

**BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN, Johnstown, PA**

**Easter Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**CALL TO WORSHIP\*\***

L: Christ is risen! **P: He is risen indeed!**

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L: Christ is risen! **P: He is risen indeed!**

L: This is the day the Lord has made! **P: We will rejoice in it.**

L: This is the day God has made; and what a day!

**P: When God wipes away our tears so we can see the empty tomb.**

L: What a day! Easter day!

**P: When God opens our hearts' tombs as Jesus calls us by name.**

L: Christ is risen! **P: He is risen indeed!**

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L: Christ is risen! **P: He is risen indeed!**

**HYMN "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" vs. 1&4 #217**

**CALL TO RECONCILIATION\*\***

We find ourselves living in the shadows these days, afraid to follow the light. We wander in our backyards, alone, looking for God in these days. Yet we are still, we will be again, we are always Easter people! Let us speak of our fears of having the resurrection promise wiped away by the virus of fear and panic, as we pray together, saying,

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION\*\***

**Unable to gather together, still on this day, as we walk through the shadows of our lives, we come to you, God who dispels our fears. Too often, we believe our foolishness is hidden from you; too often, we stand before the open door of hope, wondering if we dare enter. Uncertain of the good news offered to us, we would rather return to the comfort of our familiar ways rather than trusting in you.**

**Yet you come, as persistent as Mary at the tomb, Joy of our hearts, to open the gates of hope, so we might walk in the gardens of hope; you come, to open the gates of grace, so we might plant peace in the wilderness of the world; you come, to open the gates of resurrection, so we might know our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

**SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON\*\***

L: This is the day of resurrection and new life. This is the day God offers us steadfast hope and love which will never end.

**P: We will sing and dance on this day! We are still, we will be again, we are always Easter people! We will rejoice and give thanks to the God who saves us.**

L: Friends, Believe the Good News

**ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen**

**GLORIA PATRI**

**CHURCH NEWS**

**THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*(Please greet your neighbor by saying, "The Peace of Christ be With You.")*

**REDEDICATION OF SELF AND SUBSTANCE**

**Offertory**

**Doxology**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**LESSONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES**

Old Testament	Isaiah 65:17-25	p.644
New Testament	Acts 10:34-43	p.957
Gospel Lesson	John 20: 1-18	p.944

**MESSAGE**

**Denise Ann Todero, CP**

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; in him all things in heaven and earth were created, things visible and invisible. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

**He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first born of the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen**

**HYMN "He Lives" vs. 1&2 #220**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

L: Hear our prayers, O Lord. **P: And let our cry come unto Thee.**

L: Let us bless the Lord! **P: Thanks be to God.**

**CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

*(All believers are welcome to partake in Holy Communion.)*

L: The peace of the Lord be with you. **P: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them up to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

#### **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

L: Loving and Compassionate God, Father, all powerful and ever-living,....

**P Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the  
highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord,  
Hosanna in the highest.**

L Lord, you are holy indeed..... we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**P Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again.**

L We remember, O Father, in accordance with his command,.....  
Do this in memory of me."

**P When we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim your  
death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.**

L Worthy is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain, to receive all power and  
wealth, wisdom and might, honor and glory and praise.

