

Worship Resources - *Unlocked*

<https://youtu.be/3eaDeDxLQGk>

Easter 3, Year B,

18th April, 2021

Psalm 4 CEV / Luke 24:36b-48 CEV

Prelude *The Ash Grove* (Traditional Welsh folk melody)
played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/wLDq6XxPBfU>

Intro / Call to Worship

Miraculous God, come to us now, even as your Son came to those first disciples on the shores of Galilee. Speak your peace to our hearts. Touch us with your Holy Spirit. Reveal your word, that we may hear your message this day, and live as your disciples in the days and years to come. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

When we gather for worship in person, it is our practice to begin our services by sharing greetings and the peace of Christ with each other. As we begin our service today, let's reflect on how we share Christ's peace in the world around us, as we listen to the following musical rendition of a prayer from St. Francis.

Reflection Video *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* (with Lyrics)

posted to YouTube by Mark G, Prayer of St. Francis with lyrics or
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace with lyrics

<https://youtu.be/ihhvm6eLWZI>

Invocation

Lord Jesus Christ, the light of your love shines on, illuminating the places where you are present. As the bewildered disciples pondered the stories of your appearance, you penetrated the darkness of their fear and doubt with your word of peace. You showed them the appalling marks of evil pierced on your hands and feet. You opened their minds to understand why you had to die to defeat such evil and death.

Increase our understanding, we pray, and open our minds and hearts to receive you, Lord. Speak your word of peace to us and let your love shine on any dark areas in our

lives. May this worship which we offer in your name be a worthy response to your love and your sacrifice for us. Amen.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our reading from the Psalms today, we hear the psalmist plea to God to answer his prayer. As we listen to this reading, let's think about where we turn when we find ourselves in distress.

Scripture Reading *Psalm 4 CEV*

You are my God and protector. Please answer my prayer. I was in terrible distress, but you set me free. Now have pity and listen as I pray.

How long will you people refuse to respect me?^[a] You love foolish things, and you run after what is worthless.^[b]

The Lord has chosen everyone who is faithful to be his very own,^[c] and he answers my prayers.

But each of you had better tremble and turn from your sins. Silently search your heart as you lie in bed.

Scripture Video *Psalm 4 - God Does Wonders For The Faithful*

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/tX7mGy4ChM0>

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

This morning, let's remember Goldie Barnes and her family, as they cope with the unexpected passing of her oldest grandson Aaron, who died unexpectedly from a blood clot

following an ankle injury at 42 years old. May God give them comfort and strength as they come to grips with this tragic loss.

Let's also keep George DeBon in our prayers as he struggles with confusion and dementia. May God give him and his loved ones strength on his bad days.

We take joy in the progress Betty is making in therapy and her improvement in walking.

And finally, I am grateful to God that my recent auto accident resulted in no injuries and that I was able to find another vehicle quickly.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Lord of Dawn and Darkness, how grateful we are for your loving mercies. You saw our fear and doubt, our suspicion, our mistrust, and you banished them from our lives, replacing them with hope, peace, love, and joy.

You called us to be your witnesses, to all the world, unafraid of what others might think or say about us. We have been invited out of our darkened hideaways, into the light of your world as emissaries of hope and justice, peace and compassion.

Be with us, as we participate in ministries of healing and hope through this church, in our community, region, nation, and world. Give us courage and strength to be your disciples in all the circumstances of our lives;

For your world and your children, we bring our prayers to you, God of love.

For those creatures who are misunderstood, for those place which are abused, may there be loving care.

For those who have not known love, for those who struggle to care, may there always be another chance.

For those who live in fear, for those who bring fear to others, may there be justice and peace.

For those living with wounds, for those confounded by death and loss, may there be hope for new life. For those who want to understand more, for those who are content, may minds and hearts remain open. For your world and your children, we open our hearts. Hear our cries, and lead us, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, **Amen.**

In our Gospel reading this morning, we hear of the disciples' fear as they encountered the risen Christ. As we listen to these words from Luke, let's think about our own fears and insecurities, and how much like the disciples we may find ourselves to be.

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:36b-48 CEV

Jesus appeared and greeted them.

They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost.

But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt?

Look at my hands and my feet and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have."

After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

The disciples were so glad and amazed that they could not believe it. Jesus then asked them, "Do you have something to eat?"

They gave him a piece of baked fish.

He took it and ate it as they watched.

Jesus said to them, "While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Books of the Prophets, and in the Psalms[a] had to happen."

Then he helped them understand the Scriptures.

