

SERMON FOLLOWED BY SERVICE

April 20, 2025 - Easter

Luke 24:1-12

Do you remember your greatest catch? What was it? A fish, a giant lunger? Or maybe that baseball or softball catch that won the game. Or Grandma's vase that you almost knocked over. All I could think of catching was egg on my sweatshirt, tartar sauce on my jacket, pizza on my shirt. And then I thought of Lisa. You know that feeling you get when you make that catch? Your heart pounds faster, stronger; you look around to see if there's anyone you can show or tell.

And then there's that awful feeling you get when you drop something, something important. You know that feeling, don't you? Perhaps it was Grandma's vase. Mom said: "Don't even touch it," but you had to, and now you dropped it. Or maybe it was the ball that got away and the other team won. Or that fish that got away. And now all you can do is kick yourself, hopelessly playing it over and over again, thinking of what could have been, while you feel sick and empty on the inside,

You know that awful feeling? Then you have some idea how the women were feeling that first Easter Sunday morning. They had let Jesus slip through their fingers, and now he was dead. Oh, there was nothing they could do to save him, not from the Good Friday crowd shouting "Crucify," and not from Roman war machine trained in torture, expert and efficient in death. There was no way they were going to save him, but still, they couldn't shake the feeling they had lost him.

And it hurt. Just a week ago, they had Jesus, and with Jesus they mattered. They weren't just women to be bossed and bullied or ignored; with Jesus, they mattered as children of God. With Jesus they weren't always guilt-shamed for what they had done or not done, with Jesus they were forgiven. With Jesus they had a loving Father in heaven; with Jesus they had a Good Shepherd getting them to heaven. And so with Jesus, they had peace in their troubles, hope in their future. With Jesus they had a life that mattered. But now their Jesus was dead, and they were left feeling hopeless, sick and empty inside. And there wasn't anything they could do about it.

Except. They could make sure they didn't drop the ball in making sure Jesus got a decent burial. And so early Easter Sunday morning, they're at Jesus' grave, his tomb, looking for Jesus' body, but it wasn't there. It was like Jesus had slipped through their fingers, again. Can you imagine how confused and empty and hopeless they felt?

Then suddenly two angels dazzling bright like lightning are standing right there. **“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!”**

Jesus isn't dead. He is risen. He is raised. That changes everything! Jesus wasn't dropped. And Jesus didn't drop the ball. Jesus didn't drop his promises. Jesus didn't drop them. Jesus isn't dead. He is raised. He is risen.

That's not all the angels told them: **“Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ”** Then they remembered his words.”

“Then they remembered his words.” What a great lesson for us. On Good Friday, when the women saw Jesus dead on the cross, they could have known, should have known, that Jesus wouldn't be dead for long. When they saw Jesus buried, they could have known, should have known, Jesus wouldn't be buried long. On Sunday morning, when they went to re-bury Jesus, they could have known, should have known, Jesus didn't need to be re-buried. They could have known, should have known, on that third day Jesus would be raised back to life!

They could have known, they should have known, because Jesus had told them. He had told them the ugly, awful truth that he would be betrayed, arrested, and crucified. And he had told them why - to pay the price for our sin and guilt before God - to set us right and free with God. But that's not all, Jesus had also told them the wonderful, unbelievable truth that on the third day he would rise back to life. I said “the unbelievable truth” that he would rise back to life. I shouldn't say “unbelievable,” should I? It might seem unbelievable, but they had seen, heard, witnessed how Jesus could and, in

fact, did raise the dead. They could have known; they should have known. But it's easier to get stuck on what we see and feel - isn't it? It's easier to get stuck on the problem in front of us than to believe a promise.

What a great lesson for me. How many hours of stress? How many hours of emptiness? How many hours of dread? How many hours of trouble have I put myself through ... when I could have and should have known better ... when I could have and should have remembered his promises? But it's easier to get stuck on the problem in front of us than to believe a promise.

The disciples weren't doing any better, were they? Like the women, they could have and they should have known better, but they didn't remember the promises or process the promises, and so they were in hiding. Even after the women told them what they had seen, what the angels had told them, the disciples still didn't believe. What Jesus had said and promised didn't fit their way of thinking; now what the women saw and said didn't fit their way of thinking; and so in their way of thinking: Jesus must still be dead.

Sound familiar? It might not be easy for us to admit it, but it can be so easy for us to think the same way. When people say something to us, what do we often hear? Not necessarily all of what they say, but that part that fits our way of thinking. What do we remember? The part that fits our way of thinking. What do we process? The part that fits our way of thinking. When Jesus told his disciples that he would die and then rise again, none of that fit the disciples' way of thinking - and it seems - none of it stuck.

