

Easter Sunday ZOOM Worship with Communion for April 4 2021

Our Worship at Home this week is the 'bulletin' for our ZOOM worship. You might like to print a copy of the service so that you can follow along with hymns and prayers.

Please make sure your microphones are muted during the service.

If you have called in on your phone, press *6 to mute yourself.

Words printed in Italics would traditionally be spoken by the entire congregation. If your microphone is muted please feel free to speak those words along with our readers, and of course sing along with the hymns!

To participate in the ZOOM worship over your telephone, call 647-374-4685 or 647-558-0588, and when asked enter this meeting id: **893 0928 0459** and this pass code: **271814**. You will hear the service and even be able to speak when it is appropriate.

If you would like to participate in communion, make sure you have some bread or a cracker and some juice handy!

Rev. Joanne

Territorial Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee (ho-den-oh-sho-nee), and later the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nations.

The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Announcements

Centering Music "Halle, Halle, Halle" VU 958

Halle, halle, hallelujah

Halle, halle, hallelujah

Halle, halle, hallelujah

Halle, halle, hallelujah

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer:

One: From our couches and our kitchens,
we declare good news!

Two: *Christ is risen!*

One: Putting our fears and anxieties aside in the
light of God's new day, we can shout -

Two: *Hallelujah! Christ is risen indeed!*

One: Gathered virtually, we share the ageless story -

Two: *The tomb is empty!*

Christ is Risen!

Thanks be to God!

One: Holy God, you call to us from darkness
and revive us with your light.

Two: *You call us from doubt and uncertainty
into lives that reflect hope and justice.*

One: Remind us that, like Mary Magdalene at the tomb,
we may encounter you unexpectedly,
we may meet you when we least expect it.

Two: *Fill us with your Spirit and your presence,
lead us to work and witness that celebrates
and renews us all –*

One: We pray in the name of your Risen One, Jesus.
Amen

Opening Music: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" VU 157

'Christ the Lord is risen today,'
all creation join to say,
raise your joys and triumphs high;
sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply.

Love's redeeming work is done,
fought the fight, the battle won:
lo! our sun's eclipse is o'er;
lo! he dwells in death no more.

Lives again our glorious King:
where, O death, is now thy sting?
Once he died our souls to save;
where thy victory, O grave?

Hail! the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to you by both be given;
every knee to you shall bow,
risen Christ triumphant now.

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Choir Anthem: "Run, Mary, Run"

Reflection: *included at the end of the document for those reading today's service*

Hymn: "Christ Is Alive" VU 158 verses 1,2,4,5

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 years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

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.

Virtual Offering:

One: You, O God, are the Easter One.

Two: *You are the holy source of hope and new life.
You are the dancing spirit of life.*

One: We offer gifts in gratitude
for hope returned,
for the mystery of your grace,
and for the promise of resurrection.

Sung Response: "Alleluia" MV 50

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sacrament of Communion:

One: Christ is risen!

Two: *He is risen indeed!*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Two: *We lift them up to God.*

One: Let us give thanks to our God.

Two: *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

Two: Creator of light, Giver of all life, Source of love.
With your breath, you formed all that we are
and all that is beyond us;
the heavens tell your glory.

One: Through fear-filled days and aching nights
when the powers of death have done their worst,
your love has never deserted us.

Two: Even when we turn away from you, you are with us;
your presence never fails us,
and your gifts of hope and new life transform us.

One: We praise you for Jesus Christ,
risen to life, eternal as your love.
With the women at the tomb,
we raise the strain of gladness.
Hallelujah! Life is stronger than death!

Two: The day of resurrection has come,

scattering fear and gloom,
and so we rejoice with all your people
of every time and place,
and with angels and archangels,
to proclaim the glory of your name:

Sung Response: MV 203

**O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space,
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the one who comes
and bears your name always.**

Two: We do what Jesus did the night before he died.
He took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread,
and gave it to his friends, and said,
"Take, eat; remember me."
Then he took the cup, and said,
"Take, drink; remember."

One: Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith,
as we break bread and share the cup,
giving thanks for your love in Jesus, the Christ.
We spread your table with these gifts of the earth
and of our labour.
We present to you our very lives,
committed to your service
on behalf of all people.

Sung Response: MV 204

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

One: We pray you, God of Love,
send your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here,
that we, and these gifts,
touched by your Spirit,
may be signs of life and love to each other,
and to all the world.

Two: Help us to love as Christ loved.
Knowing our own weakness,
may we stand with all who stumble.
Sharing in his suffering,
may we remember all who suffer.
Held in his love,
may we embrace all whom the world denies.
Rejoicing in his forgiveness,
may we forgive all.

The Lord's Prayer Sung VU 959

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 glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

One: Blessed be the Ancient of Days!
Two: Blessed be the Beloved!
One: Blessed be the Spirit!
Amen!

