



# Celebrate

Third Sunday of Easter

May 4, 2025

*The disciples make a big splash and eat breakfast with the risen Jesus. Wading in the water (remembering baptism) and eating with Jesus (celebrating holy communion) is our weekly encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus asks us again and again: Do you love me? And Jesus invites us, again and again, to follow him, bringing the Easter life to others.*

## Prayer of the Day

Eternal and all-merciful God, with all the angels and all the saints we laud your majesty and might. By the resurrection of your Son, show yourself to us and inspire us to follow Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]

*Saul (later called Paul) was an ardent persecutor of all who followed the Way of Christ. This reading recounts the story of his transformation beginning with an encounter with Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus.*

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup>He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." [<sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." <sup>11</sup>The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus

named Saul. At this moment he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; <sup>16</sup>I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." <sup>17</sup>So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup>and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, <sup>20</sup>and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."]

You have turned my wail - ing in - to  
danc - ing, in - to danc - ing.

I will exalt you, O LORD, because you have lift-<sup>1</sup> ed me up  
and have not let my enemies triumph<sup>1</sup> over me.

<sup>2</sup>**O LORD my God, I cried<sup>1</sup> out to you,  
and you restored<sup>1</sup> me to health.**

<sup>3</sup>You brought me up, O LORD,<sup>1</sup> from the dead;  
you restored my life as I was going down<sup>1</sup> to the grave.

<sup>4</sup>**Sing praise to the LORD,<sup>1</sup> all you faithful;  
give thanks in ho-<sup>1</sup> ly remembrance. R**

<sup>5</sup>God's wrath is short; God's favor<sup>1</sup> lasts a lifetime.  
Weeping spends the night, but joy comes<sup>1</sup> in the morning.

<sup>6</sup>**While I felt se-<sup>1</sup> cure, I said,  
"I shall never<sup>1</sup> be disturbed.**

<sup>7</sup>You, LORD, with your favor, made me as strong<sup>1</sup> as the mountains."  
Then you hid your face, and I was<sup>1</sup> filled with fear.

<sup>8</sup>**I cried to<sup>1</sup> you, O LORD;  
I pleaded with<sup>1</sup> my Lord, saying,**

<sup>9</sup>"What profit is there in my blood, if I go down<sup>1</sup> to the pit?  
Will the dust praise you or de-<sup>1</sup> clare your faithfulness?"

<sup>10</sup>**Hear, O LORD, and have mer-<sup>1</sup> cy upon me;  
O LORD,<sup>1</sup> be my helper." R**

<sup>11</sup>You have turned my wailing<sup>1</sup> into dancing;  
you have put off my sackcloth and clothed<sup>1</sup> me with joy.

<sup>12</sup>**Therefore my heart sings to you<sup>1</sup> without ceasing;  
O LORD my God, I will give you<sup>1</sup> thanks forever. R**

*The vision of John recorded in Revelation offers a glimpse of cosmic worship around the throne. At its center is “the Lamb who was slain.”*

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup>singing with full voice,  
 “Worthy is the Lamb that was  
     slaughtered  
 to receive power and wealth and wisdom  
     and might  
 and honor and glory and blessing!”

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,  
 “To the one seated on the throne and to  
     the Lamb  
 be blessing and honor and glory and  
     might  
 forever and ever!”  
<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, “Amen!”  
 And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Gospel

John 21:1-19

*The risen Christ appears again to his disciples by the sea where they were first called. After echoes of the fishing and feeding miracles, he gives a final reminder of the cost of a disciple’s love and obedience.*

After [he appeared to his followers in Jerusalem,] Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” <sup>6</sup>He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. <sup>7</sup>That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. <sup>8</sup>But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup>When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred

fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup>A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup>Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” <sup>19</sup>(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

## Prayers of Intercession

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The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

God of resurrection and new life, we come before you in prayer for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Your love sustains the church and its ministries. By that love, equip youth directors, Sunday school teachers, and all who guide formation in the church to nurture vibrant, living faith among your people. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your abundance is made known throughout creation. Preserve oceans and rivers, lakes and estuaries (*local bodies of water may be named*) so that all creatures living in them might flourish. Make us wise stewards of our local watersheds. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your wisdom guides all who strive for justice and peace. Strengthen the work of grassroots organizers, especially among communities on the frontlines of justice work. Amplify the voices of those most in need, that their leadership guides the way forward. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your compassion surrounds all who are in need. We pray for all people experiencing poverty and food insecurity, and for all struggling with debt and economic uncertainty. Reassure all who experience hopelessness or need your tender care (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You invite all people to your table of grace. Make this a community of radical hospitality where all feel loved and celebrated. Show us how to better welcome visitors and bless the ministries of hospitality in this place (*specific ministries may be named*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We praise you for the witness of your saints of all times and places (*especially Monica, mother of Augustine*). May their lives of faith guide us in our own journeys with you, today and every day. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

**Amen.**

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## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** Psalm 121. **Tuesday** Ezekiel 1:26—2:1. **Wednesday** Luke 5:1-11. **Thursday** (commemoration of Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, c. 1416) Psalm 23. **Friday** (commemoration of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter, 1760) Revelation 6:1—7:4. **Saturday** Ezekiel 28:25-26. **Fourth Sunday of Easter** Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30.

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13 of 15  
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