

GRACE CHURCH

IN PROVIDENCE

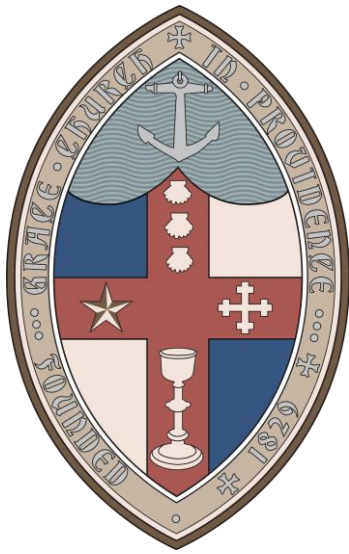
The Mission of Grace Church is to build, by the grace of God, a loving and joyful community which lives the Gospel through worship, proclamation, and service to each other, to downtown Providence, and beyond.



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

~ SUNG HOLY EUCHARIST ~
RITE II

APRIL 30TH, 2023
10:00 AM



WELCOME!

Happy Easter! That's a greeting that works on Easter Day up to the Feast of Pentecost. Another Easter greeting appropriate for the day and season is, "Christ is risen!" to which one replies, "He is risen indeed." In the Christian East, this greeting is especially common, not only in church but if you greet a friend in the bakery or post office. We might not use it as much in the West, but, as Christians, we should always have that message in our hearts, any day of the year. So welcome to Grace Church, Happy Easter, and Alleluia, Christ is risen!

The Rev. Canon Jonathan Huyck+
Rector

*Please turn off or silence all mobile devices prior to the service.
Thank you and welcome!*

VOLUNTARY

Andante pastorale for Organ & Oboe, *from* Organ Sonata No. 4, Op. 98

Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901)

~ Cheryl Bishkoff, Oboe ~

THE INTROIT

The Cantor and Choir sing from The Pavilion,

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! : *The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

Let us go forth in peace : *In the name of Christ. Amen.*

Please stand as you are able and join in singing the hymn.

HYMN IN PROCESSION, 377

Unison or harmony

1 All peo - ple that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with
2 Know that the Lord is God in - deed; with - out our aid he
3 O en - ter then his gates with praise, ap - proach with joy his
4 For why? the Lord our God is good, his mer - cy is for
*5 To Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, the God whom heaven and

1 cheer - ful voice: him serve with mirth, his praise forth
 2 did us make: we are his folk, he doth us
 3 courts un - to; praise, laud, and bless his Name al -
 4 ev - er sure; his truth at all times firm - ly
 5 earth a - dore, from men and from the an - gel

1 tell, come ye be - fore him and re - - jice.
 2 feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.
 3 ways, for it is seem - ly so to do.
 4 stood, and shall from age to age en - - dure.
 5 host be praise and glo - ry ev - er - - more. A-men!

Words: William Kethe (d. 1594); paraphrase of Psalm 100
 Music: Old 100th, melody from Pseaumes octante trois de David, 1551, alt.; harm. after Louis Bourgeois (c 1510-c 1561)
 arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION & COLLECT FOR PURITY

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
People **The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!**
Celebrant

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.**

Please join in singing the Gloria on the following page.



1. Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and

peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly King, al -

might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we

praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus Christ,

on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you

take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;

5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -

ceive our prayer. 6. For

you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



Setting: William Mathias (1934-1991)

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O GOD, WHOSE SON JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated for the readings from Holy Scripture.

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

Acts 2:42-47

Reader A reading from the Book of Acts

THOSE WHO HAD BEEN BAPTIZED devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**



1 The LORD is my Shepherd; *

I have all I need.

2 She makes me lie down in green meadows, *

beside the still waters, she will lead.

3 She restores my soul, she rights my wrongs, *

She leads me in a path of good things, and fills my heart with songs.

4 Even though I walk, through a dark and dreary land, there is nothing that can shame me, *

She has said, She won't forsake me, I'm in Her hand.

