

April 18, 2021 – Easter 3

Prelude

Introduction to the Day

The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The bread of life opens our eyes.

The word of life opens our ears.

The risen one shows us God's own brokenness,

and by those wounds we are healed.

Peace be with you **And also with you.**

COME LET US WORSHIP

Confession & Forgiveness

P: The One who calls us to repent, hears us. In trust that our Creator knows us through and through, let us open our hearts to the healing of God's forgiveness.

All: Good and gracious God, we are creatures of dust, ignorant of your revelation, misunderstanding your life, death, and resurrection among us, needing forgiveness. We repent of our failure to give as you have given to us. We beg your mercy for our fallen world. We seek your Word, that we may live with the faith of Jesus. Be our solace in this life and always. We ask this as your own children, holy and incomplete. Forgive us and lead us. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

P: In the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, your plea for absolution has been heard. God's promises are sure: your sins are forgiven. Peace be with you.

GATHERING HYMN - ELW #363 – “Come, You Faithful, Raise The Strain”

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.

KYRIE - Page 147

CANTICLE OF PRAISE, THIS IS THE FEAST – Page 149

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Acts 3:12-19

¹²[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 him 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.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 4

¹Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

²**“You mortals, how long will you dishonour my glory; how long will you love illusions and seek after lies?”**

³Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; the LORD will hear me when I call.

⁴**Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.**

⁵Offer the appointed sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

⁶**Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD.**

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

⁸**In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me rest secure.**

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-7

¹See 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION – Page 151

GOSPEL: Luke 24:36b-48

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] 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.

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.”

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON - “You Are Witness To These Things” v47

I have been keeping diary from a very young age. I still keep a daily journal for my devotions, my thoughts, my prayers. I still remember my first diary was a blue cover with a little lock to keep my meanderings to myself and no one else. I still like to keep some thoughts and writings private.

There are the writings by more renowned people of various vocations that have survived and been shared through the ages, The Diary of Anne Frank, Letters of world leaders such as Winston Churchill, or the journals by Albert Einstein, Marie Currie, Mark Twain, and Charles Darwin to name a few. For us Lutherans the writings and witness of Martin Luther.

The practice of keeping a diary or journal goes back hundreds of years, with the earliest known example coming from Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Journaling, or keeping a diary is the art of jotting down thoughts and daily musings has been found to be beneficial for everything from depression to organization and stress. Not surprisingly, this cathartic exercise is also good for your memory, allowing the recollection of events and ideas that might otherwise be lost.

I name just a handful of visionaries across a wide spectrum of professions who benefited from the practice of keeping a diary. More than a historical record, these pages offer rich insights into the personal lives of figures who in their own unique way helped to transform the world. Their writings are their testament to their witnessing of life and the world.

There's something of that same quality in today's readings. Peter speaking to the people outside the temple, John the Elder writing to a particular church, and Jesus speaking to his own beloved disciples following his resurrection. These are all conversations which were recorded by the biblical writers not only for the benefit of their contemporaries but also for readers in the future. Including us!

In our gospel reading Luke writes "You are witnesses of these things" (verse 48).

Notice, how, Jesus' speaks to the disciples, he does not say, "you *will* be witnesses or does he ask them, "please be witnesses." And he does not request, "consider being witnesses if you have time." No, he says to his disciples "you are witnesses of these things." And in turn "We are witnesses." As it turns out, witnessing is not voluntary, but a state of being. Of course, exactly to what things we witness requires some interpretive imagination. Maybe, "these things" in Jesus' statement is the real bodily resurrection of our Lord. Maybe, "these things" is the content of Jesus' own confession – the suffering of the Messiah, rising on the third day, the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Or perhaps "these things" is the entire experience of Jesus' ministry. After all, Jesus' whole life was witnessing to the "holistic character of God's salvation." His disciples

were there with him throughout his ministry. In case we need another reminder another clue of who we are, enter Peter, “to this we are witnesses” (Acts 3:15). Matt Skinner theologian at Luther seminary, writes about the people of God in Acts, “The empty tomb of Easter eventually propels the disciples to tell, through words and actions, what they have seen and what they know and what they experienced.” If an empty tomb doesn’t get you out there, it’s hard to imagine what it will take.

But that’s part of the problem. We seem to want to wait around for a more grandiose revelation of God’s activity before we are willing to acknowledge our witness to our God.

As if our God who defeated death, who overturns empires, whose salvation seeks to go to the ends of the earth isn’t enough.

What are we waiting for? What more do we need? What are we afraid of?

But more so, Jesus and Peter remind us that while we are busy expecting another miracle to come our way, our silence, our looking the other way, our inaction also testify — and in volumes. How often we forget that our words and deeds, or lack thereof, are indeed giving witness to how we imagine God to be — and we might want to stop and consider just what our words and actions are saying about God.

I suspect that for many of us, hearing that we are witnesses is not necessarily good news. Do we ever think about opportunities lost to share with someone what Christ has done in our lives. I am sure we can all remember a time or two when we have declined our identity as followers of Jesus.

