



QUASIMODO GENITI ("AS NEWBORN BABES") THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
2323 E. 12th St. The Dalles, OR 97058
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Mrs. Kristen Lawson, Organist

WELCOME IN THE NAME OF OUR BLESSED LORD! We are pleased you are here, gathered around the Gospel in Preaching and the Sacraments!
GUESTS – If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual

struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT: Bethany Lutheran Church confesses all the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired word of God without any errors. We also hold, without any reservation, to the teachings of the Evangelical-Lutheran Confessions contained in the 1580 Book of Concord. We confess these teachings to be the correct interpretation of Scripture and a true explanation of the one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic faith.

PASTORAL CARE AND GUESTS AT THE LORD'S SUPPER: Scripture and our Confessions teach that the Lord's Supper "is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine" (Small Catechism). We are concerned about the spiritual welfare of all who commune at the Lord's Table. *If you are a guest and desire to commune, please speak to the pastor before the service.* Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are active members of sister churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

APRIL 27, 2025 † 11:00 A. M.

and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and are not under church discipline in another congregation. In Christ, Pastor Lawson

† In the Name of Jesus †

Prayer before Worship: Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that of Your indescribable grace, for the sake of Your Son, You have given us the holy Gospel, and have instituted the holy Sacraments, that through these we may have comfort and forgiveness of sin: We beseech You, grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Your Word; and through the holy Sacraments day by day establish our faith, until we at last obtain eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Office of Preparation (Confession & Holy Absolution)

Hymn of Invocation: 366, *Ye Sons and Daughters of the King*

**C: Ye sons and daughters of the King, Whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave hath lost its sting: Alleluia!**

**On that first morning of the week, Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek: Alleluia!**

**An angel bade their sorrow flee, For thus he spake unto the three:
"Your Lord is gone to Galilee": Alleluia!**

**That night the Apostles met in fear, Amidst them came their Lord most dear
And said: "Peace be unto you here": Alleluia!**

**When Thomas afterwards had heard That Jesus had fulfilled His word,
He doubted if it were the Lord: Alleluia!**

**"Thomas, behold My side," saith He, "My hands, My feet, My body, see;
"And doubt not, but believe in Me": Alleluia!**

**No longer Thomas then denied; He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"Thou art my Lord and God," he cried: Alleluia!**

**Blessed are they that have not seen And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal they shall reign: Alleluia!**

**On this most holy day of days To God your hearts and voices raise
In laud and jubilee and praise: Alleluia!**

**And we with holy Church unite, As evermore is just and right,
In glory to the King of light: Alleluia!**

*At the Invocation and Absolution all **may** make the sign of the †
in remembrance of their Baptism.*

The Invocation: p. 60-61

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Confession of Sin (form I): pp. 60-62

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God, our Father, beseech Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: Who made heaven and earth.

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

C: And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

C: O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to 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: I ask each of you, in the presence of God who searches the heart: Do you confess that you have sinned, and do you repent of your sins?

C: I do.

P: Do you believe that Jesus Christ has redeemed you from all your sins, and do you desire forgiveness in His name?

C: I do.

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 to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

May He comfort your heart by His holy Absolution,
and strengthen you by His Sacraments,
that your joy may be full.

Peace be with you! **C: Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Introit

Tone 1



Antiphon (**Pastor**) As newborn babes, `Alleluia!:/ Desire the pure milk of the Word. Alleluia!
`Alleluia!

Psalm (**All**) Sing aloud `to God our strength:/ make a joyful shout to the `God of Jacob.
You called in trouble, and I `delivered you:/ I answered you in the secret `place of thunder.
I am `the Lord your God:/ who brought you out of the `land of Egypt;
Open your mouth wide, and `I will fill it:/ With honey from the rock I would have
`satisfied you.

Gloria Patri (**All**) Glory be to the Father `and to the Son:/ and to `the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the be`ginning, is now:/ and ever shall be, forever`more. Amen.

Antiphon (**All**) As newborn babes, `Alleluia!:/ Desire the pure milk of the Word. Alleluia!
`Alleluia!

The Kyrie Eleison (form I): p. 63

C: Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria in Excelsis: pp. 64-66

P: Glory be to God on high:

C: **And on earth peace, good will toward men.**

**We praise You, we bless You, we worship You,
we glorify You, we give thanks to You, for Your great glory.**

O Lord God, heav'nly King,

God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

You take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

You take away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.

