



Holy Humor Sunday

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Emily Phillips Lloyd, Rector

The Rev. Sally Lermond, Deacon

Jenna Duranko, Parish Administrator

Daniel Weatherholt, Organist and Director of Musical

Patrick Joseph, Sexton

Jim Ridgeway, Bookkeeper

Sunday, April 16, 2023 at 10:00AM

WELCOME TO ST. PETER'S

We are so glad that you are worshiping with us today! Whether you worship with us regularly or are visiting us for the first time, please know that we welcome you in the name of Christ. We are a lively, active community of faith and we strive to be a loving congregation, committed to welcoming ALL and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The History of Holy Humor Sunday -- No, we did not make it up.

For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, including "Bright Sunday" (the Sunday after Easter), was observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Priests deliberately included amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead. Early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) supported this thinking: they called God's overturning of Satan the "Easter laugh" ("Risus paschalis"). Sadly, the observance of Risus Paschalis was officially outlawed by Pope Clement X in the 17th century. Some people don't know how to have fun. The tradition also faded in Orthodox and Protestant traditions. In recent decades a Sunday to celebrate humor has experienced a bit of a revival. In 1988, the Fellowship of Merry Christians began encouraging churches to resurrect this tradition to celebrate the grace and mercy of God through the gift of laughter and joy.

We hope you smile, laugh, and remember the gift of joy God has blessed upon us.

The Holy Humor

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: Joyful, Joyful, We adore thee 376

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION 355 BCP pg.

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS: Angels we have heard on high verse 1 96

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you
Celebrant Let us pray.

Celebrant and people

O Great Laughing God, we come into your presence with joy and longing to be surprised. We thank you that you have given to us the gift of laughter and delight. These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth. May we find that in giving up to laughter there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit to renew our worship and our living. Amen.

The people are seated.

THE FIRST LESSON

Genesis 18:1-

2, 9-15, 21:1-7

Reader A reading from Genesis

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground.

They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to

him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A HUMOROUS INTERLUDE

THE PSALM

Psalm 126

Said responsively by whole verse

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, * and our tongue with shouts of joy.

3 Then they said among the nations, *
"The LORD has done great things for them."

4 The LORD has done great things for us, * and we are glad indeed.

5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.

6 Those who sowed with tears * will reap with songs of joy.

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, * will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"What I like best about Easter Sunday is the candy, and Jesus not bein' dead anymore."

© Ed Keane
Reprinted with permission

HUMOROUS INTERLUDE

THE SECOND LESSON

John 1 1:15

1

Reader A reading from John.

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of

life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**



"Once again, Lord, I come to you with this crazy, overwhelming desire to party."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
© Ed Sullivan
Reprinted with permission

The people stand as they are able at the introduction of the hymn.

SEQUENCE HYMN: I've got the Joy JOY JOY JOY down in my heart (where?)

Joy Song

Love of Jesus....

Peace that passes understanding down in my heart...

Wonderful love of my blessed Redeemer way down in the depths of my heart...

And if the devil doesn't like it, he can sit on a tack... Ouch!

Joy joy joy...

THE HOLY GOSPEL

John 20:1-18

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

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

THE SERMON

Rector

The Rev. Emily Phillips Lloyd,



THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

Amid the celebration of this day, it's good that we pause and remember that many carry burdens that need not be carried alone.

God of love and laughter, we thank you that we made for relationship with you and with one another. We thank you for laughter with friends and loved ones and for the song it creates in our hearts. We thank you for the many blessings of this life, especially those we name now either silently or aloud (you may add your own thanksgivings).

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

By your great unending love, you inspire in us a spirit of imagination. Help us to use that spirit to play more, to laugh more, and to create beauty in every way possible. Remind us to laugh out loud, for doing so will heal some of the wounds within us.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God, we pray for those who cannot find their laughter today. For those who are grieving, or suffering illness of body, mind or spirit, for those who are lonely and in need of someone to share their time and friendship, for those who have not yet moved into the season and spirit of Easter and find themselves still in the gloom of Good Friday. We pray for those on our prayer list and those we name now, either silently or aloud (you may add your own petitions).

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God, we pray for those whose laughter now rings in the heavens. May we be inspired by their example, hearing the echoes of their joy in our lives, and may we be confident in your merciful holding and healing of their lives. We pray for those who have died whom we name now, either silently or aloud (you may add your own petitions).

