

In Celebration for the Life of  
*John Joseph Ralston*



**May 2, 1958—April 19, 2024**

Lutheran Church of the Reformation  
Washington, DC

Friday, April 26th † 11am

# ☪ ☪ ☪ GATHERING ☪ ☪ ☪

*The Holy Spirit, the comforter, gathers us in worship.*

**Prelude**

*Rhosymedre*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

**Welcome**

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit, the comforter, gathers us in worship.

**Gathering Hymn**

*O God Beyond All Praising*

ELW 880

**Introduction**

Welcome in the name of Jesus,  
the Savior of the world.  
We are gathered to worship,  
to proclaim Christ crucified and risen,  
to remember before God our brother, John,  
to give thanks for his life,  
to commend him to our merciful redeemer,  
and to comfort one another in our grief.

**Thanksgiving for Baptism**

When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death.  
We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,  
so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,  
we too might live a new life.  
For if we have been united with him in a death like his,  
we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life, we glorify you. **We glorify you.**

Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life, we praise you. **We praise you.**

Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope, we worship you. **We worship you.**

To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever. **Amen.**

## Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. *A brief silence.*

O God of grace and glory,  
we remember before you today our brother, John.  
We thank you for giving him to us to know and to love  
as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth.  
In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn.  
Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up  
in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call,  
we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## Reflections

Tim Ralston  
Jim Ralston

☪ ☪ ☪ **WORD** ☪ ☪ ☪

*God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung and preached.*

## First Reading—Isaiah 25:6-9

Randy McKeen

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

<sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

<sup>8</sup>he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.

This is the LORD for whom we have waited;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Word of God, Word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Second Reading—1 Corinthians 15:49-57

Marykate Foley

<sup>49</sup>Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

<sup>50</sup>What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup>Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup>For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup>When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."

<sup>55</sup>"Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Word of God, Word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Homily**

Pastor Kevin Vandiver

## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*\*Or, "who proceeds from the Father." The phrase "and the Son" is a later addition to the creed.*

## Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray. *A brief silence is kept.*

Almighty God, in holy baptism you have knit your chosen people together into one communion of saints in the body of Christ. Give to your whole church in heaven and on earth your light and your peace. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to share the new life in Christ.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give courage and faith to all who mourn,  
and a sure and certain hope in your loving care,  
that, casting all their sorrow on you,  
they may have strength for the days ahead.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith,  
that, where this world groans in grief and pain,  
your Holy Spirit may lead us to bear witness to your light and life.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Help us, in the midst of things we cannot understand,  
to believe and trust in the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all grace, we give you thanks because by his death our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death and by his resurrection he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Make us certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

🕊️ 🕊️ 🕊️ **SENDING** 🕊️ 🕊️ 🕊️

*God blesses us and sends us in peace.*

## Commendation

Let us commend John to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer. *Silence is kept.*

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant, John.

Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming.

Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

**Amen.**

Let us go forth in peace,  
**in the name of Christ. Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

*Go, My Children, With My Blessing*

ELW 543

## Postlude

*Adagio from Symphony No. 3*

Louis Vierne



The family deeply appreciates your many prayers and love during this time. Please greet them at the reception downstairs in the Parish Hall following this service.

Memorial Gifts can be given to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network ([pancan.org](http://pancan.org)) or the charity of your choice.

**Presiding Minister:** The Rev. Kevin Vandiver, PhD

**Director of Music:** Paul Leavitt

**Stream Team:** Matt Cook, Andy Weaver

# John Joseph Ralston

John Joseph Ralston Jr., of Arlington, Virginia, died of complications of pancreatic cancer on April 19, 2024. John was born in Washington, DC on May 2, 1958, and grew up in Alexandria and Springfield. John graduated from Bishop Ireton High School in 1976, the College of William and Mary in 1980 and the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University in 1983.

John married Elizabeth Wirick in 2002 and their daughter, Sarah Ralston, was born the next year. John was devoted to his family and centered his life around Sarah's activities and interests. In addition to his family, the great loves of John's life were most of the Washington, D.C. sports teams (except for the Caps, despite the best efforts of his wife and daughter). John was also a fitness enthusiast who enjoyed running, hiking, biking, and kayaking. He loved planning family vacations and spent many happy hours researching new places to travel. He played trumpet in the NOVA Alexandria campus band from the early 1990's to 2006 and 2022-2024. He was an avid reader and some of his closest friendships were with members of the book club in which he participated for nearly 30 years. More recently, he also developed an interest in gardening.

John worked 35 years as a government attorney, focused mainly on procurement-related matters. At the time of his death, John was planning retirement from his current position with the U.S. Navy Office of General Counsel, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), where he had worked since 2005. Previously, John served in similar roles for the U.S. Coast Guard and the Defense Logistics Agency.

John was predeceased by his parents, John Joseph Ralston Sr. and Mary Barrett Ralston, and his niece and goddaughter Ashleigh Ralston. In addition to his wife and daughter, John is survived by his brothers Tim (Lisa) and James (Chelsea), and 13 nieces and nephews.

