

March 31, 2024

Easter Sunday

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Christ Arose" Robert Lowery, *arr. Victor Labenske*

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...

Lighting the Christ Candle *written by Won Hur. Used with permission. The United Church of Canada*

Christ is risen!.

He has risen, indeed!

Hallelujah!

In Christ's resurrection, God has spoken.

This indeed is God's word.

God's power is stronger than the earthly powers.

God's way of peace and justice will ultimately prevail.

This is the news that we have been waiting for.

Christ is risen.

He has risen indeed.

Hallelujah!

The Christ Candle is lit.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen, indeed. Hallelujah!

Hymn: Vu 157 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" vs. 1

Words: Charles Wesley 1739 Music: Lyra Davidica 1708

Words and Music: Public Domain

Christ the Lord is risen today, hallelujah!

all creation join to say; hallelujah!

raise your joys and triumphs high; hallelujah!

sing, O heavens, and earth reply: hallelujah!

Prayer:

O God of the universe, yours is the glory. Your heartbeat echoes in our heartbeat. Your breath is our breath. Your vitality pulses in us and throughout this vast universe. You are the creator of the universe. In you, we live and love and rejoice in the gifts of life. We thank you and praise you for the gift of Easter resurrection that we may put our ultimate trust in your goodness and gracious love. In the indomitable spirit of the risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: Vu 157 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" vss. 2-4

Words: Charles Wesley 1739 Music: Lyra Davidica 1708

Words and Music: Public Domain

Love's redeeming work is done, hallelujah!

fought the fight, the battle won. Hallelujah!

Lo, our sun's eclipse is o'er! Hallelujah!

Lo, he dwells in death no more! Hallelujah!

Lives again our glorious King: hallelujah!

where, O death, is now your sting? Hallelujah!

Once he died, our souls to save: hallelujah!

where your victory, O grave? Hallelujah!

Hail, the Lord of earth and heaven, hallelujah!
praise to you by both be given! Hallelujah!
Every knee to you shall bow, hallelujah!
risen Christ, triumphant now. Hallelujah!

Opening Prayer

Early in the morning, O Lord, you created all that is good and beautiful. Early in the morning, O Lord, a mother laid her newborn in a manger. Early in the morning, O Lord, good news was shared with frightened friends: Jesus is risen and alive in our midst. Early in the morning, O Lord, we confess our human failings and our sins. We haven't done any great evil, but we have failed to do good when we had the chance. We have not intentionally hurt anyone, but neither have we offered healing to the broken. We easily accept the witness of the angel in the tomb, but find it difficult to share this good news with our friends and neighbours. *(in silence we confess our individual sins...)* Forgive us, God. Bring us new life. Where we are tired and stressed, give us the energy to serve your creation; transform our hardened hearts into fountains of grace; forgive us of all the damage we have done, and fill us with the joy of your Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, who gives us new life, we pray.

Words of Assurance

God, our Creator, gives us new life;
Christ, our Redeemer, prepares a Table for us;
The Holy Spirit, our Joy, calls us to service.
This is the good news: the tomb is empty,
Sin is powerless, death is defeated forever.
**On this very first day, and every day, we walk as God's people,
forgiven and made whole. Thanks be to God.**

We Are Blessed By God

Ministry of Music: "Joy Comes in the Morning" Words and Music: David Tanner, *arr. Mary McDonald*

A Song of Faith *(page 1)*

God is Holy Mystery,
beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

Yet,
in love,
the one eternal God seeks relationship.

So God creates the universe
and with it the possibility of being and relating.
God tends the universe,
mending the broken and reconciling the estranged.
God enlivens the universe,
guiding all things toward harmony with their Source.

Grateful for God's loving action,
We cannot keep from singing.

With the Church through the ages,
we speak of God as one and triune:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We also speak of God as
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
God, Christ, and Spirit
Mother, Friend, and Comforter
Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love,
and in other ways that speak faithfully of
the One on whom our hearts rely,
the fully shared life at the heart of the universe.

We witness to Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 VU 837 *parts one, two and three*

R: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Let Israel now say:

'God's love endures for ever.'

Let the house of Aaron say:

'God's love endures for ever.'

Let those who fear God say:

'God's love endures for ever.'

R: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

God is my strength and my song; God has become my salvation.

There are shouts of joy and deliverance in the tents of the righteous.

The right hand of God does mighty things;

the right hand of God raises up.

The right hand of God does mighty things.

I shall not die, but live; and I shall proclaim what God has done.

God indeed punished me, but did not give me over to death.

R: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Open to me the gates of the temple,
that I may enter and give thanks to God.

This is the gate of God; through it the righteous shall enter.

I thank you for you have answered me;
you have become my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is God's doing, marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

R: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hymn VU 166 "Joy Comes with the Dawn" Words and Music: Gordon Light 1985

Music: arranged Nan Thompson 1995 Words & Music © 1985 Common Cup Company,

Arrangement © 1995 Nan Thompson OneLicense.net A620168

Joy comes with the dawn; joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

Weeping may come; weeping may come in the night,
when dark shadows cloud our sight.

Joy comes with the dawn; joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

Sorrow will turn, sorrow will turn into song,
and God's laughter make us strong.

Joy comes with the dawn; joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice, and give praise,
to the One who brings us grace.

