

The Festival of our Lord's Resurrection  
Living Faith Lutheran Church  
April 12, 2020

**GATHERING**

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! *(Repeat 3 times, a little more robustly each time)*

**Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Blessed by the holy Trinity, + one God, the fountain of living water,  
the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,  
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. *(Water may be poured into a bowl during the prayer)*

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters  
and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.  
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.  
At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.  
By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,  
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,  
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.  
Shower us with your Spirit,  
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honour and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Gathering Song #365 "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"**

1. Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia! our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!
2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia! unto Christ, our heavenly king, Alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia! sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!
3. 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!

4. Sing we to our God above, Alleluia! praise eternal as God's love. Alleluia!  
praise God, all you heavenly host, Alleluia! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

### **Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

### **Kyrie**

*Refrain: Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way. Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.*

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;  
for this holy house, for all who worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;  
that we may live out truth and justice and grace, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

For peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends and family;  
for life and for love, for our work and our play, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

For your Spirit to guide; that you center our lives in the water and the Word;  
that you nourish our souls with your body and blood, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

### **Hymn of Praise**

*Refrain: This is the feast of vict'ry for our God,  
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign! Alleluia.*

1. Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.  
Power, riches, wisdom and strength, and honour, blessing, and glory are his. *Refrain*
2. Sing with all the people of God and join in the hymn of all creatin:  
Blessing, honour, glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. *Refrain*

### **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, you give us the joy of celebrating our Lord's resurrection. Give us also  
the joy of life in your service, and bring us at last to the full joy of life eternal,  
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.

## WORD

### The Readings

#### Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup>That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup>We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

#### Colossians 3:1-4

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, <sup>3</sup>for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

### Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!

The Holy Gospel      Matthew 28:1-10      *Glory to you, O Lord*

<sup>1</sup>After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."

<sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

*Praise to you, O Christ*

**Sermon**                      **The Ragman** by Walter Wangerin

Just before dawn one Friday morning, I noticed a young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys and lanes of our city. He was pulling an old cart filled with clothes bright and new and he was calling out in a clear voice: "Rags! Rags! New rags for old!"

"Now, this is a strange sight," I thought to myself. After all, the man stood 6'4" tall; his arms were as hard and muscular as tree limbs and his eyes flashed with intelligence. Could he find no better job than this—to be a ragman in the inner city?

Because my curiosity drove me, I decided to follow him. . . and I wasn't disappointed in what I found.

First the ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief, sighing deeply and shedding a thousand tears. Her shoulder shook with her crying, and it was obvious that her heart was breaking.

The Ragman stopped his cart and quietly walked over to the woman, stepping around tin cans, dead toys, and Pampers. "Give me your rag," he said ever so gently, "and I'll give you another in return." He slipped the handkerchief from her eyes and as she looked up, he laid across her palm a linen cloth so clean and new that it almost shone. And then he left.

And as began to pull his cart again, the Ragman did a strange thing: He put her stained handkerchief to his own face, and then he began to weep, to sob as grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking. . .yet she was left without a tear.

"This is a wonder," I breathed to myself, and, like a child who cannot turn away from a mystery, I continued to follow the sobbing Ragman. "Rags! Rags! New rags for old!"

In a little while, just after the sun came up, the Ragman came upon a little girl whose head was wrapped in a bandage and whose eyes seemed empty. Blood soaked her bandage and a single line of blood ran down her cheek.

The tall Ragman looked upon the child with pity and drew a lovely yellow bonnet from his cart. "Give me your rag," he said, tracing the line of blood on her cheek, "and I'll give mine." The child could only gaze at him while he loosened her bandage, removed it and tied it to his own head. The bonnet he sat on hers.

And then I gasped at what I saw, for with the bandage had gone the wound! Against his own brow could be seen blood—his own. “Rags! Rags! New rags for old!” cried the sobbing, bleeding, strong, intelligent Ragman.

The sun rose higher in the sky now, hurting my eyes, and the Ragman seemed more and more in a hurry.

“Are you going to work?” he asked a man who leaned against a telephone pole. The man shook his head. The Ragman pressed him: “Do you have a job?” “Are you crazy?” sneered the other and pulled away from the pole revealing the right sleeve of his jacket—flat, with the cuff stuffed into the pocket. He had no arm.

“Give me your jacket,” said the Ragman, “and I’ll give you mine.”

The quiet authority in his voice compelled the one-armed to do as directed. And as he took off his jacket, the Ragman did the same. . .and I trembled at what I saw. For the Ragman’s arm stayed in its sleeve, and when the other put the jacket on, he had two good arms, thick as tree limbs. . .but the Ragman had only one. “Go to work,” he said to the man.

