

April 7, 2021 Easter and beyond at Holy Cross

Welcome to April and the season of Easter at Holy Cross. I hope you all had a blessed Easter Sunday, in whatever way you decided to enjoy it. We had an actual live service in our Sanctuary that drew 56 people! It put us near capacity in the pews and the Bell Choir stayed in the loft to help with numbers.

Family units sat separate from each other, at least six feet away and kept their masks on. The only singing we heard was recorded and the Pastor and Assisting Minister did the speaking. Through the efforts of many we stayed safe and yet experienced the Easter miracle in our church sanctuary. It was great to hear the Bells and the Organ and even the weather cooperated with a nice sunny spring day.

After service Daniel & Sheila Clausen prepared over 50 meals that were given to our Holy Cross families to help them celebrate Easter without cooking. That was a tremendous gift of service those two gave to our congregation.

Now, as has been tradition, pastors take a bit of a break after the rigors of Lent and Holy Week. Pastor Patricia is off on vacation and out of the office for the next two weeks. She will return to lead us in worship on Sunday, April 18th in the gym. **Please note there will be NO service this Sunday, April 11th**, neither in person, nor drive up, and no You Tube videos.

Following the 18th, the next Sunday, April 25th we will hold Drive up communion in the parking lot and then on May 2nd we will again have service in the gym which will include the installation of our new church council members.

Please join me in welcoming Andrew Miller, Deanna Noon, Marlene Simpson, and Steve Tweet along with the continuing council members Pat Bryant, Carolyn Ford, and Bryan Struve. And my heartfelt appreciation for the years of service to our outgoing council members; Kathy Mears, Erick Nyquest, Loran Sell and Gail Struve.

We will hold our next Council meeting on Tuesday, April 20th at 6:30 PM where both outgoing and incoming members will be in attendance. We will be discussing the transfer of the Easter House and empty lot property to Family Promise and the schedule of different church services through the end of Spring and into Summer. Your thoughts are always welcome. Please call or email me directly with any questions or concerns you may have.

Blessing to you, your servant in Christ, Bryan Struve Council President

Your Story Isn't Over Yet. I'm pretty sure I don't know all about what each of you has been going through this past year. Some of you have told me a little, some not at all, but this much I know – you've all been going through a lot this past year. The list includes a wildfire, an ice storm, the illness and death of many people close to you, the tumult of a political season that reads more like a made for tv movie, and of course, there was also a pandemic. Is still a pandemic. I look out and see a room full of people wearing masks, social distancing, and staying safe, and I know for a fact a lot of you have stepped up and gotten the immunization already. Good work. I wouldn't blame you a bit for feeling tired, worn out, and sometimes, even, ready to quit. Let somebody else be mom for awhile, or dad, or student, or state worker, or caregiver, or even pastor. But, hear this – take a break, get some rest, do things that make you happy, and then, hear this – Your Story Isn't Over Yet. Apparently, this is a phrase that's been out there for awhile – though I only came across it recently - I have even seen the semicolon used as a graphic with these words behind it. Your Story Isn't Over Yet.

Here on the Sunday we call, "The Resurrection of Our Lord" we have the opportunity to grasp this idea in the person, the ministry, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His story isn't over yet. This Holy Week has been different for many of us. I personally have found my center, my grounding in attending Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday worship during Holy Week. The act of washing the feet of another person, as Jesus did, and of connecting to the stations of the cross has always connected me to Jesus' personal story. But this year, those services were online, and perhaps a bit less personal. And Yet, Easter Sunday came anyway. Christ defeats death, defeats all those stories of powerful people who take pleasure in grinding the less powerful under their boot heel. Christ is Raised, and the Resurrection is ours, as well. Because, the Resurrection isn't the end of the story. There's one more important festival day in the church year, and that's Pentecost – 50 days after Jesus rises on Easter day, the Holy Spirit, God's gift to the world, fills the disciples, and sends them out to change the world, without the corporeal Jesus walking alongside. And they do it. They are still doing it. Every time you and I extend ourselves for the betterment of another person, Jesus lives. Every time we fight for justice in the face of tyrants, Jesus lives. Every time we reach out the hand of caring and peace to a hurting soul, Jesus lives.

