

**April 7, 2024**  
**Holy Humour Sunday**

**A Song of Faith** *page 1, continued, to page 2*

God is creative and self-giving,  
generously moving  
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.  
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.  
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.  
We sing with thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,  
of living things, diverse and interdependent,  
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,  
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,  
we sing of God the Creator,  
the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,  
who is both in creation and beyond it.  
All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.  
All creation is good.  
We sing of the Creator,  
who made humans to live and move  
and have their being in God.

In and with God,  
we can direct our lives toward right relationship  
with each other and with God.  
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.  
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.  
We can recognize all people as kin.  
We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,  
but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.

**Commissioning and Benediction**

May the God of surprises bring smiles and joys to the everyday and ordinary.  
May the God of love be seen in all we do and say.  
Go forth rejoicing, for the good work has just begun!

**Amen.**

**Sung Response: VU 884 "You Shall Go Out with Joy"**

Words: Steffi G. Rubin, 1975 Music: Stuart Dauermann, 1975

Words and Music: © Lillenas Publishing Company OneLicense.net A620168, CCLI 11438349

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;  
the mountains and the hills will break forth before you;  
there'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field  
will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)  
the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)  
the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap)  
while you go out with joy.

**Postlude:** “The Day of Resurrection” Henry Smart. Arr. Victor Labenske

### **Distribution of the Offering**

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

Your Word, O God, is a lamp to our feet, **and a light for our path.**

### **Hymn VU 345 “Come, Children, Join to Sing”**

Words: Christian Henry Bateman 1843, rev. R. Gerald Hobbs 1987 Music: anon. Philadelphia 1824

Words and Music: Public Domain

Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!

Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!

Let all with heart and voice, saved by God’s gracious choice,  
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!

Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!

Christ calls his people friends, the helpless he defends,  
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!

Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!

The whole creation o’er let all God’s love adore,  
singing forevermore: Hallelujah!

### **Joy Break**

Did you hear about the minister who was having trouble with his congregation? It seemed that they could agree upon nothing.

The chair of council said, “Pastor, this cannot be allowed to continue. We must hold a meeting to settle all areas of dispute once and for all.” The pastor agreed.

At the appointed time the pastor, the chair of council, and the ten members of council met in the conference room of the church, sitting around a magnificent mahogany table. One by one the issues were dealt with and on each issue, it became more and more apparent that the pastor was a lone voice in the wilderness.

“Come, pastor, enough of this,” said the Chair. “Let us hold a vote and allow the majority to rule.” He passed out the slips of paper and each person made their mark. The slips were collected and the chair said, “You may examine them, pastor. It is eleven to one against you. We have the majority.”

The pastor rose to his feet in offended majesty. “So,” he said, “you now think because of the vote that you are right and I am wrong. Well, that is not so. I stand here” – and he raised his arms impressively – “and call upon the Holy One to give us a sign that I am right and you are wrong.”

There came a frightful crack of thunder and a brilliant flash of lightning that struck the mahogany table and cracked it in two. The room was filled with smoke and fumes, and the chair and the members of council were hurled to the floor. Through the smoke and rubble, the pastor remained erect and untouched, his eyes flashing and a grim smile on his face.

Slowly, the chair lifted herself above what was left of the table. Her hair singed, her glasses hanging from one ear, her clothing in disarray. "All right," she said, "eleven to two. But we still have the majority."

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

**So-Low:** "You Never Saw This World So Good"

Rev. Mark

Words: Author Unknown Music: Ben S. DeVan ca. 1992

Music: © Hope Publishing Company OneLicense.net A620168

You never saw this world so good when laughter fills the air;  
that laughter is God's heart alive within creative flair,  
accessible by prayer.

Yet deep within this world we see the brokenness and pain;  
when transformed into wholeness at the touch of God's own reign,  
we celebrate again.

For even in the midst of sin does Jesus reach our soul;  
to walk with us in healing touch: forgiving is his goal,  
in mirth we are made whole.

The strangeness of our lives is such we wonder and we fear;  
but hear the message of the Christ who whispers in our ear,  
"To me you are most dear."

So in the joyful dance of faith let us go forth and say  
that even when the clouds draw nigh it is a Son-ny day,  
and chuckling we obey.

### **Prayers of the Peeps & The Lord's Prayer**

When the pastor asked the congregation for their prayer requests one Sunday, we heard the usual requests to pray for sick people, and prayers of thanks for those who helped when a parishioner died. The somber mood was broken when the last request was heard. A woman stood up and said, "My granddaughter turned 16 this week and received her driver's license. Let us pray for us all."

God of grace, God of love and laughter, we thank you that we are so wondrously created and that we are made for relationship with you and with one another. We thank you for laughter with friends and loved ones. We thank you for the laughter of children, and the song it creates in our hearts.

By your great unending love, you inspire in us a spirit of imagination and creativity. Help us to use that spirit to play more, to laugh more, and to create beauty in every way possible. Remind us to laugh out loud, for doing so will heal some of the wounds within us. Not all, but some.

God, we pray for your church, that it may be a safe place for all in a world that is increasingly frightening. Help us to not take ourselves too seriously by reminding us that we are simply servants in Your home. We pray especially for Suburban Pastoral Charge in Talbotville, and their spiritual leader, the Rev. LOL (a.k.a. Rev. Laurie O'Leary).

God, we pray for those who cannot find their laughter today. For those who are grieving a loss, and for those who are suffering illness of body, mind or spirit, especially.... for those who are lonely and in need of someone to share their time and friendship... for those who have not yet moved into the season and spirit of Easter and find themselves stuck in the gloom of Good Friday.... and for those known only in the silence of our hearts.....