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

May the troubles of all your people be soothed, blessed, and comforted by your holy presence. May we each find the laughter within us that sets our spirits free, and in that freedom, may we take your love into every part of our lives. Amen.



THE PEACE

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

The people greet one another in the Name of the Lord. At the conclusion of the peace, the people are seated.



"Loved the sermon. Hated casual Sunday."

THE OFFERTORY

HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION: 380 (v.3) 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow' Please play on the kazoo

'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below, praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen



Emma was never shy with her prayer requests.

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: God of our every moment,

Your mouth was filled with laughter
as you sang creation into being.

The heavens rang with shouts of joy,
as fruit-bearing trees sprang up,
as green pastures rippled with wonder.

Crafted in your image, you would
offer us the bounty of grace,

but we would rebel and choose death.

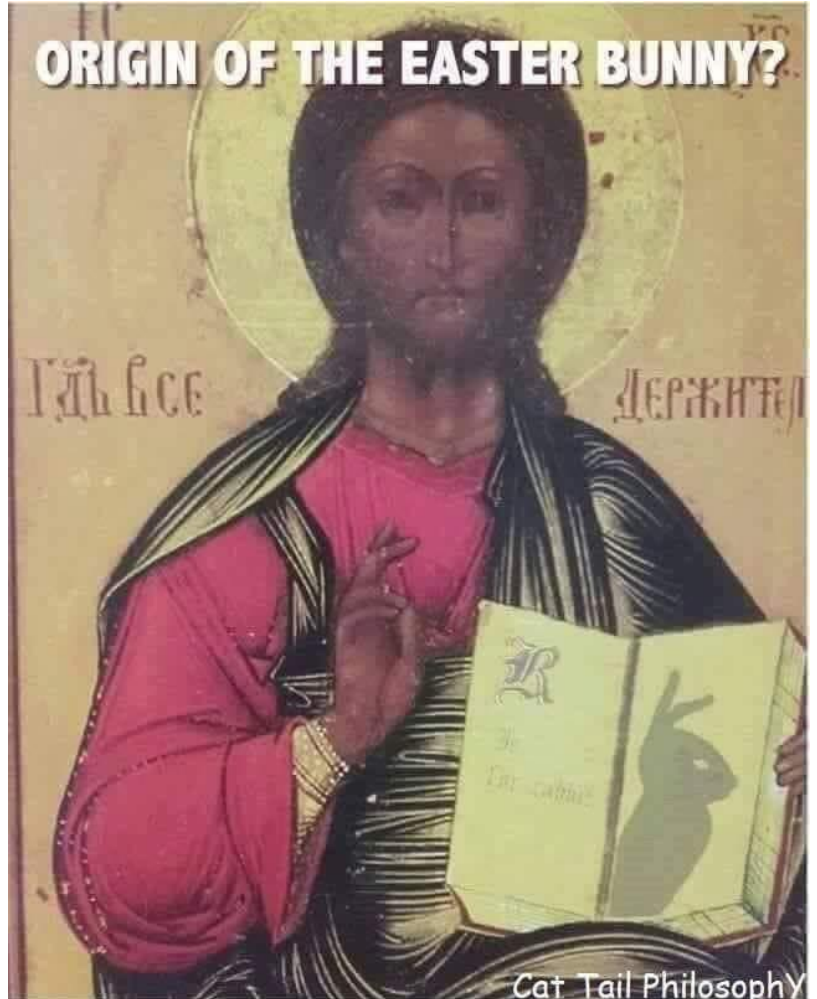
Prophets and psalmists were sent by you,

