

# PALO ALTO CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Third Sunday in Easter  
April 18, 2021



# Gathering: God's People Together

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PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Ps. 118:1, 5, 14, 17, 22-24, NIV

**Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.**

*In our anguish we cried to the LORD,  
and he answered by setting us free.*

**Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.**

*The LORD is our strength and our song;  
he has become our salvation.*

**Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.**

*We will not die but live,  
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.*

**Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.**

*The stone the builders rejected  
has become the capstone;*

**The LORD has done this;  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.**

*This is the day the LORD has made;*

**let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

OPENING PRAYER

*O Father God of the risen Christ,  
by whose creative power we live and breathe,  
send your Spirit to dwell among us in this day of worship.*

*O risen Christ, Son of the Father,  
in whose resurrection we find new light in life and new hope in death,  
may we hear your Word of peace and good news today.*

*O Spirit of the living God,  
through whom your living Word speaks to us,  
teach us, that whether in eating or drinking, working or resting, laughing or mourning,  
we may learn to live in the power of Christ's resurrection,  
in whose name we pray.*

**Amen.**

HYMN (#599)

*Come, Christians, Join to Sing*

Come, Christians, join to sing, alleluia, amen!  
Loud praise to Christ our King; alleluia, amen!  
Let all with heart and voice before his throne rejoice;  
praise is his gracious choice: alleluia, amen!

Come, lift your hearts on high; alleluia, amen!  
Let praises fill the sky; alleluia, amen!  
Christ is our guide and friend; to us he'll condescend;  
his love shall never end; alleluia, amen!

Praise yet our Christ again; alleluia, amen!  
Life shall not end the strain; alleluia, amen!  
On heaven's blissful shore his goodness we'll adore,  
singing for evermore, alleluia, amen!

## **Renewal: Washed by God's Grace**

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CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Almighty God, we confess how hard it is to be your people.*

**You have called us to be the church,  
to continue the mission of Jesus Christ  
to our lonely and confused world.**



*Yet we acknowledge we are more apathetic than active,  
isolated than involved,  
callous than compassionate,  
obstinate than obedient,  
legalistic than loving.*

**Gracious Lord, have mercy upon us and forgive our sins.**

*Remove the obstacles preventing us  
from being your representatives to a broken world.*

**Awaken our hearts to the promised gift  
of your indwelling Spirit.**

**This we pray in Jesus' powerful name.**

**Amen.**

## ASSURANCE AND GRATITUDE

*Hear the good news: the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:4-7, "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."*

GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES

Ephesians 4:17-32

## Word: God Speaks, We Respond

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OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER



The Lord, my shepherd, rules my life  
and gives me all I need;  
he leads me by refreshing streams;  
in pastures green I feed.

The Lord revives my failing strength,  
he makes my joy complete;  
and in right paths, for his name's sake,  
he guides my faltering feet.

Though in a valley dark as death,  
no evil makes me fear;  
your shepherd's staff protects my way,  
for you are with me there.

While all my enemies look on,  
you spread a royal feast;  
you fill my cup, anoint my head,  
and treat me as your guest.

Your goodness and your gracious love  
pursue me all my days;  
your house, O Lord, shall be my home—  
your name, my endless praise.

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

*Almighty, gracious Father,  
your Word grants us steadfast hope in the dark valleys  
and resolute promises of comfort in the darkest days.  
Grant to all of us that our hearts, being freed from worldly affairs,  
may hear and grasp your holy Word with all diligence and faith,  
rightly understand and cherish your gracious will,*

*and grow into the fulness of the salvation you so freely offer in Christ,  
to your praise and honor.  
Through Christ, our Lord,  
**Amen.***

SERMON

**The Beatitudes: Blessed are the Grief Stricken**

Matthew 5:1-4

HYMN (#439)

*I Love the Lord; He Heard My Cry*

I love the Lord; he heard my cry  
and pitied every groan.  
Long as I live and troubles rise,  
I'll hasten to his throne.

I love the Lord; he heard my cry  
and chased my grief away.  
O let my heart no more despair  
while I have breath to pray.

