

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Serving Absecon - Galloway Township

Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor

Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, May 4th, 2025

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER / 10:00 AM

* THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

In the name of ✠ the One who was, who is, and who is to come. **Amen.**

Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and called to live the baptized life, let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured before or during the thanksgiving.

Holy God, we give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that make a people your own, that restore to wholeness, and empower us to be witnesses in your name. Baptized into you, O Living One,

make us one as you are one.

We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that strengthen believers and give new life to beloved servants of your church; waters that extend your boundless love and cross barriers of our own making. Baptized into you, O Living One,

make us one as you are one.

We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that open the hearts of believers and give a voice in the night to those in captivity; waters that set your people on a new path, rejoicing in the Spirit's power. Baptized into you, O Living One,

make us one as you are one.

Grant us grace, love, and life, O Living One, that our every day is shaped by these waters that give us our very lives in you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One. **Amen.**

* OPENING SONG

I Love to Tell the Story



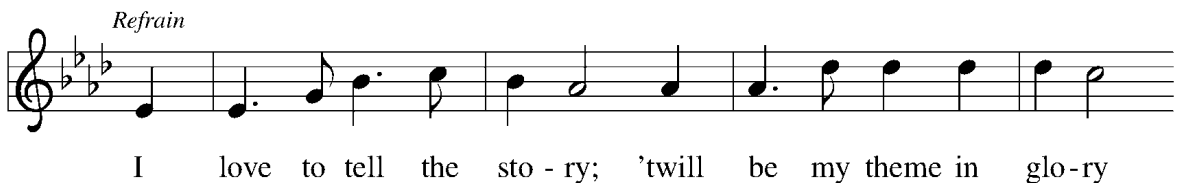
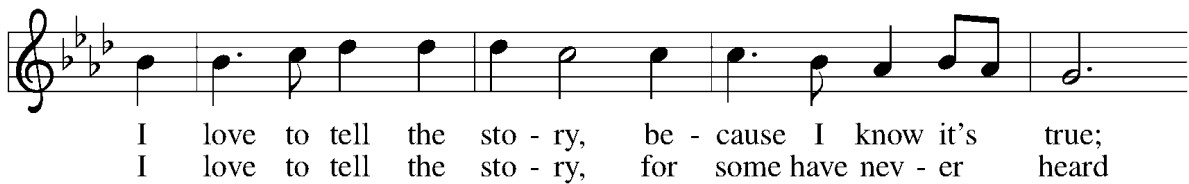
1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!

... song continues ...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)



Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834–1911
Music: HANKEY, William E. Fischer, 1849–1936

* GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray: Eternal and all-merciful God, with all the angels and all the saints we laud your majesty and might. By the resurrection of your Son, show yourself to us and inspire us to follow Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

FIRST READING: Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]

9 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” ⁵ He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay

his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 30

¹ I will exalt you, O LORD, because you have lifted me up
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

² **O LORD my God, I cried out to you,
and you restored me to health.**

³ You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead;
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

⁴ **Sing praise to the LORD, all you faithful;
give thanks in holy remembrance.**

⁵ God’s wrath is short; God’s favor lasts a lifetime.
Weeping spends the night, but joy comes in the morning.

⁶ **While I felt secure, I said,
“I shall never be disturbed.**

⁷ You, LORD, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains.”
Then you hid your face, and I was filled with fear.

⁸ **I cried to you, O LORD;
I pleaded with my Lord, saying,**

⁹ “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

¹⁰ **Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me;
O LORD, be my helper.”**

¹¹ You have turned my wailing into dancing;
you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

¹² **Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing;
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.**

SECOND READING: Revelation 5:11-14

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² singing with full voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and
all that is in them, singing,

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might
forever and ever!”

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**

I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me



1 I'm so glad I'm so glad
2 Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me. Sa - tan had me bound,
3 When I was in trou - ble, When I was in trou - ble,

Je - sus lift - ed me. I'm so glad
Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me,
When I was in trou - ble,

sing - ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Je - sus lift - ed me.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: JESUS LIFTED ME, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: John 21:1-19**

A reading from the Gospel of St. John:

21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. ⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them, and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. ¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Alabaré

Refrain

A - la - ba - ré a - la - ba - ré a - la - ba -

ré a mi Se - ñor. A - la - ba - ré a - la - ba -

ré a - la - ba - ré a mi Se - ñor.

1 John saw the num - ber of all those re - deemed, and
 2 Wor - thy is Christ . . . the Lamb who was slain, whose

all were sing - ing prais - es to the Lord.
 blood has set us free from ev - 'ry sin.

