



## The Sixth Sunday of Easter

### Opening Hymn. "Alleuia! Jesus Is Risen"

LSB #474

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926

Tune: "EARTH AND ALL STARS"

Tune: David N. Johnson, 1922-87; setting Henry V. Gerike, b. 1948

1. Alleluia! Jesus is risen!  
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!  
Splendor, the Lamb, Heaven forever!  
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!  
Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!
2. Walking the way, Christ in the center  
Telling the story to open our eyes;  
Breaking our bread, Giving us glory:  
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise.  
Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!
3. Jesus the vine, We are the branches;  
Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;  
Heaven to earth, Christ to the people,  
Gift of the future now flowing to me.  
Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!
4. Weeping be gone; Sorrow, be silent:  
Death put asunder, and Easter is bright.  
Cherubim sing: "O grave, be open!"  
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light.  
Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!

5. City of God, Easter forever,  
Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,  
River of Life, Saints and archangels,  
Sing with creation to God the I AM!  
Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!

Text: Matt. 28:5-7; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 5:6-14; John 15:1-8

Text: © 1995 Augsburg Fortress Tune: © 1968 Augsburg Publishing House; setting: © 2006 Concordia Publishing House

### Invocation.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Response: Amen.**

### Introit/Psalm.

Psalm 119:89-93; Psalm 119:105 (ESV)

<sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.

<sup>89</sup>**Forever, O Lord, your word  
is firmly fixed in the heavens.**

<sup>90</sup>Your faithfulness endures to all generations;  
you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

<sup>91</sup>**By your appointment they stand this day,  
for all things are your servants.**

<sup>92</sup>If your law had not been my delight,  
I would have perished in my affliction.

<sup>93</sup>**I will never forget your precepts,  
for by them you have given me life.**

**Glorify be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

<sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.

### Kyrie.

Verse: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

Verse: For the peace from above  
and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

Verse: For the peace of the whole world,  
for the well-being of the Church of God,  
and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

Verse: For this holy house,  
and for all who offer here their worship and praise  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

Verse: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Response: Amen.**

### **Collect of the Day.**

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Response: Amen.**

### **Readings from Holy Scripture.**

#### **Acts 17:16-31 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbling wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. <sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" <sup>20</sup> For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know

therefore what these things mean." <sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for

"In him we live and move and have our being";

As even some of your own poets have said,

"For we are indeed his offspring."

<sup>29</sup> Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. <sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Verse: This is the Word of the Lord.

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

#### **Gradual.**

*Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

**Christ has risen from the dead. [God the Father] has crowned Him with glory and honor. He has given Him dominion over the works of His hands; He has put all things under His feet.**

#### **1 Peter 3:13-22 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of

them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Verse: This is the Word of the Lord.

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

**We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. (Romans 6:9 ESV)**

Jesus says:

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33b ESV)

**Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Verse: The Holy Gospel according to St John, the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Response: Glory to You, O Lord.**

**John 14:15-21 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Verse: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Response: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Hymn of the Day. "Dear Christians One and All Rejoice"**

**LSB #556**

*Text: Martin Luther, 1483-11546*

*Tune: "NUN FREUT EUCH"*

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1800-87*

*Tune: Etlich Cristlich liden, Wittenberg, 1524; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941*

1. Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice,  
With exultation springing,  
And with united heart and voice  
And holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God has done,  
How His right arm the vict'ry won,  
What price our ransom cost Him!
2. Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay;  
Death brooded darkly o'er me.  
Sin was my torment night and day;  
In sin my mother bore me.  
But daily deeper still I fell;  
My life became a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.
3. My own good works all came to naught,  
No grace or merit gaining;  
Free will against God's judgment fought,  
Dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair

Left only death to be my share;  
The pangs of hell I suffered.

4. But God had seen my wretched state  
Before the world's foundation,  
And mindful of His mercies great,  
He planned for my salvation.  
He turned to me a father's heart;  
He did not choose the easy part  
But gave His dearest treasure.
  
5. God said to His beloved Son:  
"It's time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright jewel of My crown,  
And bring to all salvation.  
From sin and sorrow set them free;  
Slay bitter death for them that they  
May live with You forever."

*Text: Ps. 98:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom 3:28  
Text & Tune: Public domain*

### **Sermon.**

***"Always Being Prepared to Make a Defense"***

***1 Peter 3:14-16***

He is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Jesus says: "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (*John 16:33b ESV*)

Preparing for Air Force operational inspections and real world operations, my Wing Commander would ease tensions in the time of trial by saying, "Both calm and panic are contagious. ... Choose calm." His manner and his confidence inspired "calm," and collected our efforts for cool-headed action. I thought back on these times and concluded that we only share that which we

have. If we have panic, we share panic. If we have peace with God, we share peace with all.

In the Word of the Lord before us today, Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ; shares a good conscience in Christ, with gentleness and respect. Peter wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to all people in the time of trial. He recognized that isolated believers were tempted to panic under persecution. He wrote to new Christians who were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. He gave them contagious confidence in Christ.