He told them: The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death.

They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem,

you must tell everything that has happened.

Scripture Video ***Luke 24:36b-48 | Eating With The Risen Christ***

Lectioary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/XMVdOayDj5g>

Message

Unlocked

What comes to mind when you think of a locked door? Do you think of the door on your home, bringing to mind that ritual that has become automatic, the turning to lock the door when you enter or exit? Or maybe you think of that business you ran an errand to, only to pull on the door to find it locked, and the business closed? Or maybe the image of a locked door reminds you of places of confinement, like a prison or detention center, where the doors often clang shut ominously.

There are two basic reasons to lock a door, either to keep someone or something out, or to keep someone or something in. For most of us, we probably identify more with the first option. We lock our doors to keep unwanted visitors from gaining entry, from invading our space. We hide behind locked doors for the security they provide, for that small, safe place where we can unwind, without the worry of danger from the outside world, the unwelcome stranger or threat. It's often how we try to calm our fears.

Likewise, when we lock someone in, we are trying to again make ourselves safer. When someone has exhibited behavior that is a danger to others, our societal inclination is to remove them from the public, to eliminate the perceived threat to us, and restrict them in an area with doors that are locked. Again, to help us allay our fears, to make us feel safer.

There's the story of a man who had been visiting a therapist because he has had a fear of monsters living under his bed. The man has been seeing this doctor for months. Every time he would come in the doctor would ask "have you made any progress?". Every time the man would say "no." The man decided to go and see another doctor. When he went back to his first doctor and he asked "have you made any progress?" he said "yes, I am feeling all better now" The doctor asked "what happened". The man said "I went to another doctor and he cured me in one session". The doctor asked "What did he tell you?" The man said "he just told me to cut the legs off of my bed". While he may have found a way to get rid of his fear, are we ever really successful in that endeavor? Do we ever get around our fear? If fear is something we struggle with, then we're in good company.

As we enter our gospel lesson this morning, we find the disciples huddled together behind locked doors, afraid that the authorities will come after them. Like us, they want to keep danger, and the threatening stranger out. They lock their door so that they can feel safe and secure. But they are still on edge. They're wondering what it all means, the reports of "Jesus sightings" when they know very well they saw him crucified, and nobody ever comes out of that alive. Yet suddenly, Jesus appears in their midst, and their reaction is to be "startled and terrified." Even though the women told them about the empty tomb, that Jesus had risen. Even though the two from Emmaus told of encountering Jesus on the road. Even with all

that, they are shocked and surprised when Jesus appears, and they respond with fear. Would we have reacted any differently? After all, when confronted with the unknown and unfamiliar, the natural human response is fear. We respond with fear when we feel we don't have control of a situation, or we encounter a situation that is outside of our control.

Yet Jesus addresses that fear right off the bat. His first words are "Peace be with you." As we discussed last week, that phrase implies his desire for their well-being and wholeness, their shalom. He immediately follows that up with asking why they are frightened, and what doubts do they have in their hearts?

Jesus understands what it means to be human, he's been down that road. He had doubts, he struggled with despair on the cross. He knows this is a process for them. So he encourages them to touch him, to feel that he is real, and not just a spirit or a ghost. Then he takes a bigger step and asks for something to eat, to show that he is a real body, capable of eating and digesting food. In doing all this, he encourages them to move beyond where they are. Yet they still struggle. Even when they realize it's him in the flesh, they express joy, yet they still wonder how this is possible, they still can't make sense of it. It doesn't fit into their understanding of how things should work, it's not the natural way of things as they've experienced it.

Again, would we be any different? We know biology, all of us have at least a basic knowledge of human anatomy and what happens when we die. Decay begins, the brains ceases to function and the brain cells begin to die rapidly after a few minutes. There's no coming back from that, right?

So Jesus continues to walk them along. He reviews familiar words of scripture and helps them gain a deeper understanding of the prophecy contained in those words. He opens their mind to see that death is not the final word. They are witnesses to something new, something unheard of and completely unconventional. The seeds are planted for their commissioning at Pentecost to witness to the world. They are made ready for this mission because they have moved past the fear that has kept them prisoners, that has kept them idle behind locked doors.

What about us? Behind what locked doors do we keep ourselves? Some doors may be common to most of us, but I'm sure that individually we have locked doors that are unique to each of us as well. For some it can be fears concerning our health, for others it can be our financial security, or loneliness, or loss.

