

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church



Serving, accepting, and loving all.

Bulletin

April 7, 2024

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Sunday, April 7, 2024

Second Sunday of Easter, Year B

Introduction

The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need.

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE – Handbell Choir *He Leadeth Me*, K. McChesney

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

A: In the name of the Father,

and of the ✠ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

A: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and

Lord. **C: Amen.**

A: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(The assembly may kneel as able)

A: Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you

in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG NO. 384 That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

1 That Easter day with joy was bright;
the sun shone out with fairer light
when, to their longing eyes restored,
th'apostles saw their risen Lord!

2 O Jesus, king of gentleness,
with constant love our hearts possess;
to you our lips will ever raise
the tribute of our grateful praise.

3 O Christ, you are the Lord of all
in this our Easter festival,
for you will be our strength and shield
from ev'ry weapon death can wield.

4 All praise, O risen Lord, we give
to you, once dead, but now alive!
To God the Father equal praise,
and God the Spirit, now we raise!

Text: Latin hymn, 5th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra-cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,

now and forever.

C: Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 4:32-35

While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.

A reading from Acts,

³²Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 133

¹How good and how pleasant it is,
when kindred live together in unity!

²**It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar of his
robe.**

³It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the hills of Zion. For
there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life forevermore.

SECOND READING: 1 John 1:1--2:2

The opening of this letter serves as a reality check. The reality of God is light, but

our confessed reality has been sin. God cleanses us from our sinful reality through Christ's death so that we live in fellowship with Christ and walk in God's light. A reading from 1 John,

¹We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1}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; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his

side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, 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. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt 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 come to believe.”

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON – The Rev. Daniel P. Smail

HYMN OF THE DAY NO. 815 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.

I want to follow Jesus.

God set the stars to give light to the world.

The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain

In him there is no darkness at all.

The night and the day are both alike.

The Lamb is the light of the city of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2 I want to see the brightness of God.

I want to look at Jesus.

Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,

and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain*
3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain*

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934

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THE NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit
and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

Your church cries out, O God, and you listen. As you drew near to the disciples, draw near to us this day. Breathe on us your Holy Spirit, that our faith is renewed and we witness to your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation cries out, O God, and you listen. Nurture trees, crops, wildflowers, and all growing things. Guide farmers, gardeners, arborists, and others who tend the soil and nurture plants into life. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your world cries out, O God, and you listen. Guide police, firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders to work for the well-being of communities and the dignity of every person, that no one may need to live in fear. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your children cry out, O God, and you listen. Hear your people crying out for justice, for an end to racism and other oppression, and for a world where all are fed and safe. We pray for all who cry out in suffering or pain, especially those we name within our hearts (*a brief silence...*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your congregations cry out, O God, and you listen. Renew pastors, deacons, musicians, and other staff, administrators, and volunteers who facilitated Holy Week and Easter worship. Open our hearts to discern where God calls each of us to serve. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Accept our gratitude, O God, for the lives of those who now rest in you especially Dietrich Bonhoeffer and all whose lives have been given in faithfulness to the gospel. Grant us your peace amid our fears. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

MEAL

10:30 am HANDBELL CHOIR – *Open Now the Gates of Beauty*, C. Moglebust

OFFERING - *Offering boxes are located in the narthex and in back of the sanctuary.*

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

C: Risen One,

you call us to believe and bear fruit.

May the gifts that we offer here

be signs of your abiding love.

Form us to be your witnesses in the

world, through Jesus Christ, our true

vine.

Amen.

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 our thanks and

praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise
your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.
 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O holy God:

you are the Life and Light of all.

By your powerful word you created all things.

Through the prophets you called your people
 to be a light to the nations.

Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son.

He is your Light, shining in our darkness
 and revealing to us your mercy and might.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his preaching and healing,
his dying and rising,
and his promise to come again,
we await that day when all the universe
will rejoice in your holy and life-giving
light. By your Spirit bless us and this meal,
that, refreshed with this heavenly food,
we may be light for the world,
revealing the brilliance of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit,
let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table.



- 1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
- 2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
- 3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION SONG ELW pg. 146

COMMUNION

10:30 AM Service- *Recipients of First Communion will be welcomed to the table with their families:*

Let us welcome (*names*) in Christ to holy communion.

Welcome to the Lord's table. We thank God for you.

We pray that you will find joy and strength in this meal, until we feast forever at God's heavenly banquet.

COMMUNION HYMN NO. 386 O Sons and Daughters, Let Us

Sing Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1 O sons and daughters, let us sing
with heav'nly hosts to Christ our
king: today the grave has lost its
sting! Alleluia!

