

# Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!

By Cyril A. Alington (1925) & Melchior Vulpius (1609)

*See print copy for music.*

Jesus told them,

"This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Luke 24:46-48

*See print copy for art work.*

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

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**Cover art.** "Christ at Emmaus." Burin and drypoint. Rembrandt (1654).

Old Orchard Church  
Fifth Sunday of Easter  
May 18, 2014—10:15 – 11:50 a.m.

## Celebrating Jesus as The Community of Resurrection Witness

From Mary Magdalene and the women on Easter morning,  
To the ten disciples on Easter night,  
To the 500 who saw him at one time,  
Jesus' followers came to understand One Great Thing:  
They had been chosen to bear witness  
To the most bizarre thing the world had ever seen—  
A dead man resurrected to the energy of an indestructible life!

And this is how the power of the gospel is manifested:  
As we bear witness  
to the witness of those who saw Jesus alive after his death,  
God confirms the truth of Christ's resurrection  
In the minds and hearts of all those he reconciled to himself  
In the death of his eternal Son.

O Jesus, we are grateful for the privilege of bearing witness,  
Of being a living letter from you  
To someone in despair, To someone who grieves,  
To someone alone,  
To someone who doubts,  
To someone self-satisfied,  
Inviting them into the coming, rollicking kingdom of life,  
love and eternal pleasure in your presence!



### Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11  
Gospel Lesson: Luke 24:13-35

### Today's Sermon

*Christianity in Ephesus, Christianity in St. Louis Series*

“What Marriage Is—And Is For” (Part IV)

I Corinthians 7:25-35

Ron Lutjens, Lead Pastor, preaching

## On Being Witnesses—To What

As we bear witness to the truth and power of Christ's resurrection and announce it to those around us as the key to the stupendous coming renewal of the world, we must never say to people, “Just believe it.” There is **evidence** for Jesus' resurrection: credible witnesses saw him alive. And with our neighbors, friends, and families we are called to bear witness to those witnesses as well as to the resurrection power of Christ which has invaded our own lives. If Jesus is not really alive; if the remains of his body are dust somewhere outside Jerusalem even now, then whatever we think we see of Christ's resurrection power at work in each other's lives, there is some other explanation for it all. Perhaps some of the Christians we know are just exceptional human beings.

But also, let us not lose sight of the wondrous, dramatic in-your-face reversal of the power of sin, death and the devil that God cleverly worked in the dying and rising of his Son. It's almost too fantastic to believe! The gospel of the Coming Resurrection Kingdom is anything but hum-drum, business-as-usual. The writer Frederic Buechner captured well the lack of vision so many who profess Christ and his kingdom live with:

*People are prepared for everything except for the fact that beyond the darkness of their blindness there is a great light. They are prepared to go on breaking their backs plowing the same old field until the cows come home without seeing, until they stub their toes on it, that there is a treasure buried in that field rich enough to buy Texas. They are prepared for a God who strikes hard bargains but not for a God who gives as much for an hour's work as for a day's. They are prepared for a mustard-seed kingdom of God no bigger than the eye of a newt but not for the great banyan it becomes with birds in its branches singing Mozart. They are prepared for the potluck supper at First Presbyterian but not for the marriage supper of the lamb....*

We need to read and re-read I Corinthians 2:9 and allow it to feed our imaginations as we ponder all the fantastic implications of the Good News of the empty cross and the empty tomb of Jesus, or else our lives and our witness to the world will elicit only yawns:

...as it is written:

**“What no eye has seen,  
what no ear has heard,  
and what no human mind has conceived”—  
the things God has prepared for those who love him....**

—Ron Lutjens