

Second Sunday of Easter

April 12th, 2026



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
SMITHVILLE, TEXAS

Divine Service with Holy Communion
10 AM

Bible Class and Sunday School
8:45 AM



Grace Lutheran Church – Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

308 Byrne St. Smithville, TX 78957

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Pastor David Woelmer

**GRACE LUTHERAN
CHURCH**
SMITHVILLE, TX

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church! We give thanks that our gracious Lord Jesus Christ has gathered us together here for his Divine Service. Today again our Lord comes to serve us and lavish us with his gifts of life, forgiveness, and salvation. Rejoicing in those wonderful gifts, we sing with David in Psalm 84: “How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! A day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.”

Holy Communion is a sacred gift from Christ to His Church. In this meal, He gives His true body and blood under bread and wine into our mouths in order to forgive our sins and strengthen our union with Him and with one another (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17). Christians receive this Sacrament trusting Jesus’ own words, repenting of all their sin, and confessing the faith taught in Holy Scripture together in unity (Matt. 5:23-24; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:17-26). For this reason, and because those who eat and drink our Lord’s body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm (1 Cor. 11:27-34), we ask that those who have not yet been instructed and those who are not members of a congregation in fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to speak with the pastor before receiving Holy Communion.

In our readings today: The crucified and risen Lord Jesus establishes the ministry of the Gospel in order to bestow His life-giving Holy Spirit and His peace upon the Church. To those who are called and ordained to this office, and to those they serve in His name, He grants the Holy Absolution of all sins. By the fruits of His cross, He replaces fear and doubt with peace and joy, and thus gives “repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). Through the preaching of His sent ones, He calls us to believe that He “is the Christ, the Son of God,” so that by such faith we “may have life in his name” (John 20:31). In His resurrection, we have the “living hope” to which we have been “born again” and by which we are guarded “for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3, 5). Until then, “though you have not seen him, you love him,” and by the mercies of God “you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

A Prayer Before Worship: *O Lord, our creator, redeemer, and comforter, as we come together to worship You in spirit and in truth, we humbly pray that You would open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word so that we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear us for His sake. Amen.*

Exchange of Peace: By the second century, it was common for Christians to follow St. Paul’s encouragement to “greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12) during the Church’s worship. Though the place in the worship service and the manner of this greeting have changed throughout the Church’s history, it has always served as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:2-3). It’s more than a simple “holy howdy” or a warm greeting to one another. Instead, it’s an extension of the reconciliation and forgiveness that Jesus has accomplished for us. We greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you.”

Please stand and remain standing



1 Je - sus lives! The vic - t'ry's won! Death no long - er can ap -
 2 Je - sus lives! To Him the throne High a - bove all things is
 3 Je - sus lives! For me He died, Hence will I, to Je - sus
 4 Je - sus lives! I know full well Noth - ing me from Him shall
 5 Je - sus lives! And now is death But the gate of life im -



pall me; Je - sus lives! Death's reign is done!
 giv - en. I shall go where He is gone,
 liv - ing, Pure in heart and act a - bide,
 sev - er. Nei - ther death nor pow'rs of hell
 mor - tal; This shall calm my trem - bling breath



From the grave will Christ re - call me. Bright - er
 Live and reign with Him in heav - en. God is
 Praise to Him and glo - ry giv - ing. All I
 Part me now from Christ for - ev - er. God will
 When I pass its gloom - y por - tal. Faith shall



scenes will then com - mence; This shall be my con - fi - dence.
 faith - ful; doubt - ings, hence! This shall be my con - fi - dence.
 need God will dis - pense; This shall be my con - fi - dence.
 be my sure de - fense; This shall be my con - fi - dence.
 cry, as fails each sense: Je - sus is my con - fi - dence!

INVOCATION: *(God has given us our beginning in Baptism, so the Divine Service begins in His Name).*

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C Amen.

CONFESSION: *(We come into the presence of our holy God, recognizing our sin and pleading for mercy on account of Christ).*

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

ABSOLUTION: (*God speaks His words of forgiveness to us through His servant, the pastor.*)

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

G Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTROIT: (*We enter God's house with Psalms of praise.*)

Psalms 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.

