till he re - turns or calls me



all; here in the love of Christ I stand.
laid; here in the death of Christ I live.
mine, bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.
home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974

Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974

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Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 172

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

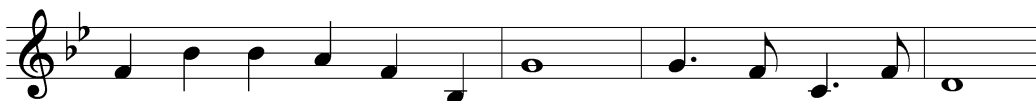
CW 213

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful and answer me.

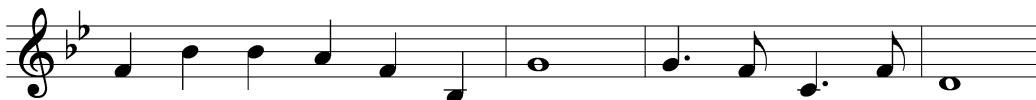
Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Hymn: 813 He Will Hold Me Fast

The choir will sing the first stanza. The congregation is invited to join in on stanzas 2-3.



1 When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
2 Those he saves are his de - light; Christ will hold me fast;
3 For my life he bled and died; Christ will hold me fast;



when the tempt - er would pre - vail, he will hold me fast.
pre - cious in his ho - ly sight, he will hold me fast.
jus - tice has been sat - is - fied; he will hold me fast.



I could nev - er keep my hold thro' life's fear - ful path,
He'll not let my soul be lost; his prom - is - es shall last;
Raised with him to end - less life, he will hold me fast



for my love is of - ten cold— he must hold me fast.
bought by him at such a cost, he will hold me fast.
till our faith is turned to sight when he comes at last! *(Refrain 2X)*

Refrain

He will hold me fast; he will hold me fast;
for my Sav-ior loves me so, he will hold me fast.

Text (sts. 1–2): Matt Merker, b. 1984, alt.; (sts. 1, Ref, 2): Ada Habershon, 1861–1918; (st. 3): Matt Merker, b. 1984
 Tune: Matt Merker, b. 1984
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THE WORD

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

Examination

First Reading

Acts 18:1–11

The Promised presence of the living Lord gave Paul the courage to keep on speaking the gospel, even when Paul was facing harsh persecution.

In Corinth

¹ After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them. ³ Because he had the same occupation, he stayed and worked with them, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴ Every Sabbath he led a discussion in the synagogue, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was entirely devoted to preaching the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when they opposed Paul and slandered him, he shook out his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles!"

⁷ He left that place and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshipper of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid, but keep on speaking, and do not be silent. ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹ He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 849 Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

Trinity's Choir will sing this hymn.



1 Lord, take my hand and lead me up - on life's way;
2 Lord, when the tem - pest ra - ges, I need not fear;
3 Lord, when the shad - ows length - en and night has come,



di - rect, pro - tect, and feed me from day to day.
 for you, the Rock of A - ges, are al - ways near.
 I know that you will strength - en my steps toward home.



With - out your grace and fa - vor I go a - stray;
 Close by your side a - bid - ing, I fear no foe,
 Then noth - ing can im - pede me, O bless - ed Friend;



so take my hand, O Sav - ior, and lead the way.
 for when your hand is guid - ing, in peace I go.
 so take my hand and lead me un - to the end.

Text: tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978; Julie K. Hausmann, 1825–1901

Tune: P. Friedrich Silcher, 1789–1860

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Second Reading

1 John 1:1–4

St. John reminds us that there were witnesses who saw and touched Jesus raised from the dead. This resurrection serves as proof that eternal life is ours.

The Incarnation of the Word of Life

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have observed and our hands have touched regarding the Word of Life— ² the life appeared, and we have seen it. We testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We are proclaiming what we have seen and heard also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write these things to you so that our joy may be complete.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

John 20:29



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Tone



Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have be - lieved.

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Gospel

John 20:19–31

The risen Savior offers proof and peace to his disciples.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ 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!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you." ²² After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ Whenever you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the Twelve, the one called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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."

²⁶ 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. ²⁷ 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."

²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰ Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, did many other miraculous signs that are not written in this book. ³¹ 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 456 O Sons and Daughters of the King

sts. 1-2, 4-8



1 O sons and daugh - ters of the King, whom heav'n - ly
2 That Eas - ter morn, at break of day, the faith - ful
3 That night th' a - pos - tles met in fear; a - mong them
4 When Thom - as af - ter - wards had heard that Je - sus



hosts in glo - ry sing, to - day the grave has lost its sting!
wom - en went their way to seek the tomb where Je - sus lay.
came their Lord most dear and said, "My peace be with you here."
had ful - filled his word, he doubt - ed that it was the Lord.



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

6 "Thomas, behold my side," said he,
"my hands, my feet, my body see;
and doubt not, but believe in me."
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- 7 No longer Thomas then denied;
he saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"You are my Lord and God," he cried.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
- 8 Blessèd are they that have not seen
and yet whose faith has constant been;
in life eternal they shall reign.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Text: tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.; attr. Jean Tisserand, d. 1494, abr.
Tune: Melchior Vulpus, c. 1570–1615;
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon: 1 John 1:1-4

Stand

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.**

Be seated

CONFIRMATION

My dear young friends, when you were baptized, your gracious Lord forgave all your sins and covered you with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Through water and Word he created faith in your hearts and adopted you into the family of believers. As you matured and heard and studied the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit enlightened your minds and preserved you as children of God.

