St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sunday, April 19, 2020

Second Sunday of Easter

*Holy Humor Sunday*

**Prelude**

Many American churches are resurrecting and old Easter custom begum by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity – “Holy Humor Sunday” celebrations of Jesus’ resurrection on the Sunday after Easter. For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, “bright Sunday” was observed by the faithful as “days of joy and laughter” with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced. The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. “Risus paschalis – The Easter laugh,” the early theologians called it.

*Jesus loves a good party!*

He performed His first miracle at a wedding reception in Cana, turning water into wine. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus tells us that the overjoyed father threw a big party for his returning son. “We are going to have a feast, a celebration,” the father declared, “because this son of mine was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.” (Luke 15:23-24)

P: Christ is Risen!

**C: He is Risen indeed! Allelulia!**

Call to Worship:

Pastor: “Smiling is infectious. You catch it like the flu.”

**People: “When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling, too.”**

Pastor: “I passed around the corner, and someone saw my grin.”

**People: “When he smiled I realized I’d passed it on to him.”**

Pastor: “I thought about that smile. Then I realized its worth.”

**People: “a single smile just like mine could travel the whole earth.”**

Pastor: “So if you feel a smile begin, don’t leave it undetected.”

**People: “Let’s start an epidemic quick, and get the world infected!”**

**Gathering Song**



**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: Knock. Knock.

**C: Who’s there?**

P: Lettuce

**C: Lettuce who?**

P: Lettuce pray.

**C: Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ’s blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32**

L: A reading from Acts.

*After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God’s plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.*

14aPeter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], 22“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—23this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. 25For David says concerning him,
 ‘I saw the Lord always before me,
  for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
 26therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
  moreover my flesh will live in hope.
 27For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
  or let your Holy One experience corruption.
 28You have made known to me the ways of life;
  you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’
  29“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. 31Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,
 ‘He was not abandoned to Hades,
  nor did his flesh experience corruption.’
32This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm: 16 read responsively**

 1Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;
  I have said to the Lord, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.”
 2**All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,**
  **upon those who are noble among the people.**
 3But those who run after other gods
  shall have their troubles multiplied.
 4**I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,**
  **never take their names upon my lips.**
 5O Lord, you are my portion and my cup;
  it is you who uphold my lot.
 6**My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;**
  **indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**
 7I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
  my heart teaches me night after night.
 8**I have set the Lord always before me;**
  **because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**
 9My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
  my body also shall rest in hope.
 10**For you will not abandon me to the grave,**
  **nor let your holy one see the pit.**
 11You will show me the path of life;
  in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

**Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9**

L: A reading from 1 Peter.

*This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ’s resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.*

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

Women stand and sing “Hallelu” then sit, Men stand and sing “Praise Ye the Lord” then sit.

Repeat twice:

(W) Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halleluiah – (M) Praise Ye the Lord

(W) Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halle-lu, Halleluiah – (M) Praise Ye the Lord

(M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah!

(M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah!

(M) Praise ye the Lord – (W) Halleluiah! (M) Praise ye the Lord!

**Gospel: John 20:19-31**

P: The holy gospel according to John.

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

*The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the 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.” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If 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. 25So 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**

***Silence for meditation***

**CREED**

We believe in God, who made us in His image.

**C: We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like Him.**

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

**C: He had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

**C: Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – He is our joy!**

Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don’t claim the happiness that is rightfully ours as your children, when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world.

**C: Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Open the doors we close, O God, when we fear those who worship you in different ways. Guide us to unity and harmony so that we may come to respect and cherish our commonalities. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

Open the paths we ignore, O God, when we prioritize financial gain and convenience over listening to the groaning of the earth. Inspire all to care for the world you have made so that living things might thrive. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

Open the rooms we lock, O God, to those who live without a homeland or place of safety. We pray that generous nations offer refuge and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

Open the hearts we close, O God, to the cries of those in pain. We pray for those isolated physically or emotionally through incarceration, addiction, mental illness, chronic suffering, grief, and all in need (especially). Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

Open the ways of love, O God, in the pursuit of peace throughout the world, and bless the efforts of missionaries, healthcare professionals, activists for women and children, and relief workers, especially those who find themselves in harm’s way. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

Open the way to eternal life, O God, as we remember those who have died in faith. Free us from the fear of death, that we embrace the peace you have promised. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

**C: 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.**

**Song after Communion**

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Amen” (Amen)

If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Amen” (Amen)

If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Amen” (Amen)

If you’re happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, Amen)

If you’re happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, Amen)

If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you’re happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, Amen)

**Benediction**

**People: “Lord, grant me a joyful heart and a holy sense of humor. Please give me the gift of faith, to be renewed and shared with others each day. Teach me to live this moment, looking neither to the past with regret, nor to the future with apprehension. Let love be my guide, and my life a prayer.”**

Pastor: “Go in laughter, go in grace. Keep the Lord in your heart and a smile on your face.”

**Dismissal**

P**:** Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P: You are the body of Christ raised up for the world.

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**