**Third Sunday of Easter**

*Modified Common Service*

April 26, 2020

***Preservice Music and Bell Peal***

**Hymn: CW # 145 v. 1,4** *Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won*

1 **Jesus lives! The vict’ry’s won! Death no longer can appall me.**

**Jesus lives! Death’s reign is done! From the grave Christ will recall me.**

**Brighter scenes will then commence; This shall be my confidence.**

4 **Jesus lives! I know full well Nothing me from him shall sever,**

**Life nor death nor pow’rs of hell Part me now from Christ forever.**

**God will be a sure defense; This shall be my confidence.**

**Invocation and Confession**

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father.

**C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

P: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Our sins are forgiven in him. Amen.

**Prayer of the Day**

P: O Lord God, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world from the despair of death. By his resurrection to life, grant your faithful people gladness of heart and the hope of eternal joys which are provided to us through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

**First Lesson** : Acts 2:14, 36-47 (EHV)

*When confronted with their compliance in Jesus’ crucifixion, the Pentecost crowds were “cut to the heart” and sought comfort from God. God in his grace, always offers his peace and forgiveness won by Jesus. Thus we should trust that grace on our behalf as well.*

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them: 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” 37 Now when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Gentlemen, brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter answered them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 He testified solemnly with many other words and was appealing to them, saying, “Escape from this crooked generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added.

42 They continued to hold firmly to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. 43 Awe came over every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They were selling their possessions and property and were distributing the proceeds according to what anyone needed.

46 Day after day, with one mind, they were devoted to meeting in the temple area, as they continued to break bread in their homes. They shared their food with glad and sincere hearts, 47 as they continued praising God and being viewed favorably by all the people. Day after day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**Second Lesson**: I Peter 1:17-21 (EHV)

*Holy wars, pilgrimages, large bequests to churches, devotion to others, physical deprivation and monastic life have all be offered as ways to gain peace with God and eternal life. They are empty. Christ alone brings God’s blessings.*

17 If you call on the Father who judges impartially, according to the work of each person, conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence, 18 because you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was chosen before the foundation of the world but revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

**Easter Proclamation** *(spoken)*

M: Alleluia! The Lord is risen!

**C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**C: ♫ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Gospel Lesson**: Luke 24:13-35 (EHV)

**C: ♫ Glory be to you, O Lord!**

*What would we have felt if we were a disciple of Christ who did not yet know the Resurrection was reality? If we had to walk in their shoes the three days from Good Friday to Easter, we might have been just as discouraged as the two on their way to Emmaus. Christ does not let discouragement linger.*

13 Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” Saddened, they stopped.

18 One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

19 “What things?” he asked them.

They replied, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. 21 But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel. Not only that, but besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. 23 When they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb. They found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.”

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going to travel farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. 31 Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?”

33 They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. 34 They were saying, “The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon.” 35 They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

**C: ♫ Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**Hymn: CW # 345 v. 1, 2, 4** *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

1 **In the cross of Christ I glory, Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time.**

**All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime.**

2 **When the woes of life o’ertake me, Hopes deceive and fears annoy,**

**Never shall the cross forsake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy.**

4 **Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure By the cross are sanctified;**

**Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide.**

**Sermon:** I Peter 1:17-21

**Who’s Buying?**

1. The empty way of life?
2. Cash?
3. Christ!

It’s seems so long since we were able to go to bars and restaurants. It may be hard to remember, but… Remember when you invited another couple or a family to join you for a meal, and then there was always the ticklish question of “Who’s buying”? I mean, we want to take our fair share, but it’s embarrassing to ask, because it almost implies that you’re trying to shirk your responsibility.

So, the awkward moment came when the check was laid upon the table, and no one knew who was supposed to reach for it. “Ah, we should have talked it over beforehand.” Perhaps a meal or two was not enjoyed as much as it could have been, because there was the nagging feeling that the check will come, and we won’t know what to do. And it was even worse if you didn’t think to grab enough cash for your wallet to cover the whole bill—what if I have to pay?

I can’t claim a lot of experience in this, but I have noticed that over time, waiters and waitresses have begun to preempt the awkwardness, by asking when taking the order, “How many checks will this be?” It doesn’t remove all the embarrassment, but it forces us to deal with the question sooner. “Who’s buying?” It saves stress if we know ahead of time.

Peter has no intention of stressing us out with restaurant questions. But there is a bill to be paid. We owe to God an enormous debt for our sins. Who’s buying? Is this being paid with our empty way of life? By cash? Or by Christ? Peter’s already given the answer—Christ has paid. We’re going to call on God for payment.

