

*Alleluia!*

*Christ is risen!*





# Easter Sunday

April 5, 2026

the news is...

Matthew 28:1-10

alive in the world

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians and faiths from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners & questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate & sorrow, rejoice & recover. This is a place where lives are made new.

Welcome on this GLORIOUS day!

Please fill out the "Worship Slip" and place it in the offering plate during the offering, as a sign of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings.

Prelude "Resurrection Fanfare" Alexander Darr

## Gathering

### Call to worship

On Friday, we thought the good news had been silenced.

**On Friday, we thought the good news had taken its last breath.**

On Friday, we thought the good news had been buried.

**But today, we know the good news is alive and well.**

The good news is dancing!

**The good news is on the loose!**

The good news is out in the world, calling your name!

**Alleluia! Even death has lost its sting.**

Let us worship our good-news Christ.

## Call to confession

Friends, on Easter Sunday we remember that the world did its worst to God.

The world battered and bruised,  
betrayed and abandoned,  
crucified and buried our living God.

And despite it all, Jesus *still* chose to return.

Jesus rose again and immediately went to work spreading God's love to the very people who had hurt him. So hear me when I say, there is *nothing* you can do that could keep God's love at bay.

With that good news mind, let us go to God in prayer, trusting that Jesus Christ loves, claims, and seeks us.

Friends, let us pray:

## Prayer of confession

**Gracious God,**

**we want to be Easter people.**

**We want to shout your good news from the rooftop.**

**We want to follow the disciples, who ran to look for you.**

**We want to follow the angels, who said, "Be not afraid,"  
but we are afraid.**

**And we don't know where to look.**

**And we are worried we'll say the wrong thing.**

**So forgive us, for we are imperfect Easter people.**

**We are best intentions and best laid plans.**

**We are an out-of-tune chorus of "alleluias."**

**We are on our way, but we are not there yet.**

**Show us how to embody your good news in this world.**

**Show us how to be your Easter people.**

**With hope for tomorrow, we pray, amen.**

## Words of forgiveness

Family of faith,

even when we are an out-of-tune chorus of "alleluias," we belong

to God.

Jesus died and rose for you.

And there is nothing that could keep God's love at bay.

So join me in this good news declaration:

**Through Jesus Christ we are seen, saved, loved, and claimed.**

**This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God.**

**Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn  
#365

*"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"*

Red

**Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Who did once upon the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss. Al - le - lu - ia!**

**Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Who endured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Sinners to redeem and save. Al - le - lu - ia!**

**But the pains which he endured, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Our salvation have procured; Al - le - lu - ia!  
Now above the sky he's king, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Where the angels ever sing. Al - le - lu - ia!**

**Sing we to our God above, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Praise eternal as his love; Al - le - lu - ia!  
Praise him all you heav'nly host, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia!**

### Greeting

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen

**C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P: The grace of our risen Savior, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you**

\*Prayer of the Day

P: God of the empty tomb and abundant surprises, who announces new life in the face of death, dry our tears of grief and calm the anguish of our losses as we listen for amazing good news. Help us to find our identity in the person of Jesus Christ. Be to us a living presence, that the story of Easter may become our story, and we can embody its hope for the whole world.  
**C: Amen.**

**God's Word**

Children's Message

Pastor Jim

First Reading

Acts 10:34-43

Celebrate pg. 1

Psalm

Psalm 118 Choir & Cong.

Celebrate pg. 1

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

Celebrate pg. 2

\*Gospel Reading

Matthew 28:1-10

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Holy Gospel acc. to St. Matthew, the 28th chapter.