Shortly after he found a drunk lying unconscious beneath an army blanket—an old man, hunched, wasted and sick. The Ragman took the blanket and wrapped it around himself, but for the drunk he left new clothes.

Now I had to run to keep up with the Ragman, for although he was weeping uncontrollably, bleeding freely from the forehead, pulling his cart with one arm, stumbling for drunkenness and falling, again and again, exhausted, old and sick, yet he went on with terrible speed through the alleys of the city, mile after mile, until he came to the city limits, and then he rushed beyond.

I wept to see the change in this man and hurt to see his sorrow, and yet I needed to see where he was going in such haste, to learn what drove him so.

Soon the little old Ragman came to a landfill, to the city’s garbage dump, and although I wanted to help him in what he did, I was frightened and hung back, hiding.

He climbed the hill and then, with tormented labor, cleared a little space on the top. Then, sighing deeply, he lay down, pillowed his head on a handkerchief and a jacket, covered his bones with an army blanket. . .and died.

Oh, how I cried to witness that death! Slumping in a junked car, I wailed and moaned as one who had no hope because I had come to love the Ragman and now he was dead.

I sobbed and sobbed and cried myself to sleep. I did not know—nor could I have known—that I slept through Friday night and Saturday and through its night, too.

But then, on Sunday morning, I was awakened by a violent sound. Opening my eyes, I could see only light, only bright, pure, hard light, slamming against my sour face and my squinting eyes.

I blinked. . .and looked. . .and saw the strangest wonder of them all, for there was the Ragman, folding his blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead. . .but alive! And, besides that, healthy!

There was no sign of sorrow nor of age, and all the rags that he had gathered shone for cleanliness and beauty.

Lowering my head in fear and trembling for all that I had seen, I walked up to the Ragman. I told him my name with shame for I was a sorry figure next to him. And then, in that place, I took off all my clothes and asked with a great yearning in my voice, "Dress me, please."

And he did. My Lord, he put new rags on me and I am a wonder beside him,  
beside the Ragman, the Ragman, the Christ. Amen. SDG

**Hymn of the Day**      **This Easter Celebration** (*Tune: "The Church's One Foundation"*)

This Easter celebration is not like ones we've known.  
We pray in isolation, we sing the hymns alone.  
We're distant from our neighbors— from worship leaders, too.  
No flowers grace the chancel to set a festive mood.

No gathered choirs are singing; no banners lead the way.  
O God of love and promise, where's joy this Easter Day?  
With sanctuaries empty, may homes become the place  
we ponder resurrection and celebrate your grace.

Our joy won't come from worship that's in a crowded room  
but from the news of women who saw the empty tomb.  
Our joy comes from disciples who ran with haste to see—  
who heard that Christ is risen, and then, by grace, believed.

In all the grief and suffering, may we remember well:  
Christ suffered crucifixion and faced the powers of hell.  
Each Easter bears the promise: Christ rose that glorious day!  
Now nothing in creation can keep your love away.

We thank you that on Easter, your church is blessed to be  
a scattered, faithful body that's doing ministry.  
In homes and in the places of help and healing, too,  
we live the Easter message by gladly serving you.

Email: [carolynshymns@gmail.com](mailto:carolynshymns@gmail.com) New Hymns: [www.carolynshymns.com](http://www.carolynshymns.com)  
Carolyn gives permission for free use of this hymn by churches.

### **Prayers of the Community**

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of resurrection, from the very beginning you give the church the gift of women as your witnesses: as preachers, teachers, and leaders, *especially our national Bishop, Susan, and our BC Synod's Assistant to the Bishop, Kathy*). Open our ears to their proclamation this day and always. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

All your creation praises you—the earth hums, the seas pulse, the stars shine, and the galaxies whirl in glorious harmonies to honor you. Let us hear and blend our voices in the song. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The countries of the world experience disunity and conflict around the struggles between the desire for personal liberty and the wellbeing of the society; we set our minds on fear and greed rather than on your rule of justice and steadfast love. Build up all countries on your cornerstone of peace, and grant healing and patience to all people everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We still weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Cradle the fearful, the suffering, and the dying, assuring them of your loving presence (*especially those who are infected, in hospitals or care homes, in Intensive Care Units, on ventilators or in hospice. We pray, too, for those in our parish family dealing with illness of body, mind or spirit, particularly Linda, Erin, Bud, Pam, Ingrid, Dorothy, Erika, Steinar, Karsten, Inez, and those we name before you now in silence or aloud. . .*). Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Bless the creative and helpful service of worship leaders this day all over the world who seek to share your grace, not in the usual churches and with the usual Easter crowds, but with those scattered about worshipping online or reading and praying at home. Give hearts that are open and vulnerable to your promise of our presence and your gift of new life to all who hunger for it and rejoice in it. And bring us back soon to our communities of faith and the places where we gather with friends and loved ones to offer our praise and thanksgiving with one clear and strong voice. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Risen Lord, you went ahead of us into the grave and defeated the powers of death and evil. We remember this morning those who have died, including *Rick and Dave and those nearest and dearest to us whose presence we miss but whose memories we cherish, especially. . .* Inspire us to live our lives in this resurrection hope and draw us to you in our final days that we might leave this world wrapped in the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, merciful God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**The Sharing of Peace**            *In whatever way and with whomever we able*

