

First Congregational United Church of Christ
"Where No One Is A Stranger"
Easter Sunday
March 31, 2024

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: This very day, God has acted.

Many: Today, we will rejoice and be glad!

One: We know the message that God sends to all people.

Many: God's peace, preached by Jesus, is available to all through the Lord of life.

One: The one who lived among us,

Many: doing good and healing all,

One: was crucified, dead, and buried.

Many: But God raised him on the third day.

One: This very day, God has acted.

Many: Today, we will rejoice and be glad!

***Opening Song:**

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

#288

*OPENING PRAYER

(prayed together)

Just as you raised Jesus from the dead, God, you offer us new and transformed lives in the risen Christ. We rejoice and give thanks for this good news, which has been handed down to us from generation to generation. May we, too, be witnesses of Jesus, who you anointed with the Holy Spirit to bring blessings of mercy and healing. May we be witnesses of his suffering and death, and how he meets us in the broken places of our lives. Most of all, may we be witnesses of the resurrection, sharing your promise of forgiveness and grace with all people. This is your doing, God. It is marvelous in our eyes. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

On this morning of hallelujahs, we must confess how human we are, Emptier of tombs. 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, nor 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 neighbors.

Bring us new life, Dazzling God. 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.

A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: God, our Creator, gives us new life; Jesus, our Redeemer, prepares a Table for us; Holy Spirit, our Joy, calls us to service. This is the good news: the tomb is empty, sin is powerless, death is defeated forever.

Many: On this very first day, and every day, we walk as God's people, forgiven and made whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

This Easter day, we rejoice that death is not the last word. God raised Jesus from death, turning sorrow into joy, despair into hope.

We sing of Jesus raised from the dead. We sing hallelujah. The Risen Jesus lives today, present to us and the source of our hope.

We sing of a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying his presence in the world.

We are called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and place, even as we look in hope for a new heaven and a new earth.

*GLORIA PATRI

#734

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Mark 16:1-8

read from *The Message*

MESSAGE:

"Rolling Stones"

Pastor Chris

Communion Song:

"Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

#698

GATHERING AT CHRIST'S TABLE

Invitation, Communion Prayer, Sanctus, Words of Institution, Consecration Prayer, Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors), Sharing the Bread and Cup

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

To this table we've come, God. At this table we've been fed. Because of this table we have been made whole. From this table we will sing your glory as Easter people, giving thanks for your saving love. Amen.

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

#34

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

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Holy God, we thank you for your goodness and mercy, especially for the good news of Jesus' resurrection. May these offerings and our very lives become a witness to all people of the salvation and grace you bring into the world. Amen.

***Closing Song:**

“The Day of Resurrection”

#298

***Going Forth with the Peace of Christ**

POSTLUDE

***Indicates all who are able please stand**

Other Lectionary Scripture Readings: Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43, John 20:1-18

The Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession (adapted), and Words of Assurance are by Thom M. Shuman from Lectionary Liturgies. The Opening Prayer and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are by Mary Petrina Boyd from The Abingdon Worship Annual 2024 edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu, The Affirmation of Faith is by Mary Sue Gast and Roger D. Straw from Flames of the Spirit-Resources for Worship Like Bread for the Journey, edited by Ruth C. Duck. The Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving (adapted) is by Mary Ann Neevel from Flames of the Spirit-Resources for Worship Like Bread for the Journey edited by Ruth C. Duck

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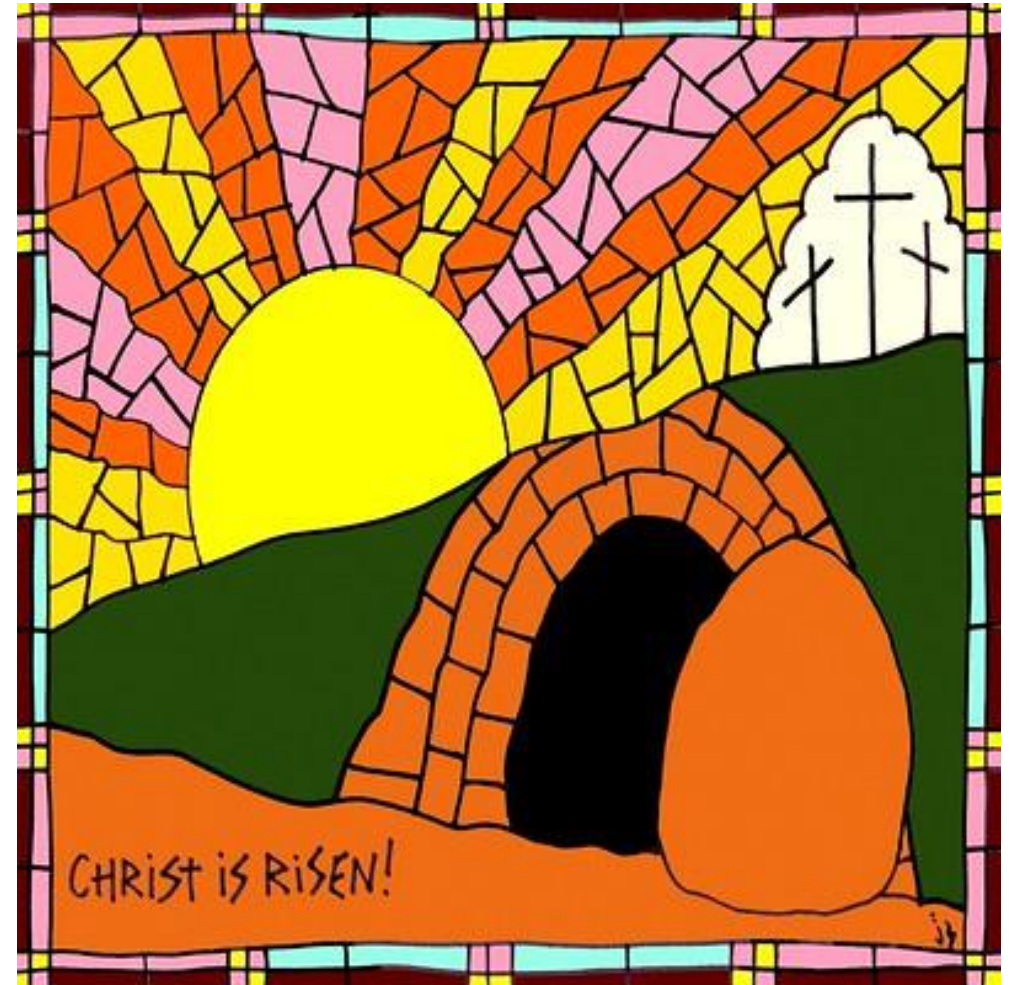
Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett

Lector:

Organist:

March Radio Sponsor: Ginny Buchanan

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*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
165 Years*

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