**You are seated at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy
upon us.**

**For You only are holy. You only are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the
Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Salutation: p. 66

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And with your spirit.**

The Collect for the Day

P: Grant, we beseech You, almighty God, that we who have celebrated the solemnities of the Lord's resurrection may, by the help of Your grace, bring forth the fruits thereof in our life and conduct; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Old Testament: *Job 19:23-27*

P: In those days Job said: Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

First Alleluia Verse (replaces the Gradual during the Easter Season)

P: Alleluia! Alleluia! He is risen from the dead: And behold, He goes before you into Galilee. Alleluia!

C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Epistle: *1 John 5:4-10*

P: *Brethren:* whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Alleluia Verse

P: Alleluia! Alleluia! After eight days came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you! Alleluia!

The congregation STANDS and responds with the Sequence Hymn

Sequence Hymn: *The Lutheran Hymnal 187, Christ Is Arisen*

P: Christ is arisen From the grave's dark prison.

We now rejoice with gladness; Christ will end all sadness, Lord, have mercy.

**All our hopes were ended Had Jesus not ascended From the grave triumphantly,
For this, Lord Christ, we worship Thee. Lord, have mercy.**

**Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We now rejoice with gladness;
Christ will end all sadness. Lord, have mercy.**

Holy Gospel: *St. John 20:19-31*

P: The Holy Gospel according to † St. John, the 20th chapter:

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: *At that time* the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

P: This is the † Holy Gospel.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

*At the words "And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
And was made man" all **may** bow out of reverence for Christ's Incarnation.*

Nicene Creed: p. 69

**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 is seated at the right hand of the Father;
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the living and the dead;
Whose kingdom shall 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 with the Father and the Son together is worshiped
and glorified,
Who spoke by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
And I look for the Resurrection of the dead
and the Life † of the world to come. Amen.**

Chief Hymn: 417, *“So Truly As I Live,” God Saith*

C: **“So truly as I live,” God saith, “I would not have the sinner’s death,
But that he turn from error’s ways, Repent and live through endless days.”**

**To us therefore Christ gave command: “Go forth and preach in every land;
Bestow on all My pardoning grace Who will repent and mend their ways.**

**“All those whose sins ye thus remit I truly pardon and acquit,
And those whose sins ye do retain Condemned and guilty shall remain.**

**“What ye shall bind, that bound shall be; What ye shall loose, that shall be free;
Unto My Church the keys are given To ope and close the gate of heaven.”**

**They who believe when ye proclaim The joyful tidings in My name
That I for them My blood have shed, Are free from guilt and Judgment dread.**

**The words which absolution give Are His who died that we might live;
The minister whom Christ has sent Is but His humble instrument.**

**However great our sin may be, The absolution sets us free,
Appointed by God’s own dear Son To bring the pardon He has won.**

**When ministers lay on their hands Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;
He who by grace the Word believes The purchase of His blood receives.**

**This is the power of Holy Keys, It binds and doth against release;
The Church e’er has them at her side, Our Mother and Christ’s holy Bride.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to Thee For absolution full and free,
In which Thou showest forth Thy grace; From false indulgence guard our race.**

**Praise God the Father and the Son And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
As ’twas, is now, and so shall be World without end, eternally!**

Sermon: Christ Is Risen! Alleluia! He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Offertory: pp. 70-71

**C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your free Spirit.
Amen.**

The Intercessions: *each petition concludes:* Lord, in Your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Hymn of Preparation: 343, *Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands*

**C: Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands, For our offenses given;
But now at God's right hand He stands And brings us life from heaven;
Therefore let us joyful be And sing to God right thankfully
Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!**

**No son of man could conquer death, Such mischief sin had wrought us,
For innocence dwelt not on earth, And therefore death had brought us
Into thralldom from of old And ever grew more strong and bold
And kept us in its bondage. Alleluia!**

**But Jesus Christ, God's only Son, To our low state descended,
The cause of death He has undone, Its pow'r forever ended,
Ruined all its right and claim And left it nothing but the name,
Its sting is lost forever. Alleluia!**

**It was a strange and dreadful strife When life and death contended.
The victory remained with life, The reign of death was ended;
Holy Scripture plainly saith That death is swallowed up by death,
In vain it rages o'er us. Alleluia!**

