



Community UCC

We're worth our words

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Champaign, Illinois

Third Sunday of Easter, Year B

April 14, 2024

Thoughts before worship: The ultimate message is this: no matter how dead you feel inside, or how dead your life dreams may feel, God is making a way for you! Easter kicks off our “Resurrection Stories” series with the Story of all Stories and the reason why there is always hope. Can you turn your life around? Can you find new life when everything feels lifeless? Can light shine in what feels like a dark tomb? Yes. Yes. Yes!

Prelude

Aaron Ames

Welcome, a Word About Worship, and an Opportunity to Check-In

Call to Worship: The Collective Story of Resurrection

Introit

Rise Up

CUCC Choir

*Rise up in us and we will rise
From death into a newfound life:
From bondage freed, from harm released,
From illness healed, as one in peace.
When all is lost our hearts are warmed,
Our hope restored, our lives transformed.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Leader: Mary Magdalene made her way to the tomb, not expecting to see the stone rolled away from the entrance...

Reader: We sometimes simply accept the dead-ends of life, and expect that closed doors are closed forever.

Leader: She ran back to get Simon Peter and another disciple, thinking that Jesus’ body had been stolen, taken away...

Reader: Expecting the worst is often our first thought.

Leader: They ran to the tomb and went inside, seeing the linens left behind...

Reader: We sometimes see only the evidence that backs up our worst fears, that feeds our imagined terrors.

Leader: The two disciples went home but Mary stayed at the tomb, crying...

Reader: Trying to escape our pain, we sometimes leave it too soon, not allowing love to show us an upside to the story.

We welcome you to our service this morning. Celebrating the diversity of creation, Community United Church welcomes persons of any age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or life condition. May the Divine Presence become real to you through this time of worship. We hope you come back!

Note: Our worship services are live streamed. If you prefer not to have the back of your head seen on the live stream worship please do not sit in the first seven pews on the left side (organ/piano) of the sanctuary.

Note 2: The congregation responds to the liturgy parts in **BOLD**

*Everyone is invited to stand in body or in spirit.

Leader: A voice from behind Mary inquired after her weeping but she did not recognize it at first...

Reader: When we are discouraged, it is difficult to recognize the Good News: that we are not alone and that we are not at the end of our stories...

Leader: She exclaimed, "Teacher!" and after seeing it was indeed her very-alive friend, she ran to tell the disciples "I have seen the Lord!" ...

**We open this day to the possibilities still in play,
that new beginnings can happen in the midst of what feels like endings,
and resurrection from death-dealing forces is possible.**

Leader: This is a Word of Life for the people who long for it.

Thanks be to the Living Word.

***Opening Hymn**

The Strife Is O'er

NCH 242, v. 1, 2. 4

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
The strife is o'er, the battle done;
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun.
Alleluia!*

*The powers of death have done their worst,
but Christ their legions has dispersed.
Let shouts of holy joy outburst.
Alleluia!*

*Christ, by your wounds on Calvary,
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live and sing eternally.
Alleluia!*

*Final Ending:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

The Key to Peace

***Passing of the Peace**

Search Committee Announcement and Gratitude for our Joint Search Committee

Anthem

Hear My Prayer

CUCC Choir

*O Lord, please hear my prayer, In the mornin' when I rise.
It's your servant bound for glory. O dear Lord, please hear my prayer.*

*Lord, please hear my prayer. Keep me safe within Your arms.
It's your servant bound for glory. O dear Lord, please hear my prayer.*

*When my work on earth is done, And You come to take me home.
Just to know I'm bound for glory. And to hear You say well done.
Done with sin and sorrow, have mercy, mercy. Amen.*

Call to Prayer

After the sermon, we will offer up our joys and concerns. Your prayer requests will be offered aloud. Whether you are sitting here in the sanctuary, or worshipping with us remotely, you are invited to add your joys and concerns to the prayer list: go to community-ucc.org/pray (a Google Form), or scan the QR code found here or there are prayer cards on the table at the back of the Sanctuary that you may fill out and hand to the usher.



Prelude to Scripture

Whether we take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth, or story, let us listen now for the meaning it might hold for us on this day.

