

THE AUSTRALIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (AELC)
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHNS AUBIGNY,
ST PAULS GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY

5 April 2026
Easter Sunday

A warm welcome to all those who are worshipping with us today!

Eyewitnesses of Jesus hear His preaching, see His miracles, grieve His death, and confess His resurrection! We are heirs of this litany—an Easter people mysteriously wrapped up tightly in the forgiveness of Jesus. We have died and been raised in Christ! Through Word and Sacrament, we are entwined with Jesus, continually receiving His miracles, grieving His death, and confessing His resurrection. Jesus welcomes sinners, calms our fears, and compels our witness that others may see Him.

In preparation of worship, please prepare by praying one of the prayers found on page 308 in your LSB hymnbook

Hymns (LSB): 457 467 475 560 710 484

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. [Christ Jesus] abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Alleluia.

2 Timothy 1:10b

Stand

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

Sit

Hymn457

Stand

Confession of Sins and Absolution

LSB 184-185

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto

God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

[Hebrews 10:22]

Kneel/Sit

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 124:8

P I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,

C and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Stand

Service of the Word

Introit & Glory to the Father

Psalm 16

¹Preserve me, O God,

for in you I take refuge.

²I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;

I have no good apart from you."

³As for the saints in the land,

they are the excellent ones,

in whom is all my delight.

⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;

their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out

or take their names on my lips.

⁵The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;

you hold my lot.

⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;

in the night also my heart instructs me.

⁸I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.

¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The Gradual

The pastor/reader speaks the gradual, and the congregation responds:

Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

P Christ has risen from the dead.

[God the Father] has crowned him with glory and honour.

He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
he has put all things under his feet.

The Lord Have Mercy (Kyrie)

Mark 10:47

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Gloria in Excelsis

P Glory be to God on high

*Luke 2:14; John 1:29
LSB SETTING 4, 204*



C 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;
 2 To You, O sole-be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;
 3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je - sus' birth!
 O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.
 For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor - shiped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—
 Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,
 You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n-ly King.
 Where You in pow'r are seat-ed At God's right hand on high—
 In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22



C And with your spir - it.

P Let us pray:

The Collect

Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Sit

First Reading

Acts 10:34–43

³⁴Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1–4

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

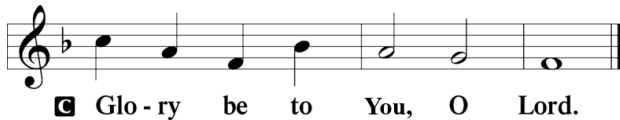
Alleluia



■ Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

P / R The Holy Gospel according to **Matthew 28:1-10**



Matthew 28:1–10

¹Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Christian: the ancient text reads "catholic," meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of Christian doctrine.

Sit

Hymn 467

Sermon (*the congregation stands to hear the text and then sits*)

THE LORD IS RISEN, HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Sermon for Easter Sunday

Matthew 28:1-10

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is taken from Matthew 28:1-10, read before.
Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.
Dear friends in Christ,

Joy fills our hearts as we hear on Easter morning the familiar tidings of our Lord's resurrection and picture to ourselves the glorious scenes enacted on that morn. Happy is he who today rejoices in a risen Lord, a living Saviour, but unhappy is he to whom the message of the angel, "**He has risen,**" is either plain untruth or just a beautiful illusion! Doubly unhappy is he who would celebrate Easter without faith in the resurrection!

With God's help, this morning, let us meditate on the glad Easter message that the Lord is risen, He is risen indeed!

Let us begin by acknowledging first of all that these words state a fact which is *certain*.

We confess the truth of Christ's resurrection in the Creeds, believing in the actual, physical, bodily resurrection of Christ. We maintain, moreover, that our Lord's resurrection is an *established, incontrovertible fact*.

Now, of course, there are those who will deny the resurrection. They will argue that in all their experience, no man has ever risen from the dead, and that it is impossible for a person who has really died to come back to life. But such arguments should not disturb us. We, too, could not have believed it if we had not been given the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul writes how "*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Cor. 2:14). This Spirit-given wisdom, including the faith to believe in the resurrection, makes no sense to a man of the world. Man, as he is by nature—physical, material, concerned about things of this world—cannot understand God's ways because natural man is unspiritual. The Spirit of God is not in him to enable him to understand. The contrast between the person who has the Spirit and the person who does not have Him in his heart is absolute. It's the difference between day and night, between life and death. But as Paul goes on to say, those with the Spirit have "*the mind of Christ*" (v. 16). When, in His divine wisdom, God the Father ordained that His Son should die and rise again, we believe.