5 She sets a table before me, in the presence of my foes, *

She anoints my head with oil, and my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and kindness will follow me, all the days of my life, *

and I will live in Her house, forever; for ever and ever.

GLORY BE TO OUR MOTHER, AND DAUGHTER; AND TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES,
as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Music & Adapted Words by Robert "Bobby" Keith McFerrin, Jr. (b. 1950)

THE EPISTLE READING

1 Peter 2:19-25

Reader A reading from the First Letter of Peter

IT IS A CREDIT TO YOU IF, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Please join in singing the Sequence Hymn.

AT THE SEQUENCE, HYMN 478



1 Je - sus, our might - y Lord, our strength in sad - ness, —
 2 Good shep-herd of your sheep, your own de - fend - ing, —
 3 Glo - rious their life who sing, with glad thanks-giv - ing, —

the Fa - ther's con - quering Word, true source of glad - ness;—
in love your chil - dren keep to life un - end - ing. —
true hymns to Christ the King in all their liv - ing:—

your Name we glo - ri - fy, O Je - sus, throned on high;
You are your - self the Way: lead us then day by day
all who con - fess his Name, come then with hearts a - flame;

you gave your - self to die for our sal - va - tion.
in your own steps, we pray, O Lord most ho - ly.
the God of peace ac - claim as Lord and Sa - vior.

*Words: Clement of Alexandria (c 170- c 220); paraphrased by F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984), rev.
Music: Monk's Gate, Sussex folk melody; adapt. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

THE HOLY GOSPEL

John 10:1-10

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

JESUS SAID, “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

The Reverend Hartwell Hylton

Please stand as you are able and say together

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.
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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Intercessor and People pray responsively,

Through Jesus the shepherd and guardian of our souls, let us pray for the needs of all God's flock.

We pray that the Good Shepherd may raise up in the church those who will lead with courage and serve with love.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that the rich nations of the world may share justly the abundance of the earth that belongs to all people.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that all who suffer for their witness against injustice and greed may take heart and follow in the nonviolent ways of Christ.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that those who have strayed from Christ may hear their Good Shepherd's voice as our community welcomes them home.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that we who are being called by our Good Shepherd may have courage to follow and openness to welcome all others who hear his call.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray this morning for *Laura, Connie, Tara Crandall, James Busby, Janet Heinze, Kenneth Scanlan, Erinn Huetteman*. Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that we may entrust our beloved dead to the One who judges justly, so that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Risen Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

WELCOME & PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE HOLY COMMUNION

AT THE OFFERTORY, ANTHEM

LO, MY SHEPHERD IS DIVINE; CAN I WANT WHEN HE IS MINE?
By the streams that wander slow, through the meads where flowerets blow
He doth lead me to rest, still with comfort blest, still with peace and comfort blest.

Words: based on Psalm 23
Music: adapted from Missa Sancti Nicolai - Kyrie, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Cheryl Bishkoff, *Oboe*

Please stand as you are able, to sing the Doxology as the offering is brought forward.



THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all bles-sings flow; praise him all crea-tures here be - low;

Al-le-lu - ia, Al-le-lu - ia! Praise him a-bove ye heav'n-ly host:

Praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. O — praise him, O — praise him,

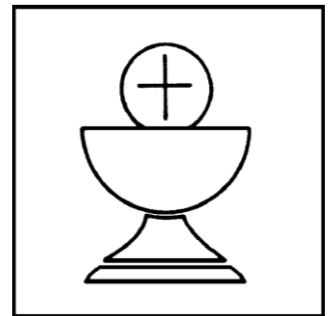
Al-le-lu - ia, Al-le-lu - ia, Al-le-lu - ia! A - men.