Thankfully, Jesus doesn't limit himself to our way of thinking. Even though it doesn't make sense, Jesus went to the cross to pay for our sins. Even though it doesn't seem possible, Jesus raised himself back to life for us. Think about it - the Son of God, God himself, went to the cross to die for us, to be punished for what we have done wrong. And then he raised his dead body back to life. Doesn't make sense, doesn't seem possible, doesn't fit our experience, doesn't fit our way of thinking, but Jesus did it.

It can be so easy for us to drop what Jesus says because it doesn't make sense to us. It can be so easy to drop what Jesus says because it doesn't seem

possible. It can be so easy for us to drop what Jesus says, but Jesus didn't drop the ball on what he said. On the way to the cross, he made some impossible, I'll say "unbelievable," promises - and Jesus kept them. Think of what that means for us - when Jesus says things that don't make sense, we can trust him! When Jesus says things that sound unbelievable, we can believe him.

When Jesus says to you: "Peace, your sins are forgiven you," you might not feel forgiven, people might not treat you as forgiven, but Jesus said it and so you can believe you are forgiven and right by God.

When Jesus says: "In this world you will have many troubles, but take heart, I have overcome the world," it might not look like it; it might not feel like it; but you can believe that Jesus has your troubles under control and he has you safe with him.

When Jesus says: "I'm taking you to heaven," we might wonder "How?" "When?" "How will I make it?" but we can be sure and believe - Jesus is coming to take us to heaven.

Some days it might feel like you dropped the ball; some days it might feel like Jesus has dropped the ball, like God has dropped you. Think back to Easter. That's the way it felt that first Easter morning. But Jesus didn't drop the ball. And God didn't drop Jesus. And together, they won't drop you. God will come through for you just like he promised - in Jesus! Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY 2025



The Resurrection of Our Lord

April 20, 2025

Pre-Service Music

Easter Medley

By Valerie Floeter

"This Joyful Eastertide"

By Charles Callahan

"Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands"

Setting by Carl Ziebell

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

By Charles Callahan

Order of Service

Opening Hymn

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

Hymn 438

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia! our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heav'nly King, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia! sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured, Alleluia! our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
now above the sky he's King, Alleluia! where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

Please stand to sing the final stanza

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia! praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all you heav'nly host, Alleluia! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

Minster: Christ is risen!
Congregation: **He is risen, indeed!**

Easter Dialogue

M: This is the day the Lord has made;

C: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it.** *(Psalm 118:24)*

M: Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

(Ephesians 2:4-7)

C: **Since we have been raised with Christ, we set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.** *(Colossians 3:1)*

M: Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. *(Colossians 3:2-3)*

C: **When Christ, who is our life, appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.** *(Colossians 3:4)*

M: Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. *(Romans 6:3-4)*

C: **What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?** *(Romans 6:1-2)*

M: But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. *(1 John 2:1)*

C: **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.** *(1 John 2:2)*

M: Christ is risen!

C: **He is risen, indeed!**

Choir

“The First Song of Isaiah”

Refrain

Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Refrain

Make his deeds known among the peoples;

See that they remember that his Name is exalted.

*Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,
and this is known in all the world.*

Refrain

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Refrain 2x

The Word of God

M: Almighty God, by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you conquered death and opened the gate to eternal life. Grant that we, who have been raised with him through baptism, may walk in the newness of life and always rejoice in the hope of sharing his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be dominion and praise now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson

Isaiah 25:6–9

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare

a feast of rich food for all peoples,

a banquet of aged wine—

the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy

the shroud that enfolds all peoples,

the sheet that covers all nations;

he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears
from all faces;
he will remove his people's disgrace
from all the earth.
The LORD has spoken.

In that day they will say,
"Surely this is our God;
we trusted in him, and he saved us.
This is the LORD, we trusted in him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Hymn

"Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won"

Hymn 444

Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won! Death no longer can appall me.
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done! From the grave Christ will recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! To him the throne high o'er heav'n and earth is given.
I shall go where he is gone, live and reign with him in heaven.
God is faithful; doubtings, hence! This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! For me he died; hence will I, to Jesus living,
pure in heart and act abide, praise to him and glory giving.
All I need God will dispense; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! I know full well nothing me from him shall sever.
Life nor death nor pow'rs of hell part me now from Christ forever.
God will be a sure defense; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And now is death but the gate to life immortal;
this shall calm my trembling breath when I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense: Jesus is my confidence!

Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymn

"There Is a Higher Throne"
Hymn 885

There is a higher throne than all this world has known,
where faithful ones from ev'ry tongue will one day come.
Before the Son we'll stand, made faultless through the Lamb;
believing hearts find promised grace; salvation comes.

Refrain

Hear heaven's voices sing; their thund'rous anthem rings
through em'rald courts and sapphire skies; their praises rise.
All glory, wisdom, pow'r, strength, thanks, and honor are
to God our King who reigns on high forevermore.

And there we'll find our home, our life before the throne;
we'll honor him in perfect song where we belong.
He'll wipe each tear-stained eye as thirst and hunger die;
the Lamb becomes our Shepherd-King; we'll reign with him. *Refrain*

The Gospel of the Resurrection

Luke 24:1-12

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

M: Christ is risen!

C: **He is risen, indeed!**

Explanation of the 2nd Article of the Apostle's Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

Hymn of the Day

"Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands"

Hymn 440 v. 1-6

Men sing v. 3

Women sing v. 4

1 Christ Je - sus lay in death's strong bands for our of -
 2 No son of man could con - quer death, such ru - in
 Men 3 Christ Je - sus, God's own Son, came down, his peo - ple
 Women 4 It was a strange and dread - ful strife when life and
 fens - es giv - en; but now at God's right hand he
 sin had wrought us. No in - no - cence was found on
 to de - liv - er; de - stroy - ing sin, he took the
 death con - tend - ed. The vic - to - ry re - mained with
 stands and brings us life from heav - en.
 earth, and there - fore death had brought us
 crown from death's pale brow for - ev - er.
 life, the reign of death was end - ed.
 There - fore let us joy - ful be and sing to
 in - to bond - age from of old and ev - er
 Stripped of pow'r, no more it reigns; an emp - ty
 Ho - ly Scrip - ture plain - ly saith that death is
 God right thank - ful - ly loud songs of
 grew more strong and bold and held us
 form a - lone re - mains; its sting is
 swal - lowed up by death; dis - graced, it
 al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 as its cap - tive. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 lost for - ev - er. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
 lies de - feat - ed. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

5 Here the true Pas - chal Lamb we see, whom God so
6 So let us keep the fes - ti - val to which the

free - ly gave us; he died on the ac - curs - ed
Lord in - vites us; Christ is him - self the joy of

tree - so strong his love - to save us.
all, the sun that warms and lights us.

See, his blood now marks our door; faith points to
Now his grace to us im - parts e - ter - nal

it; death pass - es o'er, and Sa - tan
sun - shine to our hearts; the night of

can - not harm us. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
sin is end - ed. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Sermon

Luke 24:1-12

Hymn

"In Christ Alone"

Hymn 510

In Christ alone my hope is found; he is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe;
this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Gathering of Offering

An offering can be an act of cheerful worship to thank God for his blessings and to support his ministry at St. John. The vast majority of our church and school ministry is made possible by our weekend offerings. May the Lord bless you! And may he use your gifts to be a blessing to many others!



*If you prefer online giving, you may scan
this code with your mobile device.*

Easter Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, on this glorious day we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Increase our faith that the message of the empty tomb may fill our lives with new life.

**When we are weak, be our strength; when we are sad, be our song;
and when we sin, be our salvation.**

In the hearts of the hurting and the lost, may the promise of Jesus as “the Resurrection and the Life” wipe away tears born of death and give new birth into a living hope.

Use our compassion and our witness to comfort hearts in need of mercy. Wherever we live and whatever we do, help us to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have in Christ.

King of kings and Lord of lords, destroy all dominion, authority, and power (seen and unseen) that stands against you. For your glory and for the good of your people, rule over the evil in the world and over the evil in our hearts.

Triumph over our enemies and empower us as your Church to fight the good fight to the end.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for connecting us to Christ and his resurrection through baptism. As your baptized children, keep us united with your Son, living for you as he lives for you.

Enrich us and empower us with everything we need for life and godliness.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

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.

Closing Blessing

M: Go now into God’s creation with bold confidence, living and declaring the truth that Jesus is alive. Go in the grace, the peace, and the strength of the Father who has raised the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia!

C: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

"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.

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.

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.

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!

Postlude

"I Know that My Redeemer Lives"

Setting by Michael Burkhardt

Service Participants

Preacher and Presiding Minister

Organist

Choir Director

Choir

Musicians

Pastor Kevin Raddatz

Mrs. Beth Rockwell

Dr. Tim Samelson

St. John Senior Choir

Miss Meredith Fein, *violin*

Mr. Charles Ledvina, *bass*

Mr. Steve Lemerand, *timpani*

Mr. Louis Luedtke, *trumpet*

Mr. Justin Wintrone, *trombone*

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