**P Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free.  
You are the Savior of the world.**

L Loving God, send your Holy Spirit upon these gift..... Amen

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS**

The body of Christ. **Response: The bread of heaven.**

The blood of Christ. **Response: The cup of salvation.**

**HYMN "Christ Arose"**

**#216**

#### **BENEDICTION/SENDING\*\***

L: We could just return to our homes and go back to life,

**P: but we will go to rebuild neighbors, and share the light we  
have received.**

L: We could just stand around and wonder where Jesus has gone,

**P: but we will turn and, as he calls us by name, follow to bring  
hope and healing to our world.**

L: We could just keep quiet and not whisper a word to anyone,

**P: but we will go to tell others of the good news that Jesus is  
alive and in our midst.**

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "He Lives" vs. 3**

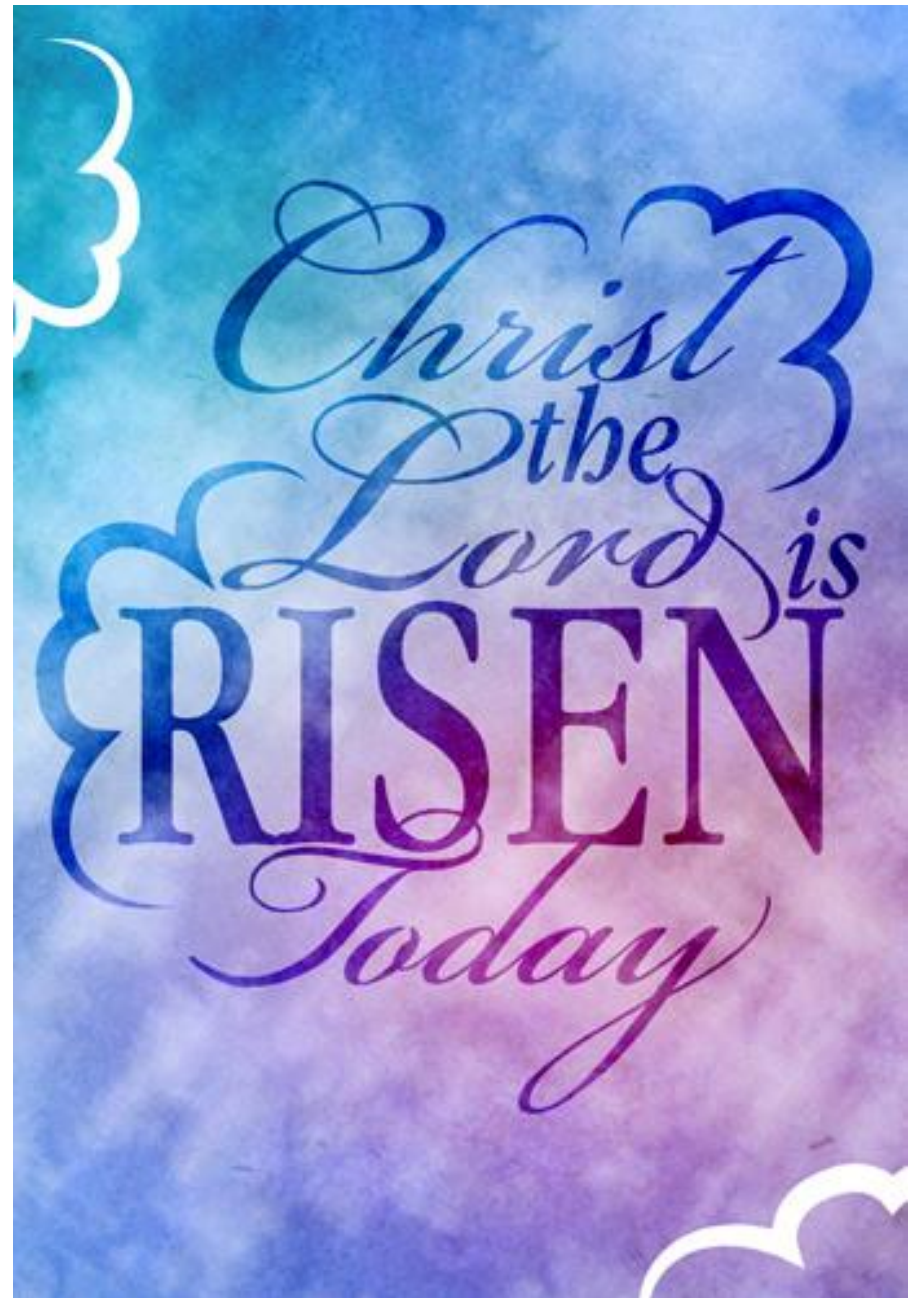
**#220**

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**COMMISSIONED PASTOR: Denise Ann Todero**

**WORSHIP LEADER: Tina Varner**



## **I Am the Resurrection and the Life**

*(Easter Sunday)*

The resurrection story finds its significance far beyond the life of one man, Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus was also the resurrection of the community of believers. A small group of men and women, who had only hours earlier watched in terror as their leader was crucified, found new life and new existence in the resurrection. Filled with the assurance of the words of Jesus Christ, they spread the gospel throughout the world.

The resurrection message is a message of hope. We cannot fall so far or sink so deep that new life is not ours for the asking through Jesus Christ. There is no mess we can make of our lives that cannot be changed through the resurrection. Just as the resurrection of Jesus brought new life to the community of faith in the First Century, it can bring new hope and new life to persons and communities of faith today.

When Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again," she misunderstood, thinking of the resurrection which pious Jews expected to come on the Day of the Lord, when the Messiah would come, the graves would be opened, the non-believers would perish, and the righteous would enter into a new relationship with God in the Messiah's new kingdom.

But, Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life." We too, like Martha, often misunderstand. The resurrection is for us in the here and now. We have only to believe in the power of the risen Christ and to appropriate that power through faith in him. And, the result is new life in us — a resurrection.