



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
OF THE  
**HOLY COMFORTER**

**SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2025**

**BURLINGTON, NC**

# 3rd Sunday of Easter

**8:15AM • 10:30AM**

*Holy Eucharist Rite II*



**The Episcopal Church Welcomes You**



# WELCOME TO ALL NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS

Please complete the information card and place it in the offering plate or hand it to one of the ushers.

## WE, THE PEOPLE OF HOLY COMFORTER

Though very diverse politically and socially, care for each other and care deeply for how our faith is manifested in the community. We believe all people are equal in God's hand. Our nurturing congregation has an appreciation for diverse perspectives and opinions. We grow through a continually evolving and questioning discussion regarding our faith, God, and society. We welcome all, without reservation, into our Christian body to be part of a loving and sharing family.

## WE CARE

Please call the church office at (336) 227-4251 if you or someone you know needs visitation, prayers or other assistance because of illness or inability to attend worship service.

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## OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

To worship God, revealed to us as Creator, as Jesus the Christ, and as the Holy Spirit, and experience God's presence within the church family, nurturing each other through a comprehensive parish program while affirming each other's individual ministries and responding to Jesus' continuing call to minister to others.

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## LAY MINISTERS

VERGER

Steven Swanner

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Christin Baker

READERS

**8:15am** - Jocelyn Safrit

**10:30am** - Patrick Rudd, Paige Ysteboe

USHERS

**8:15am** - Tom McLean

**10:30am** - Hu Womack and Patrick Rudd

ACOLYTES

**8:15am** - CHALICIST AND CRUCIFER - Julie Smith

**10:30am** - CHALICISTS - Adriane & Max Newbauer

CRUCIFER - Max Newbauer

LEFT TORCH - Adriane Newbauer

RIGHT TORCH - Anna Newbauer

GOSPEL BEARER- Holden Newbauer

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

PRESENTER - Jocelyn Safrit

ASSISTANT - Corrinne Surratt

VESTRY COUNTERS

Carol Thornell and Barbara Simpson

FLOWER GUILD

Connie Griner

ALTAR GUILD

*Audrey Deadmon*, Leslie Haines, Elizabeth Hood, Sandra Moulton, Jane Spencer, Bea Swajkoski

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

*Gretchen Peet*, Martha Stewart, Debra Scott, William Swanner, Mary Telander

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

**May 8** - Cyrus Simpson

**All are welcome for Sunday hospitality in the parlor after the service.**



## PRELUDE

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN • 182

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. His cross stands  
2 Christ is - a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant  
3 Not throned a - bove, re - mote - ly high, un - touched, un -  
4 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war where co - lor,  
5 Christ is a - live! His Spi - rit burns through this and

1 emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with  
2 years in Pal - es - tine, he comes to claim the  
3 moved by hu - man pains, but dai - ly, in the  
4 scorn or wealth di - vide, he suf - fers still, yet  
5 ev - ery fu - ture age, till all cre - a - tion

1 prais - es ring. His love in death shall nev - er die.  
2 here and now and con - quer ev - ery place and time.  
3 midst of life, our Sa - vior with the Fa - ther reigns.  
4 loves the more, and lives, though ev - er cru - ci - fied.  
5 lives and learns his joy, his jus - tice, love, and praise.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

**Presider** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**People** *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*



1. Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and  
peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly King, al -  
might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we  
praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus Christ,  
on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you  
take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;  
5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -  
ceive our prayer. 6. For  
you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,  
7. you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the  
Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of  
God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**Presider** The Lord be with you.

**People** ***And also with you.***

**Presider** Let us pray.



## COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## FIRST LESSON

Acts 9:1-20

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?"

The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name."

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

<b>Reader</b>	The Word of the Lord.
<b>People</b>	<b>Thanks be to God.</b>



## THE RESPONSE

Psalm 30

Exaltabo te, Domine



You have re - stored my life, O LORD; hal - le - lu - jah.

