

Transcript of Worship Easter 2 April 27th, 2025
Worship leaders: Judy at NUC Pat at SUC Pianist: Sabrina at SUC

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Judy

WE GATHER (*acknowledgement and lighting candles*)

SUC-Pat

As we gather in worship this morning,
let us pause to remember that in this region
we live and work and worship on Treaty One land,
and in the heart of the Metis Nation.
We acknowledge, with respect,
the history, spirituality and culture of these peoples.
We acknowledge their stories and their stewardship of the land and water,
the plants and animals, through the many generations.
May we live with respect on this land,
and live in peace and friendship with its peoples.

Today we say: (*unison*)

Hallelujah, Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

We light these candles acknowledging the presence of the risen Christ among us.

Hallelujah! Amen

SONG: VU249 Rejoice in the Lord Always

Words and Music: Traditional, anonymous. Public domain.

Rejoice in the Lord always
and again, I say rejoice! (*clap, clap*)
Rejoice in the Lord always
and again, I say rejoice! (*clap, clap*)

Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice! (*clap, clap*)

Rejoice, rejoice, and again I say rejoice! (*clap, clap*)

LIFE AND WORK of our churches and communities

Pat/Judy

CALL TO LAUGHTER (*responsive*)

For many of us, in our growing years, we were taught to be solemn in church, Holy One

Is that what you want, God?

To be seen and not heard...

Is that what you created us for?

To pray in silence with our heads bowed, and our hands held still...

That seems appropriate on Good Friday.

Then, we want to make ourselves small or invisible.

But on Easter morning, we feel like dancing and singing and throwing our arms in the air!
And every Sunday is a mirror image of Easter day.

Forgive us if we seem too solemn!

The Easter Spirit of renewal and freedom is upon us.

The exuberant Spirit of the Risen Christ
has gotten hold of us.

**We are reminded that Jesus fully human
and fully filled up with divinity,
must surely have laughed and danced.**

I wonder: when he walked on water
and Peter tried to walk out to him
and went down with a splash, did he laugh?

He must have laughed! Who wouldn't?

I wonder: when he saw the children playing,
or the field lilies bobbing, or the sparrows chirping...?

Surely, he smiled as we smile.

When he went to the wedding in Cana
and saw the groom and his bride,
did he join with the men in the dance?

Of course! He must have danced.

May we be more like Jesus:
compassionate and joyful, in every way. Amen.

SONG: MV122 This is the Day

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This is the day that God has made;
we will rejoice and be glad!

This is the day that God has made;
we will rejoice and be glad!

Singing hallelu, singing hallelu,
singing hallelu!

We will rejoice and be glad!

*Singing hallelu, singing hallelu,
singing hallelu!
We will rejoice and be glad*

PRAYER

O Great Laughing God,
we come into your presence with joy
and longing to be surprised.
We thank you that you have given to us
the gift of laughter and delight.
These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose
for us and for all the earth.
May we find that in giving up to laughter
there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing.
Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit
to renew our worship and our living. Amen.

This morning, I have some things for you to think about, funny things about our language.
Perhaps you have stories too; do you? Anything you want to share

Have you ever noticed that
There is no egg in the eggplant
No ham in the hamburger
And neither pine nor apple in the pineapple.
How about this
English muffins were not invented in England
And French fries were not invented in France.
Or Boxing rings are square
And A guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

Questions to Ponder

- If the plural of tooth is teeth, shouldn't the plural of phone booth be phone beeth?
- If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what the heck does a humanitarian eat!?

Go figure this one

Why do people recite at a play, yet play at a recital?
park on driveways and drive on parkways
Or . . . when a house burns up, we say it burned down
Or . . . when you fill in a form, we say you filled it out.

When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible

SONG: VU167 Christ is Risen From the Dead (*round*)

Words: Anonymous Music: Hasidic folk melody Public Domain

Christ is risen from the dead, glory, hallelujah! 2x
Jesus Christ is risen, glory hallelujah! 2x

MOMENT TO PONDER

We can be so deadly serious about life.
So serious that we forget to laugh – at life's absurdities,
at things that are funny, at ourselves.
We hold onto sadness and worry,
We fail to reach for the joy and hope we find in the Risen Christ.
So today let's try to cultivate smiles,
and may we be beacons
of joy to each other and to the world.

