

Glebe-St. James United Church

Easter Sunday

April 5, 2026

Gathered by God

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

"Panis Angelicus"

Cesar Franck

Viola solo: Bruce Taylor

Welcome

Susan Palmai

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time guest or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. This is a place of faith, love, and community. Glebe-St. James is an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

And now, let's acknowledge the land on which our sanctuary stands.

Land Acknowledgement

David Brown

Candle Lighting We Light This Candle

TLUS 55

Call to Worship

On Friday, we thought the good news had been silenced.

On Friday, we thought the good news had taken its last breath.

On Friday, we thought the good news had been buried.

But today, we know the good news is alive and well, calling your name!

Alleluia! Even death has lost its sting.

Let us worship our good-news Christ.

- 1 Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today:
come then, True and Faithful, now fulfil your word;
this is your third morning: rise, O buried Lord!**

refrain

**Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!**

- 2 Earth with joyful welcome clothes itself for spring;
greeted with life reviving our returning king:
flowers in every pasture, leaves on every bough,
speak of sorrows ended; Jesus triumphs now! R**
- 3 Author and sustainer, source of life and breath;
you for our salvation trod the path of death:
Jesus Christ is living, God for evermore!
Now let all creation hail him and adore. R**
- 4 Loose our souls imprisoned, bound with Satan's chain;
all that now is fallen, raise to life again!
Show your face in brightness, shine the
whole world through;
hope returns with daybreak, life returns with you. R**

Call to Healing

Friends, on Easter Sunday we remember that the world did its worst to God.
The world battered and bruised,
betrayed and abandoned,
crucified and buried our living God.

And despite it all, Jesus *still* chose to return.
Jesus rose again and immediately went to work spreading God's love to the very
people who had hurt him. So hear me when I say, there is nothing you can do that
could keep God's love at bay.

With that good news in mind, let us go to God in prayer, trusting that Jesus Christ loves, claims, and seeks us. Friends, let us pray:

Prayer for Healing

**Gracious God,
We want to be Easter people,
We want to shout your good news from the rooftop.
We want to follow the disciples, who ran to look for you.
We want to follow the angels, who said, “Be not afraid,”
 But we are afraid.
 And we don’t know where to look.
 And we are worried we’ll say the wrong thing.
So forgive us, for we are imperfect Easter people.
 We are best intentions and best laid plans.
 We are an out-of-tune chorus of “alleluias.”
 We are on our way, but we are not there yet.
Show us how to embody your good news in this world.
Show us how to be your Easter people.
With hope for tomorrow, we pray, amen.**

Assurance of God’s Love

Family of faith,
Even when we are an out-of-tune chorus of “alleluias,” we belong to God.
Jesus died and rose for us. And there is nothing that could keep God’s love at bay.
So join me in this good news declaration:
**Through Jesus Christ we are seen, saved, loved, and claimed.
This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Gift of Music

My Master From a Garden Rose

Gordon Young

*My Master in a garden lay,
Perfumed with spices rare,
For tender hands had laid Him there
To rest amid the roses.*

*'Twas on a cross they laid Him bare
And pierced His hands with nails
That you and I might live again
And be with Him in glory.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

*My Master from a garden rose
To go for us to heaven
And He will come and take us there
To be with Him forever.*

Sign of Peace

Friends, the peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you.

Hymn Send Your Peace to Our World

TLUS 135

**Send your peace to our world, God,
You, the creator of peace.
Our hearts fill with peace, God
You are the source of healing peace.**

Listening for Wisdom

Theme Conversation From Sad to Surprise!

[Hold up the stone]

Good morning, friends!

Can anyone tell me what this is?

(Wait for answers)

Yes—a rock! A big, heavy stone.

In our Bible story today, some women went to visit Jesus' tomb. And guess what was in front of it?

A **big stone**, just like this—but much bigger.

Now, how do you think they were feeling when they went there?

(Sad... confused... missing Jesus...)

Yes. They were very sad. Someone they loved had died.

[Set the stone down]

But when they got there... something surprising had happened.

The stone was **rolled away!**

Can you make a surprised face with me?

(Everyone makes a face)

Inside the tomb—Jesus wasn't there.