Equally shallow is the argument that the witnesses of the resurrection contradict one another and, therefore, cannot have been divinely inspired but are unreliable.

While we admit there are differences among the four evangelists in their accounts of the resurrection, *this proves nothing against their reliability*, and none of them contradicts each other. On the contrary, these very differences prove the *sincerity* of the apostles and corroborate their claim of writing by divine inspiration; for the Holy Spirit led each one to write what *he had seen and heard*, and the four accounts supplement each other and give a fuller picture of the entire proceedings of that morning.

Instead of scrutinising every objection made against the fact of Christ's resurrection, let us directly address the core issue. What are the facts, as reported by the holy witnesses? Jesus had truly died — the spear thrust into His side had settled that — and He was laid to rest as the Jews customarily buried their dead. Pilate had given in to the Jews' plea, who remembered Christ's prophecy that He would rise again, and had set a watch of Roman soldiers at the tomb, secured with the imperial seal. But, as we know, this was all in vain. Matthew tells us, **“There was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”** The angel then said to the women, **“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay.”** The tomb was empty! And it wasn't long before they soon saw, heard, and touched the risen Lord.

Later, the apostles and many other disciples saw the Lord and spoke with Him—not once, but many times. Paul writes how the risen Lord *“appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, ⁷ Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me”* (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

Moreover, it is evident that they truly believed in the resurrection because they boldly proclaimed it — even under the threat of death — to Jews and Gentiles as the central truth of the Gospel of Christ, and the Church grew, spread, and continues to declare its faith in the risen Saviour today.

Secondly, the Lord is risen indeed - this is also an *essential fact*.

Our religion, our faith, isn't something we have made up. It's not a figment of our imagination. We shouldn't see it just as one of life's decorations or as a rule we set to improve and complete our lives. If it were only that, then Christ's resurrection and Christ Himself might be overlooked. But our religion is so much more. On one side, there's the huge truth of man's sin, which is visible everywhere: in our conscience, in the Word of God, in the pain, sorrow, and death that have marred God's world for thousands of years.

There is, on the other hand, the righteous and holy God, the Giver of the Law, who has affixed to the Law His threat and curse against all who do not keep it. To bridge that gulf; to show to sinners the way of escape from the judgment threatening all transgressors; to restore sinful man to God's grace and favour; to lead the sinner back to God, to life, to heaven: this is the real purpose, the great object, of our Christian religion. We know the way to salvation taught by the Gospel of Christ who is the incarnate Son of God and who brought about a reconciliation when He, the Saviour of mankind, obediently fulfilled God's Law in perfect righteousness and received in His own person the punishment which the accumulated guilt of man had deserved.

From this, we see that the resurrection of Christ is vital to our faith and salvation. Everything hinges on our ability to say, "*The Lord is risen indeed.*" God took on the form of a servant; He became human. As a man, as a true Substitute for the human race, He lived, suffered, and died. Therefore, it was necessary for Him to rise again to complete and prove our salvation. It is true that Christ rose from the dead because He promised to do so; it is equally true that He promised to rise because it was necessary. To show that He not only took on our sins but also set us free from them; that He not only bore God's wrath but also extinguished it, winning love and grace for us; that He not only suffered our punishment but fully satisfied God's justice; that He not only died our death but secured life and eternal happiness for us; that He not only offered Himself as a ransom and sacrifice for our sins but that God accepted it and pardoned the sinners: for that to happen, ***it was necessary that He should not only descend into the grave laden with our sins but also rise again, free from sin, as the Conqueror of all our enemies, crowned with honour and glory, and the firstfruits of those who sleep.*** This was necessary, for, as St. Paul says, "*If Christ be not raised... your faith is in vain... you are still in your sins.*"

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (1 Cor. 15:13-19 paraphrased). But now Christ is risen from the dead! The Lord is risen indeed! God be praised that we are confident in this vital fact, giving us a firm foundation for our belief and hope!

