

**Minnesota Valley Church; Sunday, April 12, 2026;
2nd Sunday of Easter**

Prelude: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: from 148

PASTOR: Praise the LORD from the heavens,

ALL: Praise him in the heights above.

PASTOR: Praise him, all his angels,

ALL: Praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

PASTOR: Let them praise the name of the LORD,

ALL: For his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

HYMN #100 "Alleluia! Jesus Lives!"

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

Reader: Glenn Gustafson

First Lesson: *Acts 5:29-42 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." 33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. 34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a*

band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." 40 His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Gospel Lesson: *John 20:19-31 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." 24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31*

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: 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, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall 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*

Gloria Patri: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

Announcements and Receive Offering

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Songs to be chosen by Carol

SERMON: "RESURRECTION BENEFITS" 1 Peter 1:3-9
Pastor Tom Olson

We will be doing a series of messages for the next few weeks from 1 Peter. I would like to call the series "A PECULIAR PEOPLE" from the theme verse in **1 Peter 2:9** "***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...***" We begin with chapter one which fits right in with the Easter theme of our season so we will call this message "**Resurrection Benefits.**" We are all familiar with the benefits of the sacrificial death of Christ, but

what benefits do we get from His resurrection? Let's talk about it. 1 Peter 1:3-9...The first benefit of the resurrection is...

I. A LIVING HOPE

1 Peter 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

PRAISE: What an amazing two verses. We could do a month of sermons just on them. Peter is so excited about the fact that Jesus has risen from the dead that he burst out in praise. We certainly feel it in our Easter hymns as well:

- Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Alleluia. Hallelujah means literally Hallel to Yahweh or in English: Praise the Lord!
- Our opening hymn: "Alleluia, Jesus Lives"
- Or this one: "Rejoice, rejoice, O Christians. Lift up your voice and sing eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ our King."

DEAD OR ALIVE: Every works based religion in the world has a dead leader: Mohammed is dead, Buddha is dead, Confucious is dead, The Vedas sages of Hinduism are all dead. But Jesus is alive. He is risen from the dead and will come again, perhaps soon. That is reason to praise the Lord.

REBORN: Notice here that this LIVING HOPE, comes from a NEW BIRTH. When Christ enters your life, you become a new person. Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be "BORN AGAIN." It is not a physical birth but a spiritual birth that comes to through faith in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”*

BRANSON: We had the great opportunity this past week to see the play “David” at the Sight n Sound Theater in Branson this past week. They depicted many scenes from the life of David. They discretely depicted David’s adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her faithful husband Uriah.

NATHAN: Nathan the prophet came and confronted David who was brought to a state of deep and sincere repentance. He cried out the words of **Psalm 51** *“Create in me a clean heart O God.”* God forgave David of his sins even though he suffered the consequences of them the rest of his life. David was literally a new person with a clean heart but he still was in his old body and old circumstances.

ASHAMED: Many of us have done things we are now ashamed of. All over the world people are slowly being exposed by the Epstein files to the terrible evil rich powerful men committed against young girls and boys. I wonder how many of them will ever find a new life in Christ? I wonder how many of them, like Judas, will instead take their lives rather than face their sins?

COLESON: I love the true story of the once powerful Chuck Colson. Here is a description sourced from Breakpoint radio ministry: *“Chuck Colson, known as President Nixon's "hatchet man" during the Watergate scandal, became a Christian in 1973 through the influence of his friend Tom Phillips and reading C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity. After facing a spiritual crisis, he surrendered his life to Jesus in a dramatic driveway prayer, subsequently pleading guilty to Watergate-related charges to serve his sentence and focus on prison ministry.”*

PRISON: Chuck was guilty of crimes but he found new life in Christ. He went from being a corrupt political operative to being a powerful witness while in prison. He continued to do prison ministry scores of prisoners, after he was released. He started the

ministry called “Prison Fellowship” which helps many people with ruined lives become new creations through the power of Jesus to forgive their sins and save their souls. Prison Fellowship brings prisoners from hopelessness to A LIVING HOPE.

The first RESURRECTION BENEFIT is A LIVING HOPE. Secondly...

II. PROVEN BY TRIALS

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

PROVEN: Another RESURRECTION BENEFIT is that God “PROVES” our faith through trials. A mature faith is not the result of an easy life. A mature faith is the result of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This work is called here “ALL KINDS OF TRIALS.”

EXAMPLES: Most of us have had ALL KINDS OF TRIALS. We have...

- lost jobs,
- had financial reversals,
- faced major health setbacks, (Jeremy’s mom)
- gone through difficult relationships.

These things don’t break us, they make us. God sets out to purge the evil out of our hearts and make us wise, loving and peaceful people. He has to use some strong tools to get us there. I learned a poem as a child that has helped me find purpose is hard trials:

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S ABOUT

When God wants to drill a man,
And thrill a man,
And skill a man
When God wants to mold a man
To play the noblest part;

When He yearns with all His heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall be amazed,
Watch His methods, watch His ways!

