



Liturgical Service

A Short Service of Reading and Reflection
April 27, 2024

Celebrating Christ's Resurrection

Preparing

The temptation is always to reduce it to size. A bowl of cherries. A rat race. Amino acids. Even to call it a mystery smacks of reductionism. It is the mystery.

After lecturing learnedly on miracles, a great theologian was asked to give a specific example of one. "There is only one miracle," he answered, "it is life."

Have you wept at anything during the last year? Has your heart beat faster at the sight of someone beautiful? Have you thought seriously about the fact that someday you are going to die? More often than not do you listen when people are speaking to you instead of just waiting for your turn to speak? Is there anybody you know in whose place, if one of you had to suffer great pain, you would volunteer yourself?¹

Prelude: Song Without Words, Op. 19, No. 1 – Felix Mendelssohn

The pastor leads and we respond by reading the bold type:

**Blessed, Holy God of all eternity,
you look with favor on those who believe in you,
and redeem them.**

Source of all creation,
you have come among us as the fertile Vine of love,
showing us that every branch that learns to love
will bear much fruit,
and still be pruned to love more deeply.

As Philip helped the Ethiopian understand,
by your love, the poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to you.

By your love, we gather this morning in joyful worship,
to celebrate the power of Christ
returned to life from death,
calling us into a faith-filled future.

Be with us as we worship in the name of the risen Christ.²

Amen.

The pastor briefly shares announcements.

Inviting

The liturgist continues:

God of all creation, we celebrate the good news,
that you are love.

We celebrate the power of new life filled with promise,
the hopeful vision of a new heaven and new earth.

We watch the fields, springing green,
drinking in the rain, reaching for the sun.

We hear the promise of summer in the song of every nesting bird.

Holy Maker of this day,
you have shown the mercy promised to our ancestors;
you have remembered your holy covenant
with all creation,
you have given us the promise of new life in Christ.

The dayspring from on high has broken in upon us
bringing us peace in the midst of toil,
and we are grateful for the call to serve you in so many ways.

Hear now our prayers of praise and thanks,

for all the blessings you have given to the world this day.³

Amen.

The cantor sings (Hymn #175):

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

We join the cantor:

**In the grave they laid Him, love by hatred slain,
Thinking that He would never wake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.**

Praying

The liturgist continues:

God of all grace,
in foolishness and pride
we often dare to speak on your behalf,
claiming to know your ways
and making promises we struggle to keep.
Help us in humility to learn to be still,
trusting that you indeed are God.⁴

After a period of silent reflection on our sin and God's grace, we continue:

God of forgiveness and new beginnings,
we give you thanks for this new day,
for opening our eyes to each new morning,
for reminding us that Christ is always risen.⁵

Amen.

The liturgist may remind us of special blessings, needs and concerns, and then says:

I invite you to kneel as we pray.

**Our holy Guardian God, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and glory are yours now and forever.**

Amen.

Loving Christ, you came to bring good news to everyone.
Through your atoning sacrifice you freed us
to reach out to those who are weary and heavy-laden,
so that they might find rest,
healing for their wounds and illnesses,
comfort for their despair and grief,
and new hope in the face of tribulation.
God of healing love,
like Christ we would take your burden upon ourselves.

We pray silently.

Show us how we can learn to love one another,
for we know we are called to be your Body
in this time and place.

We pray silently.

Healing Holy Spirit, we raise our prayers
for those who have no dayspring in their lives,
the homeless and the lonely,
the sick and dying,
those whose bodies and spirits cry out in pain.

We pray silently.

Hear now, O God, our prayers for those in need, (including _____),
as we raise them up for healing in the name of Christ,
who walks with us, guiding our feet into the way of peace.⁶

We pray silently.

Amen.

The congregation sits.

Listening

Listen to the word of God from Acts, chapter 8, verses 26-40.

Lesson from the Book of Acts

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the pastor says:

Please join in reading from Psalm 22.

- 25 My praise is of God in the great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship
the Lord.
- 26 **The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the Lord give praise:
“May your heart live for ever!”**
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall bow before God.
- 28 **For dominion belongs to the Lord;
who rules over the nations.**
- 29 To the Lord alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship;
all who go down to the dust fall before the Lord.
- 30 **My soul shall live for God;
my descendants shall serve the Lord;
they shall be known as the Lord’s for ever.**
- 31 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn
the saving deeds that God has done.

After a period of silent reflection on the Psalm, the lector says:

Listen to the word of God from First John, chapter 4, verses 7-16.

Lesson from the New Testament

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the cantor says:

Please stand and join me in singing ___ stanzas of hymn 234, “Christ is the World’s Light.”

The people continue standing as the liturgist continues:

Listen to the gospel according to John, chapter 15, verses 1-8.

Lesson from the Gospel

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

We reflect silently on the Gospel.

Offering

The liturgist continues:

Please be seated.

We bring to you, O God, our lives, our talents, and these our other gifts.
May they work to your glory.

You can give at the doors to the sanctuary after the service, or you can visit lasierra.church and click on “Give.”

Offertory: Song Without Words, Op. 30, No. 3 – Felix Mendelssohn

Considering

The homilist prays:

Nourish us today with your Word, O God, so that we may bear witness to your redeeming love and resurrection power.

Amen.

Homily

Affirming

The liturgist say and people affirm:

We believe in a God

who is never confined to our imagining,
is never in bondage to our understanding
and never kept within our dwelling places.

Our God is the mystery

of divine and human, bound together,
of power and vulnerability,
of crucifixion and resurrection.

Our God is the wonder

of truth and compassion,
of liberation and responsibility,
of eternal wisdom and amazing grace.

We celebrate this God

who leaps free of all our boundaries in love,
stretching out beyond any barricades
and in mercy bending deep
into fragile human hearts.⁷

Amen.

We join the cantor in singing (hymn #175):

**Forth he came in triumph, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain;
Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.**

**When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Your touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.**

Responding

The pastor says:

O God, you have redeemed us and adopted us into your family: Watch over your children with love, and grant to us, who believe in your Son Jesus Christ, both true freedom and an inheritance beyond change and decay; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Angelus (organ chimes)

Blessing

Postlude: March of the Priests, from Athalia – Felix Mendelssohn

The pastor says and the people respond:

May the living God remove the suffocating shroud

that lies upon our world;
may the risen Savior draw the sting of death,
bringing all to life in him.

May the flowing Spirit set us and all creation free
and seal our hearts with faith
and the blessing of God.⁸

Alleluia! Amen!

Upcoming Texts

May 4: Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; and John 15:9-17.

May 11: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13; and John 17:6-19.

Visit <https://lasierra.church/liturgical-service/> to view upcoming texts and participants,
download this liturgy, watch online, or sign up for our email newsletter.

¹ *Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two* (2015).

² Peter Bankson & Deborah Sokolove, *Calling on God: Inclusive Prayers for Three Years of Sundays* (2014).

³ Adapted from Peter Bankson & Deborah Sokolove, *Calling on God: Inclusive Prayers for Three Years of Sundays* (2014).

⁴ *Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two* (2015).

⁵ Peter Bankson & Deborah Sokolove, *Calling on God: Inclusive Prayers for Three Years of Sundays* (2014).

⁶ Peter Bankson & Deborah Sokolove, *Calling on God: Inclusive Prayers for Three Years of Sundays* (2014).

⁷ *Celtic Daily Prayer Book Two* (2015).

⁸ Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* (2008).