May these and the troubles of all your people, here in Dorchester, or scattered places far and wide, like Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, be soothed, blessed, and comforted by your holy presence. May we each find the laughter within us that sets our spirits free, and in that freedom, may we take your love into every part of our lives. These and all the prayers of our hearts we offer now in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together saying,

**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.**

**Hymn VU 406** "See the Morning Sun Ascending"

Words: Charles Parkin, 1953 Music: Joachim Neander, 1680 Words and Music: Public Domain

See the morning sun ascending, radiant in the eastern sky;  
hear the angel voices blending in their praise to God on high!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory be to God on high!

So may we, in lowly station, join the choristers above;  
singing with the whole creation, praising you for your great love.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory be to God above!

For your loving-kindness ever shed upon our earthly way;  
for your mercy, ceasing never, for your blessing day by day:  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory be to God alway!

"Wisdom, honour, power, and blessing!" with the-angelic host we cry;  
round your throne, your name confessing, now we would to you draw nigh.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Glory be to God on high!

**Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

Just before mass started, the priest called the altar boys into his office. "Now," he said, "when I get to such and such a word in the mass, I want you to come to the front, pick up the offering baskets, and go take up the offering. When you are done, please bring the baskets back in here. When mass is over, I will come and meet you here." "Yes father," they all said. During the mass when the priest got to such and such a word the boys all got up, went to the front, picked up the offering baskets and collected the offering. When they were finished they took the offering to the office and waited for the priest. When the priest arrived in his office he noticed that all but one of the baskets was overflowing with cash. The last basket was full of wallets and watches, rings and jewelry. "Whose basket is this?" he demanded. "Dominic's," said the boys. "Dominic, what's the meaning of this?" he asked. "Well, father, I was just following orders," said Dominic. "I never gave any such order," bellowed the priest. "But, father," said Dominic, "you yourself said, 'Dominic, go frisk 'em.'" Our tithes and 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**

Lord of mirth and merriment, we give you thanks for the gift of laughter which brings healing. Accept all that we offer and use it to deliver healing and wholeness to our companions on this earth. In Christ's name we ask. Amen.

**133 Palms VU 856** "Behold, How Pleasant"

Words: Pablo Sosa, 1974 Music: Pablo Sosa 1974, arr. Darryl Nixon 1987

Words and Music: © Pablo Sosa

OneLicense.net A620168

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

How pleasant and harmonious when God's people are together:  
fragrant as precious oil when running fresh on Aaron's beard.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

How pleasant and harmonious when God's people are together:  
fresh like the morning dew that falls on Zion's holy hill.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

How pleasant and harmonious when God's people are together:  
there is where God bestows the blessing, life for evermore.

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

Behold how pleasant, how good it is!

**Call to Worship**

This is the day, this is the day

that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

**We will rejoice, we will rejoice**

**and be glad in it, and be glad in it.**

How many choir directors does it take to change a light bulb?

**Nobody knows. Nobody ever watches the choir director!**

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

How can you tell which rabbits are older?

**Just look for the grey hares!**

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

What is the greatest joke of all?

**The one God played on the power of death and darkness.**

**On Easter morn, God laughed and the world was reborn.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed!**

**Scripture:** Acts 4:32-35 **The Believers Share Their Possessions**

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

*The other readings for this week are: **1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31.** You can look them up on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and search for the passage..... in any translation you prefer (ie. King James - KJV, NKJV, NRSV, etc.)*

**Hymn VU 179** "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks"

Words: Donald Fishel, 1971 Music: Donald Fishel, 1971, arr. Darryl Nexon 1987

Words and Music: © International Liturgy Publications OneLicense.net A620168

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ;  
hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth, firstborn of all creation.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ;  
hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

Spread the good news o'er all the earth: Jesus has died and is risen.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ;  
hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

We have been crucified with Christ, now we shall live forever.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ;  
hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

Come let us praise the living God, joyfully sing to our Saviour.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ;  
hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

**Opening Prayer**

Chuckling, chortling God, who lifts our hearts when we feel most down, who strikes the light of joy in the midst of despair's gloom, who surprises us with wonder and awe, enter into our hearts this morning, we pray. Open our minds to the endless possibilities you create for growing closer to you with a giggle. Open our eyes to your presence in all things, allowing us to respond in joy. Amen.

**Meditation:** Guest Speaker: Daniella Kress

**Hymn VU 224** "Sing a Happy Hallelujah"

Words: Shirley Erena Murray, 1989 Music: Colin Gibson, 1989

Words and Music: © Hope Publishing Company OneLicense.net A620168

Sing a happy hallelujah, sing it out with heart and style,  
we're the echo of God's laughter, we're the image of God's smile.  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!

We're the proof of God's good humour, we're the twinkle in God's eye,  
made to shine, reflect the glory, given light and space to fly.  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!

Sarah laughed at God's good timing, Mary sang and David danced,  
Jesus smiled and hugged the children, so is life for us enhanced.  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!

Every day sing hallelujah! We are loved, though so absurd,  
human, foolish, chosen people, God still takes us at our word!  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!  
Hallelujah, all creation, hallelujah, everyone!

**Prelude:** "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" Lowell Mason arr. Cindy Berry

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Mark will be on con ed (continuing education) the week of April 8-14. He will be reading Tod Bolsinger's book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. He will be available for pastoral emergencies at 519-719-8079. In his absence, Rev. Keith Rameshwar will be leading worship on April 14.

**Central Board** meets Wednesday, April 17 at 7:00 p.m.

**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 14 – Third Sunday of Easter  
Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

April 21 – Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18