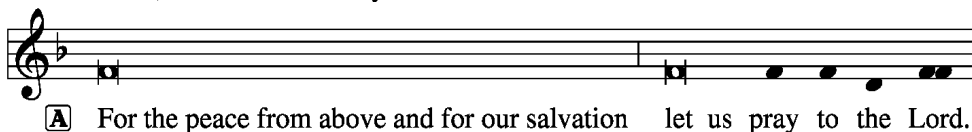
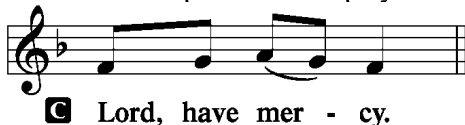
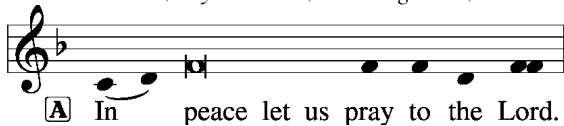
He remembers his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

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.*

KYRIE: (*From the Greek, "Kyrie eleison," meaning "Lord, have mercy."*)

LSB 152

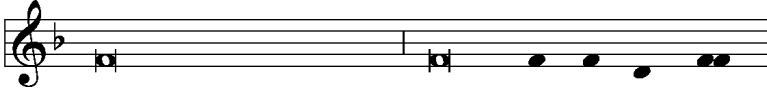




C Lord, have mer - cy.



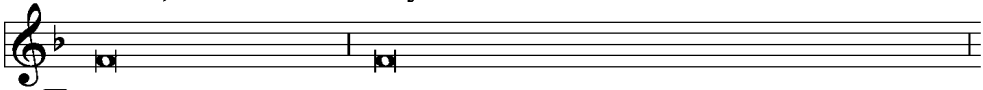
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



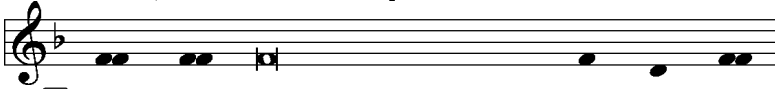
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise



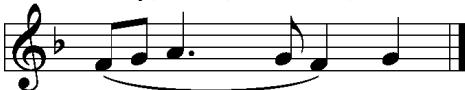
let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



C A - men.

This Is the Feast

Refrain

☐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.

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

1 — Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose

2 Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and strength, and

3 Sing with all the peo-ple of God, and

4 Bless-ing, hon-or, glo-ry, and might be to

5 For the Lamb who was slain has be-

blood set us free to be peo-ple of God. *Refrain*

hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are His. *Refrain*

join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: *Stanza 4*

God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men. *Refrain*

gun His reign. Al-le-lu-ia. *Final Refrain*

Final Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.

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

SALUTATION: (The pastor and congregation greet each other in the Lord's presence).

☐ The Lord be with you.

☑ And al-so with you.

COLLECT OF THE DAY: (These prayers have been used for over 1,500 years. They “collect” the Gospel theme for 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 A - men.

Sit

FIRST READING

Acts 5:29–42

²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, ⁴⁰and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 148; antiphon: v. 13

¹³*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.*

¹Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

²Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts!

³Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD!

For he commanded and they were created.

⁶And he established them forever and ever;

he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

⁷Praise the LORD from the earth,

you great sea creatures and all deeps,

⁸fire and hail, snow and mist,

stormy wind fulfilling his word!

⁹Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰Beasts and all livestock,

creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹Kings of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹²Young men and maidens together,

old men and children!

¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;

his majesty is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints,

for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!

¹⁵*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;*

his majesty is above earth and heaven.

EPISTLE READING

1 Peter 1:3–9

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

C Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 20:19–31

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

C Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

¹⁹On 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.”

²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”

²⁴Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So 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.”

²⁶Eight 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.” ²⁷Then 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.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but 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 to You, O Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED (*From the Latin, “Credo,” meaning “I believe.” We say back to God what He says to us.*)

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.

