

Order of Worship for Easter
April 12, 2020

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Passing of the Peace

A Time of Preparation

Call to Worship

Leader: We gather and we celebrate. What are we to make of this day?

People: When graves are opened...when the dead awaken... when life refuses to be contained...

Leader: Then nothing is impossible! Hope is never extinguished and love is never conquered.

People: We celebrate You today, Jesus, because You have made it clear that death does not have the last word; because You have filled us again with hope and faith; because You have given us a vision of new possibilities, new realities, and new ways of being.

All: Open our minds to believe what we cannot explain; open our hearts to hope for what we cannot see; open our lives to live and to love in the midst of death and despair; let resurrection happen again in us today. Amen.

Opening Prayer (unison)

Most Holy God, as we come together in worship, we ask that you keep us strong in our faith. Help us to overcome our fear and self-doubts, so that we will be loyal to Christ, even through the darkest hours. With courage let us face the harsh realities of the cross, knowing that this is our path to resurrection hope. Guide us in the journey we will take with Christ, for this is the journey He took for us. Amen.

Hymn "This Easter Celebration" (Lyrics—Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2020; tune—The Church's One Foundation)

1. This Easter celebration is not like ones we've known, We pray in isolation, we sing the hymns alone. We're distant from our neighbors—from worship leaders, too. No flowers grace the chancel to set a festive mood.

2. No gathered choirs are singing; no banners lead the way. O God of love and promise, where's joy this Easter Day? With sanctuaries empty, may homes become the place We ponder resurrection and celebrate your grace.

3. Our joy won't come from worship that's in a crowded room But from the news of women who saw the empty tomb. Our joy comes from

disciples who ran with haste to see—who heard that Christ is risen, and then, by grace, believed.

4. In all the grief and suffering, may we remember well: Christ suffered crucifixion and faced the powers of hell. Each Easter bears the promise: Christ rose that glorious day! Now nothing in creation can keep your love away.

5. We thank you that on Easter, your church is blessed to be a scattered, faithful body that's doing ministry. In homes and in the places of help and healing, too, we live the Easter message by gladly serving you.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (unison)

God, on this holy morning, we acknowledge the inadequacy of our resurrection faith. Where we have not perceived the breaking forth of Your light, forgive us. Where we have been slow to believe the promises of Your prophets, have mercy upon us. Where we have viewed one another from a human point of view, grant us the peace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. O God, You call us toward the light, and yet at times we have preferred darkness. You lead us into freedom, and yet at times we have chosen to be enslaved. Roll away the stone that keeps us from life that You intend, turn our mourning into dancing, and raise us, with all Your people, to newness of life. In the name of the Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Choral Response "Gloria Patri"

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, It is now and ever shall be, World
without end. Amen**

Prayers of the People

Anthem "Christ Arose!"

Scripture John 20: 1-18

20 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.² 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."³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;¹² 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.

¹³ 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."¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to 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.'"¹⁸ 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.

Sermon "Running Through the Cemetery"

Affirmation of Faith (from Brief Statement of Faith—unison)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, preaching Good News to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the Gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified suffering the depths of human pain, and giving His life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating His sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn "Because He Lives"

1. God sent His Son—they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon; An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

Refrain:

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.**

2. How sweet to hold a newborn baby, And feel the pride and joy he gives; But greater still the calm assurance: This child can face uncertain days because He lives.

Refrain:

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.**

**3. And then one day i'll cross the river; i'll fight life's final war with pain.
And then, as death gives way to vict'ry,
I'll see the lights of glory and i'll know He reigns.**

Refrain:

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.**

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn "Alleluia, Give Thanks"

Refrain:

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord;
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name.**

**1. Jesus is Lord of all the earth; He is the King
of creation.**

Refrain:

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord;
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name.**

**2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth
Jesus has died and has risen.**

Refrain:

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord;
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name.**

Benediction

Benediction Response:

**Make us one, Lord, make us one,
Holy Spirit, make us one.**

Let your love flow, so the world will know, We are one in you.

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Postlude

**3. We have been crucified with Christ; Now we
shall live forever.**

Refrain:

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord;
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name.**

**4. Come, let us praise the living God; Joyfully
sing to our Savior.**

Refrain:

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord;
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name.**