Sacred Reading from the Original Testament

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And God will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; death will be swallowed up forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of the people God will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; for whom we have waited, so that we might be saved. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation.

Postlude to Scripture

Together, let us say:

May the Spirit bless us with wisdom and wonder as we ponder the meaning of these words for our lives.

*Hymn

I Come to the Garden Alone

NCH 237

*I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses*

*Chorus
And He walks with me
And He talks with me
And He tells me I am His own
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known*

*Verse 2
He speaks and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing*

*Verse 3
I'd stay in the garden with Him
Tho' the night around me be falling
But He bids me go thro' the voice of woe
His voice to me is calling*

Sermon

Testimony to Resurrection: Raised

Silent Meditation

Joys and Concerns

Morning Prayer and The Lord's Prayer "Our Creator, Who art in heaven..."

NCH 9c

Prayer Response *Alleluia*

NCH 768

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Call to Offering

The invitation to give is an opportunity to live resurrected. We are no longer bound to greed, no longer tied to the expectations of others. Instead, as an Easter people, we are free to live as Christ lived, with love, generosity, and service at our centers. You may give online at community-ucc.org by clicking donate, or give in person. May God bless the gifts and the givers.



Offertory *Hope Will Rise Again* CUCC Choir

*Easter morning, Sunday dawning, Love is shining bright
Flowers waking, Earth is shaking resonating life
Now the stone is rolled away. He is risen from the grave!*

*We are Easter people now; turning power upside down
In the valley of the shadow, we're the candle in the window
Saying Hope will rise again.*

*Everybody, hear the story Grace is given free.
All together, true forever There's no where Love can't reach.
So let the walls be broken down Revolution all around*

We are Easter people now...

*Can you feel it rising now, springing up from the frozen ground
Can you hear the echoes sound...*

We are Easter people now...

*In the valley of the shadow, we're the candle in the window
In the broken pieces, healing In our unbelief, believing
Saying Hope will rise, Hope will rise again!*

Commissioning of the Community

*Hymn *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

NCH 403, v. 1, 3, 4

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust this earthly frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*Refrain:
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
all other ground is sinking sand;*

all other ground is sinking sand.

*Christ's oath and covenant and blood
support me in the rising flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
Christ then is all my hope and stay.
(Refrain)*

*When Christ shall come with trumpet sound,
'oh, may I then in Love be found,
Dressed in God's righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne!
(Refrain)*

***Benediction**

As we go, we remember: Whatever binds you, whatever locks you up, whatever keeps you from the life for which you were created...can be opened wide.

For we believe our stories can be rewritten each and every day. We know it isn't this easy or quick, but let this be a vision of your life unlocked –life resurrected.

And now, may you go into the world,
unlocking new life in all the ways you discover you can,
for yourself, for others, for the world.
And may the God who created you to be raised up,
the Christ who showed you what resurrection looks like,
and the Spirit who is transforming your life even now,
be with you now and evermore.

Amen.

***Benediction Response**

Halleluja

NCH 236

*Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

***Postlude**

Aaron Ames

Please join us in the Parlor for the after party.

Acknowledgements

Liturgy used with permission from Worship Design Studio Easter series, "Resurrection Stories," worshipdesignstudio.com/stories

Introit, "Rise Up in Us," Amanda Udis-Kessler

Anthem, "Hear My Prayer," Words and Music by Moses Hogan

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Morning Prayer written by Minister Emeritus, Rev. Connie Bandy

Offertory, "Hope Will Rise Again," Andra Moran and Ben Grace

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Serving Today

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- **Prayer Shawls:** Elena Kasper

- **Meal Train:** Jennifer Robbennolt

- **Driver's Ministry:** Marilou Hinrichs

- **Healing Music Ministry:** Marilou Hinrichs

- **Card Ministry:** Peg Wade

- **Visitor's Ministry:** Marilou Hinrichs

- **Health and Wellness Team:**

- **Hospitality Team:** Rocio (Ro) Arroyave Jamison
and Dennis Jamison

Children & Family: Brin Schuler* and Kelly Tull

Finance: Roger Wade* (treasurer), David Willcox (financial secretary)

Identity: Keri Evans* and Ramona Oswald

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- **Contracts & Insurance:** Andrew McClure

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