Sit

HYMN OF THE DAY:

O Sons and Daughters of the King

LSB 470



1 O sons and daughters of the King, Whom heav'n - ly
 2 That Eas - ter morn, at break of day, The faith - ful
 3 An an - gel clad in white they see, Who sits and
 4 That night the a - pos - tles met in fear; A - mong them



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.
 speaks un - to the three, "Your Lord will go to Gal - i - lee."
 came their mas - ter dear And said, "My peace be with you here."



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!

5 When Thomas first the tidings heard
 That they had seen the risen Lord,
 He doubted the disciples' word.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,
 And look upon My hands, My feet;
 Not faithless but believing be."
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

(stanzas 7-9 on next page)

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 How blest are they who have not seen
And yet whose faith has constant been,
For they eternal life shall win.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

9 On this most holy day of days
Be laud and jubilee and praise:
To God your hearts and voices raise.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

SERMON “Peace Be With You: Christ’s Wounds, Your Forgiveness”

(Based on one of the Scripture readings, the pastor proclaims God’s Word of Law and Gospel for our lives today).

Stand

OFFERTORY *(The congregation responds to God’s forgiveness with sacrifices of praise).*



What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to
me? I will of-fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv-ing and will
call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-
va-tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my
vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the
courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Je-ru-sa-lem.

Sit

OFFERING: *(The congregation responds to God’s forgiveness by bringing Him the first fruits of what He has given).*

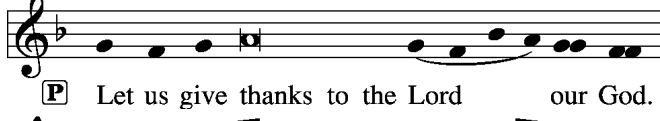
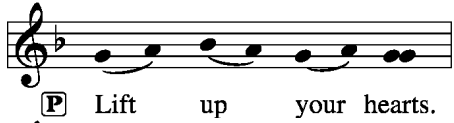
Stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH: *(The congregation prays for the Church and for all people throughout the world).*

P Lord, in Your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

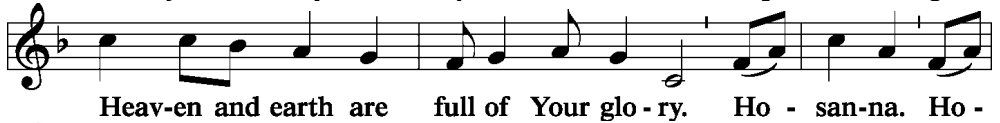
SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE AND PROPER PREFACE: *(We praise and thank God for what He does for us in the Lord's Supper).* LSB 160



P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God. And most especially are we bound to praise You on this day for the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, the very Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us and bore the sins of the world. By His dying He has destroyed death, and by His rising again He has restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, and with all the witnesses of the resurrection, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS: *(Latin for "holy." Heaven joins earth as we cry out with the heavenly host to welcome our Savior Jesus).* LSB 161





comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: *(We thank God for His Son and ask Him to give us what He has promised).* LSB 161

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(Jesus tells us that He gives us His body and blood under the bread and the wine).* LSB 162

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST:

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER: *(We pray the words that Jesus gave us to pray, trusting that our Father will hear and answer us).* LSB 162

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.



Of - fer praise with love re - plete, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!
 When con - tend - ing death and life, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ the Lord is ris'n on high; Al - le - lu - ia!



At the pas - chal vic - tim's feet. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Now He lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Met in strange and awe - some strife. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Now He lives, no more to die. Al - le - lu - ia!

