



Holy Humor Sunday
Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church
April 7th, 2024

A number of American churches are resurrecting an old Easter custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity: "Holy Humor Sunday" --- a celebration of Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday after Easter. For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday was observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced. The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead.

Holy Humor Sunday services not only give Christians an opportunity for ongoing celebrations of the greatest miracle in human history - Jesus' resurrection - it also gives each of us an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for our own smaller resurrections in this world and this life.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L) Oh Lord our God. Every good thing we have is a gift from you.

C) You give us the gift of laughter.

L) You Lord are all we need.

C) You are my rock and you keep me safe.

L) We praise you, O Lord, for being our guide.

C) You bring our lives goodness and the future is bright.

L) Even in the darkest night your teachings fill our minds.

C) We will always look to you.

L) You are always beside us so we will always be joyful to you.

C) Alleluia!

GATHERING SONG: *Take Time to be Funny* (to tune of *Take Time to be Holy* #656 gray)

Take time to be funny, rejoice in the Lord, Let laughter explode and have fun with God's Word, For laughter is healing, gives strength to the weak, God loves to see smiles, for they lift up the meek.

Take time to be silly, it's good for the soul, Too many are somber, grabbing control. Let go and let God's love wash over your soul, Heavenly transcendence can be your life's goal.

Old Sarah and Abram – a child they lacked, But God's angels promised and she birthed Isaac, In Hebrew that's "laughter", go check if you want, Genesis Seventeen is where it is found.

For humor is holy, it sanctifies life, Replenishes hope and oft softens advice. It undercuts sorrow, deflates haughty pride, So smile and hang on, and rejoice in life's ride.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P) Let us admit to God the foolish choices we make each and every day.

C) Most merciful God, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. Believing we have to be serious all the time, we miss out on the joy of your creation. We don't share in the happiness that is rightfully ours. We forget that you will have the last laugh in this world. Turn us again to you, and restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P) God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. Almighty God strengthens you with power through the Holy Spirit, so that the joy of the resurrected Christ lives in your hearts. **C) Amen.**

PEACE GREETING

P) Through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are filled with Easter joy! Therefore, let us greet one another with a sign of His peace. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C) And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P) Let us pray. **C) Lord of Life, we praise you for the gifts of laughter and delight. May these blessings give hints as to your purpose for us and for all creation. Awaken in us the true sense of Easter joy, that in giving up to laughter there is healing and hope, abundance and joy, happiness and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Holy Spirit to renew our faith and restore our lives. Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORD

Listen and learn, and the more you will know. The more that you learn, the more you'll grow. Therefore, let us listen for the Word of God.

A Reading from Genesis 18:1-15: A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. ⁹ They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." ¹⁰ Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I be fruitful?" ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "Yes, you did laugh."

A Reading from Genesis 21:1-6 : The Birth of Isaac

The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ² Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

A Reading from Ecclesiastes 3:1-4: Everything Has Its Time

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born and a time to die;

a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill and a time to heal;

a time to break down and a time to build up;

a time to weep and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn and a time to dance;

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

MESSAGE

MESSAGE SONG - *Christ Joyful* (We Lack the Gift of Laughter) Tune: Beneath the Cross of Jesus #338

We lack the gift of laughter; Faith sits all pale and glum, Hope dozes on a rafter, and Love is stricken dumb. Come, Christ, into our drabness, tell us that matchless jest of life and resurrection, your sweetest and your best.

We know the trick of tumbling, red nose and redder face; by virtues of our bumbling ours is the jester's case. Come, Christ, come down immortal, teach us that matchless jest of life and resurrection, your sweetest and your best.

You joined our sad profession, made good our foolishness, brought clowning into fashion, put on our joker's dress. Come, Christ, come holy laughter, to share that matchless jest of life and resurrection, your sweetest and your best.

Upon a foolish cross, Lord, you hung to make us mirth; but there you conquered loss, Lord, old death became new birth. Come everlasting joy; Christ, confirm that matchless jest of life and resurrection, your sweetest and your best.

CREED OF FAITH AND LAUGHTER

We believe in God, who made us in His image, who lifts our hearts during times of trouble, and inspires us with wonder and awe. We trust in the Lord to fill us with hope during times of loneliness and despair, and when we are in need of the gift of laughter.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who strikes the light of joy in the midst of gloom and despair, and who had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead. We live in the newness of life and laugh because of Him.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who with the Father and the Son is our counselor, guide, and refuge. Our eyes are opened to see God's presence in all things, and fills our lives with wonder, goodness, laughter, and great joy. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Laughter and love grow when shared with others, so let us share a sign of God's love as we take our offering.

