Holy Humor Sunday

The 2nd Sunday of Easter, Rite II
April 19, 2020 + 11:00 am
Welcome to Christ Church Washington Parish

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.

We are glad that you are worshipping online with us this morning and pray that your experience here is a blessing to you. If you are a visitor and want to know more about the church, please visit our website for more information and to contact us: www.washingtonparish.org. To contact us, see the last page of this bulletin or go to our website for more information. On the website, hover over ABOUT US and select Contact Us. The office email is linked (or click here to send an email). Also, visit us on Facebook (Christ Church on Capitol Hill).

Let this bulletin be your guide through the service; it includes everything you need.
Prelude

Opening Hymn

Earth and all stars (v. 1-3, 6)

Hymnal 412

Danny Catalanotto, organ

1 Earth and all stars, loud rushing planets, sing to the
2 Hail, wind, and rain, loud blowing snow-storms, sing to the
3 Trumpet and pipes, loud clashing cymbals, sing to the
4 Engines and steel, loud pounding hammers, sing to the
5 Class-rooms and labs, loud boiling test-tubes, sing to the
6 Knowledge and truth, loud sounding wisdom, sing to the

1 Lord a new song! O victory,
2 Lord a new song! Flowers and trees,
3 Lord a new song! Harp, lute, and lyre,
4 Lord a new song! Limestone and beams,
5 Lord a new song! Athlete and band,
6 Lord a new song! Daughter and son,

1 loud shouting army, sing to the Lord a new song!
2 loud rustling dry leaves, sing to the Lord a new song!
3 loud humming cellos, sing to the Lord a new song!
4 loud building workers, sing to the Lord a new song!
5 loud cheering people, sing to the Lord a new song!
6 loud praying members, sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain

He hath done marvelous things.

I, too, will praise him with a new song!
Opening Acclamation
Celebrant  Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People    The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.
All       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.

Collect of the Day
Celebrant  The Lord be with you.
People    And also with you.
Celebrant  Let us pray.

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 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.
Psalm 126

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second Reading

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.

The Gospel

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

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.

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

Sermon The Rev. Dr. Richard Miles

Prayers of the People

Celebrant Amid the celebration of this day, it’s good that we pause and remember that many
carry burdens that need not be carried alone.
Leader 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,
People Hear our prayer.
Leader 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,
People Hear our prayer.
Leader 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 who are stricken or otherwise affected by the
COVID-19 virus and the those who help them: first responders and healthcare
workers. 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,
People Hear our prayer.
Leader 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,

People Hear our prayer.

Celebrant 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.

Celebrant We pray also for the times we have turned away from your joy.

People Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don’t claim the happiness that is rightfully ours as your children, when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world. Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.


The Peace

Celebrant All things come of thee O Lord,

People And of thine own have we given thee

Offertory

Celebrant All things come of thee O Lord,

People And of thine own have we given thee

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:

**Sanctus**

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.**

**Celebrant**  
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.**

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

**The Lord’s Prayer**  
**BCP 364**

**All**  
**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**

**Celebrant**  
Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
**People**  
Therefore let us keep the feast. **Alleluia.**
The Invitation to a Spiritual Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray anytime to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving elements of bread and wine.

Celebrant Let us pray.

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you at the Altar, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

(St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1696-1787, adapted)

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God.

Post Communion Prayer BCP 365

Celebrant Let us pray.

All Most loving God, creator and redeemer, we give you thanks for this foretaste of your glory. Through Christ, and with all your saints, we offer ourselves and our lives to your service. Send us out in the power of your Spirit, to stand with you in your world. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the servant, our friend and brother. Amen.

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.
Ye watchers and ye holy ones

1 Ye watchers and ye holy ones, bright seraphs, cherubim,

2 O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the

3 Respond, ye souls in endless rest, ye patriarchs and

4 O friends, in gladness let us sing, supernal anthems

bim, and thrones, raise the glad strain, Alleluia! Cry

seraphim, lead their praises, Alleluia! Thou

prophets blest, Alleluia, Alleluia! Ye

echoring, Alleluia, Alleluia! To

out, dominions, prince-doms, powers, virtues, archangels, angels’
bearer of the eternal Word, most gracious, magnify the

holy twelve, ye martyrs strong, all saints triumphant, raise the

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in

choirs, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Lord, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

song, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

One, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
Dismissal

Liturgist  Go in laughter; go in grace.
Keep the Lord in your heart and a smile on your face.
Alleluia, alleluia!
All  Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Postlude  Danny Catalanotto, organ

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR

Via Zoom Meeting (teleconference or telephone)

Via teleconference: https://zoom.us/j/265300284
Via telephone only: 646-558-8656 (Meeting ID 265300284)

Use of Zoom: you can copy and paste the link above into your browser. You can use any device that can access the internet: smartphone, tablet, laptop/computer with a camera. You do not need to download an app to gain access to the meeting.

Praise God for Those Who Serve Today

Celebrant/Preacher  The Rev. Dr. Richard Miles
Sacristan  Cynthia Thomas
Liturgist  Lynne Mallonee Schlimm
Video Operations  Conor McCarthy and Sherwyn Santos
Guest Organist  Danny Catalanotto
Resources

Opening Prayer from the United Church of Canada
Prayers of the People adapted from a post on RevGalBlogPals
Blessing is inspired by the Prayer for Good Humor by St. Thomas More
Eucharistic Prayer is adapted from one by Thom Shuman found at:
  http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/search?q=laughter
Post Communion Prayer from New Zealand Prayer Book
Wisdom from the Communion of Saints:
  https://re-worship.blogspot.ca/2012/03/holy-humor-sunday-affirmation.html
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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.”
Financial Support to Christ Church + Washington Parish:
As you are financially able, please support Christ Church during the shutdown by continuing your pledges and financial gifts. We are all still here with and for each other, and we continue to have expenses for salary, insurance, benefits, bills, etc.

You may give to Christ Church in one of four ways:

1. Set up recurring, automatic gifts from your bank account or via credit card to the Christ Church’s Annual Fund via our secure database (www.onrealm.org). You will use your email address to log in and create a password.

2. One-time donations via our website: https://washingtonparish.org/donate-to-christ-church/

3. Text 73256, use Christ Church’s keyword (CCWP) and the gift amount. You will receive a text with a link to a secure site to complete your gift via bank account, credit card, or debit card. Standard text message rates apply if applicable.

4. By sending a check to Christ Church - Washington Parish, 620 G Street SE, Washington, DC 20003

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The Church Office and Building are currently closed for the COVID-19 shutdown.