



Easter, 2023

**“Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
His cross stands empty to the sky.
Let street and homes with praises ring.
His love in death shall never die.”**

These powerful words, the first verse of one of our beautiful Easter hymns (*Hymn 182, The Hymnal 1982*), reflect the joy of the Easter Acclamation: Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen, indeed. Alleluia! The second verse of this hymn further goes on to emphasize the nearness of Christ in our lives and the power of his Resurrection, highlighting how “No longer bound to distant years in Palestine, he comes to claim the here and now and conquer every place and time.”

In the linear sense of reality, Easter necessarily follows Holy Week. In regard to the state of affairs in this world, however, Easter always comes in the midst of Holy Week—that is, Easter comes in the midst of the suffering and death that are a constant reality of the world. Of course, life brings many joys; but life here on earth encompasses unspeakable woes. Hunger and lack of access to clean water affect millions who live close at home and abroad; suicide is rampant, particularly among the young; death from new versions of Fentanyl-laced illegal drugs is skyrocketing; death and trauma from the scourge of gun violence is ubiquitous; and, even more tragically, the seeming indifference fueled by self-interest on the part of far too many elected officials in our country is incomprehensible.



Our world is, indeed, in the midst of Holy Week, but the Resurrection truth and power of Jesus Christ is a faith-perceived reality breaking in the midst of Holy Week. The Resurrection power of Jesus Christ makes all the difference, however painstakingly slow such difference may seem. God calls all who believe and are members of the Body of Christ to live in the power of the Resurrection in order to bring about the benefits of the Kingdom of God on earth. God calls all who believe to live in light of the Resurrection, availing themselves of the power of the Holy Spirit to pray and act to promote faith, hope, and love in the world, and to seek after justice for all.

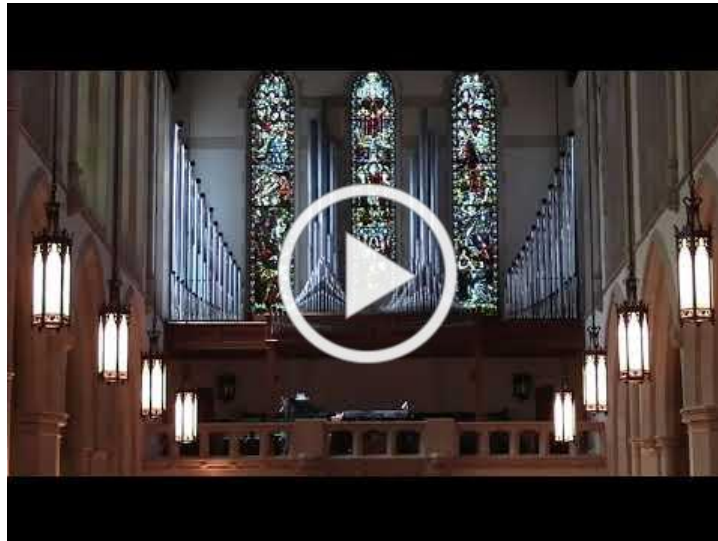
Hence, during the fifty days of Easter I am committing to pray for these three things: for the hungry to be fed; for lives to be spared; and for reason to prevail in the hearts and minds of those who govern. I invite you, individually and congregationally, to join me in praying these three petitions, if you feel so moved.

The power of prayer is real and goes hand in hand with all other actions. I pray for the reality and power of the Resurrection to be deeply engrained in our hearts. As the last verse of our Easter hymn, boldly proclaims: "Christ is alive! His Spirit burns through this and every future age, till all creation lives and learns his joy, his justice, love, and praise."

Easter blessings to you and yours now and always,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bishop Ketlen", with a small cross symbol to the left.

Bishop Ketlen
April 9, 2023



Hymn 182 from The Hymnal 1982: Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.

Alan Lewis, organist

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

