AN EARLY SERVICE

**Easter Day**

Blessed art thou, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to thine abundant mercy hast begotten us again unto a new and living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Thou hast transformed the night of doubt and sorrow into the new and eternal day of joy and gladness by the rolling of the stone from the door of the tomb. Thou hast brought life and immortality to light by the glad tidings that Christ is risen, that death has no power over him. Thou hast sent unto all dwelling in this world of darkness and the shadow of death the joyful hope of an inheritance incorruptible and full of glory. O God, we thank thee.

Thou hast delivered, from the grip of death, thy Son, who died for our sins, and hast raised him by thy power. Thou hast brought him forth as the First-fruits of all who sleep and given him the keys of death and hell. That which thou didst sow in dishonor and weakness, thou didst raise in glory and power. O God, we praise thee that through him thou hast taken away for us the sting from death, and victory from the grave.

Fill our hearts with the joy of the resurrection. Grant unto thy church and people everywhere the power of an endless life, that they may show forth thy praises. Bestow thy grace upon our homes, and bless them with Easter's consolation and hope. Send forth the conquering banner of Christ's victory into all the world, that nations may join the hosts of heaven in songs of triumph.

Guard us, O Lord, by thy power, that we may be kept in this holy faith. Wipe away all tears from our eyes. In every adversity and trial preserve us so that we fail not in receiving the blessings of Christ's ransom and the fruits of his resurrection. In the promise of Easter take from us all fear of death. Let the radiant beams of the Easter dawn's early light shine into the depths of our souls. Renew us by the Spirit of him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Hold fast before our eyes the promise that in Christ our lowly bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, and that as we have borne the image of the earthly so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. And then when thou callest us to thy heavenly rest, may we sleep peacefully in Jesus, awaiting the sound of the trumpet, when the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

In the Name of our risen and ever-living Lord. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿A LATER SERVICE

**Easter Day**

O thou God of peace, who hast brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, we thank and praise thee for thy mercy in his glorious resurrection.

Give us the radiant joy of the first Easter. Fill our hearts with its sublime announcement and precious promise. Make us glad in the heavenly tidings that he who died for our sins rose again for our justification; that because he lives, we too shall live; that death has no power over us; that he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.

Grant us a lively faith, that we may receive both the infallible proofs of his death and the infallible testimonies of his resurrection. And as thou hast declared that if we shall confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that thou didst raise him from the dead, we shall be saved, endow us with all such spiritual gifts as shall obtain for us thy salvation.

Order our steps by thy Word and quicken us by its power, that we, obeying thy commandments and trusting in thy promises, may receive the fullness of thy blessing both in this life and that which is to come.

Bestow thy gracious favor upon our homes and imbue our families with such a sense of thy goodness and manifold gifts, especially the gift of eternal life in thy Son, that Easter may be observed with the solemnity of sincere thanksgiving and celebrated with the joy of blessed hope.

Have dominion over all the nations of the earth, O Lord, and bring them to thine obedience, that all men, from the least to the greatest, walking in thy love and fear, may find him who has the words of eternal life.

For thy church we pray: Grant that everywhere it may have faithful and true shepherds who are not ashamed of that Gospel which is power unto salvation; and endow all its members with the assurance of the resurrection faith, that as thou didst raise our Lord, so also by thy power thou wilt raise us. Grant that all believers throughout the world this day may find the fullness of thy grace and peace. Help all to be faithful unto death, that they may receive the crown of life. By thy Spirit make us, heavenly Father, perfect in every good work to do thy will, and work in us that which is well pleasing in thy sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿EASTER

**Monday**

O Lord God, our Strength, our Song, and our Salvation, glorious in holiness, fearful in power, wonderful in love, we thank thee for the marvelous fulfillment of the promise made unto the fathers in the resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ from the dead.

Grant unto us the opening of our spiritual eyes that we may behold the glory of our Lord and receive from him the gift of life. Open to us thy Holy Scriptures, wherein we read that all that thou hast said by the prophets concerning the Christ, his suffering, death, and rising from the dead, has most truly come to pass. Open our hearts that the Sun of righteousness may impart light and healing to our sin-darkened lives.