Words: Thomas Ken (1637-1711)

*Music: Lasst uns erfreuen, melody from Auserlesne Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, 1623;
adapt. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**
Celebrant

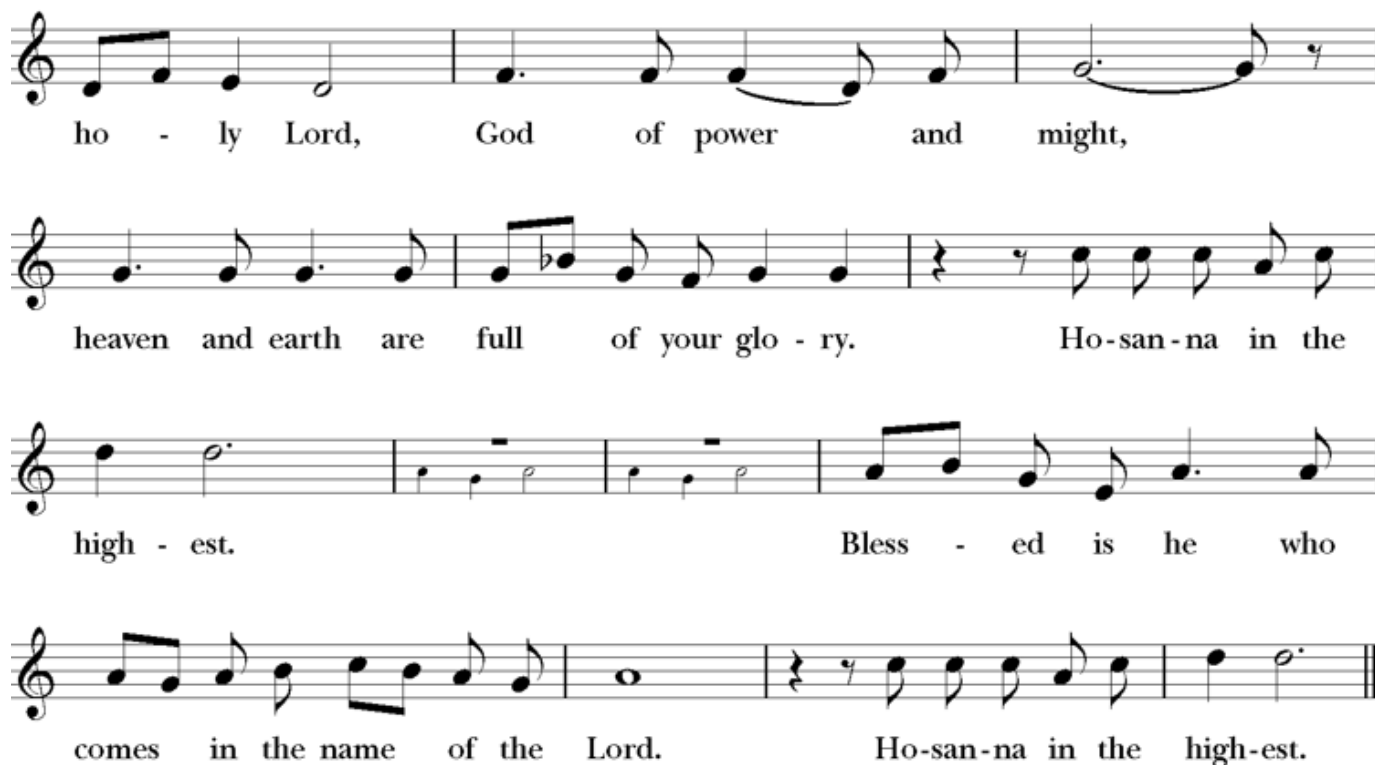


IT IS RIGHT, AND A GOOD AND JOYFUL THING, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS, S-128

Sung by all

Ho - ly, ho - ly,



Setting: William Mathias (1934-1991)

Celebrant

HOLY AND GRACIOUS FATHER: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

ON THE NIGHT HE WAS HANDED OVER to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Celebrant

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

People

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Celebrant

WE CELEBRATE THE MEMORIAL OF OUR REDEMPTION, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

After the Celebrant breaks the host, please join in singing the Agnus Dei.