This Joyful Eastertide

LSB 482



1 This joy - ful Eas - ter - tide A - way with sin and
 2 Death's flood has lost its chill Since Je - sus crossed the
 3 My flesh in hope shall rest And for a sea - son

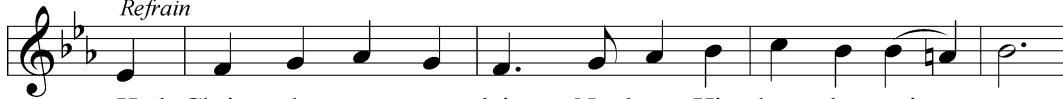


sor - row! My love, the Cru - ci - fied,
 riv - er; Lov - er of souls, from ill
 slum - ber Till trump from east to west



Has sprung to life this mor - row:
 My pass - ing soul de - liv - er:
 Shall wake the dead in num - ber:

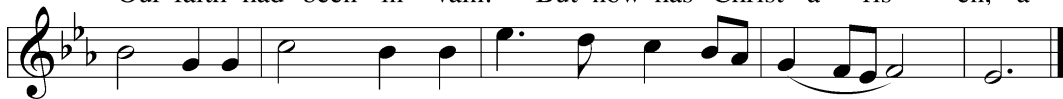
Refrain



Had Christ, who once was slain, Not burst His three-day pris - on,



Our faith had been in vain: But now has Christ a - ris - en, a -



ris - en, a - ris - en; But now has Christ a - ris - en!

He is a - ris - en! Glo - rious Word! Now rec - on - ciled
 is God, my Lord; The gates of heav'n are o - pen.
 My Je - sus did tri - um - phant die, And Sa - tan's ar -
 rows bro - ken lie, De - stroyed hell's fierc - est weap - on.
 O hear what cheer! Christ vic - to - rious, Ris - ing glo - rious,
 Life is giv - ing. He was dead but now is liv - ing!

Silent Prayer after Communing:

Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of my sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Stand

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

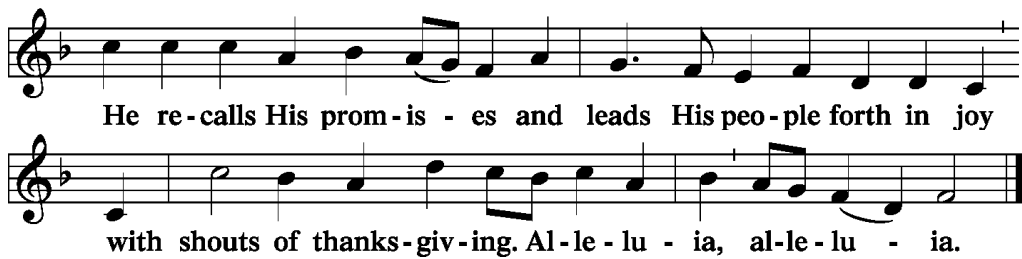
- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.
- G** Amen.

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE: *(Having received Christ in the Sacrament, we give thanks and go forth in peace).*

Thank the Lord

LSB 164

G Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.
 Let all who seek 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.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT: *(We thank God for what He has done and ask that it would show forth in our lives).*

P Let us pray.

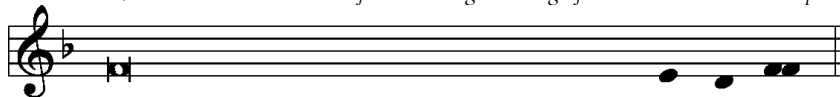
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.

BENEDICTION: *(The Divine Service ends just as it began. We go forth with God's name upon us).*

LSB 166



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 A - men.

Sit



1 A - wake, my heart, with glad - ness, See what to - day is done;
 2 The foe in tri - umph shout - ed When Christ lay in the tomb;
 3 This is a sight that glad - dens—What peace it doth im - part!
 4 Now hell, its prince, the dev - il, Of all their pow'r are shorn;



Now, af - ter gloom and sad - ness, Comes forth the glo - rious sun.
 But lo, he now is rout - ed, His boast is turned to gloom.
 Now noth - ing ev - er sad - dens The joy with - in my heart.
 Now I am safe from e - vil, And sin I laugh to scorn.



My Sav - ior there was laid Where our bed must be made
 For Christ a - gain is free; In glo - rious vic - to - ry
 No gloom shall ev - er shake, No foe shall ev - er take
 Grim death with all its might Can - not my soul af - fright;



When to the realms of light Our spir - it wings its flight.
 He who is strong to save Has tri - umphed o'er the grave.
 The hope which God's own Son In love for me has won.
 It is a pow'r - less form, How - e'er it rave and storm.