We might feel that our testimony of Christ presence and activity in our lives is not worthy of sharing or even more its none of anyone else’s business. We might tell stories of someone else’s witness to others. We might think how often we have determined that our witness wouldn’t make a difference anyway, so why bother?

But, in doing so, we deny the truth of who we are and who Jesus needs us to be. We give up telling the truth of what we believe about God that not enough people get to hear or experience. So, we forgot the fact that we are never NOT giving witness to God.

I know it is a challenge to accept our witness to Christ. But I see our witness in how we live our lives. Our words and our actions are our witness, our testimony of our faith and our trust in God.

Here's the catch, .

“We are witnesses” is not only who we are but also then how others see God to be.

“We are witnesses”, gives witness to our selves, our faith, our belief. And that is the hardest truth to hear — that perhaps we don't believe in the identity God has given us,

Or we don't believe God needs it, or don't believe others will see it, or even don't believe that it actually matters. All the while, denying God's expanded horizons and God's relentless attempts to expand our imaginations.

“We are witnesses” does not depend on our acceptance or agreement or approval.

“We are witnesses” does not depend on our readiness or recognition or responsiveness.

“We are witnesses” just is.

Left to our own devices, we would make up every excuse imaginable to give away such responsibility. We would convince ourselves that more qualifications could more certainly justify speaking and witnessing to Christ. We find ways to live out our faith without acknowledging what we know and what others are looking for in this thirsting hungry world.

And there lies the good news because witnessing is not optional. It's not a tap you can turn on and off when it comes to living our faith. It is not something you can decide to do one day and then resolve to take the next day off. It is constant. It's a way of life. It's who you are.

Collectively our witness helps us celebrate the goodness of God, to the many good things he does for us. Peace be with you! *Pastor Leena Jensen*

HYMN OF THE DAY – ELW #383 – “Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the church embodies repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, like a master artist you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it is in need of restoration (*local concerns for creation may be named*). Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and sustainable home. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all, the nations hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Many call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the peace of Christ and give your lovingkindness to national, state, and local leaders of people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness; *especially*, Florence, Jason, Richard, Heather, Sheila, Vince, Robert, Dorian. Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving Parent, you have given us such love that we should be called the children of God. Reveal yourself to us so that we in this community of faith will become more and more like you in our mutual love and bold witness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all times and ages, those who have died in you now see you as you are. We thank you for their lives among us. Assure us of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As Jesus gave himself fully for us and then appeared to the disciples bringing peace, so let us now bring wholeness and healing to others through our tithes and gifts.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us Pray

God of Love, help us remember that Christ has no body now on earth but ours,

No hands but ours, no feet but ours.

Ours are the eyes to see the needs of the world.

Ours are the hands to bless the people we meet.

Ours are the feet to do good in Christ's name.

Bless, O God, the work of our hands and these offerings

That they may be Christ's work in the world. Amen

Special Music as Table is Prepared

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING – Page 152

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.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG - "Lamb of God" Page 154

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

Go now to love, even when love involves risk

Go now to care, even when caring is hard

Go out to love, in truth and in action.

By this we are known as children of God.

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

Amen

SENDING HYMN – ELW #392 – "Alleluia! Sing To Jesus"

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister may send the assembly into mission.

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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News and Announcements:

Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special

Prayers: Florence Felske, Jason Godin, Richard Hubert, Heather Miller, Sheila Purdy, Vince Rabishaw, Robert Schoof, Dorian Verch.

GUIDING LIGHT DEADLINE

Reminder that this Friday, April 23rd is the deadline for the May issue of the Guiding Light. Please have all submissions in to Jean at the office by this date. Thank you!

SERVICE BROADCAST ON COGECO

Cogeco Community Channel is now broadcasting Zion's services at 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday mornings a week later.

COVID VACCINE

Have you made your appointment to have your covid vaccine? If not we are willing to help. Just call Susan Dupuis. 343-369-2057.... Jan Scheidt 519-752-9826...Ellen Vandersleen... 613-732-7649, and we will help

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation classes have been postponed until after the stay at home is lifted.

UPDATES FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

Please remember that Pastor Leena is available to all for pastoral care during the next few months. This support may look different than we are accustomed to as she will be following all of the covid restrictions. She can be contacted at 613-631-1082

HELP FOR ONE OF ZION'S FAMILIES

It is with a caring and prayerful heart that the Social Ministry Committee is appealing to Zion's church family and friends to assist one of our young families.

Jason and Karen Godin, with their children Haley and Lucas are active members here at Zion. Jason is the son-in-law of Cheryl Sack and brother-in-law of Blaine Sack. Jason works as a Commissionaire Barrack Warden at Garrison Petawawa as well as a volunteer firefighter for Petawawa.

Jason recently received a Glioblastoma brain cancer diagnosis - the same type of cancer that Gord Downie battled. Jason will be needing radiation and chemotherapy treatment for this aggressive, incurable type of cancer. With the long road ahead; they could use some assistance as Jason's work benefits will not be enough to cover the many expenses that will be incurred

