



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Praise and Thanks to God!

The icon shown above is titled *"The Harrowing of Hell."* It is one of my favorite Easter icons depicting the resurrected Christ emerging from hell, busting down the gate (door) of hell that now lays at his feet in the form of a cross.

We contemporary Lutherans are not very familiar with iconography (that is something more familiar to our Orthodox sisters and brothers who view icons as having a living being). However, I want to share this particular image with you as it is most fitting for our reflection on this Easter and throughout the Easter season.

Having been raised and worked on a farm, I know what a harrow is. After a farmer plows the ground, the sod is turned over but it lays in large clumps. So, in order to further prepare the ground for planting, a harrow – a heavy metal frame with spikes or sharp-edged disks, is used to break up the clods and level the ground. To "harrow" means to hurt, cut, wound, lacerate; it means to make uncomfortable; distress, torment; and vex. This is what Jesus did when he descended to the dead – he harrowed hell.

In our creeds we say that Christ "descended into hell" or "descended to the dead." So, I have a question: Just what was Christ doing in hell when he was crucified, died and was buried? We don't think about this very often, but our ancestors in the faith had some thoughts. In 1 Peter 3. 18b-19, *"He was put to death in the flesh ... in which also he went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison."* Their thinking is that Jesus' descent into hell is part of the resurrection sequence where Jesus proclaimed his victory to the souls of those who had died and were in the prison of hell (or death – that is Hades ... the realm of the dead.)

The further thought here is that Jesus' descent into hell is to do battle with Satan; thus guaranteeing the deliverance of the Saints!

Blessed Martin Luther said in a 1533 sermon that Christians ought to "*cling to the main point – that, through Christ, hell has been torn to pieces and devil's kingdom and power utterly destroyed.*" **Christ has harrowed hell.** And, today, hell itself groans: *My power has vanished. I received one who died as mortals die, but I could not hold him. With him and through him, I lost those over which I had ruled. I had held control over the dead since the world began, and lo, he raises them all up with him!* (from a Holy Saturday Orthodox liturgy).

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Blessed Easter!

Pr Curtis Zieske

Worship Information from Holy Cross – April 12, 2022

Last Sunday, April 10, 2022, we remembered Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem by waving our Palms and singing. We then followed his suffering, pain and sacrifice with a reading of the Passion of Christ voiced by several members of our congregation. If you were unable to attend, you may watch a video recording of this service on the Holy Cross YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiHbmFBDWLGIW-jcI8jRhOQ>.

This coming **Sunday, April 17, 2022 at 10:00am**, we will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord with an Easter Sunday Service of the Word and Sacrament led by our Interim Pastor Curtis Zieske. There will be special music from both our Voice and Bell Choirs. Please bring flowers to add to our Flowering Cross and potted blooms for decorating the chancel. We invite you to worship with us. We continue to sit socially distant, and while wearing masks is now optional throughout the service, we request that you do wear one while singing. Please come if you are able.

Easter Sunday Worship at Home - Holy Cross Lutheran Church
April 17, 2022 – The Resurrection of our Lord

You are invited to worship alone or with family using this bulletin.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

In the waters of baptism, we have passed over from death to life with Jesus Christ, and we are a new creation. For this saving mystery, and for this water, let us bless God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

We thank you, God, for your river of life, flowing freely from your throne: through the earth, through the city, through every living thing.

You rescued Noah and his family from the flood;

You opened wide the sea for the Israelites.

Now in these waters you flood us with mercy, and our sin is drowned forever. You open the gate of righteousness and we pass safely through.

In Jesus Christ, you calm and trouble the waters.

You nourish us and enclose us in safety. You call us forth and send us out.

In lush and barren places, you are with us. You have become our salvation. Now breathe upon this water and awaken your church once more. Claim us again as your beloved and holy people.

Quench our thirst; cleanse our hearts; wipe away every tear.

To you, our Beginning and our End, our Shepherd and Lamb, be honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving, now and forever. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS AND PSALM *God speaks to us in scripture reading and song.*

Acts 10:34-43 *God raised Jesus on the third day*

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 *This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Ps. 118:24)*

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Christ raised from the dead, the first fruits

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the feast. *Alleluia.* (1 Cor. 5:7, 8)

1 Luke 24:1-12 *The women proclaim the resurrection*

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 365 “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today”

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

On this day of resurrection joy, let us offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and our world. *A brief silence.*

Renewing God, the good news of your resurrection changed the world. Give church leaders and all the baptized the same excitement as the women at the tomb, and inspire us to share your abundant life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Sustaining God, your creation abounds with signs of new life in budding trees and newborn creatures. Provide fertile soil, ample sunlight, and

nourishing rain for the growth of plants, and provide farmers with a plentiful harvest. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Sheltering God, strengthen and sustain all who support vulnerable people across the world. Empower government agencies and international organizations that provide for refugees and migrants forced to leave their homelands. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Encouraging God, you do a new thing among us. We pray for those gripped by fear and anxiety or who suffer in any way (*especially*). Send us as your healing presence to places of hunger, pain, illness, or overwhelming sorrow. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Surprising God, you offer endless ways for us to delight in your grace. Give this community of faith a sense of joy and wonder in exploring new avenues of faith formation, worship, and discipleship. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Resurrecting God, you make us alive in Christ. Thank you for blessing us with faithful witnesses who now rest in you (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We offer to you these petitions and those we carry in our hearts, trusting in your abundant and ever-present mercy. **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Living God, you gather the wolf and the lamb to feed together in your peaceable reign, and you welcome us all at your table.

Reach out to us through this meal, and show us your wounded and risen body, that we may be nourished and believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

✠ GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, generous God, for in this bread and cup we have tasted the new heaven and earth where hunger and thirst are no more. Send us from this table as witnesses to the resurrection, that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God, the Author of life, Christ, the living Cornerstone, and the life-giving Spirit of adoption, † bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**
Go in peace. Tell what God has done. **Thanks be to God.**