Anoint thy church, O God, with the Holy Spirit and with power, and ever manifest thy presence to all who are gathered into its fold, that in worship and work it may proclaim thy Word and testify that thou hast ordained him now in this time to be the Savior of the world and in the end to be the Judge of the quick and the dead.

Let the festival of this Easter be celebrated in our homes, to the end that we may rejoice in our salvation and glory in the Christ who broke the bonds of death and opened for us the gates of everlasting life.

Send forth thy truth unto the far reaches of the earth and to every habitation of men, that they may know Christ's power over sin and hell and his victory over the grave.

If any amongst us have trouble, care, or sorrow, endow them with the joy and peace of a pure faith, the quietness and confidence of a true love, and the blessed hope of a heavenly rest that awaits the people of God.

Make us mindful of those most dear to us who in faith have entered thy rest; may our comfort and consolation be that as they have truly served thee, O Father, here in this world so they shall rejoice and praise thy redeeming love forever. Grant that we may meet them in the joy of heaven, through Jesus Christ, who will come again and receive us also unto himself. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿EASTER

**First Sunday**

O God of all grace, mercy, and peace, who, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, didst declare him to be thy Son and our Savior, and who, by the faithful testimony of the apostles, hast given us assurance that our faith stands upon a most true and sure record, grant us the witness of thy Spirit, that our hearts may rest in thy truth.

We thank thee for the unspeakable gift of eternal life in thy Son. Preserve and defend us from all assaults upon our souls, so that we may hold fast to the profession of our faith. Deliver us from doubt and despair. Save us from vain philosophies and worldly wisdom. Give us thy doctrine, the Spirit of truth, and the mind of Christ.

We lift up our hearts to thee in thanksgiving for thy Word. Grant us so to desire its pure and refreshing nourishment that we may daily bring forth the fruits of righteousness in our pilgrimage upon earth. Illumine us by its heavenly light and instruct us by its saving truth. Help us therein to find Jesus; and though we behold him not, save with the eyes of faith, lead us to love him and to rejoice in him with joy inexpressible and full of glory, and grant that we may receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

Breathe upon thy church, that it may faithfully preach thy Word and proclaim the Gospel of our risen Savior with courage and diligence in all lands and to all people.

Have respect, O Lord, unto our prayer for all the schools of the church, its colleges and seminaries, and its parish schools, that they may bring forth youth who walk in the way of thy commandments and are obedient to thy holy will.

Hearken unto the supplications that may rise secretly in our hearts for some special help or favor, and give us the assurance of thy mercy. And if, in thine unsearchable wisdom, thou hast permitted a cross to be laid on any of us, assure us that thou wilt not permit us to be tried above that we are able, but wilt strengthen us therein through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Forgive now the sins of thy people. Strengthen the doubting and the faithless. Bring back the forgetful and the wayward. And com- fort the anxious and the distressed.

And as we go from this hallowed place this day, grant unto us all thy peace.

All this we pray in the Name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿EASTER

**Second Sunday**

O Lord our God, how great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; how good are the things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Give us thy holy fear and love, that we, through Jesus Christ thy Son, may obtain those glories which our eyes have not seen, nor our ears heard, neither have entered our hearts.

We thank thee for the grace which sent Christ the Good Shepherd into the world to lay down his life for the sheep, to ransom us by his blood from the power of evil, to redeem us by his Passion from the deserved consequences of our sins, and by his cross to liberate us from the fear and bondage of death.

We praise and bless thee for his resurrection and the bright and glorious promise that all who hear his voice and follow him shall, in the likeness of his resurrection, also be raised.

Accept our thanksgiving for his compassion on us, who were like sheep without a shepherd, going astray, but who are now, through thy great mercy, returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

For thy forgiveness and the remission of all our sins, for the promise of thy peace and the pledge of thy salvation, for thy presence and power, for thy loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, for every gift and grace in Christ Jesus, we thank thee, merciful Father.