Thou - sands were pray - ing, ten thou - sands re - joic - ing, and
 Pow - er and rich - es, and wis - dom and strength . . . and

Refrain

all were sing - ing prais - es to the Lord.
 hon - or and all bless - ing shall be his.

Text: Manuel José Alonso, José Pagán; English text composite

Music: ALABARÉ, Manuel José Alonso, José Pagán

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***NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

God of resurrection and new life, we come before you in prayer for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Your love sustains the church and its ministries. By that love, equip youth directors, Sunday school teachers, and all who guide formation in the church to nurture vibrant, living faith among your people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your abundance is made known throughout creation. Preserve oceans and rivers, lakes and estuaries (*local bodies of water may be named*) so that all creatures living in them might flourish. Make us wise stewards of our local watersheds. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your wisdom guides all who strive for justice and peace. Strengthen the work of grassroots organizers, especially among communities on the frontlines of justice work. Amplify the voices of those most in need, that their leadership guides the way forward. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your compassion surrounds all who are in need. We pray for all people experiencing poverty and food insecurity, and for all struggling with debt and economic uncertainty. Reassure all who experience hopelessness or need your tender care (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You invite all people to your table of grace. Make this a community of radical hospitality where all feel loved and celebrated. Show us how to better welcome visitors and bless the ministries of hospitality in this place (*specific ministries may be named*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We praise you for the witness of your saints of all times and places (*especially Monica, mother of Augustine*). May their lives of faith guide us in our own journeys with you, today and every day. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

Amen.

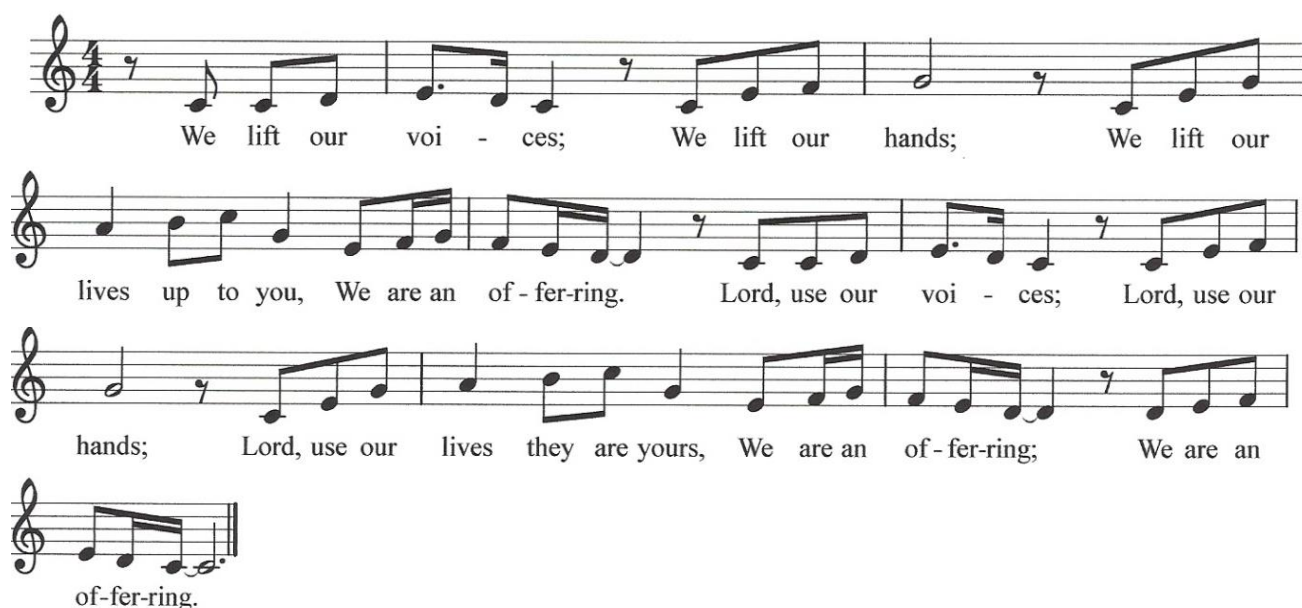
*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

*** OFFERING SONG**



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of-fer-ring.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: Risen One, you have gathered us around your table of grace along with these gifts we bring. Come among us again, breathe your life into us, and enliven us with this meal, that we may live as your risen body in the world. **Amen.**

