

April 5, 2026 - Easter Sunday

**Easter Choral Introit He is Lord**

He is Lord, He is Lord! He has risen from the dead, and He is Lord.  
Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

**Acts 10: 34-43 Peter's Account of Jesus' Death and Resurrection**

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached - how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen - by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

L: Jesus Christ is Risen today!

**P: Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**

L: Jesus has triumphed over the human powers of evil, of jealousy and greed!

**P: Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**

L: In His resurrection Jesus guarantees us all eternal life and forgiveness of our sin.

**P: Jesus Christ IS Risen Today!!**

**All: Let us join together now in celebrating Jesus' and our salvation.**

**Gathering Hymn Jesus Christ is Risen Today, VU # 155**

Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!	Hymns of praise then let us sing hallelujah!	But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!	Sing we to our God above, hallelujah!
Our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!	Unto Christ, our heavenly King, hallelujah!	Our salvation have procured; hallelujah!	Praise eternal as God's love; hallelujah!
Who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah!	Who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!	Now above the sky he's King, hallelujah!	Praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah!
Suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!	Sinners to redeem and save. Hallelujah!	Where the angels ever sing. Hallelujah!	Praise the Son and Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

L: Today we relight the Christ candle, which was extinguished on Good Friday. In Luke 23:44-45 we read that "It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two." We light this candle today, on Easter morning, to mark the third day after Jesus died for our sin – our distancing ourselves from God, and to remind ourselves of the light of Christ that is within and among us.

*The candle is lit.*

**All: Praise be to God, who spoke Light into the world, who sends Light to live among us, who brings the Light of new dawns. Amen!**

**Prayer for Illumination** Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternity. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the scriptures, our collective songs, and the message and prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Ministry of Music Hallelujah** (Lyrics by Kelly Mooney, melody by Leonard Cohen)

**Children's Ministry A new sunrise**

**Children's Hymn Don't Be Afraid, MV # 90**

Don't be afraid.  
My love is stronger,  
My love is stronger  
than your fear.

Don't be afraid.  
My love is stronger,  
and I have promised,  
Promised to be always near.

**The Lord's Prayer** *spoken*

**Offering Invitation & Prayer** We have glimpsed the empty tomb and been touched by the mystery. So, like Mary, we cannot be silenced. We cannot keep our gifts to ourselves. We will now receive the offering so our gifts can help spread the marvelous news.

O God of the empty tomb and the quiet voice, we have walked in a world full of grief and despair. Touch our souls and lighten our spirits. Come, in power and mystery; draw us in to meet the risen Jesus. Bless what we have offered here and help us find our voices to share the astonishing news. In the name of the Risen One, Amen.

**Scripture Readings**

Responsive Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

L: Let Israel now say:

**P: "God's love endures for ever."**

L: Let the house of Aaron say:

**P: "God's love endures for ever."**

L: Let those who fear God say:

**P: "God's love endures for ever."**

L: God is my strength and my song, God has become my salvation.

**P: There are shouts of joy and deliverance in the tents of the righteous.**

L: The right hand of God does mighty things, the right hand of God raises up.

**P: The right hand of God does mighty things.**

L: I shall not die, but live, and I shall proclaim what God has done.

**P: God indeed punished me but did not give me over to death.**

L: Open to me the gates of the temple, that I may enter and give thanks to God.

**P: This is the gate of God, through it the righteous shall enter.**

L: I thank you, for you have answered me, You have become my salvation.

**P: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.**

L: This is God's doing, marvellous in our eyes.

**P: This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Matthew 28: 1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

**Hymn The Day of Resurrection, VU # 164**

The day of resurrection!	Our hearts be free of evil,
Earth! Tell it out abroad.	That we may see aright
The Passover of gladness,	The Christ, in rays eternal
The Passover of God!	Of resurrection light,
From death to life eternal,	And list'ning to the accents,
From earth unto the sky,	May hear so calm and plain
Our Christ has brought us over	Christ's own "All hail!" and, hearing,
With hymns of victory.	May raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful,  
Let earth its song begin,  
The round world keep high triumph,  
And all that is there-in.  
Let all things seen and unseen  
Their notes of gladness blend,  
For Christ indeed is risen,  
Our joy that has no end.