**C: Glory to you. O God**

*(The Gospel is read)*

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

Rev. James P. Lapp

\*Hymn of the Day

*"Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia"*

*Red #364*

**Christ has arisen, alleluia.  
Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.  
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,  
Even from death, dispelling its gloom.**

*REFRAIN*

*Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.  
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.  
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!  
Jesus is living, alleluia!*

**For three long days the grave did its worst  
Until its strength by God was dispersed.  
He who gives life did death under go,  
And in its conquest his might did show.**

*REFRAIN*

**The angel said to them. "Do not fear.  
You look for Jesus who is not here.  
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.  
Only the grave clothes are lying there."**

*REFRAIN*

## Prayer for illumination

Holy One,  
all over the world, people are gathering to hear the same story.  
All over the world, people are gathering to hear how death lost its  
sting.  
All over the world, people are gathering together, praying for a  
glimpse of you.  
So like our neighbors all over the world, we pray, be here.  
Speak to us today.  
Soften the calloused parts of our hearts until we can sense your Holy  
Spirit in our midst once more.  
With eagerness and hope, we run to the tomb. We sing alleluia. We  
bow our heads. We listen for you.  
Amen.

## An affirmation of faith

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.**

It sounds like welcome  
and feels like home.  
It sounds like laughter  
and feels like mercy.  
It sounds like love  
and feels like a seat at the table,  
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.  
I have seen it alive in the world.  
And even when my heart aches,  
even when wars rage,  
even when mercy feels out of reach,  
I remember the one who  
welcomed the children  
and led with nonviolence.  
I remember the one who  
cared for the vulnerable  
and inspired those around him.  
I remember that the good news really is good news,  
for I have seen it alive in the world.  
Thanks be to God! Amen.

\*The Prayers of the Church

Celebrate, Page 4

## The Communion Meal

\* Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some  
of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Music

“Come Christians Join to Sing”  
Spanish Melody arr. David Evans

“Christ is Risen! Alleluia!” Red #382  
Choir & cong. Sing Vs. 1,2 & 4

### Offertory Prayer

P: Giver of life,

**C: We bring to your table what we have,  
gifts from you, the one who makes all things new.  
With these signs we bring ourselves,  
that we may carry to the world  
the love of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

### Invitation to the table

On Easter morning, the women went looking for Jesus.

The angel said he was not in the tomb, so they ran,  
afraid yet filled with joy. They sought after him.

They hurried to Galilee, looking for their risen Christ.

And in their seeking, the text tells us:

"Suddenly, Jesus met them" (Matthew 28:9).

Jesus met the women in their seeking.

Jesus met them in their moment of fear and grief.

Jesus met them when they felt lost.

Jesus met them and provided hope.

Friends, if like the women you are seeking Christ,

if you have known grief or fear,

if you have ever felt lost, or if you are in need of some hope,

then come to this Table.

All are welcome here.

For just as Jesus met the women in their seeking,

I am confident that Jesus meets us here,

saying, "Do not be afraid."

### Great prayer of thanksgiving /

### Prayers of the people

*This prayer is designed to serve as either the Prayers of the People or a  
Great Prayer of Thanksgiving for*

*Communion. If you use this as the Prayers of the People, feel free to remove the Communion references as you wish.*

Risen Christ,  
good-news God,  
and ever-present Spirit,  
today is a day we've been waiting for.  
We've been waiting for the holy mystery of this morning.  
We've been waiting for the good news of an empty grave.  
We've been waiting for the sound of alleluias.  
Today is a day we've been waiting for, and now that we're here,  
all we can say is thank you.  
Thank you for showing the world what could be.  
Thank you for loving us with abandon.  
Thank you for facing death and returning with mercy.  
Thank you for the empty tomb.  
Thank you for morning birdsong.  
And thank you for meeting us here, as you always do.  
Today we celebrate the good news that you are alive in the world.  
The grave couldn't hold you.  
Death couldn't keep you.  
The empire couldn't confine you.  
Instead, you are here and everywhere.  
You are risen.  
You are on the move in the world.  
Your love meets us at this Table and calls us out into the world.  
And that is *good, good news*.  
So on this Easter Sunday, this holiest of days,  
we ask for your help noticing you in our midst.  
When our feet walk beside wildflowers, may we think of you.  
When the stars light up the sky, may we see you.  
When we break bread with our neighbors, may we feel you.  
When a stranger acts with kindness and love,  
may we recognize you.  
We know that you are out in the world, God,  
and we don't want to miss a minute of it.  
And while we pray these prayers with gratitude and joy,

we also pray for those who still find themselves  
at the foot of the cross.