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

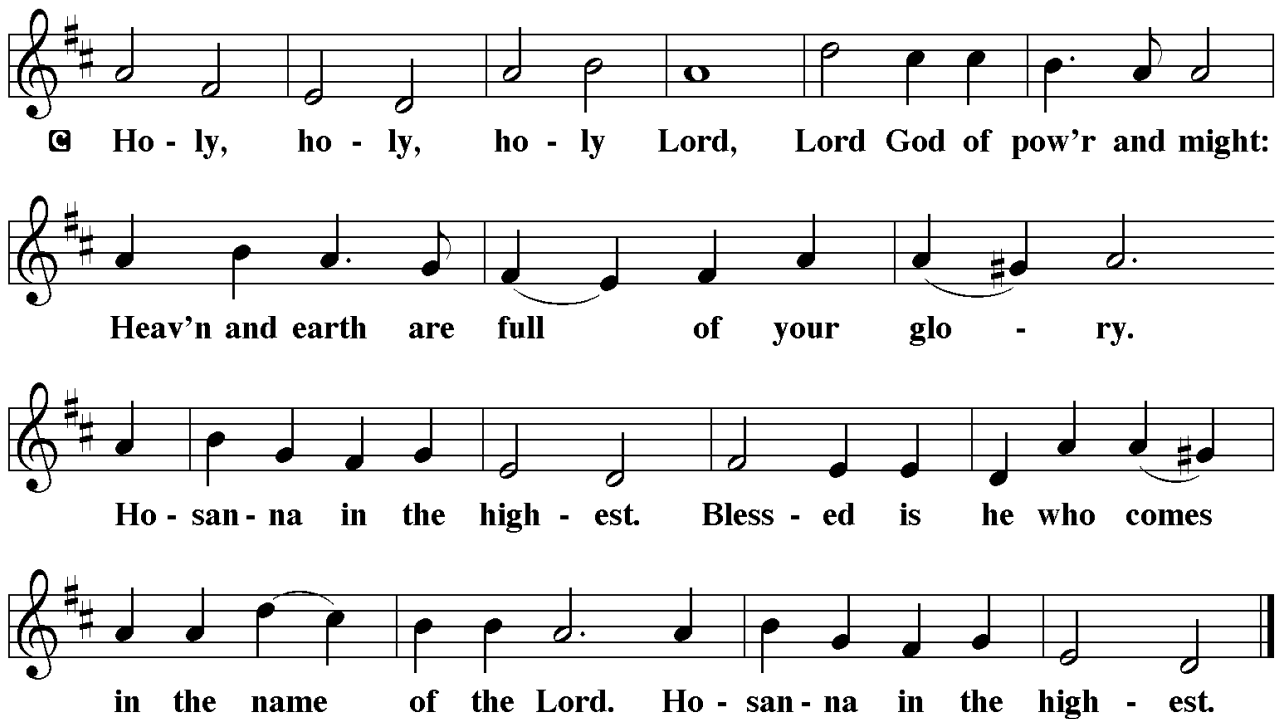
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:) we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



* WORDS OF INSTITUTION

With Thanksgiving, we remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. 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, forever and ever. Amen

* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of grace. Receive the gift of new life.

We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION SONG**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.

Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.

Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com-fort stilled you.

Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free."

The image shows a musical score for a song titled "Go, My Children, with My Blessing". It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a five-line staff. Below the first staff, the lyrics are: "3 'Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me." The second staff continues the melody, with lyrics: "Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free." The third staff continues the melody, with lyrics: "Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com-fort stilled you." The fourth staff concludes the melody, with lyrics: "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free." The music is written in a simple, accessible style, suitable for a children's song.

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Living One, in this feast you have made yourself known to us. Send us now to tell of your wonders, sing of your glory, and proclaim your risen life to a wounded and weary world. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: The triune God, who was, who is, and who is to come, Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit, light your way with resurrection dawn, now and always. **Amen.**

*** CELEBRATIONS!!!**

* CLOSING SONG

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,
 2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we left in
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, here on earth our



his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the
 sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! he is near us; faith be -
 food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! here the sin - ful flee to



vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful
 lieves, nor ques - tions how. Though the cloud from sight re -
 you from day to day. In - ter - ces - sor, friend of



Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: "Je - sus
 ceived him when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our
 sin - ners, earth's re - deem - er, hear our plea where the



out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood."
 hearts for - get his prom - ise: "I am with you ev - er - more"?
 songs of all the sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

* SENDING

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. In Christ you are made new. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

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