

A warm welcome and a Happy Easter to all! Easter is the holiday that celebrates and commemorates the central event of the Christian faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his death. Easter is the oldest Christian holiday and the most important day of the church year. In both the Catholic and Orthodox churches the entire liturgical year of worship are arranged around Easter. Although we know the holiday as Easter, Non-Anglo-Saxon languages follow the Greek word used by the early Christians: Pascha, from the Hebrew Pesach (Passover). Jesus is often referred to as the Paschal Lamb. Although Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ every Sunday, at some point in the first two centuries it became customary to have a special celebration of the resurrection on one day each year. This day is different for Catholics and Orthodox Christians, but the meaning is the same: This day we celebrate the great gifts of Easter -new life, unexpected joy and everlasting hope. This day we celebrate the mystery of Easter—the tomb had been sealed but Christ is risen!

The table at the front is decorated with symbols of the Resurrection of Jesus.

A White Cloth – symbolic of the shroud the body of Jesus had been wrapped in and then was found empty.

Fragrant Oil – early on Easter day some women came to prepare Jesus' body for a proper burial after his crucifixion.

A Stone – The stone which sealed the tomb had been rolled away.

Bread – On the first day of Easter, Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus. They recognized him when he broke bread with them.

A Cup – The cup represents the life of Christ poured out for us and the promise of God's unconditional love.

A Cross – A symbol of great power and a reminder of Jesus' suffering and death. This cross is now empty and Jesus has landed on the side of Life.

Pitcher of Water – reminds us of the water of baptism and the Spirit led life we share united in Jesus' own baptism.

A Candle – This sacred story, embodied in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is a light to the world. Like the candle, we also are meant to shine.

We Gather As God's People

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call To Worship *(Based on Psalm 118:14-20, 24)*

God is my strength and my song; God has become my salvation.

There are shouts of joy and hope in the homes of the righteous:

"The right hand of God does mighty things, the right hand of God raises up!"

I shall not die, but I shall live, and remember what God has done.

Open to me the gates of Life, that I may enter and give thanks to God.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad.

*More Voices 122

This is the day that God has made; We will rejoice and be glad!

This is the day that God has made; We will rejoice and be glad!

Singing hallelu, singing hallelu, singing hallelu!

We will rejoice and be glad!

Opening Prayer

Lighting of the Christ Candle *(adapted from John 1)*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it

Jesus is the Light of the World,

bringing a light that shines in us and for us,

illuminating the way of abundant Life.

We light candle this knowing that Christ is risen!

*VU 155

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

We Listen For God's Word

Scripture Reading: The Testimony of Peter Acts 10:34-43 *John Challinor*

For The Child In All Of Us

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 *Hélène Ellison*

Choir: Worthy is the Lamb *Pepper Choplin*

Scripture: Mark 16:1-8 *Myra Hudspeth*

Word For Today: "Looking For Aliveness"

Choir: The Tomb Stands Open Wide *Lloyd Larson*

We Respond In Faith

Invitation to the Offering

We of St. Paul's are committed to the work of the Church. Weekly offerings, pre-authorized remittance (PAR), sharing of our time and talents and reaching out to friend and stranger are but some of the ways that we give.

"God loves it when the giver delights in the giving." 2 Corinthians 9:7

Presentation Of Our Offerings

***Offertory Response VU 226 v.1 & 4**

**For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth, over and around us lies.
Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For each perfect gift sublime to humankind so freely given,
graces human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

Easter Prayers of Thanksgiving and Hope and The Lord's Prayer (VU 914)

We Go In God's Name

*VU 232 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

***Words of Sending Forth**

Christ is risen, God has spoken, the Spirit declares:

When it takes hold, resurrection doesn't let go.

Death no longer has the last word.

**Resurrection shakes the darkness from the light
and it wrestles death from all that is dying.**

**As a resurrection people let us go out into the world
and seek the Life that lives again for the love of all.**

***Words of Blessing**

***Choral Response**

Postlude