

**Worship Service**  
**Third Sunday of Easter – April 18, 2021**  
**St. Christopher-by-the-Sea**  
**Gibson Island, Maryland**

**Introduction** – The Rev. Charles Rowins

**Hymn 199, stanzas 1-2**

*Come, ye faithful, raise the strain*

Minister: Blessed by God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: *And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.*

Minister: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**Song of Praise**

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.*

*Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you,  
we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.*

*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

**Collect for Third Sunday of Easter**

The Lord be with you.

*And also with you.*

Let us pray.

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 Reading:** Acts 3:12-19 – see lesson insert

**Psalm 4** – see lesson insert

**Second Reading:** I John 3:1-7 – see lesson insert

**Hymn 194, stanzas 1-2**

*Jesus lives!*

**Gospel:** Luke 24:36b-48 – see lesson insert

**Sermon** – The Rev. Charles Rowins

### **The Nicene Creed**

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**

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;  
*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;  
*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;  
*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;  
*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;  
*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest;  
*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;  
*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

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Lord, hear the prayers of your people; and what we have asked faithfully, grant that we may obtain effectually, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Confession**

Most merciful God,  
We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

## **Absolution**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

## **Announcements and *America***

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;  
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

## **Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and has promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

## **Hymn 207, stanzas 1-2**

*Jesus Christ is risen today*

## **Dismissal**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!*

**Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, April 18, 2021.**

Today's lessons are about confidence. Together they are a pep talk, the kind of pep talk that a coach might deliver to a player after that player had missed an assignment. An example from the world of baseball. It's Spring after all.

You are at bat. The game is tied. There are two outs and there are no base-runners. You hit a single, and are now on first base with two outs. The coach gives you the steal sign. Perhaps something like this from this morning's **Collect**: "Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work." But, you miss the sign. You aren't paying attention. Your eyes are not open. And then, the next batter gets a single, which allows you to get to third base, yes, but not to home. You don't score. The next batter strikes out. The inning is over. The chance to win the game is lost, at least for the time being.

As you come back to the dugout to get your glove to take the field, the coach admonishes you for missing the sign. "If you had been at second base following the steal, you would have scored on the next batter's single. But because you missed the sign, the game is still tied. Learn from your mistake. Pay attention. You're a good player, but sometimes you lose sight of opportunities."

There is similar language in today's psalm (**Psalm 4:2**): "You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory." In other words, sometimes you are a slow learner. Not all the time, but sometimes. And, isn't that the case with you and me and how we respond to the expectations of God?

Today's Epistle (**I John 3:2**) notes, "The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now." In other words, we are the ones to let the world know that Christ has risen, that he has risen indeed. If we don't let the world know that Christ has risen, the world will miss out on the Good News. The world might get to third base on a single, but the world won't get home on a single. An opportunity will be missed.

This is the message of Jesus in today's passage from Luke (**Luke 24:36**). "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations. You are witnesses of these things."

Coach Jesus: “Stay alert. Look for signs and execute my instructions. You can do this. If you don’t, the outcome is problematic. If you do, I promise you that the outcome will be something of which to be proud.”

Coach Peter has a similar message (**Acts 3:18**). “I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that our sins may be wiped out.”

Not only pay attention. Not only stay alert. Not only keep your eyes open. But act on what you hear, what you see, what opportunities might be slipping away. We might not get another man to second base with an opportunity to score on a single.

Well, good coaches point out mistakes, to be sure. But good coaches also point out the value of not making mistakes, or, if you make them, reminds you that there will be many more opportunities to see the signal, steal the base, and score from second on a single. From today’s Psalm:

“You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine and oil increase. I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

Are you tired yet of the sports analogies? Do you want to yell at the preacher: “Enough already!”

Fair enough. The wonderful thing about our Faith is that sports is not the only analogy available. I don’t care what your background is, what your specialty is, what your profession is, what your passion is, how you spend your time, how you raise your family, how you do anything, our Faith speaks to it.

The point of preaching is not to get the listener to understand the preacher, but to remind the listener that his or her life is ripe with Biblical insights. The Bible isn’t a best-seller by accident. It is a best-seller – always has been – because it speaks to people in every walk of life, in every conceivable condition. You do more preaching than you realize because you draw out, from your life experiences, lessons from others and insights from you.

When your children or grandchildren come home from school, one of the things that you ask is some version of “How was your day?” Sometimes you get an earful. Other times you get “Same as yesterday.” In all cases, the child processes the experience. It is captured somewhere, somehow. Maybe never to be revisited, or maybe to be revisited many times.

Our role as parent or grandparent or friend or sibling or stranger or disciple is to help the child build a skill-set for processing experiences. And one of the items in this skill-set can be our Faith.

- It is comprehensive – Alpha and Omega.
- It is both honest and merciful – Sin and Forgiveness.
- It is hopeful – “Christ is risen!”
- And it is deeply personal – “The Lord be with you!”
- And it sets a high bar for behavior. It appeals to the best in people. – “Love the Lord with all your heart and all your mind.”

Our Faith can be heavy at times. It deals with huge issues. But our Faith can also be a source of rewarding intellectual and spiritual pursuits. It can even be fun. And, by “fun,” I don’t mean “Yuk it up.” I mean rather “challenging.”

Is there a tougher job in all the world than to be a parent or grandparent or aunt or uncle or neighbor or friend or coach or leader of any sort? Not really. But to exercise this role well, a solid foundation is necessary. And religious Faith in general is such a foundation. And the Judeo-Christian Faith in particular is such a foundation.

We have all missed our share of signals. We have all cost our team a run by not paying attention. But, more powerful than those lapses is the constant Love of God, a Love so deep, so comprehensive, so forgiving, so challenging that we can offer, as a prayer, at the end of every day verse 8 of Psalm 4: “I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

Now, that’s confidence. Amen.

## Lessons for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter – April 18, 2021

**Collect:** 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 Reading: Acts 3:12-19

Peter addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that this Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

### Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;

*You set me free when I am hard-pressed; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.*

“You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory;

*how long will your workshop dumb idols and run after false gods?”*

Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful;

*when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.*



Tremble, then, and do not sin;  
*speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.*  
Offer the appointed sacrifices  
*and put your trust in the Lord.*  
Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!"  
*Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.*  
You have put gladness in my heart,  
*more than when grain and wine and oil increase.*  
I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep;  
*for only you, Lord make me dwell in safety.*

### **Second Reading: I John 3:1-7**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

## **Gospel: Luke24:36b-48**

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

## Hymns for Third Sunday of Easter – April 18, 2021

### Hymn 199, stanzas 1-2

*Come ye faithful*

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness!  
God has brought his Israel into joy from sadness:  
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters,  
led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls today, Christ hath burst his prison,  
and from three days' sleep in death as a sun hath risen;  
all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying  
from his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

### Hymn 194, stanzas 1-2

*Jesus lives!*

Jesus lives! thy terrors now can no longer, death, appall us;  
Jesus lives! by this we know thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.  
Alleluia!

Jesus lives! for us he died; then, alone to Jesus living,  
pure in heart my we abide, glory to our Savior giving.  
Alleluia!

### Hymn 207, stanza 1-2

*Jesus Christ is risen today*

Jesus Christ is risen to day, Alleluia!  
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!  
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!  
unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!