



CHRIST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
MILFORD

September 20, 2020
17th Sunday of Pentecost

REFLECTION

Celebrating Jesus Christ in His Defeat of Death For Our Sake

It is Sunday—it is Resurrection Day!
Our Lord Christ in his dying and rising
has delivered all who love him
from the deep-seated terrors of Death.
Death can be faced for what it is—our Enemy,
Not the last phase in the benign cycle of life.

Lift high the cross in your life,
the very instrument of death.
For God took it up and by it won our life
And a rich immortality in his Presence.
Worship the Lord together with much gladness;
The day of resurrection has become the Lord's Day!

.....

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

Gathering Hymn Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Call to Worship Isaiah 25:6–9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, **“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”**

Invocation

1 Christ Je - sus lay in death's strong bands For our of - fens - es
 2 It was a strange and dread - ful strife When life and death con -
 3 Here the true Pas - chal Lamb we see, Whom God so free - ly
 4 So let us keep the fes - ti - val To which the Lord in -

giv - en; But now at God's right hand he stands And brings us life
 tend-ed; The vic - to - ry re-mained with life, The reign of death
 gave us; He died on the ac - curs - ed tree— So strong his love—
 vites us; Christ is him - self the joy of all, The sun that warms

from heav-en. There-fore let us joy - ful be And sing to God right
 was end - ed. Ho - ly Scrip-ture plain - ly says That death is swal-owed
 to save us. See, his blood now marks our door; Faith points to it; death
 and lights us. Now his grace to us im-parts E - ter - nal sun-shine

thank-ful - ly Loud songs of hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah!
 up by death, Its sting is lost for - ev - er. Hal - le - lu - jah!
 pass - es o'er, And Sa-tan can - not harm us. Hal - le - lu - jah!
 to our hearts; The night of sin is end - ed. Hal - le - lu - jah!

5 Then let us feast this Easter Day
 On Christ, the bread of heaven;
 The Word of grace has purged away
 The old and evil leaven.

Christ alone our souls will feed;
 He is our meat and drink indeed;
 Faith lives upon no other!
 Hallelujah!

Psalms Lesson Psalms 90:1–12

Praise Hymn Behold Our God

Who has held the oceans in His hands
Who has numbered every grain of sand
Kings and nations tremble at His voice
All creation rises to rejoice

Chorus

Behold our God seated on His throne
Come let us adore Him
Behold our King nothing can compare
Come let us adore Him

Who has given counsel to the Lord
Who can question any of His words
Who can teach the One who knows all things
Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds

Chorus

Who has felt the nails upon His hands
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man
God eternal humbled to the grave
Jesus Savior risen now to reign

Chorus

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Confession of Sin A Prayer to Confess Fear of the Future

O God our Father, we come humbly
to confess how feeble is our confidence
that you will fulfill your good purposes for us.

We are frail, and trouble snaps our faith like a twig.
Loss or sickness, or the thwarting of our plans,
is like a cry in our ear that we have no Father in heaven.
Forgive us we pray, for each time we have believed it.

O Lord may we remember;
may we remember that in your great power,
you exiled your Son for his protection,
and then called him out of Egypt for our salvation.
And as you ordered events then,
and rescued the infant Son of your love,
so the same hidden Providence has rescued us
again and again, in our own times of danger.

O Lord remind us,
that until your good purposes for us are fulfilled,
we are immortal on the earth; and that even when we die
our spirit shall be in your presence,
waiting with unspeakable joy
to follow Christ in his resurrection.

We renounce our unbelieving hearts and complaining spirits.
Hear our confession and cancel our guilt,
by the perfect life and sacrificial death
of him who was tempted to doubt your goodness,
but never gave in – Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Individual Confession

Absolution

Romans 5:6-10

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Thanksgiving Hymn

Tree of Life



All 1. There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom, whose leaves hold
Women 2. Its name is Je - sus, name that says, "Our Sav - ior!" There on its
Men 3. Thorns not his own are tan - gled in its fo - liage; our greed has
Choir 4. See how its branch - es reach to us in wel - come; hear what the
All 5. This is my end - ing, this my res - ur - rec - tion; in - to your
All 6. All heav'n is sing - ing, "Thanks to Christ whose Pas - sion of - fers in



forth the heal - ing of the na - tions: Tree of all know - ledge,
branch - es see the scars of suf - f'ring; see where the ten - drills
starved it, our de - spite has choked it. Yet, look! it lives! its
Voice says, "Come to me, ye wea - ry! Give me your sick - ness,
hands, Lord, I com - mit my spir - it. This have I searched for;
mer - cy heal - ing, strength and par - don. Peo - ples and na - tions,