AGNUS DEI, S-165

Sung by all

Je - sus, Lamb of God: Have mer - cy
on us. Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: Have mer - cy
on us. Je - sus, re - deem - er of the world: Give us your peace.

Setting: W. Mathias

THE INVITATION

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts, by faith with thanksgiving.

THE COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Sung by the Choir as the Clergy, Acolytes, and Ushers receive.

I am the good shepherd, alleluia. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, alleluia.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want;
he makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

Setting: Ego sum pastor bonus, Mode VIII

THE COMMUNION

To receive communion, extend your hands to the Priest and they will place the wafer in your hand (if you would like a gluten-free wafer, please ask for one). If you would prefer to receive a blessing instead, simply cross your arms over your chest when you come to the Altar. All are welcome at The Lord's Table!

AT THE COMMUNION, ANTHEM

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; THEREFORE CAN I LACK NOTHING.
He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
He shall convert my soul and bring me forth
in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For thou art with me: Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
Thou shalt prepare a table for me against them that trouble me:
Thou has anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.
But thy loving kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Words: Psalm 23

Music: from Requiem, John Rutter (b. 1945)

Please join in singing the hymn.

THE COMMUNION HYMN, 316

1 This is the hour of ban - quet and of song;
2 Too soon we rise; we go our sev - eral ways;
3 Feast af - ter feast thus comes and pass - es by,
this is the heaven - ly ta - ble spread for me;
the feast, though not the love, is past and gone,
yet, pass - ing, points to the glad feast a - bove,
here let me feast, and feast - ing, still pro - long the
the Bread and Wine con - sumed: yet all our days thou
giv - ing us fore - taste of the fes - tal joy, the
brief, bright hour of fel - low - ship with thee.
still art here with us—our Shield and Sun.
Lamb's great mar - riage feast of bliss and love.

Words: Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), alt.

Music: Canticum refectionis, David McKinley Williams (1887-1978)

When Communion is completed, please stand as you are able and say together

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

ALMIGHTY AND EVER-LIVING GOD, we thank you for feeding us
with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory,
now and for ever. Amen.

A BLESSING FOR EASTERTIDE

THE GOD OF PEACE, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Please remain standing as you are able and join in singing the hymn.

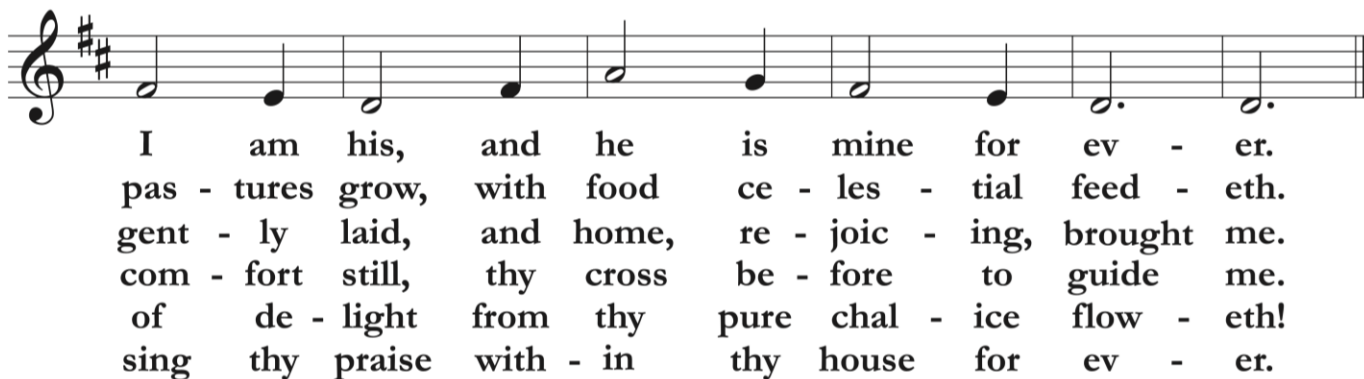
HYMN IN PROCESSION, 645



1. The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness
2. Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed
3. Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in
4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill with thee, dear
5. Thou spread'st a ta - ble in my sight; thy unc - tion
6. And so through all the length of days thy good - ness



fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
soul he lead - eth, and where the ver - dant
love he sought me, and on his shoul - der
Lord, be side me; thy rod and staff my
grace be - stow - eth; and O, what trans - port
fail - eth ne - ver: Good Shep - herd, may I



