

---

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting,  
for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea  
that is driven and tossed by the wind.

— *James 1:6* —

*The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills*

**SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

April 16, 2023

8:00 a.m. Worship Service



## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF VESTAVIA HILLS

201 So. Montgomery Highway Birmingham, Alabama 35216  
Church office: 205-823-1883 PreSchool/MDO: 205-791-5200  
Web Site: [www.vestavialutheran.org](http://www.vestavialutheran.org)  
WORSHIP: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sundays  
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:15 a.m.  
Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday



PASTOR: The Reverend Michael D. Ahlemeyer – [pastor@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:pastor@vestavialutheran.org) text: 205-201-8866  
PASTOR EMERITUS: The Reverend Clifford Hellmers – [vestluth@juno.com](mailto:vestluth@juno.com) 205-422-4951  
VICAR: Andrew Frerichs – [vicar@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:vicar@vestavialutheran.org)  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Ruth Johnson – [ruthinbham@gmail.com](mailto:ruthinbham@gmail.com)  
DIRECTOR OF MOTHER'S DAY OUT: Brooke Heisler – [bheisler@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:bheisler@vestavialutheran.org)  
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: Leigh Walter – [lwalter@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:lwalter@vestavialutheran.org)  
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR ASSISTANT: Amy Alvis - [aalvis@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:aalvis@vestavialutheran.org)  
BOOK KEEPER: Melanie Goodson - [bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org](mailto:bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org)  
ADOPTED MEDICAL MISSIONARIES - Arianna and David Shirk, Madeline & Annabelle - [shirkdavid@gmail.com](mailto:shirkdavid@gmail.com)



TO OUR GUESTS: We offer you a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. Please sign the Friendship Register. If you do not have a church home, we would be delighted to have you become a part of our church family. Please feel free to speak with the Pastor about membership in our congregation. If you do have a church home, we pray that God will bless you as you continue your growth in faith and love.



SUNDAY SCHOOL Adult Bible Classes meets in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m. Children, Confirmation, and Youth classes also meet at 9:15 a.m. in the class rooms downstairs.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH and NURSERY Following the Children's Message, all children ages 3-7 are invited to Children's Church downstairs. They will return to the sanctuary after the sermon. A nursery attendant is provided for children ages birth to 3 years during our 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services.



COMMUNION We invite all baptized Christians who acknowledge their sinfulness, trust in Christ as their Savior, and who recognize the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the bread and wine to join us at the Communion table. The practice of our congregation is to place the bread into the extended hand of the communicant. The wine is offered in individual cups; please take one from the tray as it is offered by the Elder. The common cup will be offered to those who do not take an individual cup. The cups in the center of the tray are filled with non-alcoholic wine, in consideration of persons who should not drink wine. Also, children who have not received Communion instruction are invited to come to the Communion rail, fold their hands and receive a blessing.

**The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

April 16, 2023

8:00 a.m. Worship Service

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**OPENING HYMN**

"Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven!"

LSB #477



1 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Hearts to heav'n and voic - es raise:  
2 Al - le - lu - ia, Christ is ris - en! Death at last has met de - feat:  
3 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Glo - ry be to God on high:



Sing to God a hymn of glad-ness, Sing to God a hymn of praise;  
See the an-cient pow'rs of e - vil In con - fu - sion and re - treat;  
Al - le - lu - ia to the Sav - ior Who has gained the vic - to - ry;



He who on the cross a vic-tim For the world's sal - va-tion bled—  
Once He died, and once was bur-ied: Now He lives for - ev - er - more,  
Al - le - lu - ia to the Spir-it, Fount of love and sanc-ti - ty!



Je - sus Christ, the King of Glo - ry, Now is ris - en from the dead.  
Je - sus Christ, the world's Re - deem - er, Whom we wor-ship and a - dore.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia To the tri - une Maj - es - ty!

## INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He give the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## INTROIT

~Psalm 95:1-7

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;

**let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!**

Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving;

**let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!**

For the LORD is a great God,

**and a great King above all gods.**

In His hand are the depths of the earth;

**the heights of the mountains are His also.**

The sea is His, for He made it,

**and His hands formed the dry land.**

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

**let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!**

For He is our God,

**and we are the people of His pasture,  
and the sheep of His hand.**

## KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us gracious Lord.



**C** A - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE

"This is the Feast"

*Refrain*

**C** This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 — Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose  
 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and  
 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and  
 4 Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to  
 5 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God. *Refrain*  
 hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are His. *Refrain*  
 join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: *Stanza 4*  
 God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*  
 gun His reign. Al - le - lu - ia. *Final Refrain*

*Final Refrain*

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Risen Lord, You appeared to the disciples to strengthen their faith and give them the Holy Spirit to forgive sin. Increase our faith and inspire our witness. Fill Your Church with the power of the resurrection to labor faithfully in joy until every tongue confesses with Thomas, "My Lord and my God," for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



## FIRST READING

Acts 5:29-42

*(The Apostles Give Their Testimony to the Resurrection)*

<sup>29</sup>But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

<sup>30</sup>The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.

