

**Second Sunday of
Easter**
April 27, 2025



*The Risen Jesus Appears to His Disciples. 1476.
Codex of Predis, Royal Library, Turin.*

We Gather in Response to God's Invitation

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear... Jesus came and stood among them. – John 20:19

THE GIFT OF MUSIC TO GATHER US

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AFFIRMATION OF MISSION

We declare ourselves to be a Christ-centered Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming persons into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions, ability, culture, economic status, ethnicity, or family composition.

We recognize that there are differences among us, but believe that we can love alike even though we may not think alike. We proclaim this covenant of welcome to all who have known the pain of exclusion or discrimination in church and society. We invite all people to join us in our faith journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (*RESPONSIVE*)

**An asterisk indicates when the people stand in body or spirit.*

One: What if we told you we come to this sanctuary because there is no safety behind locked doors?

All: **Jesus speaks peace among us. We do not carry this all alone.**

What if we told you we gather together to remember that fear can't keep love from showing up?

Jesus breathes the Spirit among us. We do not carry this all alone.

What if we told you worship is a place where we touch the wounds inflicted on us by the world?

Jesus reaches out his hands to us. We do not carry this all alone.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

What if we told you we join our hearts in prayer and praise
to practice opening them to the presence of the holy?

Jesus tells truths among us. We do not carry this all alone.

What if it was all true?

My Lord and my God! Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

*OPENING PRAYER (*TOGETHER*)

**In the midst of our overwhelm and fear, Tender God, we do not expect to meet
you. Yet you are here, among us, holding out your hands to us, breathing Spirit
over us, showing us again and again that nothing can separate us from you.
Surround us with your peace in this moment, Jesus; let our fears rest in you.
Amen**

SINGING TOGETHER

“Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven” Black #243 vs. 1&3 (Tune: Hyfrydol)

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
Jesus on the cross as Savior for the world’s salvation bled;
But the crucified Redeemer now is risen from the dead!**

**Christ is risen, we are risen; shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain and dew, and gleams of glory from the brightness of your face;
That we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel hands be gathered, and be yours eternally.**

We Pray for Transformation and New Life

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of John tells us that on the evening of the first Easter, Jesus’ followers were
afraid of the world around them, so they locked their doors.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE (*RESPONSIVE*)

Where we have locked the doors to new awareness with defensiveness...

[Time for silent reflection]

Jesus, breathe peace.

Unlock our understanding.

Where we have closed off to others in fear...

[Time for silent reflection]

Jesus, breathe peace.

Open our hearts.

Where we have demanded proof of wounds in order to care...

[Time for silent reflection]

Jesus, breathe peace.

Teach us compassion.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

Where we have insisted others owe us vulnerability to gain our solidarity...

[Time for silent reflection]

Jesus, breathe peace.

Show us how to be trustworthy.

WORDS OF GRACE:

Receive the good news, beloved ones of the Holy One: no locked door, no overwhelming fear, no guarded disbelief can keep out God's forgiveness and resurrecting love. We are set free to keep building up a new world.

My Lord and my God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

We hold fast to the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples behind locked doors, allowing his wounds to testify to the possibility of new life, and greeting their fears and uncertainties with peace. As disciples who continue this journey, we greet one another with a sign of peace, and as we hold out our wounded and tender hands to one another, let us remember, we do not carry this all alone.

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

(As a sign of our deep fellowship and communion with God and with one another, let us greet one another with a handshake or peace sign and bless one another with the peace that comes from being in Christ.)

SUNG RESPONSE

"He Lives"

Brown #299, vs 1

**I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him He's always near.**

Refrain: **He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.**

We Hear God's Word

MINISTRY THROUGH MUSIC

"Canticle of Praise"

J. Parker, A.L. Page

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious and loving God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternal and abundant life. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the scriptures, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING

PSALM 118:17-29 (THE MESSAGE)

A song of victory. Our responsive reading begins.

I didn't die. I *lived!* And now I'm telling the world what God did.

God tested me, God pushed me hard, but God didn't hand me over to Death.

Swing wide the city gates—the *righteous* gates! I'll walk right through and thank God!

This Temple Gate belongs to God, so the victors can enter and praise.

Thank you for responding to me; you've truly become my salvation!

The stone the masons discarded as flawed is now the capstone! This is God's work.

We rub our eyes—we can hardly believe it!

This is the very day God acted— let's celebrate and be festive!

Salvation now, God. Salvation now! Oh yes, God—a free and full life!