## THANKSGIVING

### **A Prayer for those who live alone**

Gracious God, none who trust in your Son can be separated from your love. Give to those who live alone peace and contentment in their solitude, hope and fulfillment in their love of you, and joy and companionship in their relationships with others; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **A Prayer for the elders of the community**

Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, maker of heaven and earth. From everlasting you are God, our dwelling place in all generations. You are the source of holy wisdom, and the fountain of all truth. We give thanks to you for the elders among us. We are graced by their wisdom and seasoning. We are touched by their knowledge and faith. Bless them, O God, as they are a blessing to us. Pour out your Spirit, that our elders may continue to dream dreams and testify to the Light of their salvation, Jesus Christ. May we find inspiration in their years of faithful trust and service, and may we follow their example by serving you with steadfastness and singleness of heart; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord who has taught us pray:

Our Father in heaven, 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from the evil one.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

## SENDING

### **Benediction**

May God bless and keep us; may God's face shine upon us and be gracious to us;  
may God look upon us with favour and give us peace. Amen.

### **Sending Song**            **#383 "Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!"**

Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna! Celebrate this day of days!  
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder: all creation is amazed.  
In the desert all surrounding, see, a spreading tree has grown.



Healing leaves of grace abounding bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair.  
Walk with gladness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.  
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend.  
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven nevermore shall be the same.  
Break the bread of new creation where the world is still in pain.  
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"  
God the First and Last is with us. Sing Hosanna, ev'ryone!

### **Dismissal**

Christ is with us, in us, around us, above and below us wherever we are. Thanks be to God.

### ***A few notes regarding the service above and other items related to our community:***

*The sermon today is a story told and written by a college and seminary classmate of mine, the Rev. Dr. Walter Wangerin, an American author and educator best known for his religious novels and children's books, among them **The Bible for Children**. Wangerin is presently a professor and "Writer in Residence" at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. The story, "The Ragman", is one of those in his short and wonderful book entitled **Ragman: And Other Cries of Faith**. I mention this because this moving story was preached, printed and sent out without his permission or that of his publisher. We could, however, acknowledge his talent by buying a copy of this book, originally published in 1984 and re-issued in paperback in 2004. It can be purchased online from Amazon as a used paperback for about \$2.50 US or an electronic book (kindle) for \$10.00 US. Doing so would be a nice gesture, and quiet the vague feeling of guilt I feel for "stealing" it and making it public—although I have made it clear that it is not my work. I am only the messenger.*

*Similarly, the hymn of the day today was written by a new hymnwriter, Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, a Presbyterian minister from the US. You are invited to drop her an email at the address listed at the end of the hymn thanking her for her gift with words and her generosity in making the hymn available for use for free to any congregation for this particular Sunday at this particular time.*

*You are also invited to visit our parish website <https://livingfaithlutheran.weebly.com> where all the worship resources (texts, videos and musical offerings) are posted. Feel free to open, download and pass on any of the offerings presented there to friends and family elsewhere who are "staying home" and may not have the opportunity to participate in any online worship.*

*Finally, you are welcome to donate to our congregation in this time when gathering together is not possible and normal ways of "giving" aren't "normal ways of giving". The website has a link which provides a way of contributing; you are invited to "e-transfer" (electronic transfer)*

*donations to **livingfaithlutheran@gmail.com** (and if you wish a tax receipt, please provide the necessary information in the message box); or you may wish to mail a cheque to Living Faith Lutheran Church, 4607 Whitaker Road, Sechelt, BC. V0N 3A2. Having said all of that, I want to assure you there is no obligation, pressure or any of those other words implying the freedom to disregard this last announcement. We are grateful for the gift you have given us in your “virtual presence and virtual worship” with us. So, thank you, and rejoice, because CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN, INDEED!*