Unfortunately, many people in our world use fear to their advantage, in our governments and politics, in advertising, in parenting, and sadly, even within the church. I have certainly

heard many a sermon in my youth scaring me with the fear of “eternal damnation” to get me to keep myself in line. Yet even when we get behind “locked doors,” we may feel more secure, but we are still left with our fears, with our mistrust. The very doors we think keep out that which troubles us, actually keeps us in our own prison with those very fears that we are trying to escape.

So how do we escape the prisons of fear we erect for ourselves? How do we get past those fears to be proper witnesses to the hope and joy in the promise of the resurrection? The first step is to recognize, like the disciples, that change happens at the level of action that contains risk. In other words, if you want to remain completely safe and secure without taking any risks, then you will not effect any meaningful change in your life or the lives of others.

If the disciples had stayed in the locked room, or returned home to Galilee to hide out and stay safe, nothing would have changed. There would have been no mission work, the Gospel would have died out in the first century. If they would have stayed where they were at, behind their own locked doors, they would still be captives to their fears and their mistrust of the resurrected Christ.

The disciples risked all in following and witnessing to the risen Christ because he had already defeated the ultimate threat, death itself. Death was no longer to be feared because it was no longer the end of the game.

Jesus didn't bring them security, he brought them peace, and hope. Hope for a different future. Hope for a new way of life which would lead to a new world, if they were able to open that locked door and be the change they wished to see, the change that he taught them was possible. And most important of all, that he taught them that he would be with them all along the way, until the end of the age.

I'd like to wrap up today with an interesting little illustration. Some of the early Native Americans had a unique practice of training young braves. On the night of a boy's thirteenth birthday, after learning hunting, scouting, and fishing skills, he was put to one final test. He was placed in a dense forest to spend the entire night alone. Until then, he had never been away from the security of the family and tribe. But on this night, he was blindfolded and taken several miles away. When he took off the blindfold, he was in the middle of a thick woods, and he was terrified. Every time a twig snapped, he visualized a wild animal ready to pounce. After what seemed like an eternity, dawn broke and the first rays of sunlight entered the interior of the forest. Looking around, the boy saw flowers, trees, and the outline of a path. Then to his utter astonishment, he beheld the figure of a man standing just a few feet away, armed with bow and arrow. It was his father. He had been there all night

long. How many times do we feel alone and afraid like that, behind whatever locked door we erect to try to feel secure? Yet we still feel alone and vulnerable, like the boy in the story. But also like him, we have someone close by, to look out for us as well, to make sure we are cared for.

The question is, are we willing to take that test? To give up the false security our locked doors give us, for the peace and hope that the resurrection offers us and the new world through risky change that our discipleship calls us to. I hope and pray that we can take that first step. Jesus is knocking, will we unlock and open the door? Amen

Call to Serve.

Today, we are reminded of the joy surrounding the witnesses to Jesus' resurrection! We remember that before their resurrection joy, these witnesses experienced grief at the cross.

Witnessing the Risen Christ in their midst challenges the disciples to turn their disbelief into joyful belief. Witnessing the Risen Christ challenges the disciples to turn their fear into a courageous proclamation of God's glory. God calls forth a transformative love that marks a change in the ways of repentance and forgiveness, by witnessing the Good News of salvation for everyone, everywhere. So, let us give thanks for God's steadfast love by being witnesses to those who are hungry for food, encouragement, and relationship. Let us also witness to those who are poor in spirit, by allowing God's Spirit to loosen our grip on belongings and possessions, in order to awaken every troubled heart. And lastly, let us offer ourselves in gratitude and with generosity, as witnesses to God's goodness by our joyful giving.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we listen to the following song played by Annie, let's give some thought as to how we can give our fears and insecurities to Christ, and what we can do this week to be the comforting presence of Christ to others.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

In The Garden

written by C. Austin Miles, arr. By Martha Mier,
played by church musician Annie Center,
used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

<https://youtu.be/Tx4TYV275IE>

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of abundant love, We offer a portion of our time, spiritual gifts, and resources as a sign of our love for you and the world. O God, we give you our thanks for all that we have and ask a special blessing on these offerings. And God, we ask that our collective offering be an expression of healing, that brings hope to a hurting world. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

Let us go forth having laid down our burdens. Let us go forth rich in spirit, knowing God has a plan for our lives. And, let us go forth as witnesses to God's hope of justice, peace, grace, and love. Believing fully that Christ is among all humanity, now and always. Amen.

As we extinguish this candle, carry its divine spark into your lives this week, sharing God's love and light with all you encounter. Amen.

Postlude

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desire

JS Bach, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/c8YDQV-xn5I>