- 1 *I will* exalt you, O LORD,  
because you have *lifted* me up \*  
and have not let my enemies / triumph *över* me.
- 2 O LORD my God, I *cried* out to you, \*  
and you / restored me to *health*.
- 3 You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead; \*  
you restored my life as I was go/ing down to the grave.
- 4 Sing to the LORD, you *servants* of his; \*  
give thanks for the remembrance / of his *holiness*.
- 5 For his wrath endures but the *twinkling* of an eye, \*  
his favor / for a *lifetime*.
- 6 —Weeping may *spend* the night, \*  
but joy comes / in the *morning*.
- 7 While I felt secure, I said,  
“I shall *never* be disturbed. \*  
You, LORD, with your favor,  
made me as strong / as the *mountains*.”
- 8 —Then you *hid* your face, \*  
and / I was *filled* with fear.
- 9 I *cried* to you, O LORD; \*  
I pleaded / with the LORD, saying,
- 10 “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? \*  
will the dust praise you or de/clare your *faithfulness*?
- 11 Hear, O LORD, and have *mercy* upon me; \*  
O LORD, / be my *helper*.”
- 12 You have turned my wailing into *dancing*; \*  
you have put off my sack-cloth and / clothed me *with joy*.
- 13 Therefore my heart sings to you *without ceasing*; \*  
O LORD my God, I will give you / thanks for *ever*. [Ant.]



## THE NEW TESTAMENT

Revelation 5:11-14

I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

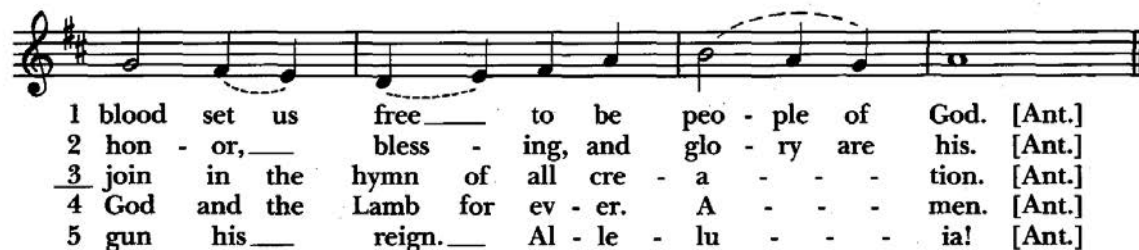
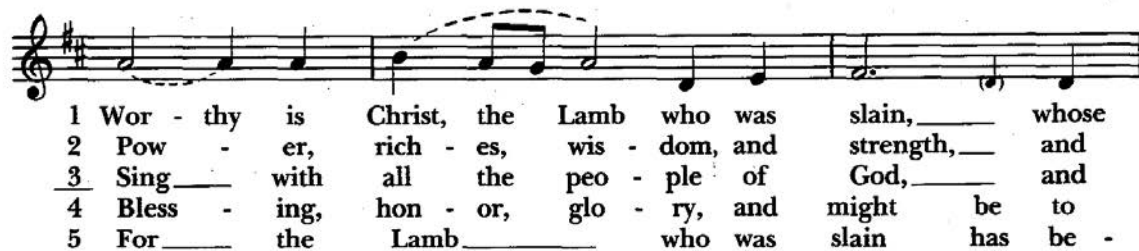
And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

**Reader** The Word of the Lord.

**People** **Thanks be to God.**

## SEQUENCE HYMN • 417

This is the feast of victory for our God





**Gospeler** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
**People** ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" Because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

**Gospeler** The Gospel of the Lord.  
**People** ***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***



**Presider and People**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Form VI

BCP 392

*The Leader and People pray responsively*  
In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

*Silence*

<b>Intercessor People</b>	For all people in their daily life and work; <b>For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.</b>
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<b>Intercessor People</b>	For this community, the nation, and the world; <b>For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.</b>
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<b>Intercessor People</b>	For the just and proper use of your creation; <b>For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.</b>
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<b>Intercessor People</b>	For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble; <b>For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.</b>
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**Intercessor** For the peace and unity of the Church of God;  
**People** ***For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.***