Instead, there were two angels who said:

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here—he has risen!”

[Hold up candle, still OFF]

At first, the women were scared and confused.

But then the angels said something very important:

“Remember.”

Remember what Jesus told you.

And when they remembered—something changed.

[Turn candle ON]

It was like a little light turned on inside them!

They remembered that Jesus said love is stronger than anything—even death.

Now I need your help.

Can you think of something Jesus teaches us to remember?

(Love one another, God is with us, be kind, forgive...)

Yes! Those are all things Jesus taught.

And when we remember those things, it's like a light turns on inside us too.

The women ran to tell their friends,

“Jesus is alive!”

Some of the friends didn't believe it at first.

But one of them—Peter—ran to see for himself.

Because even a tiny bit of hope

can help us take a step forward.

So here's the good news for us today:

When we feel sad...

or scared...

or unsure...

We can **remember**.

And when we remember Jesus' love—
it's like a little light turns on inside us.

[Lift candle slightly]

And that little light?

It can grow.

And grow.

And grow.

Because **Jesus is alive**,
and God's love is always with us.

Repeat after me prayer:

Jesus is alive!

(Gesture – throw hands up)

God's love is with me!

(Gesture – a hug)

And hope is growing in my heart!

(Gesture – blooming flower)

Amen

Hymn Little By Little (*Verses 1 and 5*)

TLUS 134

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little I know,

The tiniest seed will grow.

Habits of peace and justice.

Habits of peace and justice,

Habits of peace and justice:

Tools to change our world.

Prayer for Wisdom

Holy One,

All over the world, people are gathering to hear the same story.

All over the world, people are gathering to hear how death lost its sting.

All over the world, people are gathering together, praying for a glimpse of you.

So like our neighbours all over the world, we pray, be here.

Speak to us today.

Soften the calloused parts of our hearts until we can sense your Holy Spirit in our midst once more.

With eagerness and hope, we run to the tomb. We sing alleluia. We bow our heads. We listen for you. Amen.

Gospel Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

This is wisdom from the gospel of Luke.

Gift of Music **Let Heavenly Music Fill This Place**

Gordon Young

Let heavenly music fill this place

And all the harmonies of heaven be heard;

Let one grand song of praise resound, one alleluia!

Let mighty organs peal and roll

*And choirs invisible be heard;
Let anthems grand now thrill my soul, one alleluia!
O may we join the heavenly choir
That through the ages will sing on;
In praise to Father and to Son, one alleluia!
One alleluia!*

Reflection When Embers Catch

Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

Early on that first Easter morning, while it was still dark, the women went to the tomb carrying spices—carrying love, carrying grief, carrying all the things you carry when someone you love is gone.

They were not going expecting resurrection.

They were going to tend to death.

And yet, what they found was not what they expected.

The stone was rolled away.

The tomb was empty.

And suddenly—two dazzling figures stood beside them.

Luke tells us they were terrified. Of course they were.

Because resurrection always begins by unsettling us.

And then comes the question that changes everything:

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”

And then—this gentle, powerful invitation:

“Remember.”

1. When Memory Sparks Hope

“Then they remembered his words.”

Isn't that such a quiet turning point?

Not a miracle in the sky.

Not thunder or lightning.

Just memory.

They remembered what Jesus had told them—

that suffering would not be the end,

that death would not have the last word.

And suddenly, something that had seemed finished...

wasn't finished after all.

Hope often begins like that.
Not as a blaze—but as an ember.
A word remembered.
A promise recalled.
A moment revisited.
Maybe you’ve known that kind of moment.
A song that brings someone back to you.
A phrase someone once spoke that now means more than it did before.
A quiet sense that love didn’t end when everything else did.
Sometimes what makes an ember glow again...
is simply remembering.

2. When Testimony Fans the Flame

The women didn’t stay at the tomb.
They ran to tell the others.
And what happens?
“They did not believe the women; their words seemed to them an idle tale.”
But the Greek word Luke uses there—*leros*—it’s stronger than that.
It means nonsense.
Utter foolishness.
The ramblings of someone not to be trusted.
And honestly—that reaction feels familiar, doesn’t it?
Because we live in a world where hope can sound like nonsense.
When the news is heavy.
When grief is fresh.
When loss feels final.
Resurrection can sound like wishful thinking.
Like something too good to be true.
And yet—something in the women’s testimony catches.
Because Peter gets up.
He runs.
He needs to see for himself.
That’s how hope spreads sometimes—not by certainty,
but by just enough possibility to make us move.
Just enough light to take one step.