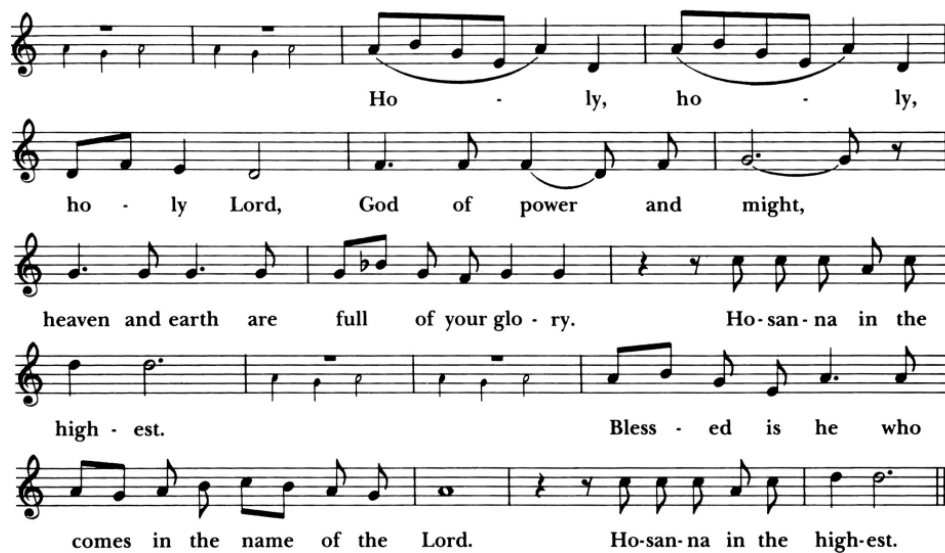
longing to restore us to your side,

but we put their words to shame.

Jesus, herald of your grace, bringer of your truth, came to be with us so that everyone might be saved.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:





Ho - ly, ho - ly,
 ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

The celebrant continues

Holy are you, Restorer of broken lives, and blessed is Jesus Christ, Mediator of salvation. Seeing the nightmare of our lives, he became one of us, so we might see the dreams you have for us. Knowing how our hearts overflowed with fear, bitterness, and worries, he came with peace and comfort. Teaching that the body is more than sin, that life is more than death, he sacrificed himself and became our salvation by rising from the grave. Before he was handed over to die, he sat at dinner with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples and said, "Eat this all of you: this is my body which is given for you. Do this to remember me." He also took wine, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples and said, "Drink this all of you: this is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me." As we give thanks for his life and death; as we shout with joy for his resurrection, we speak of the mystery of faith

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

The Celebrant continues

Pour out your Spirit upon this bread and wine to be the holy food and drink of new and unending life in you. Empty, we will be filled with the plenty of your grace. May the broken bread strengthen us so we might bring healing to a world shattered by violence and despair. May the cup of blessing and hope fill us with your love, to bring compassion to a world separated by infection and need. And when all our worrying hours have ended, when we are clothed in your mercy forever, we will gather with our sisters and brothers, our mouths bursting with laughter, our hearts singing songs of joy to you, O Lord our God, the Three in whom we are one.. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'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 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

BCP pg. 364

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Facing the people, the Celebrant offers an invitation to communion. The people are then seated.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All who seek God and a deeper life in Christ are welcome to receive Holy Communion here at St. Peter's.

COMMUNION HYMN Now the green blade riseth

204

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP pg. 365

At the conclusion of Holy Communion, the celebrant and people pray the following

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HUMOROUS INTERLUDE

THE EASTER BLESSING

Blessing May God grant you a soul that treasures all that is good, doesn't frighten easily when life goes awry, and finds the means to hold things in their place. May God grant you the good humor to take a joke, discover joy in life, and share love with others. May God, our Creator, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you this day and forever more. **Amen.**

RECESSIONAL HYMN: see print out.... The congregation is warmly invited to sing or play the kazoo as the spirit moves you

THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Go in laughter; go in grace.

Keep the Lord in your heart and a smile on your face.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

POSTLUDE



"Well done, good and faithful servant."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
©Jonny Hawkins
Reprinted with permission

"Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife." — Proverbs 21:9

"As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly." — Proverbs 31:6

Wisdom from the Communion of Saints

We believe with the Bible that

“there is a time to weep and a time to laugh.”

We believe with St. Chrysostom that

“laughter has been implanted in our souls.”

We believe with Aquinas that there is a time for

“playful deeds and jokes.”

We believe with Luther that

“You have as much laughter as you have faith.”

We believe with Calvin that

“we are nowhere forbidden to laugh.”

We believe with Francis De Sales that

“humor is a foundation for reconciliation.”

We believe with Wesley that

“A sour religion is the devil’s religion.”

We believe with Kierkegaard that

“Humor is intrinsic to Christianity.”

We believe with Krister Stendhal that

“humor, along with irony, forms a safeguard against idolatry.”

We believe with Flannery O’Conner that

“Christianity is a strangely cheery religion.