The center of the world in the first century A.D. was Rome. And Rome's man Pilate, was incited by the Jerusalem's leaders. Pilate had crucified Jesus just outside Jerusalem's wall. But Jesus soon burst His three day prison. He is risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

And Peter further encouraged the believers with the victorious descent of Christ into hell: <sup>1 Peter 3:18</sup> "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ..." Christ has set us free from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Early Christians would need this victory proclamation; for, the followers of Jesus would experience ever increasing persecutions over the next three centuries. Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome. The government leaders surrounding these Christians spread suspicion. Informing on your neighbor fanned the flames of the world's mistrust. Authorities accused Christians of not sharing their world view. Sharing your hope in Jesus became a dangerous thing.

But, these Christians of Asia Minor were changed by the Word of the Lord. They were bought by the blood of Christ. They belonged to God by their baptism into His death and rising. And the Word of the Lord that they shared would change their neighbors. Their neighbors could tell that these Christians were different, loving because they are loved by God. Delighting to keep

God's commandments in a world that keeps inventing more rules. Their neighbors would ask them the reason for the hope that resides within them.

In today's world, if you ask someone of the world to give an account for what they have done—they will get defensive. If you ask them for their hope—they will give you wishful thinking. If you ask them for what is in them—they will give you feelings; nothing more than feelings. The world can only imagine.

But, if you ask a Christian to give an account—we will tell you His Story. We will show you how He is truly our defense. If you ask a Christian for their hope—we give you our confidence in Christ who has carried our cross and restored our resurrection reality. If you ask us for what is in our hearts—we give you honor, for there dwells Christ the Lord as holy, always preparing us to make a defense to anyone who asks us for a reason for the hope that is in us; yet we do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when we are slandered, those who revile our good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

A few years back, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, General Mark A, Welsh III (10Aug2012-24Jun2016) felt the pressure placed on our United States Armed Forces to keep silent with regards to our Hope in God. Suicides threatened our warfighters. Some quiet Christians felt threatened to keep silent with respect to their faith. Atheists accused Christians of dominating others, claiming that their bold witnessing ran roughshod over their fellow warriors. Some Christian servicemen and women became timid, fearing litigation and subsequent discharge. General Welsh gave his confidence in God to all Airmen regardless of their faith.

The General encouraged us to listen first, and when invited, share the best of what we have. With wisdom the General said: "If a person does not ask you about your faith, do not assume they want to know. If they do ask you about your faith, then you are free to tell them all."

To this end Peter says we are being prepared always to be ready to make a defense, an apologetic answer to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that dwells in you. We are not preparing ourselves by technological

effort and imagination. We are being prepared by God, through Word and Sacrament. God's real presence prepares us by the proclamation of Law and Gospel and by Baptism's washing of renewal in Christ. It is not the water washing dirt that does the job. It is the Word of God active in, with and under the water.

In the beginning the Holy Spirit, the "Comforter" would brood with the Word over the waters of Creation. The Word of God and water pointed to Creation and later to recreation in Baptism. The Word of God spoke both generation and regeneration of life on this earth. This was no "self-help" program for the image of God. This was no "do-it-yourself" program for sinful mankind.

In the days of Noah, water and the Word came together again. The LORD repented of His creation; for, the wickedness of mankind was great. But, God saved back a man, Noah; a man who would walk with God. Noah was named "comfort," for through him, God would deliver mankind from the deluge. By the command of the LORD, according to the Word of the LORD, Noah and his sons would build an ark. The hand of the LORD would close the door.

The windows of heaven and the doors of the deep would fill the earth, and all would be drowned in the death of Adam. The ark would float over the flood saving Noah and his family, eight persons in all. According to God's mercy, Noah and his family would replenish the earth. With Noah, all the families of birds and things that creep on the face of the earth would again be fruitful and multiply. As the eight persons of Noah and all the animal kingdom was saved by the hand of the LORD, so baptism now saves us, by the nail pierced hands of our Lord.

This is how Peter points to the Patriarch Noah. And the type of Noah is how we know that our appeal to God is not from us. Noah did not save Himself. God did.

Similarly, by our Baptism into Christ, we are born from above. By Baptism we belong to God. For <sup>1</sup> Peter:3:22 Baptism, which corresponds to this [ark of salvation passing in and with the waters], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the

resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.” This appeal to God and a good conscience is worth nothing more than the object of our faith—the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

Jesus says: “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (*John 16:33b ESV*) How? By His scars we are healed.

Those who serve long in this world can feel the scars:

On the body from pestilence and disease,  
On the members by injury and decay,  
On the mind by worry and anxiety,  
On the soul by desperation and despair,  
On the spirit by hyperventilation and exhaustion.

