

WORSHIP SERVICE

Northampton Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday of Easter

April 14, 2024

10:00 AM

PRELUDE

Prelude from 'Te Deum'

Charpentier

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

UNISON CALL TO WORSHIP

We are witnesses to the love God has poured into us. We are witnesses of God's love, sharing it with each person we meet. We are witnesses to everyone we encounter, little children like us, sisters and brothers in God's family. Let us worship God!

HYMN

Christ Is Alive!

TRURO

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.**

**Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant years in Palestine,
But saving, healing, here and now,
And touching every place and time.**

**In every insult, rift and war
Where color, scorn or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
And lives, where even hope has died.**

**Women and men, in age and youth,
Can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
And find the way, the life, the truth,
Revealed in Jesus, freed for all.**

**Christ is alive, and comes to bring
Good news to this and every age,
Till earth and sky and ocean ring
With joy, with justice, love and praise.**

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(inspired by Luke 24:36-53)

ONE: God, You have told us to trust in you with all of our hearts.

MANY: You have told us not to lean on our own understanding.

ONE: And so we try to trust,

MANY: But we become anxious when we don't understand.

ONE: We don't understand what you mean by

MANY: "This bread is my body." "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

ONE: We don't understand who will betray you

MANY: Or why, or what that will mean for us.

ONE: We don't understand how death is victory.

MANY: We don't understand post-resurrection life – yours or ours.

ONE: We don't understand why you ask us to stay here,

MANY: And we're afraid we will somehow miss the power when it comes down from on high.

We pause for a moment of silent, personal confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: Jesus is gentle with our doubts. The Spirit offers us peace in the midst of our lack of understanding. The One who created us leads us step by step into deeper trust.

MANY: Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me *GLORY TO GOD*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.**

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

1 John 3:1-7

HYMN

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

PROMISE

In the bulb there is a flower;

In the seed, an apple tree;

In cocoons, a hidden promise:

Butterflies will soon be free!

In the cold and snow of winter

There's a spring that waits to be,

Unrevealed until its season,

Something God alone can see.

**There's a song in every silence,
Seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness,
Bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
What it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season,
Something God alone can see.**

**In our end is our beginning;
In our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing;
In our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
At the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season,
Something God alone can see.**

READER'S THEATER

Luke 24:36-48

READER 1: Suddenly Jesus himself appeared, standing among his gathered followers.

READER 2: "Greetings!" he said, "Peace be with you."

READER 1: Taken by surprise, they thought he was a ghost, and were scared spitless. Jesus said to them,

READER 2: "What have you got to be afraid of? Why are you letting your doubts get the better of you? Here, take a look at my hands and feet. See for yourselves that it is really me. Reach out and touch me and you will know that I am made of flesh and bone. No ghost can claim that!"

READER 1: As he spoke, he showed them his hands and feet. It all seemed too good to be true; so wonderful they couldn't believe their eyes. Their heads were bursting with joy and disbelief! Jesus asked them,

READER 2: "Have you got anything here I can eat?"

READER 1: They gave him a piece of grilled fish and he took it and ate it in front of them. Then he said to them,

READER 2: "The things I have said while I was with you amount to this: everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms is to be fulfilled."

READER 1: As he spoke they began to see how to read the scriptures with open minds so as to understand what God was saying in them. Jesus said to them:

READER 2: "What was written will now be clear to you: that the Messiah is to suffer and then rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that the people of every nation must be told of the Messiah's call to turn their lives around and receive forgiveness for sin. You can get started here in Jerusalem. You have witnessed these things first hand, so you can tell everyone what you have seen and heard."

HYMN

Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

MFUTAHINI, HALELUYA

Christ has arisen, alleluia.

Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.

For our redeemer burst from the tomb,

Even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia!

Jesus is living, alleluia!

**For three long days the grave did its worst
Until its strength by God was dispersed.**

**He who gives life did death undergo,
And in its conquest his might did show.**

**Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!**

The angel said to them, "Do not fear.

You look for Jesus who is not here.

See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.

Only the grave clothes are lying there."