Tree of all com - pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty.
of our hu - man self - hood feed on its life - blood.
grief has not de - stroyed it nor fire con - sumed it.
give me all your sor - row, I will give bless - ing."
now I can pos - sess it. This ground is ho - ly.
take it, take it free - ly!" A - men! My Mas - ter!

Gospel Lesson

Mark 12:18-27

Peace of Christ

The peace of the Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Gloria Patri

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.

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Old Testament Lesson 2 Chronicles 33:1-17

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Sermon Christ Pres Culture, 4: High Gospel | Pastor Curran Bishop

Response Hymn Christ is Risen

Let no one caught in sin remain
Inside the lie of inward shame
But fix our eyes upon the cross
And run to Him who showed great love
And bled for us
Freely You've bled for us

Chorus

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake come awake
Come and rise up from the grave
Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake come awake
Come and rise up from the grave

Beneath the weight of all our sin
You bowed to none but heaven's will
No scheme of hell no scoffer's crown
No burden great can hold You down
In strength You reign
Forever let Your church proclaim

Bridge

O death where is your sting
O hell where is your victory

O church come stand in the light
The glory of God has defeated the night
Singing O death where is your sting
O hell where is your victory
O church come stand in the light
Our God is not dead He's alive He's alive

Chorus

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

Bringing Our Life to God

Prayers | Collection | Profession

Prayers of the People

Collection

text **MNA 1708** to **76959** and follow the prompts
or visit give.pcamna.org/to/1708/

Confession of Faith

from John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)

Let none fear death;

for the death of the Savior has set us free.

He has destroyed death, he has despoiled hell.

Hell was filled with bitterness when it met thee:

filled with bitterness, **for it was brought to nothing;**

filled with bitterness, **for it was mocked;**

filled with bitterness, **for it was overthrown;**

filled with bitterness, **for it was put in chains.**

O death, where is thy sting? O hell where is thy victory?

Christ is risen, **and thou art cast down.**

Christ is risen, **and the demons are fallen.**

Christ is risen, **and the angels rejoice.**

Christ is risen, **and life reigns in freedom.**

Christ is risen, **and there is none left dead in the tomb.**

For Christ, being raised from the dead,

has become the first-fruits of those that slept.

To him be glory and dominion to the ages of ages. Amen.

Communion in Christ Jesus

All Christians are invited to join us to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. During this time of social distancing we offer for our pastor to come and bless your partaking of elements you provide to preserve the corporate-presence of Christ pictured in the supper as best we can. If you've been part of our streaming service please text Curran (203-812-9928) to set up a time he can meet you (from a distance) to celebrate communion.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread, Forgive our debts as we forgive
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from all evil
For Thine is the kingdom, Thine is the power
Thine is the glory, Forever and ever
Amen

Prayer for those searching

Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.

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Coronation Hymn

Christ Shall Have Dominion

Benediction

Hebrews 13: 20-21

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Capo 1: (D) (Em⁷) (A⁷) (Bm⁷) (A) (D)

1. Christ shall have do - min - ion o - ver land and sea, earth's re - mot - est
 2. When the need - y seek him, he will mer - cy show; yea, the weak and
 3. Ev - er and for - ev - er shall his name en - dure, long as suns con -
 4. Un - to God Al - might - y joy - ful Zi - on sings; he a - lone is

(Em⁷) (A) (E⁷) (A) (D)

re - gions shall his em - pire be; they that wilds in - hab - it shall their
 help - less shall his pit - y know; he will sure - ly save them from op -
 tin - ue it shall stand se - cure; and in him for - ev - er all men
 glo - rious, do - ing won - drous things. Ev - er - more, ye peo - ple, bless his

(G) (D) (G) (D) (G) (D) (G) (D) (G) (Em⁷) (A)

wor - ship bring, kings shall ren - der trib - ute, na - tions serve our King.
 pres - sion's might, for their lives are pre - cious in his ho - ly sight.
 shall be blest, and all na - tions hail him King of kings con - fessed.
 glo - rious name, his e - ter - nal glo - ry through the earth pro - claim.

