

Easter

2023

Jesus Met and Known



Sunrise Service

PARKWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Easter Sunrise Service

April 9, 2023 | 6:15am | Elm Lawn Cemetery

Prelude

Improvisations on various seasonal hymn tunes

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, the “new fire” and the sacrament of communion. The Day of Resurrection dawns on us as we begin to see things more clearly like Mary did that early morning. They 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. 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 they nailed Him to the tree?...**

v.3 **Were you there when God wept at Mary's cry?...**

Lighting the New Fire

Call to Worship

One: We have witnessed the betrayal, desertion, pain and suffering.

Many: **We have ourselves been distressed, dismayed, separated and isolated.**

One: And now light is pushing out the darkness.

All: **Christ is risen from the tomb!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Opening Prayer

Taking deep breaths, O God, we wonder how this can be true!? You were dead and buried. Now you are alive again. Assure us of this good news that we may share it in the ways that we speak, think and act. Amen.

Hebrew Scripture Lesson

Psalm 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

Matthew 28:1-10 (New Revised Standard Version)
After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here;

for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’

Solo *In Christ Alone* –Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

Sung by Michelle Brueggemann

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all – here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied;
For ever sin on Him was laid –
here in the death of Christ I live.

There is the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory, sin’s curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His, and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death – this is the pow’r of Christ in me.
From life’s first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow’r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand,
Till He returns or calls me home – here in the pow’r of Christ I’ll stand.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Sermon

Praise Song *This is the Day*

**This is the day, this is the day
That our God has made, that our God has made;
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
And be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
We will rejoice and be glad in it;
This is the day, this is the day that our God has made.**

**This is the day, this is the day
Jesus rose again, Jesus rose again;
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
And be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day Jesus rose again,
We will rejoice and be glad in it;
This is the day, this is the day Jesus rose again.**

Easter Prayers and Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer sung to the tune by Nate Stout

**Our [Creator/Mother/Father/Holy One] 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead
us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is
the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

[A variety of names for God are welcome here – including in the Lord's Prayer.]

The Sacrament of Communion at our Open Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy One, we give you thanks for this simple and sacred meal. It informs, nurtures and inspires us now. We become more Christ-like as we receive from his life and love. We feel you shaping and guiding us. Heighten our senses so that we are more and more available to one another. We want to be all about your love with all we have. Amen.

Hymn

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!

Unison Benediction

Bronwyn Angela White

Out of the darkness, light. Out of the night, day.
Out of the deep absence, radiant presence.
Out of the depths, rising to new day.
We are the Easter people in whom Christ is risen
in thought and word and deed. Amen.

Postlude

Improvisations on *Duke Street (I Know That My Redeemer Lives!)*—John Hatton, 1793

Easter Word Scramble

epcdiilss

nsote

nseir

ejuss

bmot

ceralim

cchhru

ifhat

rnseius

crtnreersoiu

viela

voel

ylli

ianbeeclrto

bleamrcs

cmtgeenuoarn

gntpmreiis

auydns

mopseir

cgaer

rapyre

lbbei

ynhm

ricpruste

veebil

snwseit

rvofeer

luaaiell

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 9, 2023

Easter

John 20:1-18

Today we celebrate Resurrection Day! The women that first Easter Sunday did not know it was resurrection day, though, when they arose in the dark and made their way tentatively to the tomb where they had laid their friend and teacher. Still, although they did not know what they would find, they moved forward into the pre-dawn darkness, ready to perform what they believe would be a last act of love and service for their friend.

“Perhaps it is no wonder,” Dorothy Sayers wrote in the essay *Are Women Human?*, published nearly 100 years ago, “that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man - there never has been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch jokes about them, never treated them either as "The women, God help us!" or "The ladies, God bless them!"; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their questions and arguments seriously; who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no axe to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unself-conscious. There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole Gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything "funny" about woman's nature.”

Centuries of church dogma and male leadership, including many periods in which systems of power explicitly sought to oppress and silence women, has not suppressed the power and wonder of this resurrection reality. In his life, Jesus loved and respected women just as they were, and after his death, they were the ones who cared for him and spoke the first words about him. Jesus needed the women in his circle as much as they needed him.

On this Resurrection Day, we rejoice that Christ came to bring new life to all people. And we specifically celebrate the women who waited at the cross, who went to the tomb and who told the first stories about our Risen Savior.

Quotation from Sayers, Dorothy L., *Are Women Human?*, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005.