

April 18, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

This Is for Real

It happens when a friend tells a big fish story or hoodwinks us in good fun. Rightly suspecting a spoof we may say in jest, "Get real!" Jesus, too, administered a strong dose of reality therapy to his disciples after the resurrection. While the two Emmaus disciples were telling their story to the others he appeared among them with a greeting for friends: "Peace be with you."

They were terror stricken. Surely this was a talking ghost! But he kept on talking and asked why they doubted despite witnesses and his very presence? "This is for real!" said his flesh and bones. His last therapeutic dose was asking for food, since no ghost eats fish.

Jesus was ridding his disciples of crippling fear. They were to witness not to a ghost but to the Messiah's death and rising by proclaiming repentance and forgiveness in his name. We too must throw aside our misperceptions, since CAT scans, MRIs, microscopes, and slide rules cannot measure all human experience. Perhaps we sense a hint of Jesus' presence in another person's self-giving love, or when the rising sun brings his resurrection to mind.

Jesus' resurrection is not about a ghost. Jesus has been the wellspring of the church's witness for twenty centuries, and he is most real when the gospel is preached and the sacraments administered.

"This is for real!" we say when joining his meal. We remember the child who grew up and died so all might live. In worship we sing praise to the world's true Savior, and our witness to the risen Christ proclaims repentance and real forgiveness for all. If someone gives us a quizzical look as we share that good news, we say unashamedly, "Friend, peace be with you. This news is for real, just like the risen Christ!"

First St. John Lutheran Church

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

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Toni Wilbarger - Secretary

**In peace I will lie down
and sleep, for you
alone, LORD, make me
dwell in safety.**

Psalm 4:8



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

April 18, 2021 - 8:00 am

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Third Sunday of Easter

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

NOTE: We can now sing the hymns and speak the congregational responses behind our masks. Annette Slater will lead the hymns. The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, www.firststjohn.com

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Prayer after Communion

P: Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, (†) Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P: Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Closing Hymn

"Be Thou My Vision"

No. 793

Postlude

Jacob Henry

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Tom Gaskins, Terry Ruedy

P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

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

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

P: The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

"All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."

Communion Hymn

"Bread of Life from Heaven"

No. 474

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace. Amen.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—8:00 am

Prelude

Jacob Henry

Ring of the Bell

Opening Song

"The Day of Resurrection!"

No. 361

The Invocation

P: In the name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

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

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P: Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water is poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

P: We thank you, risen Christ,
for these waters where you make us new,
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.
We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us
in the grace-filled waters of rebirth,
like rains to our thirsting earth,
like streams that revive our souls,
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.
Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.
Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

C: Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.

P: To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Announcements

FIRST READING: Acts 3:12-19

Peter testifies to the Easter faith, proclaiming that Christ's resurrection fulfills the promises of God and brings blessing even to those who killed him.

Peter addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

¹⁷"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out."

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 4

The LORD does wonders for the faithful. (Ps. 4:3)

Answer me when I call, O God of my right!
You gave me room when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

²**How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?**

How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

³But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.

⁴**When you are disturbed, do not sin;
ponder it on your beds, and be silent.**

⁵Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the Lord.

⁶**There are many who say, "O that we might see some good!
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!"**

⁷You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.

Offering Prayer

P: God of love, you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

C: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might be restored, and that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you--that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things."

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Sermon Hymn "The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done"

Pastor Rayl

No. 366

(Please stand)

Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: **your mercy is great.**

The Offering *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

Musical Offertory

Jacob Henry

**⁸I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.**

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-7

This letter encourages Christians to abide in Christ so God's love will be found in them. The baptized are children of God in Christ. To be a child of God is to have a mission: to offer God's love in a world of conflict.

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

⁵You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

⁶No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation *(led by Annette)*

*Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. Luke Chapter 24.

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

GOSPEL: Luke 24:36b-48

In this appearance after his resurrection, Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to understand him as Messiah. Jesus convinces the disciples he has been raised, and he sends them on a mission to proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness.

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.