

04-20-2025 Words of Worship

Welcome

Christ is Risen!
He is risen indeed!
Allelujah!

Welcome to Alexanderwohl this Easter morning! We are a Resurrection people! And we're celebrating together Jesus' resurrection, and the new life that he came to teach us about and to demonstrate. Thanks be to God!

Early yesterday morning as I sat at my dining room table, looking out over my back yard, I was struck by the beauty of the colors – the lilacs, the tulips and the columbine, their pastels against the dark green and brown of the new leaves on the branches and trunks of the bushes and trees. It was so vibrant because *it had rained* and it was still a little dark and overcast. It was all a beautiful combination of things to be grateful for. Thanks be to God!

Here at Alexanderwohl we have **a time of sharing – opportunities** for service or involvement as well as a time to share joys or concerns with God and with one another...

- Sr. Coffee this Friday with David Shelly. He is currently in Syria, posting amazing photos from Damascus and Aleppo and all variety of places around that ancient country. I don't know whether those will be the pictures he shares with us because he's travelled around the world! But whichever set of photos he has for us, along with stories of those places, you can be sure it will be interesting because he travels "off the beaten path". Come! 10:00 am this coming Friday morning, the 25th.

Call to Worship...I made a typo in the bulletin! In the line we all read together, the word is "proclaim" – and he shall PROCLAIM peace to the nations! Delton will put the whole Call to Worship up on the screen in its correct form.

Opening Prayer – (light the peace lamp) (VT 881 - adapted)

God of cosmos and quarks, God of rainbows and roly-polies, God of electricity and enzymes – you created the earth and proclaimed it good.
The galaxies and planets are known to you, yet also the hairs on our heads.
You cradle all things in the palm of your hand, supporting us with love.
We praise your name for our creation and for all the blessings of this life.
Sustain in us a spirit of awe for how you continue to be present in the world, and present with us, here, as we worship you. Amen.

Gathering Hymn - VT 359

Children's Time – Chrystiana and Emmet

Morning Prayer –

Thank you God for this Easter morning, a time for us to celebrate again the unexpected and surprising ways you show us your love and how that love behaves. Thank you for the hope we have in the resurrection of Jesus – that love and life extend beyond the suffering and injustice that we see and know here on this earth.

Thank you God for the rain we've received, for the ways it greens and refreshes the earth and all things growing. Thank you for the gifts of springtime – budding, flowering, growing and producing, being and becoming. Again, we thank you for the miracle of birth – especially for baby Asher, born to Alex and Alisha Goossen. Thank you also for Alisha's older children Carley and Jesse. Be with them as they adjust to this newest family member.

O God, we pray for those who are struggling with health concerns, those who are healing from brokenness of all sorts, for those who feel overwhelmed or discouraged. Be present with your Spirit of comfort, of healing, of hope and encouragement.

We pray for those who are in prison – especially those who are there unjustly. We pray for those who trapped in situations they can't get out of – especially women and children and those with fewer options and resources. We pray for those living in the midst of war, starvation, fear or violence. For all of these, your children, we pray O God. Be present with your Spirit of comfort, of healing, of hope and encouragement.

Thank you, God for the gifts of music and poetry, for those who've captured the essence of our faith through the generations in these art forms. As we move through this service of worship, bless our expressions of gratitude and faithfulness. Move in our midst, planting and watering seeds of courage, growing faithful disciples, healing the diseases and scars of life, sending us out to share your love and light in this world. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Offering Prayer –

Generous God, thank you for each good gift you've granted to us. Accept these gifts that are returned with humility and love. May this money and all of our gifts be used for sharing your goodness. Amen.

Words of Introduction –

When I wondered aloud to Renae a couple months ago, whether the Chancel Choir might be able to sing several Easter anthems, or maybe even do a "Lessons and Carols for Easter" kind of service, I had no idea what kind of creativity would spring from her!

The past year of celebrating 150 years since many of our forebears migrated here still held some energy and inspiration for her! That, added to the 500th year of the birth of Anabaptism led to her wondering what kinds of Easter songs might be available to us as we look back in time.

The initial anthem, *Hear the News This Easter Morn* is a contemporary call to listen to the story, hear the news.

After that invitation, we'll go as far back as we could go; we do have sources of texts and tunes in our hymnal that date back to the 5th and 6th centuries. The plainsong chant is representative of

the early church, although after Constantine. We'll hear Luke 24, verses 1-5 read in Greek by Peter Buller.

Then we'll continue to move through the centuries in various parts of Europe and the U.S. that follow the Anabaptist movement with songs of Easter praise!

Sometimes the connection is simply the time period like, connecting the King James Version of the Bible with the composer Billings. Sometimes there's a connection to location... when the Anabaptists were in the Netherlands, Prussia and here.

May the variety of languages, translations, song texts and music bring to mind the many ways that people have retold the Resurrection story through 2000 years of history.

Benediction – Hebrews 13:20-21

²⁰ May the God of peace,
who brought back the great shepherd of the sheep,
our Lord Jesus,
from the dead by the blood of the eternal covenant,
²¹ equip you with every good thing to do his will,
by developing in us what pleases him through Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory forever and always. Amen.