2 That Easter morn, at break of day,
the faithful women went their
way to seek the tomb where Jesus

lay. Alleluia!

3 An angel clad in white they see,
who sits and speaks unto the
three, "Your Lord will go to
Galilee." Alleluia!

4 That night the apostles met in fear;
among them came their master dear,
and said, "My peace be with you
here." Alleluia!

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

6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas,
see, and look upon my hands, my
feet; not faithless, but believing
be." Alleluia!

7 No longer Thomas then denied; he
saw the feet, the hands, the side; "You
are my Lord and God!" he cried.
Alleluia!

8 How blest are they who have not
seen, and yet whose faith has constant
been, for they eternal life shall win.
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, alleluia.

Text: attr. Jean Tisserand, d. 1494; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray.
Shepherding God,
you have prepared a table before us
and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet
to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of
Jesus, our redeemer and friend.

C: Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of resurrection power,
the Christ of unending joy,
and the Spirit of Easter hope

✠ bless you now and always.

C: Amen.

SENDING SONG NO. 376 Thine Is the

Glory 1 Thine is the glory,
risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry
thou o'er death hast won!
Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay.

Refrain

Thine is the glory,
risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry
thou o'er death hast won!

2 Lo, Jesus meets thee,
risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets thee,
scatters fear and gloom;
let his church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting! *Refrain*

3 No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee;
aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors,
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above. *Refrain*

Text: Edmond Budry, 1854-1932; tr. R. Birch Hoyle, 1875-1939

DISMISSAL

L: Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Children's Space

We encourage children to worship in the sanctuary as much as possible. However, we know that some days, a break may be needed. Please stop in the lounge for shorter breaks where there are coloring activities and snacks provided. All children must be accompanied by an adult. The nursery is also available downstairs in Fellowship Hall with the ability to hear the service.

Second Harvest: a community thrift store

Second Harvest is located at **624 Clay Street, Sharpsburg**. It is not only a community thrift store but the location of a freezer, refrigerator, and pantry where all are encouraged to:

“Take what you need” and “Leave what you don't.”

One of the needs of the pantry is feminine hygiene products including pads, tampons, and panty liners.

This spring, your Health and Wellness Team will be collecting unopened boxes of these much needed products for women in our neighboring communities. Please just deposit them in the labeled bin located in the narthex. The team will see that they are delivered to the pantry at Second Harvest.

Collections will be received in April 7 – May 26

Spring Bible Study 2024



“Dynamic Duos from the Hebrew Scriptures”

Friends, join us this spring as we consider some of the intriguing and inspiring pairs that appear in the Bible, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Moses and Aaron, Abraham and Sarai, and many more! And as always, if you have biblical characters about whom you have questions, we can certainly talk about those at our study! We will be meeting on April 10th and 17th, (off on the 24th), and then May 1st, 8th, 15th . We plan to offer two sessions of Bible Study each week: a morning class at 10:30 and evening offering at 7:00.

And then, our summer study sessions will begin in June.

Thanks in advance for your faithful participation in our congregation's Christian Education offerings. And remember, even if you can only make a class or two, you are more than welcome to participate as you are able

Thank you!

Your generosity is astounding. We have just completed our 3rd year of collecting sweat suit items during Lent for our prison ministry. Each year, you have exceeded the previous year in your donations. This year you gave 73 sweat suit items (pants or tops) for our brothers and sisters in Christ so that they might leave the Allegheny Jail with the dignity of some new clothes. The total given in these last three year is 199 sweat suit items! God bless you as you demonstrate "*God's work, our hands.*"

Your Health & Wellness Team.

The Week at Bethlehem

Sunday, April 7th - 8:00am Worship /

Communion 9:15a Sunday School

*10:30am Worship / Communion *10:30 am---

Live Streamed

6:30-7:30pm Youth Indoor Egg Hunt Challenge Monday, April

8th 9:00a-2:30p PACC (Fellowship Hall) 11a-2p – Passage to

Recovery (Library) 6:30p Girl Scouts (Fellowship Hall) 7:00p
Fellowship Comm. Mtg. (Lounge) Tuesday, April 9th 10:30a
AA (Schmid Hall)

6:00-8:30pm NA (Fellowship Hall) 7:00p Council
Mtg.

Wednesday, April 10th - 10:30a & 7:00p Bible Study
10:30a Memory Café (Lounge) 7-8:30pm Boy Scouts
(Fellowship Hall) Thursday, April 11th - 10:00a Stained
Glass Class (Music Rm) 4:30-6:30pm ACT-1
(Fellowship Hall) Friday, April 12th - Shelter Meal
Saturday, April 13th - 6:00pm Worship/Comm.