

Sunrise - Resurrection of Our Lord

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



1911 Zion Church Road | Hickory, North Carolina | office 828.294.2532 | www.zionhickory.org
We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

A SERVICE FOR SUNRISE ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

Congregational participation in bold font.

We gather at the southern end of Zion's cemetery (near the cross).

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

NOT QUITE DAWN

THOMAS

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark. I'm lying here with my arms crossed like I usually do. I don't know why that's my physical stance, even when I am asleep. 'Always the skeptic,' they tell me. Always standing at the back, observing and analyzing. I could see this whole thing coming - over the last months, as we started traveling to Jerusalem. There were little signs that things were going to change, that something big was going to happen. Everyone was tenser. We watched our backs - even if we wouldn't admit it. Jesus was getting more resistance and often the crowd took it out on us disciples. I'm sure there were spies around, and officials and religious bigwigs hiding in the shadows. And even Jesus was talking weird, mumbling things about suffering and betrayals and denials. I just wanted some clarity, some evidence, some open discussion, but who listens to me. And now the whole dream has collapsed and we are left to pick up the pieces.

PETER

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark. I can't sleep. I just keep waiting; waiting for that sound that inevitably comes with the first hint of light. It is a sound that will haunt me for the rest of my days – each and every day. The rooster, the cock crowing – announcing to all that I failed, that I couldn't keep it together, that I even denied knowing him. I abandoned Jesus. I feel so guilty. Actually, it is more than guilt – it is shame. I'm ashamed to show my face to my friends, to the other disciples as we try to make sense out of what makes no sense. I walk around with my eyes pointed to the ground. I can't even make eye contact. Jesus had called me, "Peter the Rock." Ha! Maybe he should have called me a pebble or something.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark. I still can't believe he is gone. I loved him so much. I don't think I have ever had anyone else give me as much trust and confidence, love and support as Jesus did. He called me "the Beloved Disciple." And now he is gone. Even when he was hanging on the cross, I couldn't believe it was happening, that Jesus would die - until Jesus looked at me, standing beside his own mother, and said to Mary, "Woman, here is your son." And then to me "Here is your mother." Wow! What a calling. I will love and take care of her for the rest of my life! Jesus often talked about his own baptism, when a voice from heaven, said "You are my Son, the Beloved." Now I am part of that family, part of that calling. I am Beloved.

MARY MAGDALENE

It is early morning – not quite dawn yet. The sun has not yet risen. It is still dark. I couldn't sleep all night. To be truthful, I have been crying off and on since Friday. I just can't get that scene out of my head. My Jesus, suffering and dying on the cross. Jesus – he was so full of grace and forgiveness – you could see it, know it, every time you saw his face; every time he looked you in the eyes and spoke your name. And to see his face slowly lose its color and then its life. I will never forget that image. It was like I was transfixed. I couldn't move. I think I was the last one to finally leave. All the men had left long before. And now I have to go to the tomb – for him, to be with him. Somehow I must protect him, at least protect his body, bring perfumes, show him honor. I need to be the first one to get there before the sun comes up again!

GOING TO THE TOMB - PROCESSIONAL (*sung 'a cappella' three times*)

We walk along the cemetery road toward the Parish Center.

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

AT THE TOMB

Whom do you seek?

We are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified on Friday.

They have taken away our Lord, and we do not know where they have laid him.

Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here, for he has risen. Go and tell his disciples.

DAWN

Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End,
the Alpha and the Omega.

All time belongs to Christ and all the ages;

to Christ be glory and power through every age and forever. Amen.

Through his holy and glorious wounds

may Christ the Lord guard us and preserve us. Amen.

A reading from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, the 6th chapter [3-11].

[Saint Paul writes] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also

live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

We pray. O God, you are like a refiner's fire, and your Spirit kindles the hearts of your faithful people. Bless this flame and those who keep this Easter celebration so that, burning with desire for life with you, they may be found fit to take part in that festival of Light which has no ending, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*As the Paschal Candle is lit, each person in the assembly repeatedly whispers "He is risen!"
We stop when the leader continues below.*

RESURRECTION - THE LIGHT BURSTS FORTH

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Almighty God, pour out your abundant blessing on this lighted candle, so that all who share in your holy mysteries may be filled with your grace and spiritual blessings. Once we were in darkness, but since we have become the Lord's people, we are in the light. Help us to live as people who belong to the light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Paschal Candle is raised high. We proclaim the Resurrection.



We walk through the parking lot, under the portico, up the ramp, and enter the darkened sanctuary through the main inner doors, and remain standing in the aisles. When the Paschal Candle is lifted high, we proclaim the Resurrection.



We move to our desired seats but remain standing. Once everyone is in their places, the Paschal Candle is lifted high, and we proclaim the Resurrection a third time.



We sit. The Paschal Candle is placed in its holder.

A reading from the Book of Job, the 19th chapter.

O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

The word of the Lord! **Thanks be to God!**

PSALM 103

Spoken responsively.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—**

who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,

**who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,**
who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

**The Lord works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**

He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.

