



Liturgical Service

A Short Service of Reading and Reflection
May 11, 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: Prelude and Fugue in C Minor by J.S. Bach

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

**God of words and wisdom,
God of beginnings and endings,
God of truth and hope,**

you lead us into each bright, new morning,
inviting us to listen as the sparrows and wrens and robins
announce the coming of the dawn;
inviting us to watch as the first golden trumpet of the daylily
opens its mouth to the sun.

You call us to delight in your presence,
to be like trees planted by streams of water,
giving shade to all who pass by,
and yielding fruit in due season.

As we sing and pray and share the stories of our life in you,
help us to remember
that you are always with us and around us and among us,
and that Christ is always risen.²

Amen.

The pastor briefly shares announcements.

Inviting

The liturgist continues:

God of hope and wonder,
God of earth and sea,
God of love and glory, we give you thanks
for all the ordinary wonders of each new day:
for bees and butterflies, for penstemon and poppy,
for the sweetness of strawberries
and the tartness of lemonade.

We give you thanks for the countless forms of beauty
that tell us of your abundant love:
for all the colors of skin and hair and eyes
that adorn the members of your Body,
for all the languages and sounds in which we sing and pray,
for all the hopes and dreams,
that help us to live the vision of your holy realm.

Because Christ is always risen,
we give our thanks and praise to you.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.

God of vision and power,
God of love and hope,
God of compassion and comfort,
even as we give thanks for so much
we hear the cries of the lost and broken,
yearning for an end to fear and pain.
Each morning's news brings word
of war and famine,
of violence and oppression,
of injustice and cruelty.
Our bodies are subject to illness and disease,
our friends and loved ones die,
our neighbors fall prey to those who would harm them,
and earthquake, fire, and flood destroy the homes
of rich and poor alike.
We pray for all who live with heartache and sorrow.

We pray silently.

We pray for all who work to ease the pain of others.

We pray silently.

We pray for all who give their lives so that others might live.

We pray silently.

Because Christ is always risen,
we pray aloud and in silence
for all who need our prayers (including _____).⁶

Amen.

The congregation sits.

Listening

Listen to the word of God from Acts, chapter 1, verses 15-17 and 21-26.

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 1.

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 **Their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and they meditate on God's law day and night.**
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;
everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 **It is not so with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment
comes,
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 **For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked is doomed.**

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

Listen to the word of God from First John, chapter 5, verses 9-13.

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 257, "Come Down, O Love Divine."

The people continue standing as the liturgist continues:

Listen to the gospel according to John, chapter 17, verses 6-19.

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: Papillon by Edvard Grieg

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: Sonata VIII, Movement III, by Sergei Prokofiev

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 18: Acts 2:1-21; Ps. 104:24-34, 35c; Romans 8:22-27; and John
15:26-27, 16:4b-15.

May 25: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; and John 3:1-17.

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).