

Easter Sunday Worship on April 20, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Robert Kennedy)

Easter Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 249 The day of resurrection
- Prayer for Worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 258 Thine be the glory

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Acts 10:34-43
- Second reading: Psalm 103:1-12 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 24:1-12
- Sermon: **The empty tomb that changed everything**
- Hymn BOP 558 The Son of God proclaim
- Communion with the Apostles' Creed
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey Because he lives

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Hallelujah! O Day of Resurrection, let us shine with joy!

Christ has led us from death to life.

O Day of Resurrection, let us live with hope!

Christ has led us from earth to heaven.

Christ has risen from the dead. Hallelujah!

He has risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Praise song – BOP 249 The day of resurrection

Prayer of Adoration

Gracious, life-giving God, maker of all things visible and invisible, on the first day of the world, you spoke and out of chaos came creation, out of confusion, order and out of nothingness came all creation.

On the first day of the week, Christ was resurrected by your grace, and out of death came life.

You come to us through the Holy Spirit, to shine light on our way forward, offering your gift of new life in Christ Jesus.

Praise and honour and blessing be to you, O God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, this day and every day, now and always.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*

Loving and life-giving God, you raised Jesus from the grave and shattered the powers of sin and death. But we confess that we remain captive to fear, resisting the hope that new life is possible for us. We hide in tombs of indifference, seeking comfort rather than justice in this world. We cling to resentment and disappointment, refusing the freedom that comes with forgiveness. Forgive us, O God, and restore us to joy and wholeness through your great mercy.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: *(The Lord's Prayer:)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

This Easter Day, God has turned our mourning into dancing!

God has taken off our sackcloth and clothed us with joy!

We are God's forgiven people.

Let us be at peace with God, with one another, and with ourselves,
through the undying mercy of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be at peace with God, with yourself and with each other.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 258 Thine be the glory

Prayer for Children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Acts 10:34-43
- Second reading: Psalm 103:1-12 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 24:1-12

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

SERMON: The empty tomb that changed everything

Have you had an experience with news that was too great to believe?

What about spaghetti tree?

Back in 1957, the BBC pulled off one of the greatest April Fool's pranks ever. They aired a fake report about a "spaghetti tree."

I made a short VIDEO. It shows how easily people believe something wild.

Now, think about the empty tomb of Jesus. At first, it must've felt like that spaghetti tree. Too incredible to believe. When Jesus died on the cross, his disciples and followers were heartbroken.

The women who went to his tomb that morning were especially devastated. Jesus didn't even get a proper burial. These women went to the tomb with the spices to anoint his dead body to honour him in death.

But, when they got there, what did they find? The stone was rolled away and Jesus' body was gone. Can you imagine how they felt? They were in complete shock, totally confused, not knowing what to think or what to do.

At that moment, something amazing happened. **V4, "suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them."**

They said, **v5 "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."**

This is the first public announcement of Jesus' resurrection. A moment that changed everything.

So, what kind of news is this resurrection? Good news, right? Absolutely!
But, put yourself in their shoes for a moment.

How would you feel standing there, hearing this?

Probably scared, shocked, maybe even dumbfounded.

It doesn't feel like "good news" right away, does it? WHY NOT?

Because we are limited by our common sense. We think, "When someone dies, that's it. Dead people don't move. They don't rise." That's what we know from experience.

But the risen Jesus goes beyond our common sense. He shatters our expectations. Maybe God loves a good surprise?! The resurrection starts with shock, but that shock is the beginning of God's greatest work. Our Creator doesn't play by human rules. Death is not the end. It's a new beginning. Like the last lines of The Chronicles of Narnia, after 7 books of adventures and events, C. S. Lewis wrote, Everything I've talked about so far is just the book cover and the title page. Now the real story begins. Our life here is like the title page. Death is not the end. It's the start of a new and better story. That's what Jesus' resurrection shows us.

Now, let's think about those women at the tomb. Back then, women weren't given much credibility. They were often overlooked, not even counted in numbers, and had no voice in society. So, when they ran back to tell the disciples what they saw, how do you think the disciples reacted?

V11, "But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."

Some Bible versions even say it sounded like **"nonsense."**

The disciples didn't trust what the women were saying. Why? Because it went against everything they knew – against their common sense.

Today, we are standing in front of the same news: Jesus' resurrection.

Some still call it nonsense. Others believe it's the truth.

But Jesus himself made some bold claims that we can't ignore.

In **John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

In **Mark 8:31, “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”**

He said it, and he did it. When Jesus makes claims like that, we can't just call him a good teacher. We have to decide. **Is he Lord, a liar, or a lunatic?** His words are about our eternity. If there's a God, Jesus is the only way. Once you've heard his, you can't unhear it.

So, who is Jesus to you? Is he your risen Lord?

And what about our friends who still hesitate to accept Jesus as their Lord? Is Jesus just a “spaghetti tree” – a big lie – or is he the real truth?

Accept Jesus. He is life. He is the truth.

Here's the beautiful thing. Jesus invites us to come to him, even if we are not 100% sure.