Joy comes with the dawn; joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

Scripture: John 20:1-18 The Resurrection of Jesus and Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

*The other readings for this week are: **Acts 10:34-43 OR Isaiah 25:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8.** You can look them up on www.biblegateway.com and search for the passage..... in any translation you prefer (ie. King James - KJV, NKJV, NRSVue, etc.)*

Meditation: "He is Risen!"

Hymn VU 468 "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ" Words: Fred Kaan 1975

Music: Jamaican Folk Song, adapted Doreen Potter 1975

Words & Music © 1975 Hope Publishing Company OneLicense.net A620168, CCLI 11438349

Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Jesus calls us in, sends us out,
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God Immanuel everywhere.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

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The God of every morning be with you!

And also with you!

People of Easter morning, lift up your hearts!

We lift them to the One who has raised Jesus from the grave.

People of Easter's joy, give thanks to the One who raises us to new life.

We sing our hallelujahs to the God of everlasting love.

On this day of joy and hope, Redeemer of the lost, we sing our praise to you. Very early in the morning, your Word shattered the silence of chaos, and grace flowed forth like a river. You reached down and gathered up the dust of creation, forming us into your image, and breathing life into us. Yet the day came when we chose to turn from you believing our wisdom was superior to your will for us. You sent us the prophets, to speak of your gracious hope, but we refused to listen. When you could have let us remain in the clutches of sin and death, you sent Jesus to be one of us, so we could come home to you. Therefore, we join our voices this morning with those who stood at the empty tomb, as well as those of every time and place, singing our Easter joy to you:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of the empty grave.

Glad songs of resurrection joy are offered to you. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes bearing your steadfast love. Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, God of every day, and blessed is Jesus Christ, Bright Morning Star. Creator of all that is good, he entered the shadows of hell to lead us into hope's light; Beloved of your Heart, he embraced our sin so we could be forgiven; Glory beyond imagination, he welcomed death so we could enter life eternal. Even as we believe what we may not understand, we trust that mystery we call faith:

On the first day, Christ shaped all that is good and beautiful;

on the first day of the week, Christ swallowed up death forever;

on the last day, Christ will call us to the Table of the Lamb.

It is here at this Table, Resurrecting God, that we are fed by your love. As you pour out your Spirit upon the Bread and the Cup, fill us with the spirit of Jesus, so we may go forth to be your people. Feed us with the Bread of Heaven, so we can fill the hunger of the world. Touch our lips with salvation's cup, so we can proclaim the good news of this day to everyone we meet. Incline your ear to hear the burdens of our hearts as we pray: for your church that may act for justice and peace, especially for Ailsa Craig United Church, and their spiritual leader Jacqui Moraal; for the people of the Balkans - Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia; for all who mourn a loss, especially the friends and family of Lois McLean; for all who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering from treatment, especially we think of ... and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

And when the morning comes when we are united with all the saints gathered around heaven's Table, we will lift our voices to you, God in Community, Holy in One, forever and ever, praying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
for yours is the kingdom the power
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayer Following Communion (*unison*)

Life-giving God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Saviour's presence in the simplicity and splendour of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by the life of Christ that we may faithfully proclaim the Good News of your love and that your church may be a beacon of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ, our Risen Saviour. Amen.

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Easter changes EVERYTHING! We have moved from death and shadows Into life and resurrection. The first believers were so changed that they gave all they possessed to sustain the needs of their community. In thankfulness we return to God, who gives us new life, a portion of the blessings God has lavished on us. Our tithes and other offerings will be received.

Offertory Hymn "The Festival Doxology" (tune 217 VU) Words: Brian Arthur Wren

Music: Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne 1623, harmonized Ralph Vaughn Williams 1906

Words: Hope Publishing Company Music: Public Domain OneLicense.net A620168

Praise God the Giver and the Gift;

All hearts and voices now uplift:

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Creator, Christ and Spirit One

From whom new life and joy have come:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Dedication

You, O God, are the Easter One. You are the holy source of resurrection. You are the dancing spirit of life. We offer our gifts in gratitude for hope returned, for the mystery of your grace, and for the promise of resurrection. Accept them, bless them, and use them for the benefit of your holy kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn VU 158 "Christ Is Alive" Words: Brian Wren 1968 Music: Thomas Williams 1789

Words: © 1975 Hope Publishing Company Music: Public Domain OneLicense.net A620168

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant year in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift, and war,
where colour, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

Commissioning and Benediction

From this Easter festival we go forth to live new lives:

In the name of God who makes us,

In the name of Jesus who makes us whole,

In the name of the Holy Spirit who makes us one.

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Response: VU 424 "May the God of Hope Go with Us" vs. 1 Words: (vs. 1) Alvin Schutmaat 1984

Music: Argentine Folk Melody Words and Music: Public Domain

May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.

May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace, singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" Lyra Davidica, *arr. Cindy Berry*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Humour Sunday – April 7: Our guest speaker will be Daniella Kress, no kidding!

Ham and Oyster Supper Friday, April 19 at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are available from Marion Woods 519-461-1136 or Jane Busche 519-268-3360. Tickets: Adults \$25; 5-12 years \$10; under 5 FREE

LECTIONARY READINGS:

April 7 – Second Sunday of Easter (a.k.a. Holy Humour Sunday)

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1- 2:2; John 20:19-31