Bestow upon thy church all such things as are needful to it, that it may be obedient to the example of its Savior and seek the lost sheep of the Israel of faith, raise the fallen, rescue the weary, comfort the faint, restore the erring, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, and thus show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Draw all thy people to a oneness of faith, doctrine, and spirit, that in obedience to truth, in loyalty to Jesus Christ, and in the concern for the prosperity of his kingdom, there shall be but one fold and one Shepherd.

In all parliaments and councils of nations, in all deliberations of commerce and industry, in all instruction in colleges and universities, in all civic and social life, give us, O God, the voice and leadership of the Good Shepherd. Suppress the vain boasts, the deceitful words, and the hollow glorying of men. Let the earth be still that it may hear and obey the Word of the Lord of life.

Direct our path through the sin, strife, and uncertainty of these times, O Lord. Grant us true faith and a godly heart. Strengthen the sick, support the weak, supply the needy, and show thyself a very present help in every necessity.

And when our last hour shall come, because our eyes have seen thy salvation, let us depart in peace according to thy Word, and receive us into everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Redeemer. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿EASTER

**Third Sunday**

O Lord God, heavenly Father, who art mighty in power and infinite in majesty, who hast created the heaven and the heaven of heavens, and bringest out by name each star in the celestial host, as we enter into the courts of thy presence with thanksgiving and prayer, incline thine car unto us, and in thy mercy hear us.

We give thanks unto thee, everlasting God, that thou didst glorify thy Son Jesus in his resurrection from the dead, after he had offered himself as Priest and as Sacrifice for all the world, laid himself upon the altar of the cross, and died to reconcile sinners unto thee. Grant us the blessings of his infinite grace and inexhaustible love.

We praise thee that thou didst transform the "little while" of the crucifixion sadness and defeat into the joy and victory of the resurrection. Help us to lay hold of Christ's promise of eternal life, and receive it in joy. Give us this glorious consolation by a true and living faith. Grant us the hope and assurance that our eyes shall yet behold him, when, according to thy promise, our Redeemer shall at the latter day stand upon the earth, and receive us and all who believe in him into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

And as the empty tomb has been the cradle of the church of Christ, we pray that all believers may be endowed with zeal to perform thy will so that thou mayest be glorified and multitudes turned from their sin to faith in our risen Lord.

Bestow thy favor upon our land. Give us a government that preserves liberty, upholds justice, seeks righteousness, curbs lawlessness, and by thine ordinance bears its sword in courage and integrity. Let all Christian citizens in accordance with thy will accept their lawful obligations cheerfully and dutifully, giving respect to those in authority and honor to all men.

And as our eternal dwelling place is with thee, O Father, grant us, who are but strangers and pilgrims on earth, such a measure of thy power and grace that we may resist all evil, fight the good fight of faith, and in the end receive the victor's crown of life.

Give the comfort of thy promises to the sick, the sorrowful, the broken-hearted, and the perplexed. Cast out from our hearts all fear of death and the unknown. Instill in us patience in every adversity. And enable us to receive all thy many blessings in love and gratitude.

These things we ask in the glorious hope of an eternal day with thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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﻿EASTER

**Fourth Sunday**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who didst send thy Son into the world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many, and who didst raise him by thy glory when he had offered the one sacrifice for sins forever, grant us a sure faith in him, that we may possess the blessed hope of eternal life.

For the multitude of thy mercies we thank thee, and pray that we may ever be mindful that every good and perfect gift is from above and comes from thee. Teach us that thy mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear thee, and that there is no variableness nor shadow of turning in all thy kindness and compassion, for thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We thank thee, O Father of Lights, for all spiritual and intellectual illumination and for the revelation of thy divine truth in Jesus Christ. Grant that all who are of the truth may come to him. Pour out upon us thy Spirit, that he may, through the engrafted Word, guide us into all truth by making known the mysteries of thy will, thine unchangeable purpose for the raising of fallen man, and the pure and perfect doctrines that pertain to our eternal salvation.