Look at Peter. Even though he didn't fully believe the women's report, he still ran to the tomb to see for himself. **V12, “But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then we went home, amazed at what had happened.”**

Peter wasn't suddenly filled with faith or confidence. He was curious, hopeful, and maybe a bit conflicted. He loved Jesus deeply and wanted to believe it might be true, but he had doubts. And that's okay.

Jesus doesn't demand perfect faith. If you have doubts, that's normal. Who doesn't? If you come to him out of curiosity or even a glimmer of hope, he'll welcome you with open arms. **The empty tomb is proof that Jesus is who he said he is.** If the spaghetti tree were real, if spaghetti actually grew when you planted a noodle in tomato sauce, that would prove the prank was true. However, it doesn't work, no matter how many times you try! Jesus, on the other hand?! He said he's rise from the dead, something no one believed, and the empty tomb proved he did it!

Through his death on the cross, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb for us. He bridged the gap between us and God. Jesus opened the door so we can come directly to the Father. The empty tomb changed everything. Jesus completed our salvation. Jesus gave us his life. Jesus is risen! And he proved that he is our Lord and Saviour. All praise and honour and glory and worship to our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

Let us take a step toward him. We might have full faith, curiosity, or even doubts. The empty tomb invites us to trust that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Will you accept him today?

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 558 The Son of God proclaim

Communion At The Lord's Table

Friends, this is the table of our risen Lord Jesus Christ. He invites all who trust in him to come and be fed. With doubts, with curiosity, and with hope. All are welcome.

At this table, we remember that night Jesus was betrayed. Jesus gave his body and blood, not only in death, but also through his resurrection. We gained new life. The tomb is empty. Jesus Christ is risen. And because he lives, we are invited into a new beginning. Let us confess our faith through The Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed (BOP 539)

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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) (Please say BOLD print together)

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

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

P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

L: It is indeed right, our joy and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal God. On the first day of the week, you broke the power of death and raised Christ from the grave. The tomb was empty. And nothing would ever be the same again. Where we saw defeat, you brought victory. Where we saw silence, you spoke resurrection life. Where we saw an end, you began something new. In Christ, you have opened the way. You have torn the veil, rolled away the stone, and cleared the path for sinners to come home. And so, with all who worship you in heaven and on earth, we lift our voices and join the unending hymn:

(Sanctus) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: Jesus Christ, we give you thanks. You came not to be served, but to serve. You lived with grace and truth— preaching good news, healing the sick, eating with sinners, and lifting the lowly.

Out of love, you gave yourself for us. You bore our sin on the cross and died the death we deserved. But the story didn't end there. On the third day, God raised you. The stone was rolled away, and in that empty tomb, everything changed. By your resurrection, you broke the power of sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life. We remember you now, we give you thanks, and we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Make them for us the body and blood of Christ, so that we might be raised with Jesus Christ to new

life and new hope. Unite us in faith, strengthen us in love, and send us out with resurrection joy, so that in all things, your name may be glorified. Through Christ, by Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

(The minister breaks bread in the presence of the people, saying:)

The Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said, “This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(The minister may pour wine into the cup, lifting it while saying:)

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

(Distribution of the elements)

Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (Take some time for personal prayer)

Prayer after Communion:

Gracious and loving God, we thank you. We are so grateful for the incredible gift of Jesus rising from the tomb. What a powerful reminder of your strength and love. Today, we want to live out that truth and share it with others.

On this beautiful Easter Sunday, we come to you with our hearts’ desires and hopes. We remember those who are suffering from physical illnesses. Heal them and recover them. Embrace their bodies and hearts, and emotions. Help their family members. Give courage and patience. We remember those who are suffering from emotional burdens, inner struggles, and mental health challenges. Give peace in them. Recover their wounds. Hold their hands and help them walk one step at a time. We also remember and pray for the people with other prayer needs. Relational struggles, financial difficulties, parenting children, and other hardships. You are the Lord, so God, help us place our faith in you and put our hope in you alone.

We think of Canada too. It’s been a challenging time. But, God, there haven’t been any easy times. But we trust and pray that you will guide us into a brighter future. Give wisdom to all the people who are voting. We are trying to get through this difficult time together. Give us listening ears, understanding hearts, and help us respect one another. Especially, we pray for political leaders. Give them God-fearing hearts. May you take the centre position and you be the guidance in their future steps.

Fill our hearts with the joy of salvation. Risen Lord, help us show your goodness and love through our daily lives. We praise you and glorify you. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

We celebrate God’s most precious gift to us in Christ’s dying and his rising. As we present our gifts to God this day, let us express our gratitude to him. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

God of grace and love and mystery, we come before you with grateful hearts, recognizing how much you have given us in Christ Jesus. Bless these gifts so that they may spread the hope and joy we feel this day to those who have not yet tasted your kindness. With our gifts, we offer ourselves to you in the name of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen

Song for the Journey – Because he lives

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Jesus is risen. The tomb is empty. Our sin was washed. God gave his precious life to us. Because we have his precious life, you are precious too. Let us live our daily lives with the love we have received.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.