**Message Blessed Assurance, Jesus is with us, now and forever!**

Jesus Christ IS risen today!! Hallelujah!!

Borrowing an image from thousands of cartoons, which were my form of social media and entertainment, as they perhaps were for many of you, I cannot help but picture the stone, rolled away from the tomb this morning, with the phrase inscribed in bold letters, for all to see: **Jesus was here!!**

Yes, Jesus was indeed here, and we witnessed him being placed there after his horrible death on the cross at Golgotha, the hill of skulls. Jesus was here, but now he IS risen. He has been raised from the usually permanent state of being dead, having gone to his death willingly, but perhaps not without some hesitation as he anticipated the pain and suffering, given that he was part mortal, while also being the divine Son of God. He appears to Mary, the disciples, and a few others, gradually more and more, until he arises into heaven on the Day of Ascension, but wait, I am getting ahead of myself and Jesus' story here. On Easter Sunday, as Jesus has predicted, he does figuratively tear down the walls of the Temple, the thick, strong, evil walls of death, made out of the hardest stone that mere humans thought could contain God. God is not to be contained! His love and mercy and goodness decimate all human institutions and powers if we but allow ourselves to truly follow him. What is the worst that the Romans and Pharisees could do to Jesus? They could denounce, humiliate, torture, punish and whip, scourge and stab, hang and break his legs, but Jesus defeats them all.

It only seems that the powers of darkness have vanquished our Christ. For a couple of days, despite the darkness and the earthquake, and the tearing of the curtain in the Temple, which probably lulled the authorities into thinking that they had won, like the Terminator, like all of our western heroes who rode off into the sunset, Jesus had made a promise: I'll be back!

Throughout the Bible we are assured by the Word of God, "Do not be afraid!" but that is the state that Jesus' friends had been left in, fear for Jesus, fear for their own safety and lives; the guards at the empty tomb are frozen with fear, and when told by the women of Jesus' resurrection, fear causes the disciples to doubt their word, and running off to confirm this truth for themselves. Isn't that just like we men? We need to verify the truth and value of things.

The disciples will soon be given their marching orders – sadly, their brave journeys spreading the good news of the Saviour will end in all of them being executed by stoning or inverted crucifixion. And yet the joy of this day and of Jesus' love inspires and sustains them as they do his bidding, as they have always done.

Jesus is alive, risen from the dead. We have His Word, his assurance that he will always be with and within us, the Spirit residing in our very beings, for perpetual guidance and support. We, each one of us, has that spark of God's light within us, and each time that we pray, and speak with God and Jesus, that flame grows brighter, and can consume your fears, doubts, anger and depression. Jesus is much better informed than we can ever be. Our duty is to be as Christ-like as we can in all that we say, think, and do. Christ's perspective is clear, seeing everything all at once, at bit like that four astronauts have done this week. But, while they see the globe and its continents, Christ's vision extends to the past, the present, and the future, to things both seen and unseen - Jesus and God are our strength and our song.

I think that our euphoria today must be so much greater that those lucky folks flying over the launch site of Artemis 2, witnessing the amazing appearance of the rocket appearing above the clouds, reflecting the light of the sun, and representing humanity's hopes and dreams. This worldly and otherworldly miracle astounds us.

Today our joy at Jesus appearing to us suddenly, surprisingly, and permanently fills our hearts and minds to bursting, our joy indeed coming with the dawn, the reappearance of the LIGHT of the world, shining down upon us and all of Creation, within us, in our minds, hearts, and souls, forevermore. Hallelujah, Amen!

### **Hymn**     **Joy Comes with the Dawn**, VU # 166

Refrain	Weeping may come,	Sorrow will turn	We will rejoice, we will
Joy comes with the dawn,	weeping may come in the	sorrow will turn into song	rejoice
joy comes with the morning	night,	and God's laughter make us	and give praise,
sun,	when dark shadows cloud	strong.	to the One who brings us
joy springs from the tomb,	our sight.	Refrain	grace.
and scatters the night with	Refrain		Refrain
her song,			
joy comes with the dawn			

### **Pastoral Prayers**

**L:** With joy in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord, who has conquered death. Father and Mother God, we thank You that for many generations your church has followed the example of those first disciples and proclaimed the resurrection of your Son. We pray that today your church throughout the world will continue to proclaim with joy the truth and wonder of your risen Son.