And this leads us to our final thought. The Lord is risen indeed: this is also a *joyful fact*.

We could spend hours this morning dwelling on this fact, but let’s not. Instead, we may briefly indicate, guided by certain Scripture texts, the springs of pure, heavenly joy which the truth that the Lord is risen opens to every believing Christian.

The first is from our text: **“He has risen, as He said.”**

The resurrection of Christ is proof of His claims, of His doctrine, of His Gospel; it proves that He is God’s Son, our Saviour, and that *“all the promises of God find their Yes in Him”* (1 Cor. 1:20).

Again, the Apostle Paul writes, *“Christ was delivered for our trespasses, and was raised again for our justification”* (Rom. 4:25). These words underscore the glorious importance of Christ’s resurrection in the eyes of the Father. Christ’s resurrection was the solemn justification of a world of sinners, a general pardon extended to all; and hence it leads to the joyful conviction that in God’s judgment our sins were forgiven long ago, and that faith may at any time take this forgiveness and rest upon it.

Then there is the word of the risen Lord Himself: *“I am with you always, to the end of the world”* (Matt. 28:20).

The risen Lord is with us as He was with His disciples, keeping His Church of believers as the apple of His eye, attending His people with His grace, His protection, His blessing, and His faithfulness.

Another word from the Lord is *“Because I live, you also will live”* (John 14:19).

Of the heavenly, transfigured life that is His, we are to be partakers by faith and renewal of heart, until He will raise us on the Last Day, receive us into the mansions which He has prepared for us, and change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body, so that soul and body may joy in His presence eternally. What pure, holy joy, then, if we can exclaim with Job in his tribulation, *“I know that my Redeemer lives!”* (19:25).

Lastly, Paul draws a practical lesson from the resurrection of Christ, which the Christian can hear only with joy: “*Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4).

A Saviour who died and rose for us, who is with us always, who renews our life and fashions it like unto His, who prepares a place for us above and will raise us to glory, what a mighty power He is for remodelling our lives! His open grave teaches us to rise from sin; His resurrection gives us power to conquer sin and temptation; His living presence fills us with devotion and zeal in His cause.

Let us rise, then, triumphant over sin and sorrow in the joy that comes with the realisation that in Christ’s resurrection there is fullness of salvation! Let this day and every succeeding day be to you a day of spiritual uprising! So the end of the resurrection will be accomplished in us: our faith will be renewed from day to day, our hope will become more firmly grounded, and our love will be quickened by our living Saviour. Let us keep the feast, then, with rejoicing and thanksgiving! The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed. Thanks be to God, therefore, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn & Offering *(the Offering may be received during or after the singing of the hymn)*

Hymn 475

Stand

Offertory

LSB 192

Psalm 51:10-12



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Your pres - ence, and take not Your Ho - ly Spir - it

from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Your sal - va -
 tion, and up - hold me with Your free spir-it. A - men.

Prayer of the Church for Easter

[1 Timothy 2:1-4]

Lord God, on this glorious day, fill Your people with a holy fear at the resurrection of Your Son, that we would tremble no longer before the grave but rejoice and live in the truth of Your power to save.

Heavenly Father, as You once chose apostles to proclaim the resurrection, so open the mouths of Your pastors and people to declare His praises to all who will hear.

O Lord, lead Your people in Your steadfast love, and guide them in strength to Your holy abode. Sanctify our homes. Be the companion of those who live alone. Make our households places where Your wisdom and grace are found.

Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power. Grant that all in authority would govern according to Your will, maintaining order and curbing evil, that we may live in peace.

Merciful God, have mercy on the sick and those in any need. Let the dawning light of the new creation in Christ sustain them in faith. In accord with Your will, grant them renewed health — a foretaste of their eternal healing in Him.

Almighty God, give us joy in Your Son's great victory feast as He shares it with us whenever we celebrate His Holy Supper. In the eating of His true body and the drinking of His precious blood in faith, overcome our sin by His forgiveness and swallow up our death in His life, that we may be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

We praise Your holy name, O Lord, for all Your servants who have departed this life in faith. We pray that You will not abandon us to Sheol but that, when we awake in the resurrection of all flesh, Your presence will give us joy.