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia!

Jesus is living, alleluia!

"Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.

He has arisen this world to save.

Jesus' redeeming labors are done.

Even the battle with sin is won."

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia!

Jesus is living, alleluia!

Christ has arisen to set us free.

Alleluia, to him praises be.

Jesus is living! Let us all sing;

He reigns triumphant, heavenly King.

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia!

Jesus is living, alleluia!

VISUAL REFLECTION

Bringing to Life

Dale Ryan

RESPONSIVE EASTER LITANY

Every Day Is Easter

ONE: When Thomas touched the wounds and set himself free

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When Peter's three "yes's" to Jesus finished his three denials

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When Mary ready to embalm the dead ran in fear from the empty tomb

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When the disciples looked from afar at a breakfast of fish on the beach

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When Emmaus became synonymous with welcome and the breaking of bread with strangers

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When Paul was blinded by the light and recognized the voice niggling in his head

MANY: It was Easter day.

ONE: When the hungry are fed at the table the same table as the rich

MANY: It is Easter day.

ONE: When weapons are beaten to ploughshares and peace is a word to be shouted

MANY: It is Easter day.

ONE: When the stranger is welcomed in community and the lonely are restored to relationship

MANY: It is Easter day.

ONE: And Christ is risen!

MANY: He is risen indeed!

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

(Scan the QR Code to give online →)



OFFERTORY ANTHEM *(Andy Chen, Soloist):*

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks

arr. Pulkingham and Fishel

DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

...God in Community, Holy in One, open us to your presence, as we pray as Jesus has taught us, saying ...

Our 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 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN

Go to the World!

SINE NOMINE

Go to the world! Go into all the earth.

Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,

Baptizing as the sign of our rebirth.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go into every place.

Go live the word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

**Go to the world! Go struggle, bless, and pray;
The nights of tears give way to joyful day.
As servant church, you follow Christ's own way.
Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
For I am with you till the age shall end,
When all the hosts of glory cry, "Amen!"
Alleluia. Alleluia.**

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

ONE: Go now as God's chosen witnesses to testify that Christ has been raised and that we are raised with him. Do not look for him among the dead, but be glad and rejoice in his salvation. And may God raise you from all that would entomb you; May Christ Jesus call you by name and go ahead of you; And may the Holy Spirit empower you for all that is good.

**MANY: We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ.
Amen.**

POSTLUDE

The Old Rugged Cross

Bennard

CLG QUESTIONS:

Read the Reader's Theater version of Luke 24:26-38.

It follows out of the Emmaus Road story; the disciples are troubled and amazed that Jesus has reappeared.

1. What doubts or questions trouble our congregation? How could we name these in a way that provides comfort and creates community?
2. What signs of resurrection do you see happening in our congregation or community? Where do you see new life being offered, forgiveness extended or peace cultivated?
3. What does it look like to hold joy and doubt in productive tension with one another? How can we help each other respond to Christ's call while also creating space for questions?

WORSHIP NOTES:

Thank you to Jessica Stehr for leading our worship service this morning while Pastor Judy is away on vacation.

The **Call to Worship** is written by Thom Shuman and posted on LiturgyLink. <https://www.liturgylink.net>

The **Prayer of Confession** and the **Assurance of Pardon** were written by Joanna Harader, and posted on Spacious Faith. <https://spaciousfaith.com/2012/11/07/Wednesday-worship-piece-being-disciples>

The **Prayer for Illumination** was written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on the **Liturgies** Online blog.

The **Reader's Theater** edition of *Luke 24:36-48* was written by Nathan Nettleton, copyright ©2002. LaughingBird.net

The **Visual Reflection** is by Rev. Dale Ryan, PhD., Associate Professor of Recovery Ministry and Director of the Institute for Recovery Ministry at Fuller Seminary. Published on The Work of The People, www.theworkofthepeople.com.

The **Easter Litany** is written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Mucky Paws. <http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws>

The **Prayers of the People** are adapted from a prayer written by Thom Shuman, and posted on his excellent Lectionary Liturgies blog.

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