



Holy Humor Sunday
Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church
April 16th, 2023

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.

READING - Based on Matthew 5: 1-13

In seeing the people, Jesus went up on a mountain, and when he was seated His disciples came to Him. Then, He opened his mouth and taught them saying:

Blessed are those who are peaceful and try to stop others from fighting. God will call them his sons and daughters.

Blessed are those who are kind and forgiving to others. They will be given the same.

Blessed are those who don't show off and think of others first. They will be given the Earth.

Blessed are those who rely on God's help. Heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who get in trouble for doing the right thing. God's kingdom belongs to them.

Blessed are those who try to please God in what they do and think. They will be with God.

Blessed are those who want fairness. God will satisfy them.

Blessed are those who are sad and upset. God will comfort them.

Jesus said that we should be happy and glad because we will be blessed in heaven if we follow His teachings.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Shirley Erena Murray)

L) Sing a happy alleluia, sing it out with heart and style -- we're the echo of God's laughter, we're the image of God's smile.

C) Alleluia, all creation, alleluia, everyone! Alleluia, all creation, alleluia everyone!

GOSPEL - Luke 18: 18-25

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

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

Prayer Response: Hear our prayer.

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

P: We give you thanks, generous God, for in this bread and cup we have tasted the new heaven and earth where hunger and thirst are no more. Send us from this table as witnesses to the resurrection, that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name. **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: Happy Birthday Olivia!

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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