5 The world against me rages,
 Its fury I disdain;
 Though bitter war it wages,
 Its work is all in vain.
 My heart from care is free,
 No trouble troubles me.
 Misfortune now is play,
 And night is bright as day.

7 He brings me to the portal
 That leads to bliss untold,
 Whereon this rhyme immortal
 Is found in script of gold:
 "Who there My cross has shared
 Finds here a crown prepared;
 Who there with Me has died
 Shall here be glorified."

6 Now I will cling forever
 To Christ, my Savior true;
 My Lord will leave me never,
 Whate'er He passes through.
 He rends death's iron chain;
 He breaks through sin and pain;
 He shatters hell's grim thrall;
 I follow Him through all.

Silent Prayer After Worship

Almighty and merciful God, we have again worshiped in Your presence and received both forgiveness for our many sins and the assurance of Your love in Jesus Christ. We thank You for this undeserved grace and ask You to keep us in faith until we inherit eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

Text Background

Paul Gerhardt (1607-76) employs the pronouns “I” and “me” in many of his hymns and especially this month’s hymn, “Awake, My Heart, with Gladness.” He wants you to know that everything that Jesus does is for your sake and benefit. This is how we approach not only the whole church year, but especially the Easter season. The resurrection of Christ means that He is victorious over Satan, sin, death, and hell *for you*. He died for you, bearing your sins in His own body on the tree of the cross. He rose for you, breaking the shackles of death and bursting out of the grave. And now, there is no longer any charge against you, no more condemnation, no more sin or guilt in you. The devil and the world have no more power over you, because the resurrection of Christ from the dead is *your* resurrection.

Text Commentary

Stanza 1 & 2: “Today” we see what has been done. Our Savior was laid in the “grave-bed” that we all deserve because of our sin. He entered the darkness we must enter, taking on our flesh and blood so that “through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death” and free those enslaved by its fear (Heb. 2:14–15). It was then that the “foe in triumph shouted.” But the gloom and sadness of Good Friday gave way to the glorious light of Easter morning. It was then that the foe’s boast was “turned to gloom,” for the One who is “strong to save has triumphed o’er the grave.” Christ crushed the ancient serpent (Genesis 3:15) and cast out the ruler of this world (John 12:31) when He went and “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame” (Col. 2:15) by His death and resurrection. Christ’s victory means the night of sin and death is over. The battle is finished! Because Christ has gone before us, death has become the portal from the darkness of this life to God’s eternal light. “The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended” (Isa. 60:20).

Stanzas 3, 4, & 5: “Peace” is the message Christ brings to his frightened disciples (John 20:21, 26) and to us. The God of hope fills us “with all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13). Gerhardt makes some bold yet truthful claims about what this Easter message means:

- Nothing can ever “sadden” the “joy within my heart.”
- No gloom or foe can ever “shake” or “take” the hope which Christ has won for me.
- I am “safe” from evil, I can “laugh” at sin, and I am not afraid of death since hell and the devil have been stripped of its power.
- I am “free” from care, “untroubled” by trouble, and “playful” with misfortune since the world’s raging fury has been defeated and night has turned into day. Commenting on Psalm 50:15, Martin Luther wrote, “*All of the misfortunes we experience are nothing but a joyful game that God plays with us...the Father will gladly and quickly lend a hand.*”

We now sing with confidence, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55). Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39). Therefore, we give thanks, for “God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

Stanzas 6 & 7: Faith clings to Christ above all things, trusting His promise: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” To belong to Him is to share His path, for we long “to know him and the power of his resurrection,” and to “share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Phil. 3:10). The Christian life is shaped by daily repentance, suffering, and endurance, yet always with this hope: “that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:11). Those who share Christ’s death in Holy Baptism will also share His life (Romans 6:4), for the way of the cross leads to the throne. Christ promises, “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne” (Rev. 3:21). Whoever dies with Christ will live and reign with Him forever.