



Easter Sunday
Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church
April 9th, 2023

Seeking: Who Are You Looking For?

When Mary finds the tomb empty, she stands weeping at the vacant grave. Jesus, mysteriously appearing as the gardener, asks her: "Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" In the haze of grief, Mary can only see what is right before her—or in this case, what is not before her. It is only when Jesus calls her by name that the veil is lifted and she beholds the resurrected Christ.

On this Easter morning, who—or what—are you looking for? Why have you come to the tomb? What kind of Jesus are you looking for? Recall all the questions that have guided us this Lenten season. Who do we see in the living Christ? What veils need to be lifted so we can recognize God's resurrection in all the places it occurs? As we journey into Eastertide, will we continue to seek the miracle of God's newness? In what ways will you continue to look for Jesus in the world?

Call To Worship

L: What are you looking for? **C: The light before dawn.**

L: What are you looking for? **C: A reason to hope.**

L: What are you looking for? **C: Joy after grief and flowers after winter.**

L: What are you looking for? **C: A place to belong.**

L: What are you looking for? **C: We are looking for the Messiah.**

L: Good news! Come in. Love is alive! **C: Surely God is in this place.**

L: Alleluia! Christ is risen! **All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Call to Confession

As a teenager, my younger brother used to yell down the stairs, "Mom! I can't find my tennis shoes!" My mother would lovingly holler back, "Have you checked your closet?" My brother would assure her that he had, and tell her they were nowhere to be found. Like clockwork, my mom would then walk up the creaky stairs of our two-story home, and like some parental magic trick, pull my younger brother's shoes from his closet. The shoes were there the whole time. He just couldn't see them. Friends, sometimes our relationship with God can feel a little bit like that. We seek after God. We swear that we're looking, and yet so often we miss when the Divine is right under our noses. So let us pray together, knowing that our seeking has its limits, but God's love does not. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession *(Brief Silence)*

God of resurrection, We confess, like a dog with a bone, we run aimlessly. We chase our tails, looking for things that provide answers to the suffering of the world, looking for comfort to our longest nights. You meet us in the darkness before dawn, but we mistake you for the gardener. Forgive us for seeking after worldly things. Forgive us for forgetting to seek you. Speak to us. Call us by name, that we might recognize you in our midst. With hope and gratitude we pray, amen.

Words of Forgiveness

L: Family of faith, No matter how many times we lose sight of God, God never loses sight of us. We might spend our whole days seeking, but we are always found. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel, the good news proclaimed in resurrection:

C: What once was lost is found. We are held in God's loving embrace: forgiven, claimed, and sent to serve. Alleluia! Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

L: Rabbouni, Teacher, **C: We have spent the past six weeks asking questions. We have turned over every rock. We have shined a light in every dusty corner. We have opened the blinds. We have wrestled with truth. We have sought after you. So on this Easter morning, bring wisdom to our seeking. Move through this room until the walls echo with the sound of alleluias. Roll back the stones that might prevent us from drawing closer to you. Calm our**

hearts. Say our names. Awaken us to your presence in our midst. We are here. We are listening. We are seeking after you. Alleluia. Amen.

Special Music

Easter Hallelujah – Carrili Larson (Sunrise Service)

Word

First Reading- Acts 10:34-43

³⁴Peter began to speak to [the people]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how 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. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not 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. ⁴²He 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. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God's mercy endures forever.

Let Israel now declare, "God's mercy endures forever."

The LORD is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.

Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!"

The right hand of the LORD is exalted! The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!"

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

The LORD indeed punished me sorely, but did not hand me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.

"This is the gate of the LORD; here the righteous may enter."

I give thanks to you, for you have answered me and you have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Reading- Colossians 3:1-4

¹If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel- John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Message

Hymn of The Day

Thine Is The Glory

ELW #376

Affirmation of Faith

L: We believe in resurrection—**C: mysterious, beyond our understanding, and yet, like tulips after the snow: real.**

L: We believe in Easter morning—**C: in the promise of a God who would roll back every stone to return to us.**

L: We believe in Jesus—**C: who calls us by name and asks, "Who are you looking for?"**

L: So we look—**C: for justice, for mercy, for God in our midst.**

L: And as we look, we sing, "Alleluia!" **C: Amen.**

Offering

Offering Song

Give Thanks

Gray #170

Prayer of Thanksgiving/Prayer of the People

Resurrecting God, Mary went to the garden looking for you. Two thousand years later, we follow in her footsteps. We seek after you, hungry for a garden moment where we might hear you say our name or feel you in our midst.

So before the hallelujahs begin, we empty our pockets of our prayers and remember where we've been.

With gratitude, we recall Maundy Thursday. We are grateful for the tables we gather around, for the friends that feel like family, and for this church—which acts as our band of disciples. We hold onto the reminder of you washing the disciples' feet that night, and trust that that same love extends to us.

With sorrow, we recall Good Friday. We grieve the depths of cruelty woven into that day—a cruelty so many in this hurting world know. So, for those who are still caught in grief and loss, for those whose days have turned to night, relieve them of their suffering. Find them in the crowd. Wipe their tears. Hold their grief for them and point them toward peace.

Now, with hope we enter into this Easter morning, to find ourselves face-to-face with your good news. Thank you for giving us reason to hope. Thank you for the sunrise after a long night, for the healing of bones and hearts, for laughter that is contagious, and for the joy felt in community. Tether every gratitude and joy in our life back to you.

And now, as we come to the Table, just as Mary came to the tomb, we ask that in every stage of our seeking, you would be near to us. Pour out a double portion of your Spirit on this bread and cup that we might see you as clearly as Mary did. And may this meal nourish us to build your kingdom here.

Holy Communion

***Words of Institution**

Pg. 207

***Lord's Prayer**

Pg. 208

Invitation to the Table

Communion Distribution (All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full—full of hope, full of promise, full of what could be. For we not only found glimpses of you at this Table, but we caught a glimpse of the way things could be: in a meal where all are welcomed and all are fed. Is there anything holier than that? So thank you for nourishing our curiosity alongside our spirit and our conviction. May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, **Amen.**

Sending

Benediction

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking. Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass. Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us. As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for. In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. Amen.

Sending Hymn

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia! – Verse 1

ELW #382

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

C: To share the Good News of God’s Word and to serve the community and the world.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Bulletin Donated: Happy Easter!

****PLEASE RETURN BULLETINS AFTER SUNRISE SERVICE****

Mission Statement of Gustaf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God’s Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord’s real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ’s name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

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