O Lord, heavenly Father, You have not let Your Holy One see corruption, but have raised Him in triumph from the dead, never to die again. Therefore, our hearts are glad, and we rejoice, for our flesh also dwells securely. Since You have set Him at Your right hand, lead us to set His resurrection before us at all times, that His path of life and the fullness of joy in His presence may be known to us, until we come also to the eternal pleasures at His right hand, forevermore; for You, O Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn 560

Service of the Sacrament

Stand

Preface

LSB 194
2 Timothy 4:22



P The Lord be with you.



C And with Your spir - it.

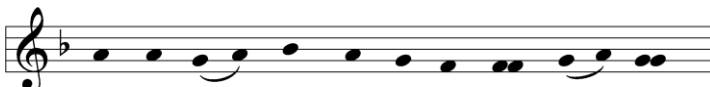


P Lift up your hearts.

[Colossians 3:1]



C We lift them up un - to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.

[Psalm 136]



C It is meet and right so to do.

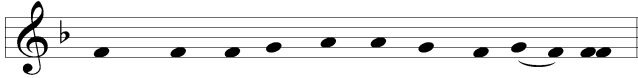
The Words of Our Lord *LSB 197 Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

LSB 197 John 20:19



☐ The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



☐ A - men.

The Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

LSB 198 John 1:29



O Christ, the Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, the Lamb of God, that



tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.



O Christ, the Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, grant us Your peace. A - men.

Sit

The Distribution

A Distribution Hymn 710 may be sung

The Lord's Supper has always been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, they thereby declare that they believe that **they are one in faith with those who commune with them**. We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with this congregation, or are unfamiliar with the AELC Statement of Faith **to refrain from communing today**. However, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing. Please show this by crossing your arms across your chest when you come to the communion rail.

After the Distribution, we stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199 Luke 2:29-32

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -
cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy
peo - ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and

to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,

is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

Thanksgiving

LSB 200 Psalm 107:1

P O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

C and His mercy endures for - ev - er.

Post-Communion Collect

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C A - men.

Salutation

LSB 201 2 Timothy 4:22

P The Lord be with you.

C And with Your spir - it.

Benedicamus

LSB 202
[Psalm 103:1]



P Bless we the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 202 Numbers 6:24-26

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.



C A-men, a-men, a - men.

Hymn 484

Acknowledgments

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Article: The Empty Tomb and the Resurrection

Written by Matthew Sippel

The belief in the resurrection – that Jesus Christ rose from the dead – is central to Christianity. If this belief were wrong, the entire Christian religion is false, and as a result then, your faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14). If Christ was not raised from death, then you are still in your sins. How? *By God raising Jesus from the dead, He showed that sin and death were truly defeated, because by Jesus' being raised, God showed that Jesus' sacrifice for your sins was acceptable and that the full price had been paid.* Jesus Christ's resurrection proved to all that Jesus Christ's life and death was enough to cover every single one of your sins. God's wrath against your sin is satisfied. Not only this, but Jesus' resurrection proved that He was the divine Son of God (and not just a false teacher claiming to be the Jewish messiah), for by God raising Jesus, God vindicated Jesus for you, proving that what Jesus claimed was true, that He was the Saviour, the Christ-Messiah, the one who saves you from your sins (Matthew 1:21). If Jesus was not raised, then Jesus was a false teacher. But Jesus is raised, and you now have a confident hope!

Many atheists, agnostics, and other religions reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They claim that someone raising from the dead simply does not happen, because people don't rise from the dead. While it is certainly true that no one usually rises from the dead, because people are simply dead, the evidence shows that Jesus truly did rise from the dead. People who *outright reject miracles* – and Jesus rising from the dead is such a miracle – will never believe Jesus rose from the dead, for they reject any evidence for the resurrection before they even examine it. Yet, as a Christian, you have a confident hope, for because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, you know that you have the forgiveness of sins and that it has been won by the death of Christ, and proved – vindicated – by His resurrection (Hebrews 11:1). In spite of all the arguments used by those who reject the resurrection, you as a Christians should be reminded that every 'argument' against the resurrection fails, and that your confident hope in the resurrection of Christ remains.

