

Third Sunday of Easter, April 23, 2023

The First Lesson, Second Lesson and Gospel will be read from the World English Bible. The Collect, and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer.

The Collect: O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them,

36 "Let all the house of Israel therefore know certainly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, even as many as the Lord our God will call to himself." 40 With many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized. There were added that day about three thousand souls.

Hear what the Spirit is saying go God's people

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-3,10-17

- 1 I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.
- 2 The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me; *
I came to grief and sorrow.
- 3 Then I called upon the Name of the Lord: *
“O Lord, I pray you, save my life.”
- 10 How shall I repay the Lord *
for all the good things he has done for me?
- 11 I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the Lord.
- 12 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *
in the presence of all his people.
- 13 Precious in the sight of the Lord *
is the death of his servants.
- 14 O Lord, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.
- 15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the Lord.
- 16 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord *
in the presence of all his people,
- 17 In the courts of the Lord’s house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 1:17-23

- 17 If you call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judges according to each man’s work, pass the time of your living as foreigners here in reverent fear, 18 knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things like silver or gold, from the useless way of

life handed down from your fathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish or spot, the blood of Christ, 20 who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in this last age for your sake, 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth through the Spirit in sincere brotherly affection, love one another from the heart fervently, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

13 Behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty stadia* from Jerusalem. 14 They talked with each other about all of these things which had happened. 15 While they talked and questioned together, Jesus himself came near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk, and are sad?"

18 One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things which have happened there in these days?"

19 He said to them, "What things?"

They said to him, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we were hoping that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Also, certain women of our company amazed us, having arrived early at the tomb; 23 and when they didn't find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of us went to the tomb

and found it just like the women had said, but they didn't see him."

25 He said to them, "Foolish people, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Didn't the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"

27 Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 They came near to the village where they were going, and he acted like he would go further.

29 They urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening, and the day is almost over."

He went in to stay with them. 30 When he had sat down at the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave it to them. 31 Their eyes were opened and they recognized him; then he vanished out of their sight. 32 They said to one another, "Weren't our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us along the way, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 They rose up that very hour, returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 They related the things that happened along the way, and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On April 23 Toyohiko Kagawa Prophetic Witness in Japan. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Toyohiko Kagawa, born on July 10, 1888, in Kobe, Japan, was a Japanese evangelist, advocate of social change, and pacifist.

Kagawa was the son of a wealthy Kobe Buddhist business entrepreneur-politician and his concubine, both of whom died when Kagawa was four years old. The youth was raised by Presbyterian missionaries and had a conversion experience at age fifteen. "O God, make

me like Christ” he prayed repeatedly.

Kagawa studied at theological seminaries in Japan and at Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, but was increasingly drawn to an evangelism of social reform, seeking to apply Christ’s teachings directly to Japan’s poor in a theologically uncomplicated way. He lived for much of the 1910 – 1924 period in a six-foot-square windowless shed in Kobe’s slums. A skilled organizer, he helped found trade unions and credit unions among dock workers, factory laborers, and subsistence farmers. Trade unions were forbidden at the time, and Kagawa was twice imprisoned. He was also a pacifist and organized the National Anti-War League in 1928. Kagawa was arrested in 1940 for publicly apologizing to the people of China for Japan’s invasion of that country. An advocate for universal male suffrage (granted in 1925), he later became a voice for women’s right to vote as well.

A prolific author, his autobiographical novel *Crossing the Death Line* (1920) became a best seller, and many of his other novels and writings in a Christian Socialist vein were translated into English. He used the revenues from his substantial book sales to fund his extensive slum work. Although Kagawa was under police surveillance much of his life, the Japanese government called on him to organize the rebuilding of Tokyo after a 1923 earthquake and again at the end of World War II to serve as head of the country’s social welfare programs.

Although some knew him best as a social reformer and pacifist, Kagawa saw himself first of all an evangelist. “Christ alone can make all things new,” he said, “The spirit of Christ must be the soul of all real social reconstruction.”

Kagawa died on April 23, 1960 in Tokyo.

Let us pray: We bless your Name, O God, for the witness of Toyohiko Kagawa, reformer and teacher, who was persecuted for his pacifist principles and went on to lead a movement for democracy in Japan; and we pray that you would strengthen and protect all who suffer for their fidelity to Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**