Words: Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877); paraphrase of Psalm 23

Music: St. Columba, Irish melody

THE DISMISSAL

Priest Let us go forth in the name of Christ! Alleluia, alleluia!

People **Thanks be to God! Alleluia, alleluia!**

VOLUNTARY

Toccata in Seven

John Rutter (b. 1945)

*The Oboist for this morning's service is sponsored in loving memory of Antoinette Gizzi Renna,
 by her granddaughter Nikki Lawrence.*

~ SERVING TODAY ~

Celebrant: The Reverend Canon Jonathan Huyck

Preacher: The Reverend Hartwell Hylton

Crucifer: Leigh Hubbard

Lectors: Sarah O'Gara, Andrew Raftery

Intercessor: Gailia Rutan-Annaldo

Ministers of Communion: Lori Brown, Matthew Sneider

Altar Guild: Margrete Jean-Louis, Cindy Stephanopoulos

Greeters: Lisa Doucet & Lisa Gerlach

Ushers: Michael D'Alesandre, Christopher Tompkins, Melody Ennis, Robert Olawoye

Audio/Visual: Clinton Crocker

Coffee Hour Servers: Luci Scanlan, Jimps Jean-Louis, Pam Baker

Cover art: "Agnus Dei" stained glass window at Grace Church.

Newcomer? Visitor?
Scan for our Welcome Card!



PRAYER REQUEST SUBMISSIONS

To submit a Prayer Request, scan the QR Code below and fill out our form.



*"Prayer is not the reverberation of sound; it is the articulation of love. It is with the heart rather than the lips that we pray."
— St. Augustine*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NURSERY CARE AVAILABLE: Child care is now available for children through age 3 from 8:45am until the end of the service. Ushers are able to guide you to our Nursery.

CHORAL EVENSONG TODAY: This afternoon at 4:00 PM we will offer a service of Choral Evensong! The Choir & Choristers of Grace Church will sing music by Joseph Rheinberger, Ivor Atkins, Sir George Dyson, Paul Spicer, and Philip Moore. A reception will follow in The Pavilion.

UPCOMING COLLEGIUM ANCORA CONCERT: Join us on Sunday, May 6 at 4:00 PM for The Glory of Great Britten! The program will feature music by 20th century, English composer, Benjamin Britten and will include *The Five Flower Songs* and the well-known cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* which artfully sets Christopher Smart's idiosyncratic, 18th century poem to music. This concert is a perfect way to welcome spring! Tickets are available at www.collegiumancora.org or at the door.

THURSDAYS @ NOON CONCERTS: Our guest recitalist on Thursday, May 4th will be Jeremy David Tarrant, Canon Organist & Choirmaster at The Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit, Michigan. He will play music by Vincent Lübeck, J.S. Bach, Robert Schumann, and Louis Vierne. We hope you will join us for this unique and bring friends!

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR GRACE CHURCH DAY! On Sunday, May 21st (Ascension Sunday), we will be celebrating "Grace Church Day" with a pot-luck lunch in The Pavilion

after the 10 a.m. service. An audio-visual presentation will be featured showing photos of Grace from yesteryear and drawings of Grace additions that were never built! But FIRST, we are putting together the planning team for this parish event under the leadership of Junior Warden, Diane Stamp. If you would like to help Grace by serving on this committee, please email Diane at flowers@gracepvd.org Thank you!