<sup>31</sup>God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup>And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

<sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. <sup>34</sup>But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.

<sup>35</sup>And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. <sup>36</sup>For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. <sup>37</sup>After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him.



He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. <sup>38</sup>So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; <sup>39</sup>but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, <sup>40</sup>and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup>Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. <sup>42</sup>And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **EPISTLE READING**

James 1:1-8

*(One Who Doubts)*

<sup>1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

Greetings.

<sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## ALLELUIA VERSE

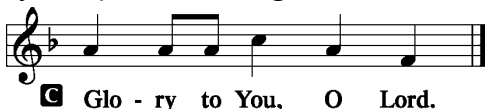


Al-le-lu-ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e-ter-nal life. Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

## HOLY GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the twentieth chapter.



Glo-ry to You, O Lord.

*(The Risen Lord Appears to His Disciples and Thomas)*

<sup>19</sup>On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld." <sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I

see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”<sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”<sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”<sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”<sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;<sup>31</sup>but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



☪ Praise to You, O Christ.

## APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ☩ everlasting. Amen.**

## HYMN OF THE DAY

"O Sons of Daughters of the King"

LSB #470 (v. 1,4-5)



1 O sons and daugh - ters of the King, Whom heav'n - ly  
4 That night the a - pos - tles met in fear; A - mong them  
5 When Thom - as first the tid - ings heard That they had



hosts in glo - ry sing, To - day the grave has lost its sting!  
came their mas - ter dear And said, "My peace be with you here."  
seen the ris - en Lord, He doubt - ed the dis - ci - ples' word.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

## SERMON

*"The Do's and Don'ts of Doubt"*

**John 20:19-31**

Rev. Michael Ahlemeyer

## HYMN OF THE DAY

"O Sons of Daughters of the King"

LSB #470 (v. 6-7,9)

6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,  
And look upon My hands, My feet;  
Not faithless but believing be."  
Alleluia!

7        No longer Thomas then denied;  
          He saw the feet, the hands, the side;  
          “You are my Lord and God!” he cried.  
          Alleluia!

9        On this most holy day of days  
          Be laud and jubilee and praise:  
          To God your hearts and voices raise.  
          Alleluia!

## **OFFERING**

## **VOLUNTARY**

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

We give thanks to You, O Lord; we call upon Your name and sing praises to You for Your wonderful works.

**By Your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

Although we have not seen Him, we love Him.

**We believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible joy.**

We live in a scientific age, O Lord, and we like to see tangible evidence to support what we believe.

**Forgive us, Lord, for being slow to accept the truth of Your Son’s resurrection from the dead.**

We are like Thomas, wanting to put our fingers into the nail prints of His hands and to thrust our hand into the wound of His side.

**We often forget Christ's promise that, if we believe without seeing, we will be blessed even more than Thomas.**

O Lord, we believe;

**Help our unbelief!**

Without the gift of Your Holy Spirit we cannot acknowledge Jesus Christ as our risen Lord.

**Therefore, send us Your Holy Spirit that with steadfast hearts we may believe and always hold fast to the truth of our Savior's resurrection.**

May the knowledge of Christ's resurrection from the dead reassure us of our own resurrection so that we can face temporal death without fear.

**Take away all our doubts and cause us to believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son so that, believing, we may have eternal life in His name.**

*Here special intercessions are made. Each portion concludes:*

Lord, in Your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

This we ask in the name of Him Who suffered and died in our place

**and rose again from the dead for our justification, even our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## **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.**

## **BENEDICTION**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.  
**Amen.**

*~the service concludes on the following page~*

## CLOSING HYMN

"Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen"

LSB #474 (v. 1-2, 5)



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en! Trum - pets re -  
2 Walk - ing the way, Christ in the cen - ter Tell - ing the  
5 Cit - y of God, Eas - ter for - ev - er, Gold - en Je -



sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light! Splen - dor, the Lamb, Heav - en for -  
sto - ry to o - pen our eyes; Break - ing our bread, Giv - ing us  
ru - sa - lem, Je - sus the Lamb, Riv - er of life, Saints and arch -



ev - er! Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!  
glo - ry: Je - sus our bless - ing, our con - stant sur - prise.  
an - gels, Sing with cre - a - tion to God the I AM!

*Refrain*



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise:



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

## EASTER DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**