Your story isn't over yet. It's a powerful phrase, and I didn't coin it, so you have my full permission to use it over and over. Some of you know I have had the privilege of surviving a suicide in my family. Some of you have, also. I wonder sometimes, if someone had just managed to say to those who died, at the right moment – Your Story Isn't Over Yet – might they have listened, given the idea thought, and still been here with us, today. Because I think that's how powerful these words are. In John's gospel we read today, Mary Magdalene is at the tomb. The person she thought would change the world has died, and now even his body is gone. She cries in total despair. Then, a voice, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" And there it is. I think in that one word, her name, and in that one look, Jesus told Mary Magdalene, Your Story Isn't Over Yet. When that moment in the garden was over, she ran to the disciples, and said, "I have seen the Lord."

That's really all that Jesus' life death and resurrection promises us – We have seen the Lord – and been forever changed by that encounter. We know the story doesn't end, just as we know we are an integral part of the story. Saint Teresa of Avila is quoted as writing, "Christ has no hands but yours" I've heard it misquoted, Christ has no hands but Ours, but I want you to hear the difference. Christ has no hand but Yours is personal – a torch passed directly to each of us – if we say christ has no hands but ours, we might think its someone else's job today, and we can shrug it off. But that's not how st Teresa said it – Christ has no hands but yours – yep I'm talking to you – today, and tomorrow, and the next day. We are part of the great story, and the wonder of that is marvelous. The burden is pretty real, too, I know, but the wonder, we could live on the wonder of it, couldn't we? Your Story isn't over yet. No matter how much loss, how much strain, and worry, and downright pain you've been dealing with this year. The Resurrection of Jesus gives us this – A story that goes on, and on. To the glory of God. Amen. -Pastor Patricia+

2nd Easter

Risen with him in Victory

Hope for a New Day

Sunday, April 11, 2021

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ,
for these waters where you make us new,
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.
We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us
in the grace-filled waters of rebirth,
like rains to our thirsting earth,
like streams that revive our souls,
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.
Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.
Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.
Make us one, risen Christ.
Cleanse our hearts.
Shower us with life.
To you be given all praise,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God,
now and forever. **Amen.**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 384 "That Easter Day"

1 That Easter day with joy was bright;
the sun shone out with fairer light

when, to their longing eyes restored,
th'apostles saw their risen Lord!

4 All praise, O risen Lord, we give
to you, once dead, but now alive!
To God the Father equal praise,
and God the Spirit, now we raise!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

First Reading: Acts 4:2-35

Psalm: Psalm 133

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1-2:2

Gospel: John 20:19-31

NICENE CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

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,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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 INTERCESSION

OFFERING PRAYER

God of love,
You call us beloved children and welcome us to your table.
Receive our lives and the gifts we offer.
Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world;
For the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life

and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Wellspring of joy,
Through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
And send us as joyful witnesses,
That your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
To know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.
The God of life,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

**Praying together at Holy Cross – April 11, 2021 – 2nd
Sunday of Easter**

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love. You shower your church with grace, O God. Unite the whole church on earth, so that with one heart it testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with power and love.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You proclaim the blessing of life forevermore. Like dew upon the mountains, refresh your creation. Restore waters, cleanse the air, and provide revitalizing moisture to parched land. Give your whole creation the promise of new life.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You direct the nations, O God. Guide all in authority, that they shepherd their peoples in the ways of your love. Defeat in us our impulse to war. Bestow the peace of Christ upon those in authority and breathe upon them the Holy Spirit.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You place within the heart of the church a spirit of sharing. Give us the power of your generous Spirit, that we provide for the needs of others. Announce your peace to those who are lonely, hurting, suffering, or afraid.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You give us fellowship with one another in this faith community Holy Cross. Shine the light of the risen Christ in our life together, so that we live in love for one another and our joy may be complete.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You share the gift of eternal life. In thanksgiving and remembrance, we recall the lives and gifts of those who now live in endless joy. Unite us with them in resurrection hope.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



**Hope
for a
New
Day**



We love
because
He first
loved us.

John 4:19