**Here the true Paschal Lamb we see, Whom God so freely gave us;
He died on the accursed tree – So strong His love – to save us.
See, His blood doth mark our door; Faith points to it, death passes o'er,
And Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!**

**So let us keep the festival Whereto the Lord invites us;
Christ is Himself the Joy of all, The Sun that warms and lights us.
By His grace He doth impart Eternal sunshine to the heart;
The night of sin is ended. Alleluia!**

**Then let us feast this Easter Day On Christ, the Bread of heaven;
The Word of Grace hath purged away The old and evil leaven.
Christ alone our souls will feed, He is our meat and drink indeed;
Faith lives upon no other. Alleluia!**

The Liturgy of the Holy Communion

The Preface: p. 72

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And with your spirit.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

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

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

The Proper Preface & Sanctus: pp. 73-76

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God; but chiefly are we bound to praise You for the glorious resurrection of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord; for He is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us and hath taken away the sins of the world. By His death He has destroyed death, and by His rising to life again He has restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

C: **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;**
 Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.
 Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He
 who come in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

The Lord's Prayer: pp. 77-78

P: Our Father who art in heaven,
 Hallowed by 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;

C: For Thine is the kingdom and the pow'r and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Words of Institution: pp. 78-79

*When the Pastor turns and elevates the Host and Cup, the congregation **may** bow as an act of reverent worship toward the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.*

The Pax Domini (The Peace of the Lord): p. 79

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

The Agnus Dei: pp. 79-80

**C: O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
grant us Your peace. Amen.**

The Distribution of the Holy Communion to the Faithful

*Prayers for “**Before Holy Communion**” and
for “**After Holy Communion**” are found on page 40 in ELH.*

Hymn of Thanksgiving: 310, *At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing*

**C: At the Lamb's high feast we sing Praise to Our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide Flowing from His pierced side. Alleluia!**

**Praise we Him, whose love divine Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast – Christ the victim, Christ the priest. Alleluia!**

**Where the paschal blood is poured, Death's dread angel sheathes the sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go Through the wave that drowns the foe. Alleluia!**

**Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Paschal victim, paschal bread;
With sincerity and love Eat we manna from above. Alleluia!**

**Mighty Victim from the sky, Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;
You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light. Alleluia!**

**Now no more can death appall, Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise, And Your saints in You shall rise. Alleluia!**

**Easter triumph, Easter joy! This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free, Newborn souls in You to be. Alleluia!**

**Father, who the crown shall give, Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days: Three in One, Your name we praise. Alleluia!**

The Collect of Thanksgiving: pp. 82-83

P: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.

C: And His mercy endures forever.

P: Almighty God, who gives the true Bread which comes down from heaven, even Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we beseech You, that we who received the Sacrament of His Body and Blood may abide in Him, and He in us, that we may be filled with the power of His endless life; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Salutation: p. 84

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

The Benedicamus: p. 84

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Benediction: p. 84

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: Amen. Amen. Amen.

Dismissal Hymn: 357, *The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done*

C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph hath begun. Alleluia!**

**The pow'rs of death habve done their worst
But Christ their legion hath dispersed.
Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!**

**The three sad days have quickly sped,
He rises glorious from the dead.
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!**

**He closed the yawning gates of hell;
The bars from heaven's high portals fell.
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell. Alleluia!**

**Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee.
From death's dread sting Thy servants free
That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia!**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

THE PASTOR IS AVAILABLE for private Confession & Absolution, and for confidential pastoral counseling, or just to chat. Please feel free to stop in. (The Augsburg Confession teaches that “[private] Confession is not abolished among us. ... Our people are taught that they should highly prize the Absolution as being God’s voice and pronounced by God’s command. ... They are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences. ... They are taught that faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins.” Article 25)

The Bible Study & Sunday School meet together for the opener at 12:30 in the parish hall. The Sunday study is working through Genesis. The next few weeks, the Thursday study will cover 1 Kings 1, followed by the last several chapters of 1 Chronicles. *All are welcome and encouraged to attend one or both studies! No First Sunday Fellowship next Sunday.*

The Evergreen Lutheran High School Choir will be giving a concert at our church today at 4:30pm. A meal will follow in the parish hall.

Cleaning at Bethany

April 21 – May 3

Rieses

ELS West Coast Circuit Conference: Pastor will be attending the annual ELS West Coast Circuit Conference this week at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Phoenix, AZ. He flies out Tuesday late afternoon and returns on Friday at noon.

