

Sunday, 5 April 2026 – Easter/Resurrection of the Lord

He is risen! He is risen indeed! For Western Christians (Catholics and Protestants) the date of Easter is the first Sunday that comes after the first full moon that occurs on or after March 21 (the Spring Equinox) — occasionally shifted to the following Sunday, when the original date happens to coincide with the Jewish Passover.

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Prelude - The titles of the three sections of Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) *Fantasia in G Major* are written in French: *Très vite*, *Gravement*, and *Lentement*. One of Bach's most popular works for organ, it is often referred to as *Pièce d'Orgue*.

Gustav Mahler was born in Kalischt, Bohemia on July 7, 1860, and died in Vienna on May 18, 1911. He composed his Second Symphony between 1888 and 1894, and led the premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic on December 13, 1895. Originally scored for full orchestra, soloists, and chorus, the arrangement heard this morning is for brass quintet, timpani, and organ and is from the ending of the second symphony, the *Resurrection* symphony. Mahler said this of the 5th and final movement of the symphony:

“We again confront all the dreadful questions and the mood of the end of the first movement. The end of all living things has come. The Last Judgment is announced and the ultimate terror of this Day of Days has arrived. The earthquakes, the graves burst open, the dead rise and stride hither in endless procession. Our senses fail us and all consciousness fades away at the approach of the eternal Spirit. The ‘Great Summons’ resounds: the trumpets of the apocalypse call. Softly there sounds a choir of saints and heavenly creatures: ‘Rise again, yes, thou shalt rise again.’ And the glory of God appears. All is still and blissful. And behold: there is no judgment; there are no sinners, no righteous ones, no great and no humble — there is no punishment and no reward! An almighty love shines through us with blessed knowing and being.”

Processional Hymn - The tune Easter Hymn first appeared in 1708 in the collection *Lyra Davidica* (the harp of David). The tune was revised by composer John Arnold (1720-1792) in 1749 for his collection *The Compleat Psalmodist*. This is the version we sing today. The first three verses of *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* appeared in *Lyra Davidica* and the fourth verse was written by Charles Wesley (1707-1788) in 1740 for his collection *Hymns & Sacred Poems*.

Offertory - In 1802 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was gradually going deaf. During this time he wrote a letter which has become known as the *Heiligenstadt Testament*. Part confessional letter and part will, it expressed his feelings of anguish and isolation due to his increasing deafness together with a resolve to go on living for the sake of his music. Shortly after writing the *Testament*, Beethoven began work on his one and only oratorio, *Christus am Olberge* (*Christ on the Mount of Olives*), which was premiered in 1803 during Holy Week. The *Hallelujah* heard this morning is the final movement of the oratorio.

Postlude - Charles-Marie Widor was born in Lyon, France on February 21, 1844. In 1870, at the age of 26, Widor was appointed temporary organist of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, a post he held for 64 years, having never been given the official title of titular! Widor's fifth symphony was composed in 1879. The fifth and final movement of the symphony, the famous *Toccata*, is one of the most recognizable organ compositions and has been featured at numerous royal weddings.