**Intercessor** For Sean, our Presiding Bishop, and Sam and Jennifer our Bishops; and for all bishops and other ministers;  
**People** ***For all who serve God in his Church.***

**Intercessor** For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

*Silence*

*The People may add their own petitions*

**Intercessor** Hear us, Lord;  
**People** ***For your mercy is great.***  
**Intercessor** We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

*Silence*

*The People may add their own thanksgivings*

**Intercessor** We will exalt you, O God our King;  
**People** ***And praise your Name for ever and ever.***

**Intercessor** We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence*

*The People may add their own petitions*

**Intercessor** Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;  
**People** ***Who put their trust in you.***

*Silence may be kept.*

*The Presider concludes with a suitable Collect.*

## **THE PEACE**

**Presider** The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**People** ***And also with you.***

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

*BCP 376*



## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Love Bade Me Welcome

Roland E. Martin

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack from my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."

Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah my dear, I cannot look on thee."

Love took my hand and smiling did reply, "Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"

My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."

So I did sit and eat.

*The people remain standing.*

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Eucharistic Prayer B

BCP 367

**Presider** The Lord be with you.

**People** ***And also with you.***

**Presider** Lift up your hearts.

**People** ***We lift them to the Lord.***

**Presider** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People** ***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

*Then, facing the Holy Table, the Presider proceeds*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you,  
Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son  
Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and  
has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by  
his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all  
the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your  
Name:



## SANCTUS • S-128



The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est." The score includes various musical notations such as whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes, as well as rests and accidentals.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,  
ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the  
high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

*The people stand or kneel. Then the Presider continues*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**Presider and People**

**We remember his death,**

**We proclaim his resurrection,**

**We await his coming in glory;**



*The Presider continues*

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with [ \_\_\_\_\_ and] all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen**

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

BCP 364

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

#### ***Presider and People***

***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, for ever and ever. Amen.***

### THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

BCP 364

*The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread.*

*A period of silence is kept.*

*The choir sings the fraction anthem.*

### FRACTION ANTHEM • S-155

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Christ our Pass - o - ver is

sac - ri - ficed for us; there - fore let us keep the feast.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



Facing the people, the Presider says the following Invitation.  
The Gifts of God, for the people of God.

All baptized Christians are invited to receive communion, and everyone is welcome to receive a blessing. Although it is traditional to drink from the common cup, you may choose to "intinct" by dipping your bread into the chalice. You may receive only the bread, if you prefer. Reception in one kind does constitute full communion. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please present your hands palms down. Persons wanting a blessing instead of receiving bread or wine at the altar may cross their arms over their chest. Communion can be brought to you at your pew; please ask an usher. If you are not baptized and are feeling God's call in that direction, please speak to the priest, who will be delighted to explore this with you.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

### 178 • Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in the key of A major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of several systems of staves with lyrics underneath. The first system includes a 'Descant' and a 'Refrain'. The second system continues the 'Refrain'. The third system includes a '1-4' section and a 'Final Ending'. The fourth system contains four verses of text. The fifth system is a 'Repeat Refrain'.

*Descant*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

*Refrain*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give thanks to the

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

ris - en Lord. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give

*1-4* *Final Ending*

Praise to his Name. Name.

Praise to his Name. Name.

1 Je - sus is Lord of all the earth.  
2 Spread the good news o'er all the earth:  
3 We have been cru - ci - fied with Christ.  
4 Come, let us praise the liv - ing God,

*Repeat Refrain*

He is the King of cre - a - tion.  
Je - sus has died and has ris - en.  
Now we shall live for ev - er. Al - le -  
joy - ful - ly sing to our Sa - vior.