How He ruthlessly perfects
Whom He royally elects!
How He hammers him and hurts him,
And with mighty blows converts him

Into trial shapes of clay which
Only God understands;
While his tortured heart is crying
And he lifts beseeching hands!

How He bends but never breaks
When his good He undertakes;
How He uses whom He chooses,
And which every purpose fuses him;
By every act induces him
To try His splendor out-
God knows what He's about.

----Annon.

FOOTBALL: I watched my son train to be a football player. It was grueling what that coach put them through in the weight room, on the practice field and at home. But without that training those boys would have gotten hurt in the game. Any development, physical,

spiritual and emotional includes good nutrition and demanding training. The coach didn't allow them to drink pop. Becoming a mature Christian includes hard training as well. In fact, if our life is too easy, we have to wonder if we really are true children of God:

Hebrews 12:5-11 "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

APPLICATION: What trials is God allowing in your life? Do you know what He is trying to work into your life? A RESURRECTION BENEFIT is to be PROVEN BY TRIALS. Finally...

III. THE RESULTS

1 Peter 1:8-9 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

RESULTS: The LIVING HOPE and the life PROVEN BY TRIALS has many wonderful results according to Peter. Here they are:

#1 RESULT-A LOVE RELATIONSHIP-you love the Lord. To meditate upon the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for us fills us with love.

ORPHANS: It reminds me of seeing old movies about orphans who desperately want a home and family. Childless parents come to the orphanage to pick out a son or a daughter. The child that is picked for a good home is so filled with love for that adoptive parent.

ADOPTION: I have a friend in North Dakota who was adopted by a farming couple who loved him, raised him well and then gave him the family farm. He loves farming. He has an exceptionally great love for those parents who rescued him from having no family and sure poverty into a good and secure life.

LOVE: That is what we have from the Lord. We were loved by God even before the world was created. He adopts us and makes us joint heirs with Christ. The basis of our faith is love.

#2 RESULT-JOY FILLED LIFE-Peter goes on to tell us that new life in Christ results in *“inexpressible and glorious joy.”* This is a sign that we have been truly saved. Many people belong to churches out of tradition or upbringing but don’t have “the joy of salvation.” One reason for that could be that they have never really truly seen their lost and sinful condition and then gotten a revelation of Jesus shedding his innocent blood to wash away their sins.

I know of one Lutheran pastor who served churches in Phillips and La Crosse, Wisconsin for 13 years without salvation. His father was a seminary professor in St. Paul who wrote several theological books. The son was taught the clear teachings of the Bible but never experienced them. His name was Pastor Joe Stump. He lived from 1895 until 1969.

After 13 years in the ministry, he didn’t know what to say to people who were dying. He went to New York to seek help from famous theologians but found none. In desperation, someone recommended

that he go to a rescue mission to see souls saved. It was at the mission with the drunkards and prostitutes that he came to know Jesus in a living a personal way.

He went back to La Crosse, got up in the pulpit and announced to the church that he was now saved. He became a new and dynamic preacher. In the next five years over 300 people in that large Lutheran Church in La Crosse came to find the assurance of salvation in Christ. If I am not mistaken, some of those people were the founders of Christ is Lord Free Lutheran Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin.

Pastor Stump went on to do great evangelistic work with Youth for Christ and preached all over the world under the oversight of Bethany Fellowship in Bloomington. Pastor Stump was known for the JOY OF SALVATION that he experienced when he was born from above and got new life in Christ.

MEMORY: I was born in La Crosse. I grew up hearing about the pastor from who served many years as an unsaved man without the joy of the Lord. Do you have the *“inexpressible and glorious joy of salvation?”* It comes when Jesus saves your soul and dwells in your heart.

#3 RESULT-ETERNAL SALVATION-Peter finishes with the final RESURRECTION BENEFIT, in what he calls, *the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.* The purpose of the RESURRECTION is the salvation of our souls. It is not to merely make us rich, or give us good health or give us power. Christ rose from the dead so that we could one day rise from the dead and spend eternity with him in his KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE. The BENEFIT OF THE RESURRECTION is the salvation of our souls to eternal life.

The resurrection has many benefits: A LIVING HOPE, TRIALS THAT MATURE US, LOVE, JOY AND SALVATION.

If you are not sure about your salvation, you can invite Jesus into your heart personally. You can repent of your sins and ask Jesus to forgive you. Believe that he died FOR YOU. Trust the innocent blood of Jesus shed on the cross for you. Trust his Word. Please stay after and come to the altar if you would like to pray to receive Christ. *May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

Hymn #527 “He Lives”

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 that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

Closing Song: Chosen by Carol

Postlude: Carol Gustafson