We pray that all Christians will work together to build up your family, and that any of your people being persecuted for their faith may find peace, hope and fresh strength in the good news of Easter.

**P: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

L: Creator God, we thank you for the delightful sights and sounds of Spring, that show us the wonders of your creation. By your Spirit's power make us aware of how we can be better stewards of your world, to care for it and everything that lives on it. In a moment of silence please bring to God your thanks for a place that is special to you.

**P: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

L: Merciful God, we thank you for all the efforts of Peacemakers around the world, working to bring peace to war-torn nations and trying to get warring people to talk to, and listen to each other. We pray that world leaders and people of influence would play their part too, that they would strive for truth, justice, reconciliation and peace around the world. We pray for all nations of the world, that people will learn to live together with respect and love for one another. In a moment of silence please bring before God a place in need of peace on your heart this morning.

**P: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

L: Faithful God, we thank you for our community, our families and friends. We thank you for the people who taught us about you by their lives, love and actions. We pray especially for those do not know you yet, that during the coming weeks they will come to understand more of the message of Easter and your promise of life and love for them, and that they may be drawn closer to you by our witness and the work of your Holy Spirit. In a moment of silence please thank God for a person who has shown you Jesus by their life and witness.

**P: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

L: We pray that you will roll away their burdens, open their hearts to your peace and healing and fill their lives with the light of your glory. Loving God, we thank you for all the people who have been working so hard over this last year, to care for those in our hospitals, the grieving, the panicking and the lost. We pray for all who feel trapped by pain, loss or depression, those who are suffering, physically, mentally or spiritually. In a moment of quiet please name the person on your heart this morning.

**P: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

L: Faithful God, as we leave church today, we pray that we may shine your love in our families, our church and community, so that all can see that we are followers of the Risen Christ. May God continue to bless this congregation, and every single one of its members, their families, friends, and this community. May the Word of God have permanent residence in your minds and in your homes, may the love of Jesus vibrate deep within your hearts and minds, and may this church's leadership, example, and kindness remain a beacon of Christ's light in this area. Through our gifts to Mission and Service may this reach of love extend across this country and around the globe, which we have so miraculously seen from afar this week in the photos sent from Artemis 2. May the love of God, the father, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sustain, inspired and uphold us and we go about Your work in this our home.

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer. Amen.**

**Parting Hymn** *Welcome, Happy Morning*, VU # 161

Welcome, happy morning!	Earth with joyful welcome	Earth with joyful welcome	Author and sustainer,
Age to age shall say;	Clothes itself for spring:	Clothes itself for spring:	Source of life and breath,
Hell, today is vanquished,	Greets with life reviving,	Greets with life reviving,	You for our salvation
Heaven is won today.	Our returning king:	Our returning king:	Trod the path of death.
Come then, true and faithful,	Flowers in every pasture,	Flowers in every pasture,	Jesus Christ is living,
Now fulfil your word,	Leaves on every bough,	Leaves on every bough,	God for evermore!
This is your third morning,	Speak of sorrows ended,	Speak of sorrows ended,	Now let all creation
Rise, O buried Lord!	Jesus triumphs now!	Jesus triumphs now!	Hail him and adore.
Welcome, happy morning!	Welcome, happy morning!	Welcome, happy morning!	Welcome, happy morning!
Age to age shall say:	Age to age shall say:	Age to age shall say:	Age to age shall say:
Hell, today is vanquished,	Hell, today is vanquished,	Hell, today is vanquished,	Hell, today is vanquished,
Heaven is won today!	Heaven is won today!	Heaven is won today!	Heaven is won today!

**Commissioning & Benediction** May the loving power of God, which raised Jesus to new life, strengthen you in hope, and enrich you with his love, and fill you with joy in your faith. May God bless this congregation on its pathway ahead. Give them courage and determination, hope and optimism, and may their amazing love and faith empower in the days and years ahead. Amen.

**Choral 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.

Praise God for all that He has done;  
Praise Him for He has overcome;  
The grave is beaten love has won;  
Praise God, our Saviour, Christ the Son.

**Choral Amen**