Argument #1: The “Swoon” or “Coma” Theory. Because of the historicity of Jesus – that he truly lived – and the evidence in favour of Christ's resurrection, some sceptics try to deny the resurrection of Jesus by claiming that Jesus did not actually **die** on the cross but simply fell into a deep sleep or a coma, and then, he only walked out of the tomb three days later. This is ridiculous, for the Romans knew how to kill people; and, no one survives crucifixion. On a cross, one dies by asphyxiation: you cannot breathe. Your arms nailed to the side make it harder to breathe, and eventually, you become too tired and run out of strength to keep yourself up to breathe. On a cross, you die; no one survives. Not only this, but the Romans ensured every person going through crucifixion was dead, and they found Jesus dead (John 19:33). Therefore, you can be beyond confident that Jesus died on the cross.

Argument #2: The “Theft” Theory. Other sceptics claim that Jesus' body was stolen from the tomb, by either the Jews, the Romans, a grave robber, or the disciples. It is firstly important to remember that the Jewish chief priests, the Pharisees, the Roman soldiers, the women, and the disciples all knew which tomb Jesus was in, and the Roman soldiers guarded this tomb (Matthew 27:62-66; Mark 15:47, Luke 23:55). In Roman Military Law, being assigned to guard a tomb, and failing to do so meant you could have faced execution, especially if you were negligent or asleep. Sceptics believe that Jesus' body was stolen from the tomb, either by the Jews, the Romans, a grave robber, or the disciples. This is simply wrong because: **1) If the Jews had stolen the body, then when the disciple's claimed Jesus was risen, they could have shown the body and said, “No he is dead” and Christianity would have fallen apart. The Jews had no intention of stealing the body, because they wanted to make sure**

the body was in the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66); **2)** If the Romans had stolen the body, they also would have simply shown the body, because Rome did not want uprisings of any kind against their authority, and showing Jesus' dead body would have stopped this growing movement instantly. Both the Romans and the Jews both persecuted the early Christians, and both groups wanted Jesus' body to remain in the tomb, which is why they posted guards to the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66). For this reason, this prevents either **3)** a grave robber or **4)** the disciples stealing the body, because the Roman soldiers were guarding the tomb.

Argument #3: The “Hallucination” Theory. This theory suggests that Jesus appearing to the 11 disciples (John 20:26) and to 500 people at once (1 Corinthians 15:6) was simply a hallucination experienced by all of them. However, this is obviously ridiculous because two people do not hallucinate the same thing, let alone 7, 11, or 500. Even if all these people were genuinely hallucinating, it would only take one look in the tomb to find Jesus' dead body and prove he was not risen. Therefore, this theory – concocted by sceptics – is also false.

Argument #4: The “Mistaken Identity” or “Twin” Theory. This theory claims that the disciples and followers of Jesus mistook another person for Jesus, suggesting that Jesus may have had a secret twin who now claimed to be Him after His death. However, there are two main issues with this theory: **1)** The disciples lived with Jesus for over three years, so they would absolutely know if the person claiming to be Jesus was someone else, especially if that person had different mannerisms and ways of speaking; and **2)** All it would take is a quick look in the tomb to see Jesus' dead body, proving He was not risen and that the person claiming to be Jesus was an imposter.

Argument #5: The “Lettuce” or “Gardener” Theory. This theory suggests that a gardener moved Jesus' body to a different tomb because he had planted a new garden and was annoyed that people walked over it. However, this theory is false because everyone knew which tomb Jesus was placed in, and they saw the stone being rolled in front of the tomb to seal it on Friday (Mark 15:46-7). Moreover, it is illogical because more people would have walked over his garden if that were true. This theory lacks any historical support and was only created by sceptics attempting to disprove the resurrection of Jesus.

Argument #6: The “Fraud” Theory

The most common theory is the “**fraud**” theory, which says that the disciples just lied and said Jesus rose from the dead. But this theory is also ridiculous because: (1) This theory claims that the disciples lied and then willingly got tortured, imprisoned, abused and ultimately were killed for a lie, which simply does not happen, and that none of the disciples ever recanted and took back what they said which they would have known to be a lie if they were making it all up, and (2) This theory relies on the fact that the tomb was empty but with no explanation as to why, in spite of the guards guarding it, and if the disciples were making the entire story up, all the Jews or Romans would have to do was show Jesus’ dead body in the tomb and the entire movement would have stopped. This theory is also false.

