

“The Risen Body of Christ”  
Easter

April 5, 2015  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
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Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! This Lenten season we are considering the Body of Christ. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction] THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

Feet, hands, mouth, ears, eyes, heart, blood—the body of Christ—  
a source of blessing for all with whom he came into contact.

With *his feet* he walked from one village to another,  
so that *his hands* could touch and heal.

*His mouth* continually announced the forgiveness of sins  
and proclaimed the love of a gracious parental God.

*His ears* were tuned to hear cries for mercy from others,  
and *his eyes* were open to see their misery.

*His heart*, full of compassion and love,  
again and again prompted him to use the power of God  
to heal and comfort them with the forgiveness of their sins,  
even to the point of raising the dead!

Christ used the full capacity of his body to bring God’s love,  
God’s kingdom, into the world.

At the last supper Jesus gave *his body* for food and his blood for drink.  
Then he gave *his body* to be broken and crucified,  
and *his blood* to flow from the cross.

So the body of Christ was buried,  
laid in a stone grave,  
sealed in a tomb with a great rock.

**[Easter Morning]**

It was this same lifeless body of Christ  
which Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seeking  
when they went to visit the sepulcher early that Sunday morning.

But they didn’t find the lifeless body of Christ in the tomb!  
Alleluia! Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

They had their spices ready to anoint the body of their Lord, their Master.  
But where was it? The answer for them came from the message of an angel:

***“Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen as he said. Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead...”***

The body of Christ has risen! The body of Christ Is resurrected to eternal life.  
It isn't just a nebulous ghost sort of body either,  
for Jesus himself met them and greeted his disciples.  
He offered his hands in blessing.  
And Thomas recognized the print of the nails there.

They fell at his feet in wonder.  
Those same feet of Christ,  
once washed by the tears of a sinful woman,  
were again embraced.

They heard the gracious words of his mouth, and he ate in their presence.

It is true that his body may have been changed in some way.  
Glorified, we might call it; more real, perhaps.

More solid than our world, maybe, for he walked through the walls which the disciples used to hide behind in fear.

He stepped through those “solid” walls as we might step through a curtain of fog.

The risen body of Christ is more permanent  
than the clouds of atoms and electrons which we call reality.

His body was changed to a glorious, immortal body.  
And because he lives we shall live also!

In Christ, we too shall have better, eternal bodies.  
This is the good news for the day of our own death:  
that we will live eternally in God's kingdom  
because of the gracious, free gift of faith given to each of us.

[***Today!***] But there is also good news for today, here and now.

I think we can get at this good news by asking the question,  
“Where is the body of Christ now? Where is the body of Christ today?”  
We know it is no longer walking the dusty roads of Palestine,  
preaching and healing,  
for he was crucified and buried.

We know the body of Christ is no longer in the tomb either,  
for the angels announced to the women that he was risen,  
and he appeared both to them and to many disciples.

One answer then to the question, ‘Where is the body of Christ now?’  
is that it is in the kingdom of God, in heaven.

But there is another answer to the same question and both answers are true.  
Where is the body of Christ, today?”  
The Body of Christ is right here.

The Body of Christ is within the walls of this building.  
The Body of Christ is in fact gathered and seated in these very pews!  
***You are the body of Christ!***

The feet of Christ...  
— You walk into hospital rooms to bring the presence of God to people in need.  
— You walk into the homes of the elderly and shut-in to bring the presence of Jesus Christ to their loneliness.  
***You are the body of Christ!***

The hands of Christ...  
— You lay your hands upon the sick;  
— You touch them with love and pray for them.  
— ***You are the body of Christ!***

The mouth of Christ...  
— You speak love, gentleness and God’s mercy to the brokenhearted and grieving.  
— You announce forgiveness and reconciliation to those who feel the guilt of their sins.  
***You are the body of Christ!***

The ears of Christ...  
— You hear the cries of the sad and weary.  
— You listen patiently, for many need to express their pain and exhaustion.  
— You hear them with the love of Jesus.  
***You are the body of Christ!***

The eyes of Christ...  
— You see the weak and the powerless as they suffer injustice.**AND**  
— You become their ally as Christ has become our advocate before the Father.  
***You are the body of Christ!***

The heart of Christ...

— You have the very love of God to move you.

— You contribute generously—

sums of money, hours of labor,

great talents and abilities to the work of Christ.

It is the very heart of Christ which compels such compassion from you.

***You truly are the risen body of Christ!***

As members of the Body of Christ, we must take care of one another.

That is why we come together here.

Only when we ALL are here, is the body of Christ complete.

If any one of you is not here, we are not whole.

Then one of the members of Christ is cut off from the body.

When we ALL are here, we draw strength from one another.

We also draw strength from the Word,

the good news of forgiveness which gives life to our body in Christ.

We draw strength also from the sacraments:

— from Baptism which gives birth to our members, and

— from Communion which sustains us with the body and blood of Jesus our Lord and our Head.

We need this nourishment to keep our body united,

and to have the strength day after day to be the Body of Christ

bringing God's love into our world.

That is why we gather here week after week,

so we can keep on being

the feet of Christ, the hands of Christ,

the mouth, ears, eyes and heart of Christ.

That's the good news for today!

We get to be the flesh-and-blood body of God's eternal love!

And the good news for eternity is that we shall live with him forever, for Scripture assures us:

**But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body... (Phil 3:20-21)**

All because Christ is risen!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!** Amen!

You are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it! Amen!