But this text begins with a different tack. If you know someone else is footing the bill for your delightful meal, wouldn’t you be thanking them profusely? Is it any different if God is paying for your sins? Peter leads off with: “If you call on the Father…conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence.” Show him respect. Honor him for his eternal gift, with living your life (the time of pilgrimage) in view of filling the emptiness with something meaningful.

That circles us back around to the “empty way of life” Peter referenced. The “empty way of life”, can be taken two ways.

I don’t mean to get on a soapbox. Plenty of preachers have pounded the theme of society missing the point of what life is about.

It’s not a new thing. I was recently reading a book about the middle ages, particularly the life of nobles and kings. What a life: great work, if you can get it!

It was appalling to hear the opulence of the courts. Noblemen would outfit their knights with glorious new clothing of expensive velvets and spun gold thread, knowing that it would be torn to shreds in battle. No expense was spared in phenomenal gifts to visiting nobles.

And the quantities were ridiculous: You would not give a guest one golden, jewel-encrusted sword, you’d give a hundred. How many can you use at a time? At best, only two. Paul warned all: “For we brought nothing into the world, and we certainly cannot take anything out. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be satisfied,” (I Timothy 6:8). It was conspicuous consumption at its extreme. Immoral amounts of wealth were wasted on frivolous gifts, wasteful feasts, and irrational entertainments.

But it’s not an old thing. In my year-and-a-half at Home Depot, I was frequently reminded of the emptiness of life for many colleagues. Plow through till you have the free time to get drunk. Get plastered on the most expensive vodka, etc., come back to work hungover, and plow through till the next chance to waste a paycheck.

Now, I know not everyone lives like that. But it was shocking how empty many people’s lives really are. Little thought of meaningful contributions to the world—just live for self and for stuff. You know, there’s that bumper sticker announcing: “The one who dies with the most toys, wins!” I get it, they’re just being funny. But for some it’s not funny, it’s their life. An empty way of life.

But I’m not supposed to be on a soapbox. And Peter’s intent was more to focus on the empty religious way of life most of his readers had grown up with. It’s not just chasing after stuff that brings no value, the religious principles many live by are not doing us any favors.

Enguerrand VII of Coucy, France, the chief noble of the book I was reading (a history—not a novel) had established a donation to a monastery that would say masses in his name in perpetuity—forever. His hope was that his sins would be continually remitted by this effort. The money given was enormous. Who’s buying his way into heaven now? The monastery was twice overrun by war and destroyed; the monks were defrocked and disbanded as heretics; their buildings sold. Less than 400 years after his death, the “perpetual” masses in his name ceased. They are said no more. Turned out to be an empty effort.

That, of course, says nothing of the unbiblical belief that religious actions by the living affect the dead. The Bible declares, “Man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment,” (Hebrews 9:27). At death, it’s done. There’s no changing the judgment any further. Prayers spoken for those who have already died is an empty religious effort.

Peter’s hearers were familiar with another emptiness, the fruitlessness of Jewish sacrifice: those who faithfully brought brought lamb after lamb after lamb in a meaningless parade.

Did they mean nothing? The slaughtered lambs taught very well the truth that a sacrifice was needed, but for actually cleansing them of sin, it was of no value. The letter to the Hebrews pointed out, “(The sacrifices) will never be able to make perfect those who continually offer the same sacrifices year after year. If it could do this, would they not have stopped bringing sacrifices, because the worshippers, once they were cleansed, would no longer have a bad conscience about sins? Instead, these sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. The fact is that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins,” (10:1-4).

“Not all the blood of beasts, on Israel’s altars slain, could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain.” The practice of animal sacrifice, handed down from their forefathers in unending generations, was an empty way of life. It brought no forgiveness. It paid no debt.

Even the almighty dollar falls short. When you think of the ways that people will attempt to assuage their consciences, donating money is a big one. One can say that philanthropy is the natural result of a successful life. But consider that most of the same greatly praised philanthropists were earlier reviled as “robber barons” who had no conscience about destroying others in their way to the top. There must be something else behind their giving.

Cynically, one could say that the robber barons were simply trying to regain a positive standing by their gifts. I tend to think it’s not concern about their standing in society, but their standing before God that motivated their giving. Who’s buying their way into heaven now?

Be that as it may, the idea of buying God off is a long-time obsession of cultures across the globe and across the ages. Gold or silver is the means to a good conscience. The Romans were adept at multitudes of ceremonies and gifts that were designed to push the gods back from punishing. Before Rome’s preeminence, as St. Paul reminded the Greeks of Athens about the many temples they had erected and dedicated to the various gods—none of those temples were cheap or chintzy. Regular offerings of flowers, food and coins are left in Buddhist, Hindu and Shinto shrines. People are still paying for masses for the dead. For many cash is the coin of the realm of God and with enough money he can be bought.

