

**DORCHESTER UNITED CHURCH
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
SUNDAY APRIL 14th 2024
WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

Musical Prelude: "Just as I am, Without One Plea"
William Bradbury. Arr. Cindy Berry

Land Acknowledgement

It is important that we take a moment to think about the land that we are located on in our various locations. While we are the current stewards of this land, it was not always so. We recognise that for thousands of years before Europeans and others arrived here, there were already peoples who were stewards of this land, the Anishnaabe, the Mississauga and others. And before there were people the land was. As Christians and as Indigenous people alike, we acknowledge that the land which sustains us all, the land on which we live and move and have our being belongs to God, our Creator.

Lighting the Paschal Candle

The sun was setting as they walked away from the city.
The light was soon going to be extinguished.
But the true light walked beside them.
We fail to see what is in our midst.
We light this candle to remind us that we are in the presence of holiness.

Call to Worship The God of the living meets us on the road.
We open our hearts and minds to this God.
God has come to bless and to change us.
We open our lives to a love that transforms.
God has come to fill us with new hope.
We come to worship and then go out to witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Hymn VU 409 Morning has broken

Words: Eleanor Farjeon, 1931 Music: Gaelic melody, harm. Alec Wyton
Music: Public Domain Words: © David Higham Associates
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Morning has broken like the first morning
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's re-creation of the new day!

Opening Prayer VU 188 Easter Prayer (In Unison)
Paul Fayter 1991

God of grace and glory,
by the death and resurrection of your Beloved Child
your reign of wholeness has been unleashed
within our bent and broken world.
Open us to your empowering grace
that we may be bearers of your world-redeeming love;
through the resurrected Christ,
our dignity, our power, and our peace. Amen.

WE ARE BLESSED BY GOD

Ministry of Music: "What a Friend" Joseph Medlicott Scriven
Choral setting by Jack Schrader

A New Creed of the United Church of Canada

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

First Lesson Acts 3: 12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “Fellow Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you rejected the holy and righteous one and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

¹⁷ “And now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Psalm 4 VU 727

R: In the night I can take my rest.

You alone keep my life secure.

Answer me, when I call, O God, defender of my cause,
for you set me free when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me now
and hear my prayer.

R: In the night I can take my rest.

You alone keep my life secure.

How long, you people, will you defame my honour?

How long will you love what is worthless and seek lies?

Know this, that God has chosen the faithful;

God hears me when I call.

Stand in awe, and cease from sin,
commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.

Offer sacrifices that are appointed,
and put your trust in God.

R: In the night I can take my rest.

You alone keep my life secure.

There are many who say,

“O that we might see prosperity!
Lift up the light of your face on us, O God.”
But you have put gladness in my heart
more than those whose grain and wine are plentiful.
Safe and sound, I lie down and sleep,
for you alone, God, make me dwell in safety.
R: In the night I can take my rest.
You alone keep my life secure.

Gospel Luke 24: 36b-48 Jesus Appears to His Disciples

³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷ They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ Yet for all their joy they were still disbelieving and wondering, and he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.
⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.”

Other Readings 1 John 3: 1-7

The Message *A Stranger Among Us*

Hymn VU 184 *As We Walked Home at Close of Day*

Words: The Iona Community, 1988 Music: Georg Joseph, 1657
Words: © WGRG, The Iona Community, GIA Publications Inc.
Music: Public Domain OneLicense.net A620168, CCLI 11438349

As we walked home at the close of day,
a stranger joined us on our way.
He heard us speak of one who'd gone,

and when we stopped, he carried on.

“Why wander further without light?
Please stay with us this troubled night.
We’ve shared the truth of how we feel
and now would like to share a meal.”

We sat to eat our simple spread,
then watched the stranger take the bread;
and, as he said the blessing prayer,
we knew that someone else was there.

No stranger he; it was our eyes
which failed to see, in stranger’s guise,
the Lord who, risen from the dead,
met us when ready to be fed.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
As Mary and our sisters said,
the Lord is risen from the dead!

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer (The Prayer of Jesus)

God of the living, as we, too, walk the road to Emmaus, open our eyes to see the truth of your gospel. Open the eyes of this world to a love that never ends. Be a shepherd to us and lead us along the paths of right living. May all who are estranged from your presence find you along the path of love and reconciliation. Show your compassion again to the lost and the lonely and empower us to be your agents of grace.

Risen One, may your resurrected power fill the lives of the sick and the broken in spirit. Look tenderly on this fragile earth that we continue to despoil. May we spare no effort to bring renewal to all the places we have pillaged and laid waste. Show us how to work towards a fair distribution of the world's resources.

May your gracious presence become a catalyst for change where the innocent still suffer and the unjust hold sway. Grant your wisdom to those in power that they may rule with justice. We pray in the name of Jesus who continues to be our companion on the road of life. AMEN

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,
Thy 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 thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Christians are called not just to live in a broken world but to engage with its reality of pain and suffering. The brutal injustice and wanton intransigence of those in power push us to seek the path of indifference, but the life and example of the Suffering Servant is our invitation to change and new life.

Offertory Hymn "The Festival Doxology" (tune 217 VU)

Words: Brian Arthur Wren

Music: Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne 1623,

 harmonized Ralph Vaughn Williams 1906 Music: Public Domain

Words: Hope Publishing Company

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

Above the noise of conflict, there is a song of peace.
Above the world's weeping, there is a song of hope.
Above the cries of hate, there is a song of love.
Bless these gifts, O God, that we, too, may be singers of your song.

Hymn VU 642 Be Thou My Vision

Words: Irish ca. 8th C, trans. Mary Elizabeth Byrne 1905, vers. Eleanor H. Hull 1912

Music: Irish traditional melody Words and Music: Public Domain

Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
naught be all else to me save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Commissioning and Benediction

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you to the
end of your road.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands teach you to serve
one another.

May the Christ who love with a wounded heart be your love forever.

When you go out may you see the face of Jesus in everyone you meet.

And may everyone you meet see the face of Jesus in you.

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.

Musical Postlude: "The Strife Is O'er The Battle Done"

Giovanni de Palestrina. Arr. Cindy Berry