Some see the scars and feel defenseless. Has the Lord left us as orphans? No He has not! He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! And He is ascended, and He sits at the right hand of Authority. Today, He comes in His Word and Sacrament. At the Last Day He comes to take us to be with Him.

Commanders with their confident calm tell us to prepare for the worst. But truly, our LORD prepares us by swallowing the worst and giving us His best. This is how we are always being prepared for sharing the hope that resides within. He alone is our victor over the grave and hell. He is here with us now.

Who can contend with a contagion? Jesus! Who can defeat a disease?

Jesus! Who can be prepared for a pestilence? Jesus!

Who can safeguard safety? Jesus! Who can provide in poverty? Jesus!

Who can win over worry? Jesus! Who can disperse despair? Jesus!

Who can alleviate anxiety? Jesus!

Who can lift labor? Jesus! Who can return resources? Jesus!

Who can give victory over the grave? Jesus! Who can destroy death? Jesus!

<sup>1 Peter 3:14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness

and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

He is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

### **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Prayer.**

*Thanks be to God for Our Armed Forces*

Almighty God, heavenly Father, by the crucifixion of Christ atone us, by His resurrection lift us, by His ascension fill us, by Your Holy Spirit comfort us and the last coming of our Lord Jesus Christ lead us in glory. Gather us into Your Church, the body of believers in Christ. Give us grace to trust You during this time of illness and distress. In mercy put an end to the contagion that afflicts us. Calm our fears. Grant relief to those who suffer, strength to those who serve, and console all that mourn. Make Your people joyful in their work and patient in their service. Sustain all medical, law enforcement, and defense personnel in their labors. Restore your people's livelihood and cause Your people ever to serve You in righteousness and holiness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Collect for the Word.**

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**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 trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory;  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

**Offering.**—*Send your offering to God by supporting your house of worship*

**Hymn of Response.**

**"Dear Christians One and All Rejoice"**

**LSB #556**

*Text: Martin Luther, 1483-11546 Tr. Richard Massie, 1800-87    Tune: "NUN FREUT EUCH"*

*Tune: Etlich Cristlich lider, Wittenberg, 1524; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941*

6. The Son obeyed His Father's will,  
Was born of virgin mother;  
And God's good pleasure to fulfill,  
He came to be my brother.  
His royal pow'r disguised He bore;  
A servant's form, like mine, He wore  
To lead the devil captive.

7. To me He said: "Stay close to Me,  
I am your rock and castle.  
Your ransom I Myself will be;  
For you I strive and wrestle.  
For I am yours, and you are Mine,  
And where I am you may remain;  
The foe shall not divide us.
8. "Though he will shed My precious blood,  
Me of My life bereaving,  
All this I suffer for your good;  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life will from death the vict'ry win;  
My innocence shall bear your sin,  
And you are blest forever.
9. "Now to My Father I depart,  
From earth to heav'n ascending,  
And, heav'nly wisdom to impart,  
The Holy Spirit sending;  
In trouble He will comfort you  
And teach you always to be true  
And into truth shall guide you.
10. "What I on earth have done and taught  
Guide all your life and teaching;  
So shall the kingdom's work be wrought  
And honored in your preaching.  
But watch lest foes with base alloy  
The heav'nly treasure should destroy;  
This final word I leave you."

*Text: Ps. 98:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom 3:28*

*Text & Tune: Public domain*

**Benedicamus.**

Verse: Let us bless the Lord

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

**Benediction.**

The Lord bless you and keep you  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you  
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending Hymn. "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus" LSB #821**

*Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98*

*Tune: "HYFRYDOL"*

*Tune: Roland H. Prichard, 1811-87*

1. Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;  
His the scepter, His the throne;  
Alleluia! His the triumph,  
His the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion  
Thunder like a mighty flood:  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation  
Has redeemed us by His blood."
2. Alleluia! Not as orphans  
Are we left in sorrow now;  
Alleluia! He is near us;  
Faith believes, nor questions how.  
Though the cloud from sight received Him  
When the forty days were o'er,  
Shall our hearts forget His promise:  
"I am with you evermore"?
3. Alleluia! Bread of heaven,  
Here on earth our food, our stay;  
Alleluia! Here the sinful  
Flee to You from day to day.  
Intercessor, Friend of sinners,

Earth's Redeemer, hear our plea  
Where the songs of all the sinless  
Sweep across the crystal sea.

4. Alleluia! King eternal,  
Lord omnipotent we own;  
Alleluia! Born of Mary,  
Earth Your footstool, heav'n Your throne.  
As within the veil You entered,  
Robed in flesh, our great High Priest,  
Here on earth both priest and victim  
In the eucharistic feast.
5. Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;  
His the scepter, His the throne;  
Alleluia! His the triumph,  
His the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion  
Thunder like a mighty flood:  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation  
Has redeemed us by His blood."

*Text: Rev. 7:9-14; Heb. 9:11-28; John 6:31-35, 48-51; 14:18-19*

*Public domain*

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