**The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

**He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;

**as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.**

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

**For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.**

As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;

**for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.**

...continued...

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,
**to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments.**

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.

**Bless the Lord, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word.**

Bless the Lord, all his hosts,
his ministers that do his will.

**Bless the Lord, all his works,
in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.**

READING

I CORINTHIANS 15:12-14,20-22,53-57

A reading from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, the 15th chapter.

[Saint Paul writes] Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord! **Thanks be to God!**

We rise in body and spirit as we are able.

READING

JOHN 20:1-10

A reading from the Gospel according to Saint John, the 20th chapter.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus'

head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

We proclaim the good news three times, getting louder each time.
Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN

'MORNING HAS BROKEN'

ELW 556



1 Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing;
 2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sun - lit from heav - en,
 3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing,



black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird.
 like the first dew - fall on the first grass.
 born of the one light E - den saw play!



Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
 Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
 Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - 'ry morn - ing,



Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
 sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.
 God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

We sit.

MORNING HAS BROKEN - I HAVE SEEN THE LORD

MARY MAGDALENE

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord! Can you believe it? I almost missed him. It was like I couldn't see straight. First I had come to the tomb and the stone was gone. Panic! The body had been stolen. I must have come too late! I failed him. I ran and told Peter and the Beloved Disciple. My body was shaking. My eyes kept tearing up. I finally broke down outside the tomb. I just wanted to find the body! And then, and then! Who I thought was the gardener, speaking to me, asking questions... It was my name. He spoke my name. "Mary." And I knew! Right in that instant – I knew! It was Jesus. I saw my Lord. He told me not to hold on to him, and now I don't need to. I feel so free. I can let him go because I saw him. I am going to tell everyone I know!

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord! It was Mary Magdalene who woke Peter and I, each drifting on and off before dawn. She was almost in hysterics. We just ran, we didn't know why or what to expect. It was like a foot race – and I had the edge. I got there first...I stopped suddenly at the edge of the tomb, half off balance, not daring to go in, just seeing the linen wrappings scattered on the ground. I somehow knew that if I took another step, if I entered further, my whole life was about to change. My mind flashed ahead to everything that could have happened – but there was something just beyond what my mind could fathom, something bigger and more amazing, and I couldn't quite grasp, it was beyond reach unless I took that next step. Peter moved first. He always did. And then I took that step and even the cloth from Jesus' head was neatly rolled up. The world had changed. I just knew it. Deep down I knew he was alive. I saw and believed.

PETER

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord! I have seen him with my own eyes. Yes, these eyes. I am looking and seeing again! I can look you in the eye! It all happened so quickly, so fast! Mary just ran in, talking nonsense, but somehow drawing us, urging us back to the tomb. And it was empty – the linens and cloths just lying there. A part of me knew already then that he was alive, that something new and amazing and world-shattering had just happened. The world would never be the same. And then we saw him at the house – he just appeared, like nothing had happened – "Peace be with you." "Receive the Holy Spirit." We are just trying to pick our jaws off the ground and he is already sending us out to the world. I would see him again. I knew he wasn't done with me yet. By the beach. He took me aside and asked three times "Do you love me?" "Of course I do," I blurted. By the third time, I knew that the rooster's crow would never bother me again.

THOMAS

Morning has broken. I have seen the Lord! I didn't think I would ever utter those words. Even when the rumors started. The women were crazy in their delusions. The others, also said they saw him, even saw his pierced side and hands. All nonsense, illusions, daydreams – rising out of our collective grief. Let me touch the nail marks and then we'll talk. This went on for a week – a long week where I dared not entertain the possibility even in the far recesses of my mind ... And then he was right in front of me. He just appeared through closed doors. "Peace be with you." And he dared me to put my fingers on his hands and side. No more doubting! I stood there open-mouthed. I didn't even move a finger – his voice was proof enough. All I said, all I could say, was "My Lord and my God."

PRAYER

We pray. Eternal giver of life and light, **this holy night has ended and now shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your church with the Spirit given us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth and may shine as a light in the world, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

We rise in body and spirit as we are able.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us, saying: **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.**

BLESSING

God, the Author of life, Christ, the living Cornerstone,
and the life-giving Spirit of adoption,
✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give thanks to the



ris-en Lord. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give praise to his Name.

Verses



1. Je - sus is Lord of all the earth.
2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth:
3. We have been cru - ci - fied with Christ.
4. God has pro - claimed his gra - cious gift:
5. Come, let us praise the liv - ing God,



He is the King of cre - a - tion.
 Je - sus has died and has ris - en.
 Now we shall live for ev - er.
 Life e - ter - nal for all who be - lieve.
 Joy - ful - ly sing to our Sav - ior.