Blessed are you who enter in God's name— from God's house we bless you!

God is God, he has bathed us in light.

Adorn the shrine with garlands, hang colored banners above the altar!

You're my God, and I thank you. O my God, I lift high your praise.

Thank God—God is so good. God's love never quits!

PLAIN AND SIMPLE

“Questions Sunday”

Pastor Dave

GOSPEL READING

JOHN 20:19-31

Jesus appears to the disciples. Hear the Good News.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The word of God for the people of God.

God is still speaking. Thanks be to God!

MEDITATION:

“Behind Locked Doors”

Pastor Dave

SINGING TOGETHER:

“We Live by Faith and Not by Sight”

Black #256

**We walk by faith and not by sight; no gracious words we hear
From Christ who spoke as none e'er spoke, who still we know is near.**

**We may not touch Christ's hands and side, nor follow where Christ trod;
But in confessing we rejoice: our Savior and our God!**

**Help then, O Christ, our unbelief; and may our faith abound
To call on you when you are near and seek where you are found.**

**That, when our life of faith is done, in realms of clearer light,
We may behold you as you are, with full and endless sight.**

We Respond to God's Word

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: CENTERING PRAYER

Take a moment to choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to open to God's resurrecting presence and action within. You could use words like: peace, believe, solidarity, receive, or unlock.

Take a few deep breaths and let your bodymindspirit settle into prayer. In the silence, call to mind the sacred word you chose. If other thoughts interrupt, return gently to your sacred word. Notice what the Holy may be offering you in this moment.

[Hold silence for 2-3 minutes]

With gratitude for the presence of God's resurrecting spirit in and among us, and acting through us, we offer our prayers. Amen.

A TIME FOR COMMUNAL PRAYER

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

You are invited to share joys and concerns we can pray for together. Let our sharing itself be an act of prayer.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

PRAYERS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

You are invited to place your gifts in the offering basket as you arrive or depart from our worship together.

The news these days give us many reasons to be afraid. Violence and injustice seem to be growing unchecked. Like the disciples, who similarly faced so many reasons to be afraid, we might be drawn to lock our doors and look for safety by closing ourselves off from others. But today's scripture reminds us that real safety comes with the flourishing of all people. Amid our fears, the Holy Spirit comes to fill us and send us out. So let us unlock our hearts and unclench our fists, offering what we have as a symbol of our commitment to go out and be the presence of God's love in our world.

DEDICATING OUR OFFERING (*TOGETHER*)

In the presence of fear, may these gifts bring hope. Where doors are locked, may these offerings open new possibilities. Where there are wounds, may these gifts honor their truth. In the presence of despair, may these offerings testify to a new world rising up. To this collective liberation, we dedicate ourselves and our offerings. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

*SINGING TOGETHER

"Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One" Black #253

Refrain: Yours is the glory, Resurrected One!

Endless is the victory you o'er death have won.

**Angels clothed in radiance rolled the stone away;
conquered is the grave in which your body lay. (*refrain*)**

**See, it is Jesus, Jesus has appeared;
do not doubt at all for nothing you will fear.**

**Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing;
tell it without ceasing: Death has lost its sting. (*refrain*)**

**Am I frightened? One whom I adore,
Jesus lives again, gives peace forevermore.
Jesus is my victory, life and strength and Head;
Jesus is my glory, nothing shall I dread. (*refrain*)**

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

*GOOD WORDS FOR GOING FORTH

Hear the resurrection blessing Jesus offered his disciples when they were dwelling in fear:
“I am here. We are here together. Peace be with you.”

In the midst of your fear, when the way ahead seems impossible or unclear, no matter where your journey takes you in the coming days, even behind locked doors, know this resurrection blessing is for you: God is here. We are here together. Peace be with you.
Amen.

*SINGING TOGETHER

“Halleluja”

Black #236

Halle, halle, halleluja. Halle, halle, halleluja.

Halle, halle, halleluja. Halleluja, halleluja.

TAKE WITH YOU GOD’S GIFT OF MUSIC

WE RETURN TO THE WORLD

RENEWED AND EMPOWERED BY GOD’S SPIRIT

All music and/or lyrics reprinted in the Sunday bulletin and performed during live-streamed worship services are done with permission, CCLI License #1414709.

Much of the liturgy is adapted from “Building Up a New World – Locked Doors” Service Prayers for Easter by written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, who serves as Join the Movement toward Racial Justice Curator with UCC National Ministries.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

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