

Easter Sunday Service of Worship Distancing Together

St. John's United Church of Christ

PRELUDE

CHURCH BELLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRINITARIAN GREETING

RITUAL OF FELLOWSHIP

A Video Drive-By Greeting

*CALL TO WORSHIP

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you.

M: This is the day that the Lord has made: Let us rejoice and be glad.

P: We shall not die, but live to proclaim the works of the Lord.

M: The Lord has Risen!

P: He has Risen indeed!

HYMN OF CELEBRATION

This Easter Celebration

(Tune: The Church's One Foundation)

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This Easter celebration is not like ones we've known.

We sing in isolation, we sing the hymns alone.

We're distant from our neighbors — from worship leaders, too.

No flowers grace the chancel to set a festive mood.

No gathered choirs are singing; no banners lead the way.

O God of love and promise, where's joy this Easter Day?

With sanctuaries empty, may homes become the place
we ponder resurrection and celebrate your grace.

Our joy won't come from worship that's in a crowded room
but from the news of women who saw the empty tomb.

Our joy comes from disciples who ran with haste to see —
who heard that Christ is risen, and then, by grace, believed.

We thank you that on Easter, your church is blessed to be
a scattered, faithful body that's doing ministry.

In homes and in the places of help and healing, too,
we live the Easter message by gladly serving you.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

M: O God, like the first witnesses of the resurrection, we too, come to the empty tomb with a variety of responses. We hear the good news that Jesus has risen, but so often the evidence for this is difficult to detect in our lives.

P: Forgive us when we fail to make the risen Christ evident through our words, our actions - our lives .

M: As we come to the empty tomb seeking forgiveness for all our faults and shortcomings, help us to re-order our priorities so that we put the risen Christ first in our lives at all times.

P: Forgive us when we forget that the tomb is forever empty because Jesus is here and is wherever we live and worship.

M: Help us always to remember the costly act of Jesus Christ which led to victory over sin and death, an act which gives us the gift of a new beginning - guilt free and graced by love. The tomb is empty because Christ is risen.

P: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia. Amen!

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

M: Jesus "is the one ordained by God 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." (Acts 10: 42b,43) Hear, believe, and live the good news. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

P: Thanks be to God!

***RESPONSE**

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SHARING GOD'S BLESSINGS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

OFFERTORY

L: Our offerings are but one response to the good news of Easter. They are an appropriate expression of thanks to God. They bear witness to the degree of our commitment. But no offering is a substitute for personal faithfulness to God, who calls us to be healer, witnesses, and lovers of the world's people, whom Christ came to save.

ANTHEM

In Christ Alone

"Virtual Choir"

Words and Music by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty Vocal Arrangement by David Wesley
This virtual choir a cappella performance features the voices of 48 singers from 14 countries. It was a labour of love lasting 5 months, and many dozens of work hours.

*** DOXOLOGY**

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

P: We give because we have received your gift of life; we give because we have a message of good news; we give because we wish to share what we have received. We share because we will soon fully reemerge, changed by lessons learned. Bless the gifts we offer from our home, our holy place, and bless us we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

L: In this extraordinary and at times frustrating time – let us offer our ears, mind and heart to God. Let us pray;

P: O Lord God Almighty, You have raised up your Son, rolling away the stone from the tomb. Through your Son, who is the way, the Truth and the Life, the gate of everlasting life has opened. May we ever thirst and hunger to hear and live the gift of your words. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Colossians 3:1-4 ~ John 20:1-18

SERMON

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 28:1-10

HYMN

This Is My Song

Verse 1

This is my song O God of all the nations
A song of peace for lands afar and mine
This is my home the country where my heart is
Here are my hopes my dreams my holy shrine
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine

Verse 2

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine
But other lands have sunlight too and clover
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine
O hear my song Thou God of all nations
A song of peace for their land and for mine

Verse 3

This is my prayer O Lord of all earth's kingdoms
Thy kingdom come on earth Thy will be done
Let Christ be lifted up till all shall serve Him
And hearts united learn to live as one
O hear my prayer Thou God of all nations
Myself I give Thee let Thy will be done

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PASTORAL PRAYERS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayer requests, Prayer & Moment for Silent Reflection

Lord's Prayer – Debts/Debtors

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Invitation

L: In the name of the living God, the Resurrected Christ, and the mysterious Spirit, let us together, prepare to eat the bread that is broken for us and to drink of the cup – together, not in person but in God's Spirit. Receive the life of God, share the victory of Christ and enter into the mystery of the Spirit.

Communion Prayers

M: Holy God, we thank you for calling us into existence by your word; for speaking your words of demand and grace through teachers and prophets; for promising that your words shall be written on our hearts. We marvel with gratitude that your Word became flesh and lived among us in Jesus; that he suffered as we suffer to be with us and die for us; that you raised him from the dead in victory over death and sin.

P: Holding the glad word of your good news in our minds, as well all worship and share this meal from our own homes, may your Spirit transform this bread and cup into signs of Christ's resurrected and living presence and engrave upon our hearts the life-transforming image of Christ. With all companions of Christ's way in every time and place we praise your holy name. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing the Meal

Prayer of Thanksgiving

M: This has been no ordinary meal. It has been one in which we have been fed and nourished with the life of Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord.

P: This is no ordinary time, and yet you still provide. We thank you for this great gift, we pray that as we go from this moment, we that in our social and worship distancing we be refreshed, renewed and eager, to share that life with one another and with others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

*** CLOSING HYMN**

In Remembrance of Me

Verse 1

In remembrance of Me eat this bread
In remembrance of Me drink this wine
In remembrance of Me pray for the time
When God's own will is done

Verse 2

In remembrance of Me heal the sick
In remembrance of Me feed the poor
In remembrance of Me open the door
And let your brother in let Him in

Bridge

Take eat and be comforted
Drink and remember too
That this is My body
And precious blood shed for you shed for you

Verse 3

In remembrance of Me search for truth
In remembrance of Me always love
In remembrance of Me don't look above
But in your heart, in your heart
Look in your heart for God
Do this in remembrance of Me
Do this in remembrance of Me
In remembrance of Me

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*** BENEDICTION**

*** POSTLUDE**