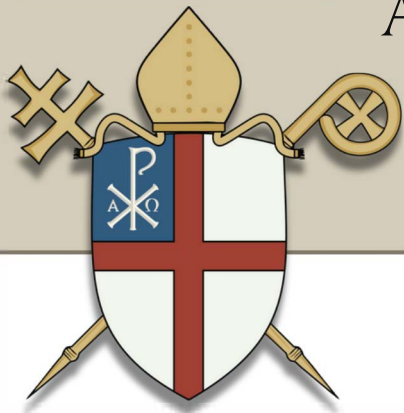


# ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA



The Most Reverend Chandler Holder Jones, SSC  
-Presiding Bishop-

## PRESIDING BISHOP'S EASTERTIDE MESSAGE 2024

### HIS MIGHTY RESURRECTION

*Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

‘When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.’

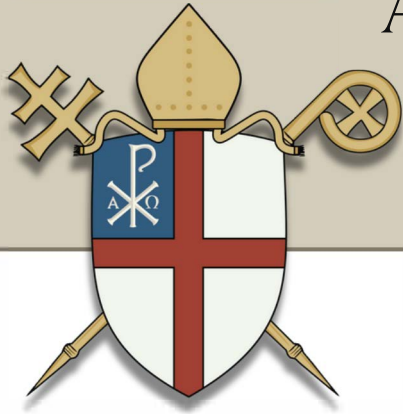
The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave is the foundation and crowning event of the orthodox Christian Faith, the basis of all that we believe and profess. ‘Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures... if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain... but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept’ (I Corinthians 15.1-4, 14, 20).

For this reason, Easter Day is the original and unique Christian festival, the celebration from which the rest of the Christian liturgical year springs. Easter is so important and vital that it is not merely one Day, but a Day that expands into eight, and then forty. The initial eight days of the Easter commemoration, the great Octave, becomes the source for all other Octaves in the Church Year. The eight days signify the New Creation: God created the world in six days, rested on the seventh, and recreated the world by Christ’s Resurrection on the eighth, the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, the new day of Christ’s victory over death.

Ancient Christian art and architecture reinforce this truth – early baptisteries of the patristic period feature octagonal, eight-sided, buildings and baptismal pools, showing in sign and form that through the regenerative and saving waters of Baptism we are plunged into the death and Resurrection of Christ and made partakers of the New Life, the New Creation inaugurated by the Lord Jesus in His bodily Resurrection (Romans 6.1-11, Hebrews 9.13-15, I Saint Peter 3.21-22, Titus 3.5). The day of our Holy Baptism was our own Easter Day, the day of our new birth in Christ and the pledge of our own Resurrection from the dead. The Church is first and foremost the community of the Resurrection, the band of faithful disciples of Jesus which worships and serves the Risen Lord of Glory, the Mystical Body of Christ indestructibly identified with and supernaturally and sacramentally united to her deathless Head (I Corinthians 12.12-14, Galatians 3.27).

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest and most profound truth of all, the supreme and central Mystery of our faith with which the Apostles began their preaching of the Gospel after the bestowal of the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday. Our Redemption was won by Christ’s death on the Cross of Calvary; by His mighty Resurrection, eternal life is given to us. The Resurrection is the ground of the Church’s continual triumph, the cause of her endless rejoicing, the source and summit of her faith and life. Until the advent of God the Word in human flesh in

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the Incarnation and His conquest over death, the entire human race suffered in a state of rejection and alienation from God, far from God because of sin, enslaved in spiritual death. This misery continued until the Resurrection of Christ, which was our deliverance and salvation.

Through His death on the Cross, His descent into hell and His magnificent Resurrection, Our Lord has raised His people to the hope of heaven – ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things’ (Ephesians 4.8-10).

The Lord Jesus, descending to the dead, took hell captive, He destroyed it, He put death to death; He overthrew and bound our last enemy (I Corinthians 15.26). Our Divine Lord annihilated the power of death over us. Now in Christ, our physical death becomes but a blessed transition from this fallen world to the age of the world to come, to the larger life in which we shall be received more and more into His joyful service and in which we, and His servants everywhere, shall win the eternal victory.

Because of the Resurrection of Christ, we shall eternally grow and develop into the life of God in the land of light and joy in the fellowship of the Saints, as we go from strength to strength, and with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the image of Jesus from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord (II Corinthians 3.18). Now in Christ, bodily death is for us only a temporary breach, for by His mighty Resurrection, Christ has opened to us the gates of everlasting life, the general Resurrection of the body. Now we know we shall die in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection unto eternal life through Jesus, at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3.21).

‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is’ (I Saint John 3.2). The Resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our own resurrection.

To depart this life is to be with Christ, for we know we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, many mansions in our Father’s house, a place prepared for us, in which Our Lord will receive us unto Himself, that where He is, we may be also. The joy and blessedness of the heavenly Church, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, the Church of the first-born written in heaven, with Apostles, Prophets, Confessors, Virgins and Martyrs, await us in their perfect fullness and fulfillment. In communion with all saints and angels and each other, free from sorrow, suffering, pain and labours, and seeing God face and face as we worship and reign forever before the Throne of the Lamb, we shall literally live to witness the consequences of Easter!

God bless you!