

Martin Luther

Easter 3 • April 12, 14-15, 2018

We worship using Service of the Word, p. 38 in the hymnal.

Hymn—160, “This Joyful Eastertide”

Invocation; Confession; Prayer and Praise (p. 38)

First Lesson—Acts 12:1-19 EHV

At about that time, King Herod laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter during the days of Unleavened Bread.

After arresting Peter, Herod put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of four soldiers each to guard him. Herod intended to bring him before the people for trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church earnestly offered up prayer to God for him.

The very night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. He was bound with two chains, while sentries were in front of the door, guarding the prison.

Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood near him, and a light shone in the cell. The angel woke Peter up by striking him on the side, saying, “Quick, get up!” The chains fell from his wrists.

Then the angel said to him, “Get dressed and put on your sandals.” So he did so. Then the angel told him, “Put on your cloak and follow me.” Peter went out, following the angel, but he did not realize that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed through the first and second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city. It opened all by itself for them. They went outside, walked down one street, and immediately the angel left him.

When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I know for sure that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from everything the Jewish people were expecting.”

When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who is also called Mark. Many had gathered there and were praying. When Peter knocked at the entrance gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. She recognized Peter’s voice and was so overjoyed, she did not open the gate. Instead she ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate.

They told her, “You are out of your mind!” But she kept on insisting it was so, and they started saying, “It’s his angel.”

Meanwhile, Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned to them with his hand to be silent and described to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. He said, “Tell these things to James and to the brothers.” Then he left and went on to another place.

At daybreak, there was no small commotion among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. After Herod searched for him and did not find him, he questioned the guards and ordered that they be executed.

Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

Psalm of the Day—Psalm 118 (see insert page)

Second Lesson—2 Corinthians 2:12–3:6 EHV

When I came to Troas to proclaim the gospel of Christ and a door was opened for me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.

But thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ and reveals the fragrance of his knowledge through us in every place. Yes, we are the fragrance of Christ for God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To some we are the odor of death that is a prelude to death, to the others the fragrance of life that is a prelude to life. And who is qualified for these things? To be sure, we are not like many who peddle the word of God for profit. Instead, in Christ we speak with sincerity in the sight of God, as men from God.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. It is clear that you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets, but on tablets that are hearts of flesh.

Such is the confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent by ourselves to claim that anything comes from us; rather, our competence is from God. He also made us competent as ministers of a new testament (not of letter, but of spirit). For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

Verse of the Day—Luke 24:32 cf. NIV

Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. Our hearts were burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us. Alleluia.

Gospel—Luke 24:36-49 EHV

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

But they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost.

He said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they still did not believe it (because of their joy), and while they were still wondering, he said to them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. He took it and ate in front of them. He said to them, “These are my words, which I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Hymn—735, “Speak, O Lord” (see insert page)

Sermon—Jesus Opens Doors for the Gospel (Luke 24)

Apostles Creed (p. 41)

Offering—*Please sign Friendship Register at this time*

Prayer of the Church; Lord’s Prayer; Blessing (p. 42)

Hymn—145, “Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won”