We pray for those stuck in the pain of Good Friday.

We pray for....

*Name the prayers of lament relevant to your community and/or  
the moment.*

*For example: those who find themselves trapped in war-torn areas.  
We pray for our country, as she  
continues to break over gun violence and political differences. We  
pray for those in our own pews  
who are saddled with grief. We pray for our earth as creation  
continues to cry out. . .*

Holy One, so many days feel like Good Friday,  
but the promise of Easter is that Good Friday does  
Not have the last word. So may we live like that is true.

May we speak this hope to our neighbors.

May we look for you in our midst. May we see you at this Table,  
in this ordinary bread and cup.<sup>2</sup>

And may we always remember: alleluias came after the grave.

As we live like Easter people, let us continue to pray the words  
Jesus taught us to pray, saying...

*Offer the Lord's Prayer in your preferred language.*

### **??\*Prayer of Preparation ??**

**P: We prepare our hearts to receive God's grace by  
confessing our sin and need of forgiveness:**

**C: O God, our Creator, we celebrate the new life  
Which you have given us.  
We have experienced broken lives made whole,  
Old wounds of alienation healed over,  
And tired spirits rejuvenated with new vision.**

**Gracious God, we are so grateful for the purpose  
And possibilities you have placed before us.**

**Yet there are times when doubt has overcome  
hope,  
Cynicism has replaced dedication,  
The worlds values have captured us more than  
yours.  
Forgive for those times, we pray.  
Help us let go of the past  
That we might live joyfully into a new future  
That points to your love and justice.  
Amen.**

\*Lord's Prayer

**C: Our Father, in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today, our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are yours  
Now and forever.  
Amen**

## **The Sending**

### **A Benediction**

As you leave this place,  
when you meet anger, speak with love.  
When you meet fear, speak with hope.  
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.

But no matter what, speak this good news.  
For the good news of the gospel is  
love and justice for all.  
It is joy that surprises,  
and nonviolence that transforms.  
The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,  
so go forth speaking.  
For if you won't, then who will?  
Thanks be to God  
for this good, *good* news.  
**Amen.**

\*Closing Hymn

*"Thine Is the Glory" Red #376*

**Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;  
Endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!  
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.**

**REFRAIN**

**Thine is the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;  
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won!**

**Lo, Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb!  
Lovingly he greets thee, scatters fear and gloom;  
Let his church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
For the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting**

**REFRAIN**

**No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;  
Make us more than conqu'rors, through thy deathless  
love;  
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.**

**REFRAIN**

\*Dismissal

P: Alleluia! go in Peace.  
Share the Good News.

**C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude “An Easter Alleluia Recessional!”  
Richard Anderson

### **Prayer Concerns**

SHORT TERM Bob Zigler, Kathy Freeman, Family of Pr. Herb Schmidt, Kathybelle & her father, Beth Stiles, Colin, Family of Marc Northcott, Camryn, Corbin, Family of Marilyn, Dorothy Ronning, Bob Holzwarth, Mary Robe & Family, Renee, Family of Laura Gates, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, Laura, Ayla, Beth Stiles, Laura & twin babies, James, Don & Taiyo, Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, Kevin, Liz, Sam, Tom Williams, Kathy M., Nancy, Corrine & Daniel, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Sal, Katarina.

LONG TERM Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Beth UG, Brian Utto, Kathy Brooks, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit & family (Ethiopia), Miller, April, Aaron Johnson, Shelby, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Mike, Susan Anderson, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris & John B., Immigrant families, The Homeless, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation’s leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen’s Child Development Ctr, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

## **Our Mission Statement**

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, invite people to share the joy of the Spirit.

## **Reconciling in Christ Statement**

We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.

### **St. Stephen's Lutheran Church E.L.C.A.**

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Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's  
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp  
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp  
Music Directors: Gary Roberts  
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp  
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens  
Custodian: John Hopping

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