

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Aitkin, Minnesota
April 11, 2021
Second Sunday of Easter
ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

C **Amen.**

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

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the

grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead 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.**

Introit *Ps. 105:1–5, 8; antiphon: 1 Peter 2:2–3*

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation—

if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;

make known his deeds among the peoples!

Sing to him, sing praises to him;

tell of all his wondrous works!

Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!

Seek the LORD and his strength;

seek his presence continually!

Remember the wondrous works that he has done,

his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.

He remembers his covenant forever,

the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

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.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation—

if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 4:32–35

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

1 John 1:1—2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that

you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

John 20:19–31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am

sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.
From thence 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.**

Sermon Text – 1 John 1 – 2:2

Theme – “The Word We Proclaimed to You”

For the last two years, Mrs. Becker and I have tried to impart a lot of knowledge into the brains of the three who are being confirmed today. Starting a little over a year ago, because of COVID-19, we had to do this using technology. We all learned how to do a Zoom meeting. All in all it went pretty well, although there were a few glitches. In their first year of class, Mrs. Becker reviewed with them some of the stories in the Bible. This past year, I taught them the truths contained in Luther’s Small Catechism.

We covered the 10 Commandments. One thing they learned is that the Commandments can be summarized by these words: **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart**

and with all your soul and with all your mind. ... and ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37,39). As we talked about the Commandments, we were reminded how we all fail to live up to those commandments. We, sometimes, love other things more than we love God. We, also, don't always love our neighbor as we should. For these sins, for all sins we need forgiveness.

After that, we covered the three articles of the Apostles' Creed which remind us that our God is a Triune God, three persons, one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We also covered prayer and talked about how God promises to hear and answer our prayers. Most recently, we covered the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Through the water and Word of Baptism, our sins are washed away and faith is worked in our hearts. In the Sacrament of the Altar, through the bread and wine, the very body and blood of Jesus, our faith is strengthened and we receive the forgiveness of sins that Jesus gained for us on the cross. We also covered the topic of Confession and talked about how when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and forgives our sins.

These are some of the things that are proclaimed in this church, in Confirmation class, in Sunday School, in Bible Classes, and from this pulpit. The thing I want to say is this: "The most important thing that we proclaim is the fact that Jesus died for us and on the third day, rose from the dead. Because He did all of this, He conquered sin, death, and the devil for us. Through Him we have forgiveness." This is truly good news!

This is good news that is the truth! Trouble is: there are many in our world today who reject this truth. They think of it as fantastic fantasies or worse a whole bunch of rubbish.

That's not what our text for today is telling us. John, one of the disciples, who was in the locked room that we hear about in our Gospel lesson for today, wrote the words of our text. In that

room the crucified Jesus was suddenly there and said to them all, **“Peace be with you”** (John 20:19),

It is probably this experience that John is thinking about when he begins his first letter with these words: **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ”** (1 John 1:1-3).

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not some fantastic fantasy. It is not something to be thrown away like so much rubbish. John saw it; he heard it; he looked at it; he touched it. And, it wasn't just him who did these things. It was all of them who were there that Easter evening and the evening one week following and in the days following for a total of 40 days that Jesus showed Himself very much alive to as many as 500 at one time. That's why John and the others proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

They believed and they proclaimed the good news of Jesus to others who believed. And those that believed their message proclaimed it to others who believed and this proclamation continues even to this day by believers like us.

When we believe God's Word that is proclaimed to us, it is the **“word of life”** that John talks about in our text. This **“word of life”** tells us that through Jesus we have eternal life. More than that, through Jesus we have fellowship with all other believers. But, most importantly, we have fellowship with God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we have this life and this fellowship as long as we believe.

And, so that we will continue to believe we need to continue to hear God's Word. Otherwise, we might start believing some of the other things that are being proclaimed out there, things like: "The story of Jesus' resurrection never happened" or "there are different paths to heaven" or "there is no such thing as absolute truth."

Let me tell you there are absolute truths. Some of them are found in the Bible. One of them is this: there is only one way to heaven and His name is Jesus. That's what Jesus is saying when He says, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"** (John 14:6). That is Natalie Crowther's confirmation verse.

We are able to go to heaven through faith in Jesus. He gave His life so that that could happen. That is the gospel, the good news, which Hailey Henry's confirmation verse is talking about when it says, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"** (Romans 1:16).

Through Jesus we have hope and it is my prayer that not only Ella Sincak, but all three of our confirmands, as well as everyone listening to this sermon, will let that hope bring them comfort. It is that hope that Ella's confirmation verse is talking about when it says, **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"** (Romans 15:13).

As it says in our text, **"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you"** (1 John 1:5). It is my hope and prayer that all of us will continue to hear this message and continue to believe this message. AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

Heavenly Father, by the resurrection of Your Son You adopt all who believe in Him. Receive us as Your newborn children and nourish our faith by the pure spiritual milk of Your Word, that we may dwell in Your presence forever.

Almighty God, You have declared peace between God and man in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Receive our thanks for the authority given to Your Church on earth, and grant that the ministers of Your Church would faithfully carry out their office and pronounce the free forgiveness of sins upon all repentant sinners.

Merciful Father, as Your people are united in the common life and love of our Savior, grant that we would share that life and love with those in need. Be with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, especially the Rev. James and Deaconess Christel Neuendorf. Be also with the staff and board of Lutheran Island Camp.

Heavenly Father, Your peace flows from the risen and glorified wounds of Christ through Your Church and into the lives of all Your faithful people. Bless and direct Christian parents, that Your forgiveness would be freely shared in their homes and that each family would live together in Your peace.

Almighty God, You appoint rulers and officials for the sake of order and peace. Bless those You have placed in authority over us in federal, state and local governments. Give to them the desire to serve with integrity and honor and to work for the benefit of all.

Lord God, we praise Your Son's resurrection from the dead and draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. *[Especially we pray for _____.]* Graciously receive our prayers of intercession and hear them for His sake.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that out of Your indescribable grace and for the sake of Your Son You have given us the Holy Gospel and instituted the Holy Sacraments, that through them we may have comfort and the forgiveness of sin. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Your Word, and through the Holy Sacraments establish our faith day by day, until at last we obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.**

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C **Amen**

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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