OFFERING SONG *Hark The Herald Angel Said* (Tune: Hark the Herald Angels Sing ELW #270)

Hark the herald angel said, "Why seek Jesus with the dead? He's not here, as you can see, A grave cloth lies where he would be. On your way now, tell the others, Jesus will be with his brothers. Sisters, too, he wants to see on the hills of Galilee." Hark the herald angel said, "He is risen from the dead!" When the doors were locked in fear, Christ the Lord again came near. Peace be with you! twice he said, Now I send you in my stead. Take the Spirit and forgive, Show the world that I do live. Let my love cast out all fear, Trust that I am always near! Witness to the Risen One, Share my peace with everyone!

OFFERING PRAYER

L) Let us pray . . . **C) Good and gracious God, our mouths are filled with laughter, and our tongues with songs of joy. Use these gifts to spread Your light to the world, so that all who are touched by Your presence may be filled with Your love. Through Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Amid the laughter and celebration of this day, it's good that we pause and remember that many carry burdens that need not be carried alone.

L: God of grace, God of love and laughter, we thank you that we are so wondrously created and that we are made for relationship with you and with one another.

ALL: We thank you for laughter with friends and loved ones. We thank you for the laughter of children, and the song it creates in our hearts.

L: By your great unending love, you inspire in us a spirit of imagination and creativity.

ALL: Help us to use that spirit to play more, to laugh more, and to create beauty in every way possible. Remind us to laugh out loud, for doing so will heal some of the wounds within us. Not all, but some.

L: God, we pray for those who cannot find their laughter today. For those who are grieving, or suffering illness of body, mind or spirit...for those who are lonely and in need of someone to share their time and friendship... for those who have not yet moved into the season and spirit of Easter and find themselves stuck in the gloom of Good Friday.

L: May these and the troubles of all your people be soothed, blessed, and comforted by your holy presence.

ALL: May we each find the laughter within us that sets our spirits free, and in that freedom, may we take your love into every part of our lives. These and all the prayers of our hearts we offer now in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER OF LAUGHTER AND JOY

L) Let us pray together a prayer of laughter and joy. **C) God made you and God made me, He made the world for us to see. God loves you and long ago, He sent his Son to tell us so. Jesus has shown us so many things, to love and share and dance and sing. To learn and pray, to help and care, He promised he'd always be there. He died but then came back to life, let's celebrate for he's alive! Amen**

HOLY COMMUNION

*Great Thanksgiving Pg. 206

*Holy, Holy, Holy Pg. 207

*Words of Institution Pg. 207

*Lord's Prayer Pg. 208

*Invitation to Communion

P: The risen Christ dwells with us here. All who are hungry, all who are thirsty, come.

*Lamb of God Pg. 208

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

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

L: Foolish, foolish God, your belly laugh echoes through the world, We have responded to your invitation to join in the Banquet. Here we have eaten, we have drunk, we have tasted your goodness. May the joy we find in this meal together lift up our hearts, may we carry your laughter to the world around us, may we live out that foolishness called love wherever we go. **C: Amen.**

BENEDICTION

May the God of humor and joy bring you sunshine and a smile to your face. May the God of love and laughter be with you in all that you do and say. And may Christ, Our Risen Savior, always be there by your side to bless you, for the good work has just begun! Amen.

SENDING SONG *Go tell it on the cellphone* (Tune of *Go Tell it on the Mountain* ELW #290)

Refrain: *Go tell it on the cellphone, FaceTime, Skype and all those Zooms, Go tell it on the cellphone that Jesus is alive.*

While soldiers watched the gravesite that quiet Sunday dawn there came a big commotion and then the storm was gone. (Refrain)

The women found no body their spices to anoint; instead they found an angel, God's message to appoint. (Refrain)

Go from where He isn't to where He said He'd be. An Easter-time reunion: the hills of Galilee. (Refrain)

DISMISSAL

L) Go in laughter. Go in grace. Keep the Lord in your heart and a smile on your face.

C) Ya, sure, you betcha! Thanks be to God!

Bulletin Donated:

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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Prayers of the People— posted by Sue on the **RevGalBlogPals** blog.

Post Communion Prayer~ posted by Rev Gord on his blog, **Worship Offerings.**