3. When Grief Feels Too Heavy

And still—the others remain unconvinced.
And we shouldn't judge them too quickly.
Because grief has weight.
Grief wraps itself around us like a heavy cloak.
It slows us down.
It dims our vision.
Sometimes memory isn't enough.
Sometimes testimony doesn't reach us.
Sometimes we sit exactly where the disciples are—
hearing good news, but unable to receive it.
And that's not failure.
That's love.
Because grief is what love looks like
when it has nowhere to go.
So we don't rush past it.
We don't deny it.
We don't rank it or measure it.
Even the smallest grief matters.
Because it tells the truth:
we have loved.

4. The Turning Point: Grief Is Not the End

But here is the heart of Easter:
Grief is real.
But it is not ultimate.
Grief is a passage.
Not a destination.
It is liminal—
a threshold space.
The women cross that threshold when they remember.
Peter crosses it when he runs.
The others will cross it later, in their own time.
Because resurrection does not erase grief—
it transforms it.
It tells us that love is not lost.
That endings are not final.

That what looks like absence
may be the beginning of something we cannot yet see.

5. What Makes the Ember Catch?

So what makes an ember of hope flare into a living fire?

Sometimes it's memory.

A word, a promise, a presence that returns to us.

Sometimes it's testimony.

Someone else's courage to say, "I have seen something... and it changed me."

Sometimes it's time.

The slow, quiet work of God in hearts that are not ready yet.

And sometimes—

it is simply the refusal of God

to leave us in the dark.

Because Easter is not something we manufacture.

It is something God does.

God rolls away stones we did not think could move.

God speaks into silence.

God breathes life where we only expected endings.

6. A Word for Us Today

So where are you this Easter morning?

Are you with the women—

just beginning to remember?

Are you with Peter—

running, searching, unsure but hopeful?

Or are you with the others—

hearing it all, and thinking,

"This sounds like nonsense"?

Wherever you are—

the story makes room for you.

Because resurrection does not demand instant belief.

It begins with an ember.

A flicker.

A question.

A memory.

And then, slowly, gently—
God breathes on that ember
until it becomes something more.

7. The Fire of New Life

And here is the promise:
That ember you carry—
however small—
is enough.
Because it is not only your hope.
It is God's hope in you.
The same God who raised Jesus
is still at work.
Still speaking.
Still stirring.
Still bringing life out of what feels lost.
So remember.
Listen for the stories.
Hold space for your grief.
And trust—
that even now,
in ways you may not yet see,
the fire is beginning to catch.

Christ is risen.

And hope—
even now—
is alive.

Responding in Thanksgiving

Hymn The Day of Resurrection

VU 164

- 1 The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
the passover of gladness, the passover of God!
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
our Christ has brought us over with hymns of victory.**

- 2 Our hearts be free of evil, that we may see aright
the Christ in rays eternal of resurrection light,
and, listening to the accents, may hear so calm and plain
Christ's own 'All hail!' and, hearing, may raise the victor strain.**
- 3 Now let the heavens be joyful, let earth its song begin,
the round world keep high triumph, and all that is therein;
let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ indeed is risen, our Joy that has no end.**

Invitation to Give

Offering Hymn What Can I do?

MV 191

**What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy, I'll say a prayer
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.**

Offering Prayer

Beloved One,
take our offerings of time, talent, and money
and use them to create peace
by meeting the needs of the suffering.
We each have a little but together as a congregation,
what we offer you here in love becomes more.
We ask you to bless our gifts
and with the addition of your blessing,
we believe that there could be enough for all.
Amen

Invitation to the table

On Easter morning, the women went looking for Jesus.
The angel said he was not in the tomb, so they ran, afraid yet filled with joy.
They sought after him.
They hurried to Galilee, looking for their risen Christ.