We thank thee for the gift of thy church and the fellowship of the saints. In order that it may be one, holy, Christian, and apostolic, keep it in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, give it steadfast obedience to thy commandments, preserve it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith, and continue it in conformity with the inspired teaching of the apostles. Shower thy blessing upon it every- where. Protect it from all its enemies. Prosper it in all its labors.

For the gift of the home we give thanks to thee. Let thy Spirit dwell in each house, that love and tranquility, joy and consolation, strength and virtue, may reign in undiminished glory.

For the gift of our noble and pleasant land, accept our thanks, O God. Stretch forth thy holy arm to defend it inwardly and outwardly from all who would bring it shame and reproach by reason of sin, from all who would overthrow it by strife and rebellion, and from all who would assault and destroy it by war.

For the gifts of our daily bread and all things needful for the wants and support of this present life, we thank thee. For the blessings of health and healing, for education and social joys, for friends and companions, for the beauties and powers of the earth and the wondrous marvels of the heavens, we thank thee.

Great art thou, O Lord, and great is thy goodness. Mighty art thou in all thy works, and glorious in thy salvation. Help us now and always to receive thy gifts with gratitude. Hear our prayers. Grant us thy graces, and finally receive us into everlasting communion with thee and with thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. In his Name we

pray. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿EASTER

**Fifth Sunday**

O Lord God, whose divine thoughts and sublime ways are as far removed from ours as the heavens from the earth, who livest to bless and to communicate life, love, beauty, and joy throughout thy universe, and to receive with pardon thy penitent children, we praise and glorify thee for thy great goodness.

We give thee our heartfelt thanks for the precious gift of thy Son Jesus, whom thou didst send that we might have life and have it more abundantly, and who, to accomplish his mission, innocently suffered in meekness and humility the afflictions of this life, took our sins and infirmities in his own body, and bore them unto death upon the cross. For this great salvation, for our deliverance from the dominion of death by his resurrection, and for the sweet hope of heaven, we glorify thee, O Lord God, and sing forth the honor of thy Name.

And now, trusting in the promise of thy Son that whatsoever we shall ask of thee in his Name thou wilt grant, we beseech thee to move our hearts to such love and affection for our Savior that in all things we will gladly hear his Word and willingly obey his doctrine.

Send forth thy Word, O God, into all the world, that in the power of its sacred truth it may accomplish that whereunto thou hast sent it, bringing salvation where it is obeyed, condemnation where it is rejected, and judgment on the deeds of all men in this present time for eternity.

Bless thy church and let it be, both here in this congregation and everywhere, a loving union of the faithful, a holy communion in sacred things, a people of faith and prayer, exercising a true religion in the performance of every merciful work.

As thou dost govern the nations on this earth, look in mercy upon them and turn them into the ways of justice, righteousness, and peace.

Especially do we beseech thy gracious favor upon our land. Bestow upon our president, our councilors and legislators, and all our magistrates such endowments of mind and heart that they may perform their several duties with diligence, equity, honor, and intelligence. Defend us from all enemies within and without. Remove all grievances from our midst. Inspire obedience to law. Overthrow all workers of unrighteousness, and grant us a love of holiness and purity. For all who toil in industry we pray that they may prosper and receive the fruit of their labor. To all who serve thee in the professions grant the satisfaction of a noble work. Bless the farmers and all who produce the fruits of the soil, that they may have favorable weather and a bountiful harvest, and ever acknowledge thee who art the Giver of our daily bread.

Bless all our loved ones. Especially do we remember before thee the sick and those who mourn. Let them seek thee and receive thy gracious help and be mercifully delivered from all their distresses.

Now, O Lord, keep us steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in thy work, forasmuch as we know that in thee our labor is not in vain. In the Name of Jesus we pray always. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿**The Ascension**

O Lord God, our Father, who art our Strength and Song, and who hast prepared for us a well of salvation in Jesus Christ thy Son, who through the eternal Spirit did make himself an offering for the sins of the world, we thank thee for thy great mercy.

Most heartily we praise thee for the life of grace and truth that he lived among us. We thank thee for his perfect revelation of thee, and for the unfolding of thy glorious purposes and solemn designs. Grant us to believe all that he has taught us and to do all that he has commanded us.

