

St. Olaf Lutheran Church
Sunday, April 12, 2026
Holy Humor Sunday

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

P: Christ is risen!

C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P: Now, our mourning become dancing
by God's gracious love.

**C: Our sobs become belly laughs,
and new songs are written from our sighs.**

P: The punchline sat in the grave's shadows,

C: until God played the best joke ever on life.

P: So, break out loud laughs, fill the room with giggles,

C: May our joy sound like April Fool's noisemakers!

P: Come, stoic old folks and snickering kids,
come, all you curmudgeons and worriers.

**C: We join the God who laughs with us,
Who raised Jesus from the grave,
Welcoming everyone to joy everlasting!**

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Before we can truly laugh,
we must first let go of what weighs us down.

Before joy can rise in us,
grace must clear some space.

So let's be honest—

not because God doesn't know,

but because we forget that mercy is already leaning in,
smiling,

waiting for us to fess up

and fall into arms wide with forgiveness.

Let us pray together.

Gracious God,

we confess that sometimes we take ourselves too seriously.

**We walk through life stiff with worry,
grim with guilt, and frowning with fear.
We forget that you created laughter,
and that joy is a fruit of your Spirit.**

**Forgive us for putting a lid on your joy,
for muting your music,
and for walking around like the resurrection never happened.
Remind us that Easter is the world's biggest surprise party,
and we're all invited.**

**Delight our hearts with your grace,
nudge us with your mercy,
and teach us to live with eyes wide open for holy hilarity.
In the name of the Risen One who laughed in the face of death,
Amen.**

Silence is kept

Here's the good news:
God doesn't hold a grudge—God holds us.
Christ didn't come to scold us—he came to save us,
to shake us out of our sorrow,
and to set loose joy in our hearts like confetti in the wind.
So laugh, dance, rejoice—
for in +Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
C: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

***Hymn**

Earth and All Stars

ELW 453

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray together...

C: God of abiding joy, as you cracked open the tomb, rolling away the stone so that your love could come out. You sneak up on us when we least expect it. Your Spirit breathes joy into our aching lungs and touches us with peace so that we can know without a doubt what seems too good to be true actually is. So on this day, and every day, God our Holy three in One, teach us to believe the

outrageous truth: that love wins, that hope lives, and that the punchline of the gospel is joy. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Please be seated.

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-24

^{14a} Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]: ²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know ²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 16

¹ Protect me, O God, for I take ref- | uge in you;

I have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my good a- | bove all other.”

² **All my delight is in the godly that are | in the land,
upon those who are noble a- | mong the people.**

³ But those who run after | other gods
shall have their troubles | multiplied.

⁴ **I will not pour out drink offerings | to such gods,
never take their names up- | on my lips.**

⁵ O LORD, you are my portion | and my cup;
it is you who up- | hold my lot.

⁶ **My boundaries enclose a | pleasant land;
indeed, I have a | rich inheritance.**

⁷ I will bless the LORD who | gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night | after night.

⁸ **I have set the LORD al- | ways before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall | not be shaken.**

⁹ My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spir- | it rejoices;
my body also shall | rest in hope.

¹⁰ **For you will not abandon me | to the grave,
nor let your holy one | see the pit.**

¹¹ You will show me the | path of life;

in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures
for- | evermore.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

***Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)**

pg 142

***Gospel: John 20:19-31**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 20th chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, 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 his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not

written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

P: The gospel of our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Katie Bills

Sermon

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

***Hymn**

Joy to the World

ELW 267 (v3 kazoo)

***Apostles Creed**

pg 105

*** Prayers of Intercession**

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

***Peace**

P: The joy of the Lord is your strength—peace be with you!

C: And also with you!

(Turn to one another with a smile, a chuckle, or even a holy high-five, and share this good news!)

Offering: *Please consider giving an offering for the mission and ministry of St. Olaf. We can continue to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with your support and generosity. God bless you. Also, please pass the attendance sheets down your row and fill out your info.*

***Offering prayer**

Generous God,

you've filled our lives with laughter, our hearts with hope,
and our pockets with more than enough loose change and holy possibility.

We bring these gifts not out of guilt, but out of gratitude-

because you keep surprising us with love, grace, and the kind of joy that makes us snort when we laugh. Use what we offer-

our coins and our kindness, our time and our talents,
our dollars and our dancing— to infuse the world with resurrection joy
and to spread your love like laughter in a quiet room.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

*Lord's Prayer

*Blessing

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,
Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,
and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

*Hymn

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

ELW 836

*Dismissal

P: Go now—

we will go with pockets full of laughter,
with eyes squinting from the brightness of grace,
with hearts wide open to holy surprises.

Be bold in your joy.

Be generous with your giggles.

**C: We will tell the good news with a grin,
and live like resurrection is the punchline
that changes everything.**

P: May your steps with +Jesus be light,
your burdens be lifted,
and your spirit be as free
as a kid on a swing in the sunshine.

C: The world needs our joy. Let us go to share it.

Assisting in Worship

Presider: Pastor Jim McColley

Assisting: Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Organist: Jason Swedlund

Reader: Stacy Hendrickson

Ushers: Mitch Craigmile, Doug Seltz

Tech: Marc Matthes