TABLE BLESSING

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus, clothed in the splendor of your Resurrection. You accepted death on the cross for our sake, and the power of God raised you up on the third day. Grant us the grace to celebrate this Easter festival with the new bread of sincerity and truth. Bless our Easter breakfast as you once blessed the meal with your disciples, and be forever present as a guest at our tables until we join you in heaven. **Amen.**

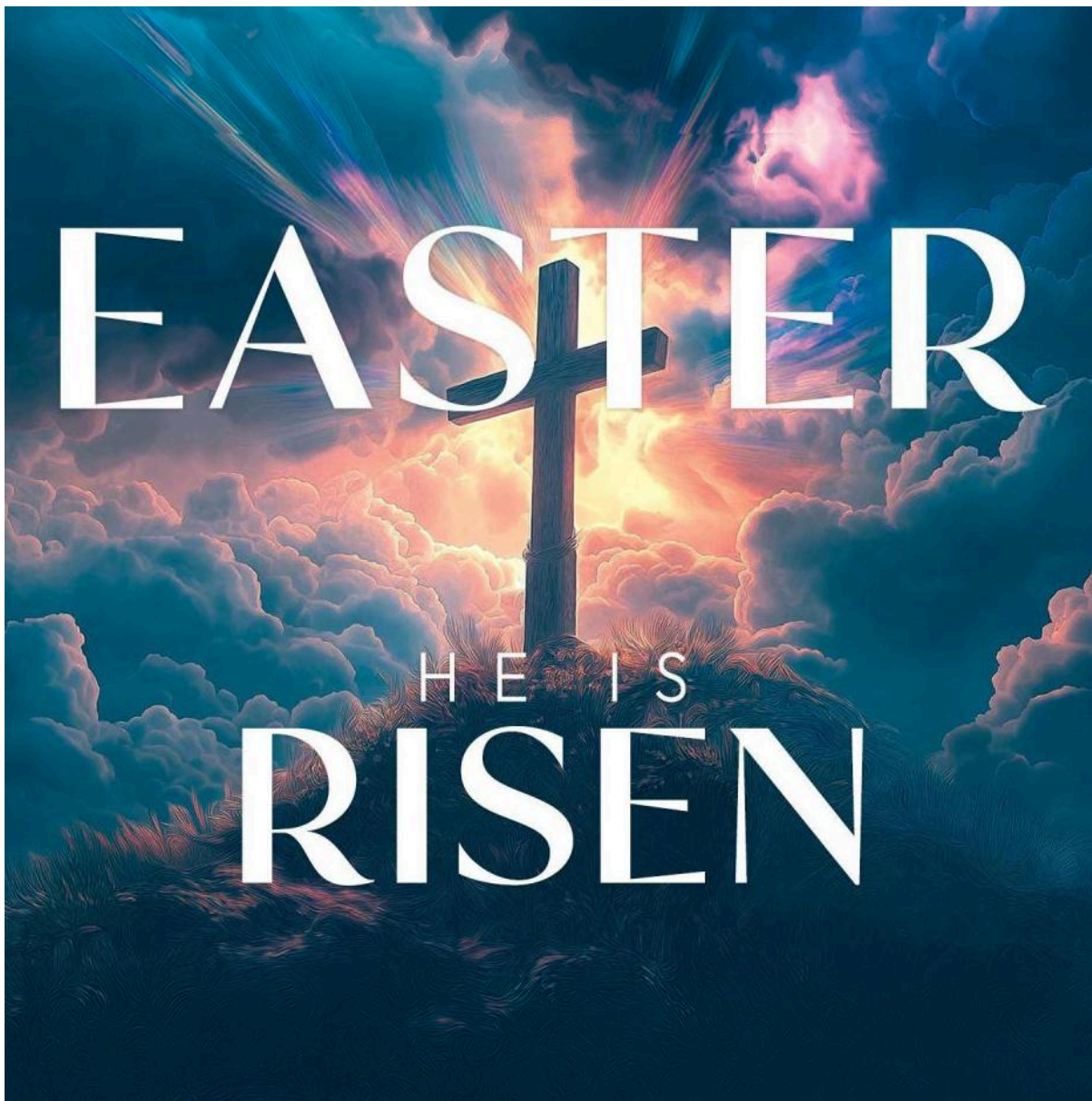
DISMISSAL AND POSTLUDE

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Tell everyone what God has done!

We will! Thanks be to God!



This worship service utilizes resources created by Mark Diller Harder of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, who posted it to the From Our Churches archive of the Resource Centre of Mennonite Church Canada, which grants permission to reproduce and distribute the content. A portion of "Whom do you seek? A sunrise communion service for a small congregation" by Sophie Mathonnet-Vandervell, Stephen Mathonnet-Vandervell in Reformed Worship 30 © December 1993 Worship Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church. Used by permission. The Table Blessing is from p. 23ff of Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette's Blessings of the Table: Mealtimes Prayers Throughout the Year (© 2003, Ligonri/Triumph). Liturgical portions and music are offered in this service from Sundays and Seasons.com. © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual Licenses #14946-LIT and #SAS103445. Other copyrighted hymn portions under permission of OneLicense.net A-727013 or CCLI License #2436432. Scripture readings from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**PLEASE LEAVE THIS SERVICE GUIDE IN THE SANCTUARY
TO BE COLLECTED FOR RE-USE IN COMING YEARS.
THANK YOU.**