You have expressed the desire to confess the truths you believe before your Savior, your family and friends, and this congregation. You are ready to say with St. Paul, "I believed; therefore I have spoken." You have learned to examine your thoughts, words, and actions in the light of God's law, and you have experienced the comfort of forgiveness in the Savior's gospel. With this preparation you are eager to receive the Savior's body and blood in the sacrament.

As we worship with you on this day, we are filled with joy as we see how the Lord has grown your faith and love. We are bringing our prayers to the Savior's throne of grace and imploring him to keep you faithful to him and his Word until you join us and all believers in the glories of heaven.

I now ask each of you:

Are you ready and willing to confess your faith before the triune God and those who are worshipping with you today?

I am.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**Yes, 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.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**Yes, 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.**

Do you reject the devil along with all his lies and empty promises?

I do reject him.

Do you believe that all the books of the Bible are the inspired and inerrant Word of God?

I do.

Do you believe that the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as you have learned to know them from Luther's Small Catechism, are faithful and true to the Word of God?

I do.

Is it your sincere prayer and desire to remain faithful to your Lord Jesus and his Word all the days of your life?

Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Is it your sincere prayer and desire to live a life that pleases God, to value his Word and sacraments, and to witness to your Savior wherever you go?

Yes, and I ask God to help me.

The pastor speaks to the congregation:

Friends in Christ, the Word of God urges us to pray for one another and especially for the youth of the church. On this special day, it is fitting that we bring our prayers before God, firmly believing that he alone is able to strengthen us by the power of the Holy Spirit and keep us faithful to the Savior until we die. Let us pray.

Gracious Father, in Holy Baptism you created faith in the hearts of these young people and gave them a new birth as members of your family. Help them remember their baptisms every day and find comfort in your promise that you will never leave them or forsake them. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Give them strength to put down and drown the sinful nature that lives within them so that each day their faith may triumph in their living and loving and in their words and actions. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lead them to see and believe that in the word of the gospel they find forgiveness for their sins and relief for their guilt. Use the remembrance of your commandments to drive them to the comfort of the gospel and then to guide them as they live for you and others. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Protect them from Satan when he tempts them to be careless with your Word and sacrament, to make plans for this life and not for the life to come, or to find popular theories more appealing than your truth. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Empower them by the gospel of your Son to live in their world with kindness, humility, and patience that others may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Help us provide fitting examples of faithfulness to your Word and sacraments. Lead us to encourage and admonish them in wisdom and love even after they have left our homes and made new homes for themselves. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

When the end comes and we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, have compassion on us despite our sins and accept us as eternal dwellers in your royal rooms, through the merits of Jesus our Savior, who became sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

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.**

The pastor speaks to those being confirmed:

Now Kate and Grant, receive a blessing from the Lord and a word of encouragement from the Scriptures.

Kate your confirmation passage is Isaiah 41:10 *"Do not fear for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

Grant your confirmation passage is Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."*

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification and the fear of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your heart and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

The Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, renew and increase in you the gift of the Holy Spirit for your strengthening in faith, your growth in grace, your patience in suffering, and for the blessed hope of eternal life.

The God of peace sanctify you through and through and keep you blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The minister says:

The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

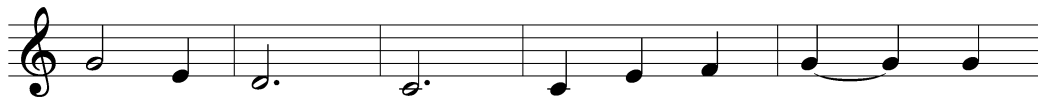
Offering

Offering Hymn: 713 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

sts. 1, Ref, 2



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to
2 I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to



fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of Right - eous - ness,



light to the world. The star of my life— is Je - sus.
shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.

Refrain



In him there is no dark - ness at all. The night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the



cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934

Tune: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934

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Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

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.

Amen.

Hymn: 930 Go, My Children, with My Blessing



1 Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.
2 Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
3 Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, clos - er to me;
4 I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you; you are my own.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.
I the Lord will smile up - on you and give you peace;



In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for -
Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry; here you touched him, saw his
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you; here his ten - der com - fort
I the Lord will be your Fa - ther, Sav - ior, Com - fort - er, and



ev - er. Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own.
glo - ry. Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
stilled you. Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free.
Broth - er. Go, my chil - dren; I will keep you and give you peace.

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008

Tune: Welsh, 18th cent.

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:45 AM Worship and Confirmation, 9:45 AM Fellowship

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

City-Wide Garage Sale

On May 17th-18th we will be participating in Seward's City-Wide Garage Sale. Members are invited to bring items that will be given away for free. When someone tries to buy an item we will give them a postcard that says "Just as salvation is free through Christ, so is this item."

Following our service on May 12th members can set-up their items. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for members to designate when they would like to volunteer for the event. More information can be found on the weekly update. If you have any questions please contact Pastor Wilkens.

Voters Meeting

Grace's next voters meeting will be on Sunday April 14th at 7:00 PM.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class, Worship 47 in person, Facebook Reached 53, Audio/YouTube 8. Offerings: Home 1,615.00, WELS 680.00, Trinity 25.00 **To God be the glory!**

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