## **Sending: God Goes with Us**

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SENDING PRAYER

*Compassionate Father,  
surely whatever sorrow or grief we face in this life,  
there is no sorrow so great that you have not known it,  
and no grief so deep that you cannot remove its weight.  
We pray that the light of your resurrection  
may transform our lives,  
that whether in joy or in grief,  
we may know the height and width and depth of your love for us,  
you who wept at Lazarus's death  
and who gave your life that we may truly live.*



*Send us out, we pray, to be light in the world for the glory of your Name.*

*In Christ we pray,*

**Amen.**

## BLESSING

## HYMN (#924)

*Come, All You Servants of the Lord*

Come, all you servants of the Lord,  
who work and pray by night, by day.  
Come, bless the Lord within this place;  
with lifted hands your homage pay.

The Lord now bless from heaven above  
and shine on you with radiant face;  
the Lord who heaven and earth has made  
illumine you with peace and grace.

## POSTLUDE

## Participants, Music, Art & Liturgy

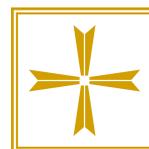
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<i>Cover</i>	Paramentics, <i>God Blesses Us</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	Gretchen Hull, piano: <i>My Jesus, I Love Thee</i> , arr. Virginia Halberg
<i>Liturgy</i>	Parts of our liturgies are selected or adapted from <i>The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition</i>
<i>Pastor</i>	Rev. Rich Loerop
<i>Reader</i>	Mary Schrotenboer
<i>Hymns</i>	The Hull family
<i>Postlude</i>	Valerie Sterk, organ: <i>Festive Postlude on "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!"</i> by Albert L. Travis

## Offering

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As you worship this weekend, we invite you to respond with your gifts. If you'd like to send a check, please make it payable to the PACRC and designate the cause (General Fund or special offering) in the notation line. Mail your checks (no cash) to the church and we will keep them safe until we are able to count them.

You are invited to give through our online portal on the PACRC website: <http://www.pacrc.org/donate>. Using the drop-down menu, you may specify which cause you would like to support. If you do not designate a cause, your donation will be applied to the General Fund. Please feel free to contact the deacons if you have any questions.

**PACRC General Fund** – The General Fund pays for the operating expenses of the church, including staff salaries, local education and outreach programs, and property maintenance, as well as ministry shares supporting the work of the Christian Reformed denomination in California and around the world.

**Climate Witness Project** – The [Climate Witness Project](#) (CWP) is a campaign of the Office of Social Justice and World Renew that walks with congregations, organizations, and individuals to take action on the climate crisis in one or more of the following areas:

- Energy Stewardship: reducing congregational/organizational/individual use of energy and fossil fuels
- Worship: healing our relationship with creation through liturgy, song, Scripture, and preaching
- Education: providing and recommending book studies, films, discussions, and speakers to learn about the realities of climate change
- Advocacy: addressing public policy at the local, regional, and national levels for the benefit of the earth, people who are poor and vulnerable, and future generations

### Offerings for upcoming weeks:

4/25 Bread for the World

5/2 GEMS (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior)

5/9 World Renew

5/16 New Creation Home Ministries

## Announcements

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Notes from meeting of the **PACRC Council on April 13, 2021**

1. **Pastoral search:** The search committee had its first meeting on March 25 and met again on April 16. Don Sterk will serve as chair, Elliot Fiske as secretary, and Jan Seerveld and Jennifer Baham as prayer coordinators. The group's next task will be to decide on the process and timeframe for engaging the congregation in discerning where we are now, where God is calling us to go, and how that calling shapes our vision of our next pastor.
2. **In-person worship:** Council reviewed recommendations from the Reopening Task Force for resuming in-person worship and discussed service schedules for the other congregations sharing our worship center. A proposal has been sent under separate cover for congregational approval. Please submit your vote on the proposal no later than Sunday, April 25.
3. **Congregational meeting:** The annual congregational meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 7. The agenda, council candidates, and suggested budget will be circulated after the May council meeting.
4. **Operation Vibrancy:** Please see the announcement in this week's bulletin for an update on numerous OpVib activities. Council is grateful for the congregation's support and involvement!
5. **Facilities:** A new refrigerator has been purchased for the parsonage; the previous unit would have required an expensive new compressor to repair. Painting and refurbishment of the cabinets in the Sunday School rooms is complete. The leak in the church roof has been repaired. The bathroom renovation project will soon begin, starting with the modification to the maintenance closet for storage of the folding tables.