New Meditations are available on the table in the church entryway, both regular size and large print.

A Church Work Day is planned for next Saturday. We will be working on a landscaping project in the front yard. Please speak with Nathan Larson or Jeff Kopp for more information. *Thank you to Jerry Bull and Jeff Kopp for all the work they've done so far prepping the lawn.*

The Hope Clinic Spring Legacy Event is on Friday at Calvary Baptist Church in The Dalles from 6-8pm (check-in starts at 5:45). A variety of locally made desserts, coffee, tea and other drinks will be offered from 6-7pm, during which time there will also be a Silent & Live Auction. Our church has a table with a couple of more spots available. Please talk to Pastor if you would like to attend and sit at the table. 7:15 is the Presentation & Speaker part of the evening, featuring high school senior Evie Wendell. Evie is this year's Oregon Right to Life Oratory Winner. Please consider partnering with Hope Medical Clinic in serving our community with the love of Christ by preserving the lives of unborn children while meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of women and their families facing unplanned pregnancy or other abortion-related concerns. You may also go to givebutter.com/c/Legacy25 to donate.

Sacred Music For the Season... "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today," "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," "Awake, My Heart, with Gladness," "He's Risen, He's Risen." You can listen 24/7 to sacred music for the 50 days of

the Easter season at lutheranpublicradio.org, TuneIn, Amazon Echo, Google Home, Apple HomePod and the Lutheran Public Radio mobile app.

Feasts, Commemorations, and Events Easter Week

Monday: Pastor at Bethany

Tuesday: Pastor leaving for West Coast Conference in Phoenix, AZ

Wednesday: Pastor at West Coast Conference in AZ

Thursday: No Bible Study at Bethany; Pastor at West Coast Conference in AZ

Friday: Pastor returning from West Coast Conference

Saturday: Bethany Work Day, 9:00am

Next Sunday: *Misericordia Domini: Second Sunday After the Resurrection*

Concordia Holy Communion, 9:00am

Bethany Holy Communion, 11:00am

Bethany Bible Study & Sunday School, 12:30pm

Youth Catechesis, 1:45pm

Easter 2: Our bodily life matters so much to God that He incarnated human flesh Himself. Even after accomplishing atonement by His body's brokenness, He did not discard it but inhabits it by resurrection as His eternal instrument (John 20:27). When we are physically suffering sin's consequences, our Savior's words of forgiveness breathe healing (John 20:21-23), and His ways of faith bring peace into our very bodies.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, let me take hold of You by faith until Your wounded and resurrected body redeems my own. Amen.*

Life Thoughts in the Church Year/One Year Lectionary – Lutherans For Life

“Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands” The Magisterial Easter Hymn of the Lutheran Church



On Easter the church bursts forth in her most exuberant songs in praise of the Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord. We rejoice that the bonds of death have been burst and that our Lord is victorious over sin, death, and the devil. *Alleluias*, silent since the Transfiguration of Our Lord, once again sound triumphant.

In her hymnody, the Church teaches not only the facts of Jesus’ death and resurrection, but most importantly what those acts of Christ mean for us. In the hymnody of the church, the blessings of those events are proclaimed to us and by us, and instilled in us. For Blessed Martin Luther this was the driving force of congregational song.

His Easter hymn, *Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands* [ELH 343] proclaims to all who sing it why Jesus had to suffer and die, what His death has won for us, and it drives us to the Sacrament of the Altar where we receive the fruit and benefit of His sacrificial death.

This hymn was first published in 1524 in the city Erfurt in a hymnal containing 25 hymns, of which 20 were written by Dr. Luther. This hymn is acclaimed by *Julian’s Dictionary of Hymnology* to be “second only to [Luther’s] unequalled ‘A Mighty Is Our God’”

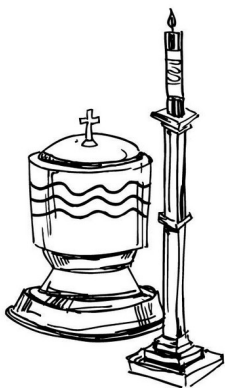
Like many other Easter hymns, *Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands* carries over phrases from (or alludes to) the Medieval Easter Sequence, *Christians, to the Paschal Victim* that was chanted before the Easter gospel last Sunday. Luther himself saw his hymn as an improvement to the 12th Century Latin hymn *Christ Is Arisen* (TLH 187). In fact his original title of this hymn was *Christ Is Arisen Improved*.