And in their seeking, the text tells us: “Suddenly, Jesus met them” (Matthew 28:9)

Jesus met the women in their seeking.
Jesus met them in their moment of fear and grief.
Jesus met them when they felt lost.
Jesus met them and provided hope.

Friends, if like the women you are seeking Christ,
If you have grief or fear,
If you have ever felt lost, or if you are in need of some hope,
Then come to this Table.
All are welcome here.

For just as Jesus met the women in their seeking,
I am confident that Jesus meets us here.
Saying, “Do not be afraid.”

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Risen Christ,
good-news God,
and ever-present Spirit,
today is a day we’ve been waiting for.
We’ve been waiting for the holy mystery of this morning.
We’ve been waiting for the good news of an empty grave.
We’ve been waiting for the sound of alleluias.
Today is a day we’ve been waiting for, and now that we’re here,
all we can say is thank you.

Thank you for showing the world what could be.
Thank you for loving us with abandon.
Thank you for facing death and returning with mercy.
Thank you for the empty tomb.
Thank you for morning birdsong.
And thank you for meeting us here, as you always do.

Today we celebrate the good news that you are alive in the world.
The grave couldn't hold you.
Death couldn't keep you.
The empire couldn't confine you.
Instead, you are here and everywhere.
You are risen.
You are on the move in the world.
Your love meets us at this Table¹ and calls us out into the world.
And that is *good, good news*.

So on this Easter Sunday, this holiest of days,
we ask for your help noticing you in our midst.

When our feet walk beside wildflowers, may we think of you.
When the stars light up the sky, may we see you.
When we break bread with our neighbours, may we feel you.
When a stranger acts with kindness and love, may we recognize you.

We know that you are out in the world, God,
and we don't want to miss a minute of it.

And while we pray these prayers with gratitude and joy,
we also pray for those who still find themselves at the foot of the cross.
We pray for those stuck in the pain of Good Friday. We pray for...

Prayers of the People

Holy One, so many days feel like Good Friday,
but the promise of Easter is that Good Friday does not
have the last word. So may we live like that is true.
May we speak this hope to our neighbors. May we
look for you in our midst.
May we see you at this Table, in this ordinary bread and cup. And may we
always remember: alleluias came after the grave.
As we live like Easter people, let us continue to pray the words Jesus taught us to
pray, saying...

Prayer of Jesus

**Our Mother and Father
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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

We break the bread

The bread of life
The cup of Blessing

We Share Communion

Gift of Music

Lord, I Believe In You (Credo)

Gordon Young

*Lord, I believe in you, you are the one.
Oh, hallelujah, oh praise the Lord!
You are the one who came from heaven,
You are the one who came to save;
You are the one who rose victorious,
Rose victorious over the grave.
Oh, Lord, I believe in you, you are the one.
Oh hallelujah, oh, praise the Lord!
Yes, I believe in you,
Lord, at last, I do believe!*

Sent by the Spirit

Prayer Following Communion

Loving Christ,
thank you for the bread that nourishes our bodies.
Thank you for the cup that quenches our thirst.
Thank you for this community, which reminds us who we are.
Thank you for this Table that brings us together.
Thank you for the music that lifts our spirits.
Thank you for the promise that at this Table, and every table, you will be there.
May this holy meal nourish us to go out into the world
speaking of your good, good news.
With joy and hope we pray, amen.

Hymn Jesus Christ is Risen Today

VU 155

- 1 Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!
our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!
who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah!
suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!**

- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing hallelujah!
unto Christ, our heavenly King, hallelujah!
who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!
sinners to redeem and save. Hallelujah!**

- 3 But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!
our salvation have procured; hallelujah!
now above the sky he's King, hallelujah!
where the angels ever sing. Hallelujah!**

- 4 Sing we to our God above, hallelujah!
praise eternal as God's love; hallelujah!
praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah!
praise the Son and Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!**

Sending Forth

As you leave this place,
when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.
For the good news of the gospel is:
love and justice for all.
It is joy that surprises,
and nonviolence that transforms.
The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,
so go forth speaking.
For if you won't, then who will?

Sung Amen

Music to Send Us Forth

"Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!"

End of Worship, Beginning of Service

**Thank you for joining with us this morning.
Please join us, following the service for a time of refreshments and fellowship.**

Musical Acknowledgements

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