**San Jose Christian School** is having a virtual fundraising auction on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm. Participants can also attend the Silent Auction April 19-24<sup>th</sup>. You can find out more [here](#).

**Save the date:** Details will follow regarding a wildflower walk at 10am on Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Calendar (April)

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*If you would like further details regarding how to participate in any of the below activities, please email [info@pacrc.org](mailto:info@pacrc.org).*



4/18 (Sunday) **Fellowship hour** via Zoom at 11:45am

4/21 (Wednesday) **Adult Bible Study** via Zoom at 7:00pm

4/25 (Sunday) **Adult Sunday School** via Zoom at 9:00am

4/25 (Sunday) **Fellowship hour** via Zoom at 11:45am

4/25 (Sunday) **Young Adult Bible Study** via Zoom at 1:30pm

4/28 (Wednesday) **Care Group** via Zoom at 7:30pm

## **Birthdays**

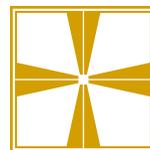
4/20 Alix Traeger

## **Anniversaries**



## **Operation Vibrancy: A Review (April 2021)**

Toward the end of last year (2020) Council began telling the congregation about an opportunity to get involved with Operation Vibrancy, small groups taking on tasks as varied as thinking about next steps for the church's web presence to how to get together during a pandemic to share a safe outdoor activity. You may have gotten involved with one of these groups or you may be wondering what happened to the whole operation. Here is a short review of vibrancy in action:



### **Worship:**

A Vibrancy Group is researching new ways churches are successfully incorporating very young participants into worship, blending the varied capabilities for learning and awareness in ways that allow and encourage people of all ages to fully participate in worship. Through a time of experimentation, with everyone working together, good results have been accomplished. The Group will propose opportunities to discover as we return to in-person worship. If you would like to join this effort, please contact Ida or Betsy. They would welcome your help and support.

### **Fellowship:**

A Vibrancy Group made up of Sharon Traeger and Ron Schrottenboer came up with a list of activities to do together, safely and easily. The first activity will be announced shortly.

A Vibrancy Group made up of Greta Stan and John Zwaanstra got together to share best practices for how to keep in touch and care for those who may not always be at the center of what's going on at church. This pastorally minded group is ongoing and augments the work of the elders.

**Discipling:**

A Vibrancy Group made up of Jennifer Baham, Tim Lindemulder, Don Sterk, Winnis and James Chiang, Landon Sterk, and Ed Hull planned and began two Bible Study Groups.

One Bible Study group provides a time for regular in-depth study of the Scriptures and meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. Leadership rotates among several facilitators. The Bible study portion of the meeting runs from 7 to 8 PM, following with an optional time of prayer and fellowship. If you'd like more information, please contact Ed Hull, Don Sterk, Jennifer Baham, or Tim Lindemulder.

Another Bible Study group is built around young adults. Contact Landon Sterk for more information.

**Structure:**

A Vibrancy Group consisting of Mary Schotenboer, Jan Seerveld, and Pietie Vreman worked together to trim out the parsonage for the arrival of the interim pastor and spouse, as well as update certain aspects of the church's interior and exterior. From this, also came the on-going plan to update the main bathrooms at church.

A Vibrancy Group made up of Judy Vander Sluis, Landon Sterk, and Don Sterk dove into the church's website to discover what could be done to bring it up to date and into a state of manageable upkeep. You will see the results of this endeavor soon!

And a Vibrancy Group including John Wynbeek, Tim Lindemulder, and Luke Seerveld looked into what it would take to stream our worship services if the need arose. We are thankful for their efforts, but at this time we plan to continue recording live or podcasted worship services as audio files only.

Vibrancy Groups have been a way for us to tackle small tasks in a way that reimagines how committees used to take on these same opportunities. We may look to this method in the future to keep the impact of committee work on our lives to a minimum.