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

*This would be the moment for you to take your own bread and juice, perhaps saying out loud the words
"Jesus Christ the bread of life" and "Jesus Christ the true vine."
If you are with another person, you might choose to serve the bread and juice to each other.*

Prayer after Communion

One: Gracious God,
may your gifts of love transform and enliven us
that we may live lives of thanksgiving.
Two: May your presence among us

*provoke such longing for your realm,
that we will never be satisfied
until the whole earth knows
your justice, your peace, and your love.*

One: In the name of Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

Closing Music: "Hallelujah, Hallelujah Give Thanks" VU 179

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

Jesus is Lord of all the earth, first born 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 forever.
Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ,
Hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

Come let us praise the living Christ, joyfully sing to our saviour.
Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give thanks to the risen Christ,
Hallelujah, hallelujah! Give praise to God's name.

Blessing:

One: O God, may the empty tomb remind us that in unexpected ways
you bring love, justice and healing into the most difficult times
and circumstances.

Two: *Send us out from this celebration time with hope,
send us back to our lives with joy,
send us into the world – however we are able to connect –
with the delight of new life in our hearts.*

One: And as you go, know that God
who sang the universe into being, goes with you.
Christ, who is God's love song to the world, accompanies you,
and the Spirit will continue to sing God's love
into each and every heart, each and every day. Amen

Rev. Joanne's Reflection

Happy Easter!

The tomb is empty! Christ is Risen!

It is Easter Sunday – and it seems no matter what the weather, no matter where we are – it is time to celebrate, time to be warmed by the mystery and miracle of the empty tomb. It is the celebration in our church year that is at the very heart of our faith – and we can joyously declare that in life, in death, in life beyond death, nothing can separate us from God's love.

The powers of the world could not destroy Jesus. The powers of fear, hate and cruelty, the powers of inertia and self-interest could not end his ministry to the world. God would not let that death stand. As I said, it is mysterious, it is miraculous, and those who have followed Jesus for the past 2,000 years are still trying to really make sense of all that this means for us in our lives separately and as a community of faith. We SHOULD be shouting from rooftops today, we COULD be declaring far and wide that God loves us, God is with us, that God is great and God is good.

I think, perhaps we are more often a little more like those women, like Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome. Sometimes we approach this day still bearing the grief of Good Friday, especially this year as restrictions continue, the pandemic still shapes our lives, and we remain distant from each other and from our families to keep each other safe and healthy. Like those women we have questions – who will roll away the stone of this pandemic, or other stones that keep us from living fully? Who will clear the way for our lives to return to normal, or at least to lives that can be joyful? Who will help us so that we can carry out the tasks we have to do?

Can we, like those women, picture the stones we encounter in our lives rolled away? Unexpectedly, everything changed for them. Astonishingly, the job they had come to perform was simply not needed. Unexpectedly, can God change our perspective? Astonishingly, might we find that we have other tasks and work that will take us in a new direction?

I think one of our tasks is to identify what our own stones might be, as individuals and as part of the AUC family. What are the barriers we face today, that might keep us from encountering God or doing God's work of justice, kindness and compassion in the world? For the women coming to the tomb that first Easter, the barrier was obvious; a physical rounded stone very likely the size of a small boulder and too big for them to move on their own. Our own stones might be similar in that we need God's help, or our community's help, in order to roll them away. Perhaps our hurdles are related to how we talk to God, how we pray – or whether we pray at all. Perhaps the obstacle is our own physical or mental well being, especially in these lock-down days. Perhaps our stumbling blocks are related to really seeing those people that are in need around us.

What we can learn from our scripture story, our Easter story, is that God can help us – often through action by those who have some strength, some ability beyond our own. We can be reminded once again

that when we allow God to help us, to open us and remove our stones, truth, light, hope and even astonishment may follow.

What do we do with this Easter good news? Mary, Mary and Salome were confronted with a life-changing, world-shaking truth at that empty tomb. Jesus was not dead and his body did not need anointing. Once more God in Christ has turned the tables and the world upside down. Jesus, who was never dead in their hearts, is now alive and heading to Galilee where he will meet them. Despite this news, the gospel writer tells us they “fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

Perhaps we carry some fear as well. Fear related to the COVID-10 pandemic, fear that we will not get the vaccine, fear that our lives, our church, will never really be the same. We might fear for the health and safety of friends and family. We might even fear declaring our faith and the hope of Easter. We might understand the pressure to keep silent that fell on those women who ran from the tomb. The Roman occupation had not simply ended, the powerful temple leaders had not changed their minds about Jesus, there was still real danger for them, especially if they or the other disciples were suspected of stealing Jesus' body.

For us today, this is not the time to be silent. This is the time to declare hope, declare our belief that God is always with us, and that as faithful people we are called to stand with anyone who experiences injustice, exclusion, cruelty and violence. We can declare that God is alive in our hearts and in our lives, and that our faith makes a tangible difference for us. Our faith helps us to cope with the stones, with the fear, with uncertainty.

I call on this community to make an outward sign of your inward joy today. Alleluias were distributed with your Apple Logs and service bulletins this week. You might print one, or write your own joyful words, and tape them in a window facing out, so the world can know you are celebrating today. Take a chance to declare that Easter is important for you – not because of chocolate or eggs or furry creatures, but because stones have rolled, because the Chosen One is now the Risen One, and “death has lost its sting and has no power”. The one we thought the world had destroyed has returned in flesh and blood, because God would not let terror, fear and loss be the last word about Jesus, or the last word for us.

May God continue to roll away the stones in hearts, in lives, in our faith, and may we joyously share the Easter light and hope with the world. Hallelujah!