NAMETAGS AVAILABLE: You, too, can have a nametag to wear at Grace! Nametags help us build connections with one another. If you would like one made, please clearly print your name on one of the sign-up sheets at the back of the church, entering the Pavilion, or in the Narthex. Don't forget to drop them in the Nametag Return bin when leaving the courtyard or exiting into the Grace parking lot! We'll have it waiting in the Narthex for the next time you join us.

SHAWL MINISTRY: Every Wednesday from 10:00 - 11:00 AM members of the Shawl Ministry meet in The Pavilion to knit and crochet shawls, which are given to individuals who are ill, struggling, or grieving. For more information, contact Prayer Shawl Ministry Coordinator Jane Ditmars at shawls@gracepvd.org

GRACE ABOUNDS E-NEWSLETTER: If you are not yet receiving our new weekly E-News and announcements via e-mail, and would like to be on our growing list, kindly e-mail admin@gracepvd.org



**THE GLORY OF GREAT
BRITTEN**

Featuring choral works by the great
Benjamin Britten

**SUNDAY 07 4:00PM
MAY**

Grace Episcopal Church, Providence
COLLEGIUMANCORA.ORG

A SERVICE OF CHORAL EVENSONG

SUNDAY, APRIL 30TH, 2023

4:00 PM



*The combined Choirs and Choristers of Grace Church sing music of Joseph Rheinberger, Ivor Atkins, Sir George Dyson, and Philip Moore.
A reception follows in The Pavilion.*



April 30, 2023 – Easter 4 (A) Week 4: Reflections on the Resurrection



During the Easter season, Sermons That Work is pleased to present reflections from some of the newest bishops of The Episcopal Church on the resurrection of our Lord. Check back each week for a brief exploration of how Jesus Christ's rising from the grave changes everything. To listen to this reflection, scan the QR code on this page and subscribe to the Sermons That Work podcast.

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women who were with them; these women are not only the first evangelists, but they are also the saints we need for our day. They do not yet know what it will look like or what it will mean that Jesus is risen from the dead. They do not know, at this point in the story, how it will be that Jesus will reveal himself to them, in what form he will appear, how they will know, or what it will look like. They do not yet know where new life is, only where old life is no longer.

But they do not wait. They do not need to know what comes next in order to proclaim what currently is. These women stand in the midst of an empty tomb and see it filled with the potential that Jesus is very much alive; not as he had been, but as he will be. These women do not hold back from proclaiming their truth to those who would disbelieve. They did not care that it would not make sense, that others could not yet see what they had seen.

This is a critical moment for these women and the rest of Jesus' followers. The scenes that follow -- the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus -- are dependent on them knowing the possibility that Jesus might just appear. If they could not consider the angels' words, if they could not hold out hope that the tomb could not contain the love of God, they could never have known resurrection when it appeared. Jesus could not be on the beach, grilling fish, if he were back in the tomb. He could not be walking with them on the road to Emmaus, if his body were someplace else unknown.

In order for them to see the fullness of God's Love in the world around them, they needed to see the emptiness of the tomb. They needed to stop looking for the living among the dead and instead seek the living Christ in the life of the world. These women are our evangelists, proclaiming to us the Good News that Jesus Christ is risen. These women are our saints - our inspiration and our example of how it is God asks us to stop seeking the living among the dead. To stop seeking life at the empty tombs of our lives. To allow for the potential that new life is around every corner, a possibility that exists only when we stop insisting it can only be found where it once was.

We do not need to know where it is that the Risen Life of Christ will meet us on the roads of our lives. We need only know that the empty tomb we are in is not, in fact, empty, but full. It is full of possibilities. It is full of hope. It is full of love. It is full of life. Why do you seek the living among the dead? Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!



The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey W. Mello is the sixteenth Bishop Diocesan for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. Bishop Mello was consecrated in October 2022.

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Anaezi Modu

Class of 2025

Carissa Mills
Lori Brown
Joel Goloskie
Nicholas Halar

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