

A Worship Celebration for Easter with the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church, Thomas J. Bickerton, Resident Bishop

April 12, 2020
Order of Service

GREETING: The Rev. Matthew T. Curry, Director of Connectional Ministry

HYMN: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (UMH #302) led by Mr. Raymond Trapp, Musical Director. Words by Charles Wesley, Music from *Lyra Davidica*

1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia! Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!
2. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia! Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia! Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!
3. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia! Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia! Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia! Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!
4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia! Following our exalted Head, Alleluia! Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia! Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

SCRIPTURE READING: John 20:1-18 read by the Rev. Doris K. Dalton, Director of Leadership Development and Intercultural Competency

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

SERMON: "Easter People, Raise Your Voices" by Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton

HYMN: "Easter People Raise Your Voices" (UMH #304), led by Mr. Raymond Trapp, Musical Director. Words by William M. James, Music by Henry T. Smart.

1. Easter people, raise your voices, Sounds of heaven in earth should ring. Christ has brought us Heaven's choicest; Heavenly music, let it ring. Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter people, let us sing.

2. Fear of death can no more stop us From our pressing here below. For our Lord empowered us To triumph over every foe. Alleluia! Alleluia! On to victory now we go.

3. Every day to us is Easter, With its resurrection song. When in trouble, move the faster to our God who rights the wrong. Alleluia! Alleluia! See the power of heavenly throngs.

PRAYER: The Rev. David A. Gilmore, Director of Congregational Development and Revitalization

As we face this unprecedented time in our lives and our world, we would like to invite you to pray. Psalm 62:8 states that we are to "pour out our hearts to God, for [God] is our refuge."

Pray that the drastic measures being taken will slow the spread of the virus. Pray for those most susceptible to contracting COVID-19: older adults and people with serious chronic medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease). Pray for our neighbors: that we as Christians will be witnesses to them regarding how to sense God's presence with us at all times in all ways (Jesus, Immanuel, God with us). Pray for our communities, workplaces, and schools. Pray for homes impacted by the loss of work, many in the service sectors (like restaurants, salons, etc.) and especially for single parents who already have a heavy load to lift and now carry more. Pray for our health-care system and medical professionals. (Please remember to include the doctors, nurses, department heads, facilities, and laboratories testing and discovering how to address the coronavirus.) Pray for our first responders: fire, ambulance, police, etc. Pray for homeless shelters and those working with social service needs. Pray for faith leaders all over our world and for the NYAC to be a [beacon of hope].

God of us all,

We give you thanks for your love, your grace, and your power on this blessed Resurrection morning!

We thank you for the many friends and loved ones who have made the extra effort to via this medium – here with us today.

We thank you for the brilliance of our many colors – and the colors around us that remind us of new life!

Today, blessed God, we gather to remember and celebrate:

We remember Jesus, who healed the sick and raised the dead.

We remember Jesus, who gathered children to himself and dealt kindly with women centuries before our efforts at women's liberation.

We remember Jesus, who always kept the mission in the forefront, and the minutia in the lowest seat.

We remember Jesus, Son of God, Song of God, who sang God's melody to us.

We remember Jesus, who consented to suffer and die at our hand.

Today, Almighty God, we celebrate the fact that death could not hold Jesus in the grave!

We celebrate that not even death is able to separate us from the love of God!

We celebrate the new life that we have in Christ!

We celebrate the assurance that we have of eternal life!

Today we celebrate and give thanks that in life, in death, in life after death – in all things – including COVID 19 – we [still] belong to [our] God! Amen.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING: We are sent forth from this time of worship in the power of Christ's resurrection. Alleluia! May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God, And the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, now and always. AMEN.

- Worship Service Notes: All Transitional Music is “He Rose” (UMH #316)
- Musical Director is Mr. Raymond Trapp. Joseph Roberts on Keyboard, Raymond Trapp on Organ, and Shani Boxill on Vocals.
- The Prayer is adapted from “Ten Ways to Pray In Response to COVID-19” and “Celebration and Thanksgiving on Easter Sunday; A Pastoral Prayer”.
- The Dismissal with Blessings is from the UM Book of Worship, p376.
- Video Recording, Editing and Post-Production Services provided by EPMG, LLC
- Translation Services provided by: Johanny Dickson (Spanish), Chan K.P. Gilliam (Korean) and Peter Kung (Simplified Chinese)