## 189 • Love's redeeming work is done



1 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, fought the fight, the  
 2 Lives a - gain our glo - rious King; where, O death, is  
 3 Soar we now where Christ has led, fol - lowing our ex -



bat - tle won. Death in vain for - bids him rise;  
 now thy sting? Once he died our souls to save,  
 alt - ed Head; made like him, like him we rise,



Christ has o - pened par - a - dise. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 where thy vic - to - ry, O grave? Al - le - lu - ia!  
 ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Al - le - lu - ia!



al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_  
 al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_  
 al - le - lu - (ia!) \_\_\_\_\_

## PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

*For those attending remotely.*

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP 365

*For those attending in person.*

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord, **Amen**

## BLESSING



## RECESSIONAL • 492

Sing, ye faithful, sing with gladness



1 Sing, ye faith - ful, sing with glad - ness, wake your no - blest,  
2 Sing how he came forth from hea - ven, bowed him - self to  
3 So, he tast - ed death for mor - tals, he, of hu - man -  
4 Now on high, yet ev - er with us, from his Fa - ther's



sweet - est strain, with the prais - es of your Sa - vior  
Beth - lehem's cave, stooped to wear the ser - vant's ves - ture,  
kind the head, sin - less one, a - mong the sin - ful,  
throne the Son rules and guides the world he ran - somed,



let his house res - ound a - gain; him let all your  
bore the pain, the cross, the grave, passed with - in the  
Prince of life, a - mong the dead; thus he wrought the  
till the ap - point - ed work be done, till he see, re -



mu - sic hon - or, and your songs ex - alt his reign.  
gates of dark - ness, thence his ban - ished ones to save.  
full re - demp - tion, and the cap - tor cap - tive led.  
newed and per - fect, all things gath - ered in - to one.

## DISMISSAL

*The people respond*

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## POSTLUDE



*During the Easter season, Sermons That Work is pleased to present reflections from some of the newest bishops of The Episcopal Church on the resurrection of our Lord. Check back each week for a brief exploration of how Jesus Christ's rising from the grave changes everything. To listen to this reflection, scan the QR code on this page and subscribe to the Sermons That Work podcast.*



"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life." – Znamenny Chant, Hymn 816 from Wonder, Love, and Praise

My first recollection of this chant was sitting in the candlelit Easter Vigil at the church my family and I attended when our daughter was young. The vigil was the central liturgy of that congregation. It began at 9 pm, it lasted for three hours, the pews were full to the point of overflowing.

The vigil very often included an adult baptism in the full-immersion font that a parishioner had built for the church. It certainly did that first year that my husband, our daughter and I were there – a dear friend, who had found the congregation at the same time that we did. We gathered by candlelight around the font as she was baptized, praying for her heart to be open, that she would love others in the power of the Spirit, that she would be a witness to God's love... Then after the baptismal water, the seal, the lights, and those first alleluias, we sang, again and again: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life."

There was a mystical quality to that liturgy in that place on that day – a beauty in the proclamation of what is and what will be, a hope in witnessing that transformation with my toddler by my side, a joy in sharing that moment with our friend as she made the commitment to a life in Christ.

I felt a palpable confidence in Jesus' resurrection that day; a promise that I have carried with me. The memory of our celebration nurtured my faith through times of challenge and of joy; it nurtures me now in a moment where so much has been dismantled and challenged – a moment where fear, greed, and brokenness are driving decisions both nationally and globally. Even now, more than two decades later, I can close my eyes and see us crowding around the font, amid the candles and a cloud of incense. Even now, each time I smell chrism I remember the abundance of it at that vigil.

In this moment of our common life, so much seems unsteady and fearful and fraught. Through it all, I find myself returning to memories of encounters like these, when God is present and the words of my faith – sometimes chanted, sometimes whispered or held in silence, sometimes prayed among the faithful – those words carry a hope that is greater than I can ask or imagine.

As we gather again to remember Christ's resurrection, we gather again with the saints across centuries who have led and prayed and worshiped through moments of fear. As we celebrate this great mystery, may we remember our promises made in our baptism and commit again and again to the work that we have as disciples of Jesus Christ: to seek justice and peace, to share the Good News, to love others as we have been loved. We can, and we will, with God's help.

**The Rt. Rev. Kristin Uffelman White** is the tenth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio. A lifelong Episcopalian, Bishop White spent time in worship and in service with congregations in the Dioceses of Alaska, Eastern Oregon, Oregon, Chicago, and Indianapolis prior to her election as bishop in 2023. She and her husband, John, live in Cincinnati.



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