Accept our thanks also for his mighty works and merciful deeds. Help us by these signs to see surely and certainly that in thee we live and move and have our being, and that all things are done in thy power.

Most especially we thank thee for his death and resurrection. By thy Spirit enable us to receive his sacrifice for our redemption and to trust in him for the gift of eternal life.

Grant now, as we celebrate with joy the ascension of our Lord, that even as thou didst raise him to the right hand of thy power and majesty in heavenly places, so may we ever exalt and praise him in adoration and prayer, and find in him the springs of gladness and devotion.

Lift the eyes of thy church heavenward to see, beyond mortal sight, him who ever lives to make intercession for the saints, and grant thy people hope and confidence in the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe. Quicken us who are baptized with the Holy Spirit, to witness to the saving grace of Jesus to multitudes at home and abroad and to preach the Gospel to every creature.

Establish Christ's kingdom in every nation, and from the four corners of the earth turn the hearts of men to his faith and obedience, so that every knee may bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord. Maintain our land in righteousness and peace. Let our rulers ever be men that love and honor thee. Give unto all our schools the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Bless all institutions of mercy, and uphold and further all good works. Deliver us from war and pestilence, and spare us from greed, rebellion, and lawlessness. Give our people a sincere love of piety and peace, and thus guide and prosper us.

We pray for thy mercy upon all who are in any way afflicted. Especially do we beseech thy gracious help for the sick. Give them the confidence that whatsoever they ask in accordance with thy will thou wilt grant. May they pray with all patience and trustfulness.

And now, O God, as this same Jesus that was taken into heaven shall come again in like manner as he ascended, let our hearts rise thither in gratitude and love, and help us to look for his appearing again to receive us to himself, and to prepare in watchfulness and prayer for his return.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, which Name is above every name, we offer these petitions. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

﻿THE SUNDAY AFTER

**The Ascension**

Almighty God, our Light and our Salvation, we adore and praise thee for thy manifold works of love and mercy toward all the children of men, but especially for the gift of thine only-begotten Son, to whom thou gavest triumphant ascension into heaven to sit upon thy right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and a name that is above every name, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

We thank thee that thou hast thus crowned him with glory for his perfect life, his loving obedience, his innocent sufferings, and his redeeming death. And as thou hast raised him as King over all the earth and Head over all the church, may we also confess that he is the true Lord of our hearts and the only Savior of men.

For this pure and holy intention, O God, may thy Holy Spirit give us understanding and knowledge concerning the things that pertain to thine eternal kingdom. Comfort and strengthen us by the light of heavenly truth, as the Spirit illumines our minds. Through thy Spirit teach us of thy manifold grace in Jesus, and lead us into the paths of brotherly love, fervent charity, and willing generosity. Let him inspire us to give heed to this hour of history and to this time in our lives, and to watch and pray that we fall not into temptation. And in any testing of our faith, grant us by thy Spirit to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of our Lord.

All who serve in thy church endow in full measure with the mind of the Spirit, that Christ may be confessed with all faithfulness, his cross uplifted, and his Gospel declared as the only power unto salvation. Grant thy ministers and missionaries grace and power, and thy people zeal for thy house.

Give thy blessing to all parents, that they may be wholesome examples to encourage their children in love toward thee, in the practice of virtue, in the desire to pursue learning to its foundation, and in usefulness to thy church and to all men.

Pour out thy Spirit upon our nation, that our people may dwell in peaceful homes and serve thee in all godliness and honor. To this end bestow thy benediction on all who labor with mind or hand, that they may work with diligence and honesty and receive the just reward of their toil. Give a sanctified intelligence to all in government, that they may perform their duties in such manner as to receive thy favor. Hear the prayers of all who are afflicted with any adversity. In the quiet hours of the night when there is no one to lighten the weight of pain, loneliness, and anxiety, grant unto them strength and hope in the assurance of thy love, thy power, and thy nearness.

And now, as we go from this season of prayer, we give glory unto Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

From Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)