

Easter Sunrise



PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, April 4, 2021

Welcome to



PARKWAY

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ALL ACCEPTED, NO EXCEPTIONS

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Limitless Love | Courageous Action | Spirited Inquiry

Purpose Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ strives to be an inclusive community embracing: spiritual nourishment, open-minded inquiry, courageous action, and interfaith partnerships to fulfill God's calling to create a just world for all.

Congregational Statement

Parkway United Church of Christ, with God's grace, seeks to be a congregation that includes all persons, regardless of race, ethnic, or socio-economic background while respecting differences of gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability. We aspire to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We invite all to share in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our open and affirming congregation.

Easter Sunrise Service

April 4, 2021 | 6:30am | Live-stream and In-person
Elm Lawn Cemetery behind our Historic Sanctuary

Welcome to Parkway UCC on this morning of *Alleluias!* Easter is a time of great joy! Early in the morning, however, the story begins in dark, cold, quiet. Gathering in the darkness like the women did so long ago, we are warmed and encouraged by prayers, songs, community and the ‘new fire’. The Day of Resurrection dawns on us as we begin to see things more clearly like Mary did that early morning. She and the others believed that all was lost, that Jesus and his mighty mission were over...tears flowed...but this sunrise moment reminds us that there is always a split second when there is suddenly more of one thing than the other...this story is all dark and dread and grief...then comes light and love and resurrection...and the tears flow again. We know who Jesus is! We know who we are again too! Alleluia!

Hymn *Were You There?*

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

v.2 **Were you there when God wept at Mary’s cry?...**

Lighting the New Fire

Call to Worship

One: We have walked a rough path these last few days. We wondered if any of this was real. We weren’t sure if we even knew who we were amidst all the turmoil.

Many: **We have watched the disciples lose focus—as they became distressed, dismayed, separated and isolated. We’ve wondered about how Jesus felt through it all. We ached for him—brokenhearted. What did he do with his deep disappointment and all of the denials? Was he afraid of who he was becoming?**

One: And now light is pushing out the darkness and dread. Things are not the way they had seemed. Jesus was right. There is a way out of ‘no way’. Things are becoming clear. This is resurrection. This is restoration. This is real.

Many: **Christ is risen from the tomb! God’s steadfast love endures forever!**

All: **This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! Christ is risen indeed! The Spirit is pouring out upon us. Alleluia!**

Opening Words

We believe in You, God, the power of life and love that flows through each of us and the entire universe. We believe in You, Jesus, as You revealed the good news of our connectedness with God and with all people, Your solid compassion standing up for justice, even if that meant losing Your life. You gave us an experience of God by demonstrating the power of life and limitless love. Through Jesus' words and example, we believe that we too have this power and the capacity to give people an experience of the Holy by living life fully, loving with our whole heart, and striving to be all we can be—even when that involves risk and courageous action. We believe in You, Holy Spirit, as You weave us all together, engaged in the search for meaning and the quest to be connected with the Source, Solidarity and Sustainer of all that exists. With You we ask questions, seek answers and find comfort and reassurance in the spirited inquiry when there aren't answers or clarity at all. We were lost. Now we know who we are again! Amen.

Hebrew Scripture Lesson Psalms 118, selected verses

O give thanks to God—for God is good. God's steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to God. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is God's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we beseech you, O God! We beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in God's name. We bless you from the house of God. God has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you. O give thanks to God, for God is good. God's steadfast love endures forever!

Response *Were You There?*

Were you there when He rose up from the tomb?...

Gospel Lesson 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 him. 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.

Sermon

Easter Prayers & Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer an alternate version

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, glad heavens, and earth reply: Alleluia!**

**Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!
God has opened paradise, Alleluia!**

**Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!**

Benediction

Seven Stanzas at Easter

John Updike

Make no mistake: if he rose at all
It was as His body;
If the cell's dissolution did not reverse, the molecule reknit,
The amino acids rekindle,
The Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,
Each soft spring recurrent;
It was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled eyes of the
Eleven apostles;
It was as His flesh; ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes
The same valved heart
That—pierced—died, withered, paused, and then regathered
Out of enduring Might
New strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,
Analogy, sidestepping, transcendence,
Making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the faded
Credulity of earlier ages:
Let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,
Not a stone in a story,
But the vast rock of materiality that in the slow grinding of
Time will eclipse for each of us
The wide light of day.

And if we have an angel at the tomb,
Make it a real angel,
Weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair, opaque in
The dawn light, robed in real linen
Spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
For our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,
Lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are embarrassed
By the miracle,
And crushed by remonstrance.

Christ Has No Body

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Easter Day

April 4, 2021

Now What?

Mark 16:1-8

The resurrection story is the story of a journey from death to life - not only for Jesus the Christ but also for those who loved and followed him.

Jesus' friend Mary is the first to the tomb, along with some other women disciples. She arrives at the tomb uncertain, and in the telling from the Gospel of Mark, leaves that place "trembling and bewildered." At first, the Gospel says, they said "nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." And yet the story must have leaked out, because we tell it again today. The story moved from the tomb of confused silence to the resurrection light of confident proclamation.

We also often find ourselves trembling and bewildered, silent and afraid. How can we move from the speechlessness of fear to the joyful speech of the good news? Maybe following Mary to the tomb can give us some ideas about how to take the journey ourselves from death to life. Like Mary and her friends, we can meet grief face to face, and to take the risks that challenge us in that encounter.

Mary was willing to meet grief face-to-face. Personally, she had witnessed the brutal torture and murder of her teacher, healer and friend. By tending to the tomb of her loved one, Mary was enacting one of the rituals of grief. At first, it might cause more sadness, but she had the wisdom to know that pausing to grieve was an important step on transformation's path. How awful it must have been to face that terrible grief. But the good news is that no matter the grief, joy will come in the morning.

In her grief, Mary was also willing to take a risk. How scary it must have been for Mary and the other women to be there in the garden, before first light had come. There is so much that tells us to be afraid. But the good news is that the new life that Christ promises is greater than any fear.