All these theories show that there is no likely explanation given for why the tomb remained empty. Therefore, you can also say that it is a fact that the tomb was empty; and this fact changes everything. The most plausible remaining option is that Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead, just as the New Testament says. Yes, you yourself know that people don’t rise from the dead, but this is what you believe happened based on the evidence. This is a Christian’s hope, this is your hope, that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead. Believing that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead is a belief, but it is a confident belief by which everything in the world and in your life revolves around: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And you now have eternal life! Praise be to God for this good news!

Children’s Address:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Happy Easter, kids!

Today is a happy day, isn’t it! But have you ever been outside when it got really dark and you saw lightning, heard thunder, and rain and hail came down? Were you happy? Afraid? What could you use to keep from getting soaking wet? Well, a raincoat would help, and so would an umbrella and a flashlight. But what if the wind was really blowing, almost knocking you over, and the hail was really big? What could you do? How about finding a safe place to shelter from the storm? We’d call that place a “refuge.”

In Psalm 16, we hear about King David facing danger. What did he do? Where did he go for refuge? He ran to God. He prayed, “Preserve me [keep me safe], O God, for in You I take refuge” (Ps 16:1). David trusted that God would protect him and be his refuge whenever trouble came. He believed that God was with him.

Have you ever been so scared that you started to shake? King David said that because God was at his right hand, right next to him, he would not be shaken (16:8).

God promises to be with us always, our refuge, no matter what storms or troubles we face. God loves us very much. We know that because He sent His Son, Jesus, to be put to death to take the punishment for our sins. And now on Easter, Jesus came back to life. He promises that because He rose from the grave, we, too, shall live even after we die.

King David believed that God wouldn't leave him dead but would at the end of the world bring his body back to life and take him to heaven, where there would be no more fear, crying, sickness, pain, sin, storms, darkness, or death. There will be joy and pleasures forever (16:11).

Until Jesus takes us to heaven, He promises that because He's alive again, He'll be with us always. And when Jesus is with us, all will be well. When we're scared and alone, there's always one safe place we can go: Jesus, our Refuge. He invites us to call on Him as David did when we're afraid, and He'll be there to help us. So today we can say, "Happy Easter," because Jesus' resurrection guarantees He'll never leave us, He's always with us, and one day we'll be with Him forever in heaven.

Thank You Jesus for dying and rising for me. I know that You are always with me, and I look forward to the day when I shall see You face to face and rejoice forever in Your presence! Amen.



SERVICE TIMES

12 April 2 Easter	19 April 3 Easter	26 April 4 Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday)
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR MS Pastor is away 6-18 April	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC (Baptism) 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR

Sunday, 2 Easter		
READINGS: Acts 5:29-42;	1 Peter 1:3-9;	John 20:19-31
HYMNS: 818 470 553 527		
Sunday, 3 Easter		
READINGS: Acts 2:14a, 36-41;	1 Peter 1:17-25:	Luke 24:13-35
HYMNS: 352 482 578 (570 623) 488		
GRN: 592 482 578 570 623 488		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tomorrow, 10.00 am. Parish Sunday School Picnic at St Johns Aubigny. All are invited to attend. Could each family please provide a plate to share and also something for dessert? If you would like to bring along any games/puzzles (eg. how many jellybeans in a jar etc) please do!

The Women's Guild is again running an Easter colouring competition for the children. Sunday School-aged children can take home a picture to colour in today. Please bring it to the Easter Monday Picnic at Aubigny!

Friday, April 10, 7:00pm. Young Adults & Youth (YAY) for Aubigny-Oakey-Greenwood at St Johns Aubigny. The hall is open from 6:30pm. Please bring your Bible and a plate to share for supper.

*Please note once off change of day to Friday instead of Saturday

Saturday, 11 April, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are welcome to attend. Please bring something for a shared afternoon tea.

WEEKLY READINGS

Sunday, April 5	Numbers 26-28 Matthew 2	<i>Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2017)</i> pp. 110 - 114, Eighth Commandment Questions 83 - 87
Monday, April 6	Numbers 29-31 Matthew 3	
Tuesday, April 7	Numbers 32-34 Matthew 4	
Wednesday, April 8	Numbers 35-36 Matthew 5	
Thursday, April 9	Jonah 1-4	
Friday, April 10	1 Kings 1-2 Matthew 6	
Saturday, April 11	1 Kings 3-5	