I myself would like, over time, to foster a stronger emphasis on donations to a food bank of some sort. I don’t believe that the majority of middle-class members of congregations truly comprehend the reality of significant hunger in the financially strong community that is Wausau. The experience of the “Grab-and-Go” food distribution since the Safer at Home initiatives should open our eyes. Thousands of people are being fed each week by that program. These are not “welfare cheats” sponging off the system. There are those. But there are also the legitimately hungry. More than we knew.

So, I would like to foster among this congregation an enhanced response to Jesus’ call, “I was hungry and you fed me,” knowing that, “Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me,” (Matthew 25:40).

At the same time, I have to be honest with you. That won’t help you. At least not in the sense that somehow, we are giving to God any bit of the debt we owe him for our sins. We were reminded, Peter began this portion of Scripture, that we are living in thankful response to him who has already paid the debt. You were redeemed! Not by an empty way of life. Not by gold or silver.

Who’s buying? Christ did! He’s the one lamb whose sacrifice means something. For he offered to God himself, blameless and pure, as the ultimate payment.

Even in their fruitless Passover lambs, or the bulls and goats of Yom Kippur sacrifices, the Israelites brought the best that they had. Christ brings perfection. Obedient to the Father every step of his life, Jesus does what we were to do. The hungry, for example, were fed. The temptations of alcohol or acquisition were defeated by his knowledge that greater things above (the treasures of heaven) were worthy of his unwavering dedication.

In that passage from Hebrews denying the value of bulls and goats, Jesus goes on to say, “You were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said, ‘Here I am. I have come to do your will, God’,” (Hebrews 10:6,7). That Will of God led him to the cross to shed his blood in perfect payment. “Tetelestai!” “Paid in full,” he cried out from the cross, in the English phrase we know more commonly as: “It is finished”!

With payment finished, God raised him from death and gave him glory. Revelation’s song is: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and you bought us for God with your blood,” (5:9). We’ll be singing that song of praise with the saints and angels of heaven, in the final phase of the plan begun “before the foundation of the world”. Gracious God: let us sing before you now, with the words of praise, and the lives of service that you desire.

It’s not a life to pay for sin. I’m not buying! Christ’s life did that. We are only living in reverence for him who took our check and generously paid it all. AMEN.

**Confession of Faith--Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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 sin, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

**Prayer of the Church**

O Lord our God, we deserve only to stand condemned before you and to be cast forever out of your presence into eternal doom, for we have sinned against you every day. But thanks to your boundless love and mercy, you have delivered us from damnation through Jesus Christ your Son, and for his sake have prepared for us a glorious home in the heavens. Cheer and sustain us with this certain hope of everlasting life.

Give us a proper respect for Christ that we acknowledge and honor him as our Savior alone. When we are tempted to take credit for our faith or salvation, remind us that we can bring nothing of value to the table and are wholly dependent on him. We also thank you that he has paid all our debt with his one sacrifice at the cross.

Dear God, with the tender touch of your mercy look upon all who are sick in any way. Treat with compassion all who suffer, all who are weak and weary, worn and sad. Watch over Gordon Baumann and his family who are dealing with the loss of wife and mother, Valeria. Give them strength and confidence in Christ that forgiveness and heaven have been won for all of us. Thank you for bringing Gordon through a heart procedure this past weekend. Continue blessing the work of surgeons and doctors and give the medical staff guidance in bringing the best conclusion to our friend’s health challenges.

Grant us a joyful role in bringing comfort and help to any in this world who need our efforts. Bless the donations to food pantries so that those affected by a loss of work, or reduced hours and pay, may be fed adequate meals during this time of stress.

In your kingdom, Lord, we are privileged to have a part. We seek to share the message of Christ through our church and our school. Therefore, we ask particular blessings upon the work of the Assignment Committee of our Wisconsin Synod, that they may direct graduates into the correct ministry for them to begin. If you are willing, allow us one of those graduates to serve our school in years to come.

May our lives of ministry, of offerings, of service show you the respect we have for you and for our salvation. Listen to all our prayers, and this one as we pray...

