

# I have seen the Lord!

JOHN 20:18



## **A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS:**

We extend a warm welcome from Bethel Presbyterian Church!

We invite you to participate in signing the Friendship Folders adding your name and address and if you desire a church newsletter or a pastoral call.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say "sins...sin against us" rather than "debts..." or "trespasses..."

Prayer requests can be noted on the cards provided in the pew racks.

Please put those in the offering plate.

**The Service for the Lord's Day  
Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Easter Sunday / Communion  
April 9, 2023 – 11:00 AM**

*\* Indicates congregation standing if able.  
Congregational responses indicated in bold.*

**GATHERING AND GREETING OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

*Please sign the Friendship Pad found in your pew, passing it down the pew then back.*

Prelude

Call to Worship (*L = Leader, P = People*)

L: What are you looking for?

**P: The light before dawn.**

L: What are you looking for?

**P: A reason to hope.**

L: What are you looking for?

**P: Joy after grief and flowers after winter.**

L: What are you looking for?

**P: A place to belong.**

L: What are you looking for?

**P: We are looking for the Messiah.**

L: Good news! Come in. Love is alive!

**P: Surely God is in this place.**

Prayer of Invocation

Let us pray:

Almighty God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

you broke the power of death and opened the way to eternal life.

As the empty tomb stands witness to his triumph over death,

make your church to be a bold testimony to his enduring victory in life, that all we do may proclaim to the world, “He is risen, indeed!” Through Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

\* Hymn No. 232

**“JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN TODAY!”**

EASTER HYMN

*Jes-us Christ is risen to-day, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Our tri-um-phant ho-ly day, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Who did once, up-on the cross, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Suf-fer to re-deem our loss, Al-le-lu-ia!*

*Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Un-to Christ, our heaven-ly King, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Who en-dured the cross and grave, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Sin-ners to re-deem and save, Al-le-lu-ia!*

*But the pains which he en-dured, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Our sal-va-tion have pro-cured. Al-le-lu-ia!  
Now a-bove the sky he’s king, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Where the an-gels ev-er sing, Al-le-lu-ia!*

*Sing we to our God a-bove, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Praise e-ter-nal as God’s love, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Praise our God, ye heaven-ly host, Al-le-lu-ia!  
Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost, Al-le-lu-ia!*

\* 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:

\* Corporate Prayer of Confession

**God of Resurrection,**

**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.**

\* Sung Response No. 573 **“CHRIST HAS DIED; CHRIST IS RISEN”**  
*Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a-gain.*

\* Declaration 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:

**P: What once was lost is found.**

**We are held in God's loving embrace:**

**forgiven, claimed, and sent to serve. Alleluia! Amen.**

\* Sung Response No. 591 “HALLE, HALLE, HALLELUJAH!” (*Refrain*)

*Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah!*  
*Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah!*  
*Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah!*  
*Hal-le-lu-yah! Hal-le-lu-yah!*

## THE WORD

Children’s Moment

Choral Anthem

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:

Rabbi, Teacher, 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.

Readings from Scripture

Psalter      Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24      (*A Song of Victory*)      Pg. 534

History      Acts 10:34-43      (*Gentiles Hear the Good News*)      Pg. 121

Gospel      John 20:1-18      (*The Resurrection of Jesus*)      Pg. 108

Sermon      “Who Are You Looking For?”

## RESPONSE TO THE WORD

### \* Affirmation of Faith

We believe in resurrection—

**mysterious, beyond our understanding, and yet,  
like tulips after the snow: real.**

We believe in Easter morning—

**in the promise of a God  
who would roll back every stone to return to us.**

We believe in Jesus—

**who calls us by name and asks, “Who are you looking for?”**

So we look—

**for justice, for mercy, for God in our midst.**

And as we look, we sing, “Alleluia!” Amen.

## THE EUCHARIST

### Call to Offering

God has given us life in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In gratitude, let us offer our hearts and the fruit of our labor  
to God’s service.

### Offertory

### \* Hymn No. 606 “PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW”

*Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow;  
praise him, all crea-tures here be-low;  
praise him a-bove, ye heaven-ly host;  
praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. A-men.*

### \* Prayer of Dedication

Almighty God, by your grace, accept the fruit of our labor  
and the offering of our lives in union with our risen Lord  
who lives and reigns with you forever. Amen.

