

April 15 & 16, 2023

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we welcome Rev. George Swanson. Together we celebrate Easter - Jesus lives!

OPENING HYMN

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today: Alleluia"

Hymn 442

Christ the Lord is ris'n today; Alleluia!
Christians, hasten on your way; Alleluia!
see the place where he was laid; Alleluia!
praise him for the ransom paid. Alleluia!

For the sheep the Lamb has bled, Alleluia!
sinless in the sinners' stead. Alleluia!
"Christ is ris'n," today we cry; Alleluia!
now he lives, no more to die. Alleluia!

Christ, the victim undefiled, Alleluia!
God and sinners reconciled, Alleluia!
while, in strange and awe-full strife, Alleluia!
met together death and life. Alleluia!

Christ, who once for sinners bled, Alleluia!
now the firstborn from the dead, Alleluia!
throned in endless might and pow'r, Alleluia!
lives and reigns forevermore. Alleluia!

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

**C: Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: Christ, have mercy.

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: Amen.

HYMN

“Like the Golden Sun Ascending”

Hymn 470 vs. 2, 3, & 4

Thanks to you, O Christ victorious! Thanks to you, O Lord of life!
Death has now no power o’er us, you have conquered in the strife.
Thanks because you did arise and have opened paradise!
None can fully sing the glory of the resurrection story.

You have died for my transgression, all my sins on you were laid.
You have won for me salvation, on the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise and shall meet you in the skies.
Death itself is transitory; I shall lift my head in glory.

For the joy your advent gave me, for your gospel’s great reward,
for your baptism which has saved me, for your supper and your Word;
for your death, the bitter scorn, for your resurrection morn:
Lord, I thank you and extol you, and in heav’n I shall behold you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Acts 2:14a, 22–32

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:

“ ‘I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

“Awake, My Heart, with Gladness”

Hymn 443 vs. 2, 3, & 4

The foe in triumph shouted when Christ lay in the tomb;
but lo, he now is routed, his boast is turned to gloom.
For Christ again is free; in glorious victory
he who is strong to save has triumphed o’er the grave.

This is a sight that gladdens—what peace it does impart!
Now nothing ever saddens the joy within my heart.
No gloom shall ever shake, no foe shall ever take
the hope which God’s own Son in love for me has won.

Now I will cling forever to Christ, my Savior dear.
My Lord will leave me never; with him I need not fear.
He rends death’s iron chain; he breaks through sin and pain.
He shatters hell’s dark thrall; I follow him through all.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 1:3–9

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 20:29

Alleluia. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 20:19–31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense”

Hymn 446

Jesus Christ, my sure defense and my Savior, now is living!
Knowing this, my confidence rests upon the hope he’s giving,
though the night of death be fraught still with many’ —an anxious thought.

Jesus, my Redeemer, lives; I, too, unto life shall waken.
Endless joy my Savior gives; shall my courage then be shaken?
Shall I fear, or could the head rise and leave his members dead?

No, too closely am I bound unto him by hope forever;
faith’s strong hand the rock has found, grasped it, and will leave it never.
Even death now cannot part from its Lord the trusting heart.

I am flesh and must return unto dust, whence I am taken;
but by faith I now discern that from death I shall awaken
with my Savior to abide in his glory, at his side.

Glorified, I shall anew with this flesh then be enshrouded;
in this body I shall view God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded;
in this flesh I then shall see Jesus Christ eternally.

SERMON

"We've Got His Life in Our Veins"

1 Peter 1:3-9

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

EASTER PRAYER

M: O Lord God, our strength, our song, and our salvation, you fulfilled your promises by the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.

C: Thanks be to God! You give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

M: In your compassion you sent Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life to rescue the lost.

C: **Drive out all doubt and gloom that we may delight in your glorious triumph.**

M: Lift our eyes heavenward to see him who lives to make intercession for the saints, and grant us confidence in the greatness of his power. Keep before us the vision of your redeemed people standing before your throne and singing the song of victory.