REFRAIN
 (D) (A) (D)

Christ shall have do - min - ion o - ver land and sea,

(D) (A⁷) (D) (G) (Em⁷) (A⁷) (D) 7

earth's re - mot - est re - gions shall his em - pire be.

REFLECTION

Monday Morning and the Empty Tomb

What do most people around us believe about human death? Probably that unless you're an axe murderer you'll live forever in a beautiful place after you die. And this doctrine that we are all immortal and will live happily ever after has threaded its way from ancient times into the present in most cultures. The pagan Celts believed in the immortality of the soul. But the ancients feared death because they feared the gods. Modern people, either believing there is no God, or if he exists, that he must be like a Great Big Sweet Grandpa, try to talk themselves out of the fear of death. Consider the opening lines of a contemporary piece I came across a few years ago:

Death is nothing at all. It does not count. I have only slipped away into the next room. Nothing has happened. Everything remains exactly as it was. I am I, and you are you, and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.

Unchanged? Nothing has happened? Tell that to the families of the coalition forces killed in Afghanistan during this 13-year old war still raging. Tell the relatives of the thousands of Iraqi civilians blown up in the last 11 years of war there that “everything remains exactly as it was.” Tell that to the thousands of victims of ISIS/ISIL.

What we celebrate in our liturgy today is not that death has been domesticated by redefining it but that it has been conquered by Jesus Christ handing himself over to it. The great insight of the contemporary world, in my judgment, is its realism. We don't just keep a stiff upper lip and stuff our feelings when someone we love dies. We talk about it, we get our feelings out, we form grief support groups. And all of this is far better for us and our children than the stoic determination of an earlier generation not to appear weak or vulnerable in the face of losing someone. Therapeutically, that's a gain. Ask any person old enough to have lived through the two vastly different approaches. But philosophically, we've regressed. We've romanticized death, trying to tame it by regarding it simply as a part of life. We try to withdraw death's sting by convincing ourselves that it's not as bad as the ancients made it out to be. And we not only manipulate death at the end of life, we do it also at the beginning: when an unborn developing baby is killed *in utero* we do not honestly call it that; we call it the termination of a pregnancy.

But death will not be tamed; it must be destroyed. And it is as bad as the ancients feared: it robs us of our life and loves, ends every opportunity to better ourselves, and ushers us into the severity of a divine judgment on our lives. That's what death is and what it does.

But Christ, the incarnate God, broke the back of death when he offered his pure and perfect life to the fury of the justice of God on our behalf. That destroyed him. But it was impossible for death to hold him down. On the third day he was raised to an indestructible, immortal life, and now shares that life with anyone who trusts him.

For us, every Sunday is Easter—a fresh celebration, in the weekly rhythm of living, that God himself has rescued us from what the ancients feared and we moderns manipulate: the ruination of death. That's the message we must proclaim to those around us, with courtesy and graciousness always, but with a holy firmness, too, because some will hear Christ speaking through us and pass already from death into life.

– Ron Lutjens (2014)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Group – meeting tonight, September 20, 5:30-7pm at the Bishops (21 Green St., Milford, 06460). We'll enjoy community together while having a BYO picnic dinner.

Thursday Night Prayer Meeting – 7-7:50pm

In the midst of pandemic, financial crisis, social isolation and turmoil we need each other, and we need God. Please join us as we follow a short prayer and scripture liturgy, pray for each other, and have some “digital fellowship” while staying home and staying safe.

[Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 856 4475 2681 Passcode: 665297

Exploring Church Membership – Thursdays, 8-9pm, *Does not meet this week*: resumes 10/1, 8, 15 & 22. We take five vows in joining a Presbyterian church—this class explores those vows, as well as some distinctives we strive to embody as a church.

[Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 856 4475 2681 Passcode: 665297 (same as prayer meeting)

Worship Location Schedule

– September 20, 27: [1 Shipyard Ln., Milford, CT 06460 \(Fowler Pavilion\)](#)

Contact us

203.812.9928 or curran.bishop@cpcmilford.org; find us on Facebook at facebook.com/CPCMilford or visit us online at cpcmilford.org

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