\* Communion Hymn No. 536 “RISE, O CHURCH, LIKE CHRIST ARISEN”

*Rise, O church, like Christ a-ris-en,  
from this meal of love and grace;  
may we through such love en-vi-son  
whose we are, and whose, our praise.*

*Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia: God the won-der of our days.*

*Rise, trans-formed, and choose to fol-low  
af-ter Christ, though wound-ed, whole;  
brok-en, shared, our lives are hal-lowed  
to re-lease and to con-sole.*

*Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia: Christ, our present, past and goal.*

*Rise, re-mem-ber well the fu-ture  
God has called us to re-ceive;  
pres-ent by God’s lov-ing nur-ture,  
Spir-it-ed then let us live.*

*Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia: Spir-it, grace by whom we live.*

*Ser-vice be our sure vo-ca-tion;  
cour-age be our dai-ly breath;  
mer-cy be our des-ti-na-tion  
from this day and un-to death.*

*Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia: Rise, O church, a liv-ing faith.*

Invitation to the Lord’s Table

Friends, it would have been easy on that Easter morning  
for Jesus to roll away the stone, walk to the city center,  
and declare that death had not won.

Instead, Jesus waited in the garden.

He waited for the people who needed him most.

He waited for Mary. He called her by name.

He stopped her crying. He gave her a reason to hope.

So if you have ever doubted  
that God's love for you is personal and specific,  
may the truth of this day remind you otherwise.

The God you seek will meet you in the garden on your hardest days.  
And that same God has a seat saved at this Table, specifically for you.

So, come. Come, whether you are dancing for joy,  
or like Mary, still feeling a little lost.

Come with your questions. Come with your hunger.

Come, whether this is your first time or your hundredth.

Come, because this feast is a reminder  
that God's Table is big enough for all of us.

Jesus Christ is risen today and he rose for you.

So, come. All are welcome.

### Great Thanksgiving

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.  
Until that promised day, we pray together  
using the words you taught us to pray, saying, **Our Father...**

The Lord's Prayer (*sin / sin against us*) Hymnal pg. 35

**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 sins,  
as we forgive those who sin 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.  
Amen.**

Words of Institution (*Breaking Bread*)

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread,  
and after giving thanks to you,  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

*(Pouring Wine)*

In the same way, Jesus took the cup, saying:

This cup is the new covenant sealed with my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup,  
you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes.

Brothers and sisters, the gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Communion

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Where don't we seek after you, God?

We look for you in the mirror, in strangers, in sunrises, on mountain tops,  
in the laughter of children, and in meals shared together.

We look for you on the city streets, in hospital rooms, in jail cells,  
in poetry, and hymn melodies.

We look for you everywhere!

Sometimes the seeking is hard,

but then at other times, we come to this Table and all are fed,  
and all are welcomed, and there is room for everyone,  
and no one is turned away, or made to feel unworthy.

And in those moments, we see you clearly.

So thank you for meeting us in our seeking.

Please don't stop seeking us. Gratefully we pray, amen.

\* Hymn

**“UP FROM THE GRAVE HE AROSE”**

Insert

*Low in the grave he lay, Je-sus my Sa-vior,  
wait-ing the co-ming day, Je-sus my Lord!*

*(Refrain)*

*Up from the grave he a-rose;  
with a might-ty tri-umph o'er his foes;  
he a-rose a vic-tor from the dark do-main,  
and he lives for-e-ver, with his saints to reign.  
He a-rose! He a-rose! Hal-le-lu-jah! Christ a-rose!  
Vain-ly they watch his bed, Je-sus my Sa-vior,  
Vain-ly they seal the dead, Je-sus my Lord!*

*(Refrain)*

*Death can-not keep its prey, Je-sus my Sa-vior;  
He tore the bars a-way, Je-sus my Lord!*

*(Refrain)*

\* Benediction

Receive the good news: Christ is risen from the dead.  
Tell the good news: the power of death shall no more oppress us.  
Live the good news: we are free to love as he has loved us.

May God who raised Jesus from the dead bless you  
and by the power of the Holy Spirit raise you with him in glory.

\* Sung Response No. 591    **“HALLE, HALLE, HALLELUJAH!”** (*Verse 1*)

*O God, to whom shall we go?  
You a-lone have the words of life.  
Let your words be our prayer and the song we sing:  
hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah!*

\* Postlude

## MUSIC ATTRIBUTIONS

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“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!”

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“Jesus Christ Is Risen Today!”

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow (Doxology)

“Up from the Grave He Arose”

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