C: **Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive wisdom and power and honor and glory and praise.**

M: Make us instruments of your peace as we bring the good news of hope and new life to those around us. Guide us in the use of all that you have entrusted to us: our time, our talents, and our treasures.

C: **Risen Lord, live in us that we may live for you.**

M: Merciful Lord Jesus, grant healing to the sick, and strengthen the faith of the suffering and the dying. Assure them of your abiding presence, and comfort them with the hope of eternal life.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Gracious Father, you have restored to us the joy of your salvation. With happy hearts, we come before you and say:

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

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

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

C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus*

**O holy, holy, holy
Lord God of pow'r and might,
Your glory, earth and heaven
In countless ways recite.**

**Hosanna! Come and save us,
Lord God of hosts on high,
And in your grace and mercy
Receive our fervent cry.**

**Hosanna in the highest!
How truly blest is he
Who in God's name is coming
To set his people free!
He comes to bring salvation
And with his blood outpoured,
Deliver us from bondage— Hosanna,
mighty Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Blessed are you, O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By his victory over the grave, our Savior declared death's reign ended, the door to heaven open, and the payment for sin complete.

We celebrate with joy the glorious resurrection of your Son.

We marvel at the depth of your love.

We stand in awe of your power.

We are humbled by the compassion you have shown our fallen race.

Lead us to rejoice in the pardon offered and sealed in this Sacrament and to live a life worthy of your name. The Lord Jesus lives! Alleluia.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

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

C: **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
 you take a - way the sin of the world;
 grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"He's Risen, He's Risen"

Hymn 445

He's risen, he's risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord;
 he opened death's prison, the incarnate Word.
 Break forth, hosts of heaven, in jubilant song
 and earth, sea, and mountain, the praises prolong.

The foe was triumphant when on Calvary
 the Lord of creation was nailed to the tree.
 In Satan's domain did the hosts shout and jeer,
 for Jesus was slain, whom the evil ones fear.

But short was their triumph; the Savior arose,
 and death, hell, and Satan he vanquished, his foes.
 The conquering Lord lifts his banner on high;
 he lives, yes, he lives, and will nevermore die.

O, where is your sting, death? We fear you no more;
 Christ rose, and now open is fair Eden's door.
 For all our transgressions his blood does atone;
 redeemed and forgiven, we now are his own.

Then sing your hosannas and raise your glad voice;
proclaim the blest tidings that all may rejoice.
Laud, honor, and praise to the Lamb that was slain:
with Father and Spirit he ever shall reign.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN – CHOIR & CONGREGATION *“I Know That My Redeemer Lives”*

HYMN 441

I know that my Redeemer lives! What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead; he lives, my everliving head!

He lives triumphant from the grave; he lives eternally to save;
he lives all-glorious in the sky; he lives exalted there on high.

*Choir - To our King be highest praise Rising through eternal days.
Just and faithful He shall reign Jesus shall reign!*

He lives to bless me with his love; he lives to plead for me above;
he lives my hungry soul to feed; he lives to help in time of need.

He lives to grant me rich supply; he lives to guide me with his eye;
he lives to comfort me when faint; he lives to hear my soul's complaint.

*Choir - To our King be highest praise Rising through eternal days.
Just and faithful He shall reign Jesus shall reign!*

He lives to silence all my fears; he lives to wipe away my tears;
he lives to calm my troubled heart; he lives all blessings to impart.

He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend; he lives and loves me to the end;
he lives, and while he lives, I'll sing; he lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King.

*Choir - To our King be highest praise Rising through eternal days.
Just and faithful He shall reign Jesus shall reign!*

He lives and grants me daily breath; he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives my mansion to prepare; he lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same.
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives: I know that my Redeemer lives!

OFFERING

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Nine new missions and six ministry enhancements approved

On March 24, WELS Board for Home Missions approved the first new missions and enhancements for the synodwide “100 missions in 10 years” initiative.