The first stanza states quite simply why we *should thankful be and sing to God right thankfully loud songs of Alleluia*. Christ, who was dead, is alive again and has ascended to the Father. He died to pay the penalty our sin demanded.

The second stanza teaches our sinful state. Most of Luther’s hymns include stanzas highlighting our sinful condition and our inability to remove ourselves from



the same. He teaches that there *is no innocence on earth, for all have sinned* (Rom 3:23). Not only have all men sinned, but sin is perpetually in our flesh and always desires to spring up and overtake us (Rom 7:13-23). Since sin guarantees death, Luther writes that sin keeps us *in thrall* (servitude) to Death (Death in this hymn is directly referring to Satan) and its power *ever [grows] more strong and bold and [keeps] us in his bondage*.



But with St. Paul we cry: *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ Our Lord! (Rom 7:24-25) His sting is lost forever. Hallelujah!* And that is exactly where Luther next takes us. He does not leave us to wallow in pity or turn to our works, but he immediately takes us to Christ. He succinctly teaches Christ's Incarnation, birth and sinless life in the third stanza. Jesus, by His death, fought and destroyed Death. For those who belong to Jesus, death has no power and is *nothing but the name*.

The events of Good Friday Luther rightly calls a strange and dreadful strife when Life and Death contended. Here he adapts the Easter Sequence which proclaims: *Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous.* Luther calls to mind Paul's great teaching on the Resurrection in 1 Cor 15. There we are taught that Christ's death and resurrection have forever defeated death and taken away its sting and victory (1 Corinthians 15:55). This stanza also calls to mind the reversal heard in the Proper Preface for Passiontide where we heard of the defeat of Satan by the Cross: *that even as Satan once overcame by a tree* (deceiving Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden) *likewise by a tree* (Christ's Cross) *he was overcome*.

Also, as is seen in many of our Easter hymns, there are illusions to the Passover and the Exodus. The fifth stanza teaches us that Christ is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7), whom God the Father made a curse and sacrificed for us, to make atonement for all our sins so we may not be cursed and damned eternally. To make Christ's death and resurrection ours, His Blood covers us, poured on us in Baptism where the Holy Spirit casts out the unclean spirits and dwells in us to keep us as God's dear children: *See, His blood doth mark our door* (the door of our heart, that is). *Faith points to it* (to the blood of Christ, that is). When faith, by the Holy Spirit, points to that Blood that covers us – shed because of His strong love – sin and death flee confounded *and Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!*

Faith does more than point to Christ's Blood, though. It also points us to the place where we receive Christ's Blood again and again. Faith desires to be with the Faithful, gathered around the gifts Christ freely gives. Luther captures this in his sixth and seventh stanzas. He tells us to *keep the festival whereto the Lord invites us*. He bids us to *feast this Easter Day on Christ, the Bread of Heaven*. We need not search for nourishment in any other place because in the Church only are we given Christ. *Christ alone our souls will feed, He is our meat and drink indeed and our faith lives upon no other*.



Although we will move quickly through the Easter season, I encourage you to continue to gather with the Faithful to receive our Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us. I also encourage you to further explore the Easter and Ascension hymns available in our hymnal (hymns 340-360 & 388-393). Here you will find many treasures with which you can join with all the Faithful in our praise of our Risen and Ascended Lord, our only Confidence. The peace and joy of Christ's defeat of sin, death, and the devil be with you this Easter!

The Paschal candle next to the baptismal font is the largest candle in the church. Like all the other candles, it signifies the radiant light of Jesus Christ, Who rose from the dead, giving the light of eternal life to all who call upon His Name. The Paschal candle is also specifically the Resurrection candle. It is lit at every Service through the 40 days from Easter to Ascension Day (May 29 this year). It's a beautiful candle, elaborately decorated with various symbols of the resurrection. Outside the Easter season, the Paschal candle is also lit for baptisms and funerals. This is to signify that just as Christ passed over from death to life on Easter, so the sacrament of Holy baptism is our Passover – our dying to sin and rising to new life – with Christ; and in death the Christian passes over for the final time, now only to await the final resurrection of the body on the Last Day.

