

## ***THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER***

*We begin in a period of silence and semi-darkness, continuing to reflect on the grief and despair in which we have waited. Then, a voice:*

Is Jesus there?  
**He is not here, He has been raised!**

*The figure of Christ is unveiled, the Paschal candle is lit, and the worship area is illuminated.*

Christ is Risen!  
**Christ is Risen Indeed!**

‡ HYMN – *Jesus Christ is Risen Today* (LBW 151)

‡ OPENING

We gather this morning as we live:  
In the name of God our Creator,  
the risen and living Christ,  
The sustaining and empowering Spirit.

**Amen.**

We welcome and celebrate God's new day.

**Everywhere we look we see new life.**

In seeds and buds, in smiles and touch, we know God's life-giving presence.

**Death can never be the last word.**

For God has raised Jesus from the dead, and Christ lives among us today.

**As we have died to chaos and fear,  
we now rise into hope, faith, and love.**

‡ HYMN – *Unclouded Day* (BC 316)

‡ A PSALM OF PRAISE (Psalm 118)

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

**God's steadfast love endures forever.**

Let us now proclaim:

**God's steadfast love endures forever.**

The Lord is our strength and our might.

The Lord has become our salvation.

The tents of the righteous resound with joyous songs of deliverance;

**The hand of the Lord is triumphant,**

**The hand of the Lord is exalted,**

**The land of the Lord is triumphant.**

We shall not die, but live.

**We shall proclaim the works of the Lord.**

Open the gates of righteousness,

**That we may enter them and praise the Lord.**

This is the gate of the Lord,

**The righteous shall enter through it.**

We praise you that you have answered us,

**And have become our deliverance.**

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

**This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes.**

This is the day that the Lord has made,

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

✠ HYMN OF PRAISE – *The Victory Dance* (BC 263)

✠ PRAYER OF THE DAY

God be with you,

**And also with you.**

Let us pray ...

**Amen.**

✠ THE WORD OF GOD

Jeremiah 31:1-9

Colossians 3:1-4

[ BC 479 *Alleluia!* ]

John 20:1-18

[ BC 479 *Alleluia!* ]

✠ HOMILY

✠ HYMN – *Now The Green Blade Rises*, (LBW 148)

✠ PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

We bring our thanksgivings and our intercessions before God and each other.

...

All our prayers, spoken and unspoken, we lift up to God,

Trusting and believing that God hears and answers.

**Lord, hear our prayers. Amen.**

✠ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God:

**who works in the hidden stillness of every dawn,**

**who beckons us to visit the tomb of our fears**

**so we can discover the birth of hope,**

**who sends new life in fragrant flowers and good friends,**

**and bright angels with the message of joy and hope.**

We believe in Jesus, the risen Christ:

**who meets us on every path,**

**who greets us as friends, names and calms our fears,**

**who bids us walk and talk as children of the Light,**

**who always goes before us into our Galilee.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit:

**who gathers us into a new community,  
who works through the weak and the powerless,  
the hurting and the hopeful,  
who prompts our halting prayers,  
kindles our deepest longings,  
and joins in our praise.**

We believe we are called to be Easter people:

**challenging despair with glowing hope,  
acting peacefully in the midst of painful Good Fridays,  
living joyfully even in the midst of harsh realities.**

We believe in the church – the body of Christ:

**the handholding, hearty singing, and  
passionate fellowship of seekers and finders.  
This we Believe!**

‡ GREETING OF PEACE

Let us greet each other in the peace of the risen Lord.

‡ OFFERTORY HYMN – *I Am the Bread of Life* (song sheet, WOV 702)

‡ OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us thank God for the gifts we have received.

**Wonderful, amazing God,  
We thank you that you have raised Jesus from the dead,  
bringing us the promise of abundant life.  
Awaken us to new opportunities to love and serve you.  
Use us, our lives, and our gifts, to your glory.  
In the name of the risen Lord, Amen.**

‡ **THE EUCHARIST** ‡

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to the God who made us and all creation.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Creator God, we acknowledge your greatness.

All your actions show your wisdom and love.

You formed us and put us in the world to serve you and others.

On this day we overflow with thanks and praise, O God,

for this is the day you have made,

the day that fills us with fear and great joy.

On this day you sent your angels to roll back the stone

and you raised Jesus, who had been crucified, from the dead,

Never again need we search for Jesus

in the places of dead memories and buried dreams,

for he has been raised and goes forever ahead of us

to open the gates of justice,  
preaching peace and the forgiveness of sins.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,  
so that in this communion we may know the unity we share in the body of Christ,  
living as your sign of peace and hope for all people.  
Join now our prayers with those of your servants of every time and place,  
as we sing your praise:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord,  
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest.**

As Jesus sat at table with those he loved, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them,  
saying: *"This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me."*

In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, blessed it and gave it to his disciples,  
saying: *"Take this and drink, this cup is God's new covenant sealed with my blood shed for you  
and all people. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me."*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

As we break bread we come together in the risen body of Christ.  
As we pour wine we come together in the new life Christ gives.

**By eating this bread and drinking this cup,  
we proclaim Christ's death,  
celebrate Christ's resurrection,  
and await Christ's coming again.**

✠ COMMUNION

✠ BLESSING

**We give you thanks, O God,  
that you have refreshed us at your table,  
touched our deepest needs,  
and called us to share in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

✠ CLOSING

Burst free from the cocoons which enslave you  
**Fly free as the butterfly. Shine bright as the rainbow.**  
Christ has risen!  
**Christ has risen indeed!**  
Go in peace to live and serve in the kingdom of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

✠ CLOSING HYMN – *Here I Am Lord* – BC 115