“Our God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,” says Rev. Mark Gabb, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions. “So how does it look to live like we believe this? That’s the question that the Board for Home Missions considered as we reviewed the many new start requests. We knew that there were questions about money and pastors, yet with sanctified common sense we made our decisions based on our trust that God can do immeasurably more.”

The nine new mission starts approved include:

- **Bentonville, Ark.:** The 12-person core group has been active in its community, which is home to Walmart’s headquarters and is projected to see 35 percent population growth in the next three years.
- **Boston, Mass.:** The closest WELS church to Boston’s urban center is a 90-minute drive. This urban mission has potential for college and cross-cultural ministry.
- **Cincinnati, Ohio:** Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio, is starting a second site in the Oakley and Hyde Park neighborhoods with a core group of 20 members.
- **Idaho Falls, Idaho:** With the nearest WELS church three hours away, the 11-person core group has been meeting for weekly Bible studies with a pastor via Zoom.
- **Kalispell, Mont.:** Kalispell, Mont., is considered the fastest-growing micropolitan city (population of 10,000-50,000) in the United States. The core group has been worshipping together twice a month for more than ten years and participating in regular Bible studies for more than eight years.
- **Kronenwetter, Wis.:** Five WELS churches in the greater Wausau, Wis., area are supporting this mission, which will worship at Northland Lutheran High School. The 22-member core group has been meeting monthly since December 2021 for Bible study and mission planning.

- **Marquette, Mich.:** Marquette serves as the hub of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and 52 percent of the people in and around Marquette do not have a home church or attend a church.
- **Panama City Beach, Fla.:** Amazing Grace, Panama City, Fla., is expanding west and starting a second site in the greater Panama City Beach area.
- **North Collin County, Texas:** A core group of 15 members from Atonement, Plano, Texas, are part of this new mission in a northern suburb of Dallas. Divine Savior Ministries, a WELS-affiliated organization with four church/school campuses, has partnered with the mission and plans to build a Divine Savior Academy by year five of the mission start.

The Board for Home Missions is also financially supporting ministry enhancements for Beautiful Savior, West Des Moines, Iowa; Fairview, Milwaukee, Wis.; Christ the King, Port Charlotte, Fla.; and Divine Savior, Sienna, Texas. It is providing unsubsidized support to Our Redeemer, Ladysmith, Wis., and Good Shepherd, Midland, Texas.

To learn more about these new missions and ministry enhancements, visit **wels100in10.net**.

Conference of Presidents holds spring 2023 meeting

At its spring meeting last week, the Conference of Presidents (COP) discussed the following issues:

- The COP discussed the pastor and teacher shortage and how best to address the growing number of vacancies.
- The COP has adopted guidelines for congregations to follow as they work to fill teacher vacancies in a time of growing teacher shortages.
- A committee has been appointed to plan for the synod's 175th anniversary in 2025. The theme of the celebration will be "Christ through Us." A special anniversary offering will be gathered to support specific projects in Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education.
- Rev. Joel Gaertner accepted the COP's call to serve in Congregational Services as the director of Special Ministries.
- The COP discussed a proposal to change the synod convention from a biennial to a triennial event. Since this would be a major constitutional change that would require approval by two conventions, the COP decided that the issue should be placed before the 2024 district conventions for reaction and input. The COP itself has taken no position on the issue.
- The COP continued its discussion of the re-statement of the synod's doctrinal statement on male-female roles. The issue will be discussed by district conventions in 2024 and at various called worker conferences.
- The COP approved a pilot project for a voluntary mentoring system for called worker spouses. The pilot project will take place in the South Central District.
- With the growing need for Christian counselors, the COP was asked by Christian Family Solutions if the COP would encourage such training at Martin Luther College and/or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The COP is aware that such a program is in the long-range plan of Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) and concluded that WLC is the appropriate place for such training to take place.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder