

## ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

### Sunday Morning Service and Message



From Pastor Larry and Carmen  
Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020

*For those who have invited friends and family to join us, we ask that you pass their email address on to Pastor Larry and Carmen at [thedean58@hotmail.com](mailto:thedean58@hotmail.com).*

*We will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday morning, beginning with the opening prayer and continuing with the service as outlined. This will seem strange and different as we are all so steeped in “visual media”. However, it makes sense when we truly understand and believe God’s word that says “Where two or three gather in My name, there will I be in their midst.”*

*Let’s just settle ourselves in for our service. Reverently bow your hearts and pray aloud, knowing that in the Holy Spirit there are many familiar faces of brothers and sisters, loved ones and family all around you, praying together, embracing one another and raising collective voices of praise and worship to our Father God and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Think also of those who have gone before and picture them as young and alive, waiting for your entrance into the Kingdom where we will worship God together throughout eternity.*

*If for some reason you are not able to worship at this time, purpose to meet with God at a later time and go through the worship service with Him. When we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. Open your spiritual eyes upon Jesus, look*

*full in His wonderful face, as the song goes, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace. Remember we are all together as one body. Please read and sing it all aloud worshipfully. He says that our praise and worship to Him are as a sweet fragrance in the nostrils of God.*

**10:00**

**WELCOME:**

**Good morning to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. As we come together this morning, please know that Carmen and I have prayed for you and for our service together this morning, and are wishing each of you a very Happy Easter.**

**OPENING PRAYER:**

**Good morning, Father. As we celebrate this Resurrection Day, we are reminded of the tremendous pain, torment and sacrifice that Jesus suffered to pay for our sins, past, present and future. He was totally empty of sin and you filled Him up with ours, because of your amazing love for each of us. Father, you said that you thought of us before the worlds were framed. You know all things and at that time you understood that we were going to need your Son to come down to earth to live as a man and die on that cruel cross so that we might have eternal life with you, our Holy Father. Thank you, sir! Amen.**

**SONG OF WORSHIP:      Our God Reigns**

**How lovely on the mountains are the feet of Him,  
Who brings good news, good news.  
Proclaiming peace, announcing news of happiness,  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.**

**CHORUS**

**Our God reigns, He reigns in power. Our God reigns, He reigns in Glory.  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.**

**Out from the tomb He came with grace and majesty.  
He is alive, He is alive.  
God loves us so, see here His hands, His feet, His side.  
Yes we know, He is alive.**

**CHORUS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP (from Hymnal):**

**We praise You, O God.**

**We acclaim You as Lord; all creation worships You, Father everlasting.**

**To You all angels, all the powers of heaven, cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:**

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of Your glory.**

**The glorious company of the apostles praise You.**

**The noble fellowship of prophets praise You.**

**The white-robed army of martyrs praise You.**

**You, Christ, are the King of Glory, the eternal Son of the Father. When You became incarnate to set us free You humbly accepted the Virgin's womb.**

**You overcame the sting of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.**

**You are seated at God's right hand in glory. We believe that You will come to be our judge.**

**Come then, Lord, and help Your people, bought with the price of Your own blood, and bring us with Your saints to glory everlasting.**

**HYMN OF GATHERING: He Lives!**

**I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today.  
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.  
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,  
And just the time I need Him He's always near.**

**CHORUS**

**He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with me  
along life's narrow way.  
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.**

**In all the world around me I see His loving care,  
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair.  
I know that He is leading, thro' all the stormy blast;  
The day of His appearing will come at last.**

## **CHORUS**

**Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian! Lift up your voice and sing  
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King!**

**The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find,  
None other is so loving, so good and kind.**

## **CHORUS**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE:**

**The peace of Christ be with you all  
And also with you.**



**(Hug your family )**

## **PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)**

**Father, we come to you this morning with joyful hearts. We thank you, Lord, for Your love for us, for Your joy, Your peace that passes all understanding, Your patience with us, Your grace and faithfulness to us. Lord, we especially thank you today for your plan to send Jesus to us, so that we may be holy and blameless before you, as you see us through the blood of your dear Son.**

**Thank you for this body of believers, and I ask you right now to bless them, draw them close to you and keep them safe as we go through these troubled times. Father, we lift to you those in our fellowship who have recently been struggling with health issues, family issues, or issues related to COVID-19. We lift up to you those who have contracted this virus and for those who are struggling through this harsh economic time in their lives. Lord, we trust you. You are able to take us through this and we know that you will work all things for our good.**

**Lord, help us to seek your face, to be listening and to learn to hear and understand that still, small voice from You. Your voice brings us instruction, peace, wisdom, and direction. Your power and Your help is needed in our everyday life, as well as in times of danger, chaos, and upheaval throughout the world.**

**As we have gathered this morning, we thank you for Your Son's prayer...Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.**

## **GLORIA PATRI:**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end, Amen, Amen.**

## **TODAY'S READING**

**Let us prepare ourselves for the Word of God. Our hearts and minds are open and we are eager to hear.**

## **A READING FROM GOD'S WORD:**

**“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.” (Matthew 7:13).**

**“And there will be a highway called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not travel it, only those who walk in that way – and fools will not stray onto it.” (Isaiah 35:8).**

**This is the Word of God and a witness of the people. Thanks be to God.**

## **MESSAGE – Doubt, Denial and Unbelief**

**Last week I started my message with the observation that for over 2,000 years people have been writing books and preaching on the many aspects regarding the suffering of the crucifixion, and celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**In God's word, the writings of three major events in the life of Jesus Christ have brought about love, joy, peace and hope to those of us who believe. By the same token millions of people around the world who have heard and read about these events have walked away with doubt, denial, unbelief and rejection.**

**Let's take a closer look at these three events. Seven hundred (700) years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah prophesied this: “But you Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2).**

**So, for hundreds of years this prophecy, along with many others, was passed down from generation to generation. Over the centuries a remnant of the Jewish people continued to believe that their king, the messiah, was coming to the earth and would be born in Bethlehem.**

**The birth of Jesus is the first of three major events that would take place with Jesus Christ on earth. God had set into motion all things He had planned for**

**in this fullness of time. Jesus came to earth with no public fanfare, but rather in a humble manner, as was arranged by God.**

**At that time a small number of people were made aware of His birth and came to worship the new born King. However, many Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to bring about their deliverance from the Roman bondage and restore the earthly kingdom of Israel. God's plan for Jesus would turn out to be in stark contrast to their expectations.**

**Today we know that many Jewish people doubt, deny, disbelieve and totally reject Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the promised King and deliverer they had expected. Some are still awaiting His first appearance.**

**The second major event was Jesus' Crucifixion, and Resurrection three days later. Many turned against Him and doubted, denied and did not believe He was who He said He was. Even Jesus' followers had their doubts that He would come back, after seeing Him crucified. Even when Mary told them she had just seen Jesus, some still doubted. Thomas, of course, was one we all remember.**

**Jesus said "I am the first and the last. I am He that lives, and was dead; and behold I am forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." (Rev. 1:17-18). "I and my Father are one." (Jn. 10:30). "Don't you know me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' " (Jn.14:9). "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn. 14:6).**

**So right before Jesus was to be crucified, He began to tell His disciples of the third major event which was coming to take place on planet earth. He was coming back! He began to teach them some of the details which would surround His return.**

**Jesus said, "For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt, 24:27). "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt, 24:36).**

**Several years ago there was supposedly a true story told about a preacher who told his congregation that the following week he was going to tell them when Jesus would be returning. They laughed and he said that he was serious. He knew when Jesus was coming back and that he would tell them the next week. He also told them to bring their friends and their neighbors and that they would also learn when Jesus was coming back.**

**So the story goes that the following week it was hard to seat everyone who came. People were packed in the pews and some standing at the back of the church. He gave his whole sermon and people were hanging onto his every word. At the end of his message, he told them that at that moment he was going to tell them when Jesus would return. You could hear a pin drop. People leaned forward to hear better. He said, “Jesus is coming back...at a time when you least expect Him”, and then said his closing prayer.**

**Jesus continued His instructive, warning message. “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came, and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matt. 24:37-39).**

**Years ago, Carmen and I visited Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. My parents had moved there to do volunteer work for the church, university, prayer tower, hospital, etc. At that time, a huge Noah’s ark was built, with a reenactment of the day of the flood. We went up the gangplank into the ark and were seated. After everyone was in, the huge door closed. A few minutes went by and then we heard raindrops on the roof, and then a downpour. Thunder could be heard and lightning could be seen through the small windows at the top. You could hear the wind and the storm building in intensity. All of a sudden we heard screaming and shouting outside the door. People were pounding on it and yelling for help. It was so real that we wanted to help them and could actually imagine what it must have been like to be left behind... to drown. The floor began to sway and it felt like we were in a boat. Gradually we heard the shouting and banging on the door go silent. We still heard the storm for a few minutes and then it was over. I was totally impressed and never forgot it.**

**Jesus went on, “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into, therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matt. 24: 42-44).**

**People, we do know when Jesus is coming back...at a time that we least expect. It could be today. Why not? Are we ready today for Jesus to return? Do we need to ask God right now to forgive us for any secret sins we might be harboring. God knows that even as Christians, we will continue to sin, because of our sinful nature. He already knows about them anyway, but He wants us**

to acknowledge and repent of our sins. He wants us to be pleasing to Him and God does not wink at sin. He says, "If we will confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9). We need to turn away from any sin in our lives and strive to not revisit those sins.

People will say, "Well, my Great Granddaddy and my Granddaddy and my Daddy all believed that He was coming back in their time on earth. So why should I believe He's coming back in my lifetime?" Well, we are closer to the time of His coming than our relatives from several generations in the past. Further, He wants us to be obedient to what He's teaching His disciples, to remember His warnings to them. He wants us to keep alive the blessed hope that He has given us, to be looking and longing for His return. If you get a chance, pick up a book by David Jeremiah, called Discover Paradise, A Guidebook to Heaven, Your True Home. I think it's excellent.

So, today, on this glorious day, we celebrate three things...the first, that Jesus was born in the manger in Bethlehem, fulfilling God's promise made in the Old Testament. The second that Jesus DID rise from the dead and is ALIVE IN OUR HEARTS TODAY! HALLELUJAH! Thank you, God, for your promise fulfilled! And thirdly, that we still look forward to His promised second coming, to take us home. We have so much for which to be thankful on this Easter Sunday morning!

Several years ago I ran onto a Dottie Rambo song that has a message that I feel strikes a chord with me. It's called,

**"I've Never Been This Homesick Before"**

There's a light in the window, And the table's set in splendor  
Someone's standing by the open door.

I can see a crystal river, Oh I must be near forever  
And I've never been this homesick before.

**Chorus:**

See the bright light shine, It's just about home time  
I can see my Father standing at the door.  
This world has been a wilderness, I'm headed for deliverance.  
Lord, I've never been this homesick before.

I can see the family gather, Sweet faces, all familiar,  
But no one's old or feeble anymore.

Oh this lonesome heart is cryin' -- Think I'll spread my wings for flyin'.



**Lord, I've never felt this homesick before.  
Lord, I've never been this homesick before.**

**(Chorus)**

### **DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
Amen**

### **HYMN FOR THE JOURNEY – He Keeps Me Singing**

**There's within my heart a melody,  
Jesus whispers sweet & low.  
Fear not I am with thee, peace be still,  
In all of life's ebb & flow.**

**Chorus:**

**Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.  
Sweetest name I know.  
Fills my every longing,  
Keeps me singing as I go.**

**All my life was wrecked by sin & strife.  
Discord filled my heart with pain.  
Jesus swept across the broken strings,  
Stirred the slumbering chords again.**

**(Chorus)**

**Feasting on the riches of His grace,  
Resting 'neath His sheltering wing.  
Always looking on His smiling face,  
That is why I shout & sing.**

**(Chorus)**

**Oh, sometimes He leads through waters deep,  
Trials fall all across the way.  
And though sometimes the path gets rough & steep,  
I see His footprints all the way.**

**(Chorus)**

**Soon He's coming back to welcome me,  
Far beyond the starry sky.**

**And I shall wing my flight to world's unknown,  
I shall reign with Him on high.**

**(Chorus)**

**BENEDICTION**

**May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He cause His face to shine upon you. May He lift up His countenance unto you and give you peace. Amen**

**Christian brothers and sisters, no matter our situation in life or how old we are, always remember...we have a marvelous future ahead of us! Keep the faith, stay the course and carry on bravely.**

**WE LOVE EACH OF YOU; MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU IN THE  
COMING WEEK!**

**Pastor Larry and Carmen**