

3rd Sunday of Easter: April 18, 2021

The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church, Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today! We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and to serve as an officer of the church.

We Gather in Christ

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, your power makes the lame walk and the dead rise to new life. We give you thanks for the love poured into our world through Christ Jesus, who opened our minds to understand what you have made, whose appearance among his followers brings peace, and who creates faith through touch and taste. Show us Jesus, even now, through the mystery of your threefold presence, one God, abiding now and forever. Amen.

PRELUDE

Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain
Sally Harmon, organist

arr. Martin

WELCOME & CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

CALL TO WORSHIP

The bread of life opens our eyes.

The word of life opens our ears.

The risen one shows us God's own brokenness,
and by those wounds we are healed.

Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Let us worship God!

HYMN 415: *Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy*

**Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
full of pity, love, and power.**

Refrain:

**I will arise and go to Jesus;
he will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.**

**Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify,
true belief and true repentance,
every grace that brings you nigh. (Refrain)**

**Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
lost and ruined by the fall;
if you tarry till you're better,
you will never come at all. (Refrain)**

**Let not conscience make you linger,
nor of fitness fondly dream;
all the fitness he requireth
is to feel your need of him. (Refrain)**

CALL TO CONFESSION

The One who calls us to repent, hears us.
In trust that our Creator knows us through and through,
let us open our hearts to the healing of God's forgiveness.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Good and gracious God, we are creatures of dust, ignorant of your revelation, misunderstanding your life, death, and resurrection among us, needing forgiveness. We repent of our failure to give as you have given to us. We beg your mercy for our fallen world. We seek your Word, that we may live with the faith of Jesus. Be our solace in this life and always. We ask this as your own children, holy and incomplete. Forgive us and lead us. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

In the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
your plea for absolution has been heard.
God's promises are sure: your sins are forgiven.
Peace be with you.

RESPONSE 240: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give thanks to the ris - en Lord. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give praise to His Name.

GIFT OF MUSIC

Ländler
Nancy Norris & Virginia Stern, pianists

Schubert

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Penny Andrist

The Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, by your Spirit
reveal your radical, surprising love;
come to us through your holy word,
and let us hear what you are saying. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Luke 24: 36b-48, Whirl Bible p. 418

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

May God bless the reading and hearing of this portion of the holy Word.

SECOND READING Acts 3:12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, ‘You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

‘And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

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

SERMON: The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

HYMN 234: *Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain*

**Come, you faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness!
God has brought forth Israel
into joy from sadness,
loosed from Pharaoh’s bitter yoke
Jacob’s sons and daughters;
led them with unmoistened foot
through the Red Sea waters.**

**’Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ has burst his prison,
and from three days’ sleep in death
as a sun has risen.
All the winter of our sins,
long and dark, is flying**

from the Light, to whom we give
laud and praise undying.

Now the queen of seasons, bright
with the day of splendor,
with the royal feast of feasts
comes its joy to render;
comes to glad Jerusalem,
who with true affection
welcomes in unwearied strains
Jesus' resurrection!

Neither could the gates of death,
nor the tomb's dark portal,
nor the watchers, nor the seal
hold you as a mortal:
but today, among your own,
you appear, bestowing
your deep peace, which evermore
passes human knowing.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: Taken from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church. In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Responding to the Word

OFFERING

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bearing the Word into the World

HYMN 39: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not.
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
(Refrain)

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
(Refrain)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Great is Thy Faithfulness

arr. Schrader