**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**

**Words of Institution**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Hymn: CW # 128 v. 1-5** *Not All the Blood of Beasts*

1 **Not all the blood of beasts On Israel’s altars slain**

**Could give the guilty conscience peace Or wash away the stain.**

2 **But Christ, the heav’nly Lamb, Takes all our sins away,**

**A sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they.**

3 **In faith I place my hand On that dear head divine,**

**As penitently here I stand And lay on him my sin.**

4 **My soul looks back to see The burden you did bear**

**When hanging on the cursed tree—I know my guilt was there!**

5 **Believing, we rejoice To see the curse remove;**

**We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice And sing his bleeding love.**

**Closing Prayer and Blessing**

Almighty God, grant to your Church the Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes from above. Let nothing hinder your Word from being freely proclaimed to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people, so that we may serve you in steadfast faith and confess your name as long as we live, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C: ♫ Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: CW# 351 v. 1, 2, 4** *Hail, O Once-Despised Jesus*

**1 Hail, O once-despised Jesus! Hail, O Galilean King!**

**You have suffered to release us, Hope to give and peace to bring.**

**Hail, O universal Savior, Bearer of our sin and shame;**

**By your merits we find favor; Life is given through your name.**

**2 Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, All our sins on you were laid;**

**By almighty love anointed, You have full atonement made.**

**Ev’ry sin has been forgiven Through the power of your blood;**

**Open is the gate of heaven; We are reconciled to God.**

**4 Worship, honor, pow’r, and blessing You are worthy to receive;**

**Loudest praises, without ceasing, Right it is for us to give.**

**Help, O bright angelic spirits, All your noblest anthems raise;**

**Help to sing our Savior’s merits; Help to chant Immanuel’s praise.**

***Announcements***

***Brief Postlude***

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**Notes and News**

**Lord’s Supper Offered:** We will celebrate the Lord’s Supper following this Sunday’s service (April 26) from 10:30 am to 12:00 noon. Please read the April newsletter for details. We will also have copies of *Forward in Christ, Portals of Prayer,* and *Meditations* available.

**Asleep in Jesus:** Our sister in Christ, Valeria Baumann, was called home to heaven on Tuesday. A Christian funeral service was held on Thursday. We pray for God’s comfort and peace for Gordon and their family.
*“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” John 11:25-26*

**Teacher Calls:** The Church council, in consultation with the School Board, has submitted our request for a principal candidate and preschool teacher to be assigned from the 2020 assignment pool of Martin Luther College. Assignment Day is May 16. In fairness to the members of Our Savior’s, we need to report that, overall, there will be more requests of the Assignment Committee than graduates available. We, therefore, pray for the success of this request.

**Family Devotions:** WELS Commission on Discipleship has started offering devotions developed for the entire family to use. The devotions will coincide with the previous Sunday’s Bible readings. Each devotion is complete with a set of questions for different age groups, a prayer, and hymn verses that can be sung or spoken. Downloadable printable versions are available as well. You can subscribe to have the devotions e-mailed to you at [wels.net/subscribe](http://wels.net/subscribe), find them on the WELS Facebook page [fb.com/welslutherans](http://fb.com/welslutherans), or visit [wels.net/family-devotions](http://wels.net/family-devotions).

“The foundation of the Christian family begins at home. What an opportunity in coming weeks for parents to commit to starting and sustaining a good and godly habit,” says Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director of WELS Commission on Discipleship.

**April WELS Connection:** You can now view the[**April WELS Connection**](https://u2735450.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=NbfoMkUCuObsUzbEbtvyW2chnUK1vK5inFJsUbfHObMqOHxr9XkPBZVu8TuhpCmX3XnMaqtvZp6e2c7wjqY-2FD4JtUfzTH1D5UOQHzFmlPrqd00K6NtmIsI-2FWvBbuR4LhcvNs9i-2BMy0zjQDDXLy02VljtK8XMmH-2F8PdXXh1U39F2pAY6NMwG3UQLmN5SL4QVE9gREegZgrjCdRpeSbHEPP8xpCs-2FJ7BOq-2BhQui24zqIc-3DlYSk_Gz7t1Gmf-2FaSuJEL0vevTymz-2F0FhUTOamEOaCRCTfE-2BzGvk-2BBjwHmj-2FzqLPSaUhpSRWIxN6tn-2F7R4s1ZIg04juY5Grgt3-2Fz2MJs9peYhgF9MZpym7e6RlFMoAy9K-2BDyInLV9TP2UZLjiA0GNqYsacX-2Bv9kplJzSskN3GNynD-2FwnJcEC6ryXd8WPN4Z7u6uyb74qbPceZg82gPkroWZAeZBQ-3D-3D) online: <https://vimeo.com/410330911>. It is also on our website [http://www.oursaviorswausau.org](http://www.oursaviorswausau.org/page/2200/4891/Links) (click on the “Links” tab on our home page) and on our Facebook page at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church and School <https://www.facebook.com/OurSaviorsWausau/>