SPIRITUAL Readings:

Scripture **John 20: 19-31**

NUC-Ellen

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." ²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Contemporary Reading:

Balloons Belong in Church *excerpt by Ann Weems* [Reaching for Rainbows](#)

SUC-Dodie

Where did we get the idea that God loves gray and sh-h-h-h
And drab and anything will do?
I think it's blasphemy not to appreciate the joy in God's world.
I think it's blasphemy not to bring our joy into God's church.
For God so loved the world
That Christ hung there
Loving the unlovable.

What beautiful gift cannot be offered unto God –
Whether it's a balloon or a song or some joy that sits within you
waiting to have the lid taken off?
The scriptures say there's a time to laugh and a time to weep.
It's not hard to see the reasons for crying in a world where hatred
for others is so manifest.
But it's also not hard to see the reasons for laughter in a world
where God's love is so manifest.

So celebrate!
Bring your balloons and your butterflies, your bouquets of flowers.
Dance your dances, paint your feelings, sing your songs, whistle, laugh.
Life is a celebration, an affirmation of God's love.
Life is distributing more balloons.
For God so loved the world . . .
Surely that's a cause for joy.
Surely we should celebrate!
Good news! That God should love us that much.

HOLY HUMOUR INTERRUPTION

Some bulletin bloopers:

Charlene Mason sang, "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

- "Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."
- The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.
- The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing "Break Forth into Joy."
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person(s) you want remembered.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

REFLECTION

I begin today with a story of debate. An apocryphal tale from the Middle Ages. But there is something rather biblical about it in how it makes you think about things even as it amuses: It seems that the Pope, under pressure from all the Cardinals, decided that all the Jews had to leave Rome. Naturally there was a big uproar from the Jewish community. So, the Pope made a deal. He would have a religious debate with a member of the Jewish community. If the Jew won, the Jews could stay. If the Pope won, the Jews would leave.

The Jews realized that they had no choice. So, the elders of the people picked a respected Rabbi to represent them. The Rabbi was rather flamboyant in his expression, so they asked for one addition to the debate. To make it more interesting, and safer, neither side would be allowed to talk. The Pope agreed.

The day of the great debate came. The Rabbi and the Pope sat opposite each other for a full minute before the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. The Rabbi looked back at him and raised one finger.

The Pope waved his fingers in a circle around his head. The Rabbi energetically pointed to the ground.

The Pope pulled out a loaf of bread and a glass of wine and he broke the bread and ate, then sipped the wine. The Rabbi pulled out an apple and took a bite from it.

The Pope then stood up and said, "I give up. This man is too good. The Jews can stay in Rome as long as they want."

An hour later, the cardinals were all around the Pope asking him what had happened.

The Pope said, "First I held up three fingers to represent the Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that there was still one God common to both our religions."

Then I waved my finger around me to show him that God was all around us and is Lord over the church. He responded by pointing to the ground and reminding me that God may be all around, but God was also right here with us and is God of the Jews as well as of the church. I broke bread and drank wine to show that God absolves us from our sins. The rabbi ate of the apple to remind me of original sin and how it still affects us. He had an answer for everything. What could I do?"

Meanwhile, the Jewish community had crowded around the Rabbi. "What happened?" they asked.

"Well," said the Rabbi, "First he said to me that the Jews had three days to get out of here. I told him that not one of us was leaving.

Then he told me that this whole city would be cleared of Jews. I let him know that we were staying right here."

"And then?" asked a woman.

"I don't know," said Moishe, "He took out his lunch and I took out mine - and now we can stay as long as we want."

I must admit my bias here— I like to laugh, and I believe that God is in our laughter. I think that God wants us to laugh, And I think that it is about time that we felt like laughing in a church — if we laughed more maybe we would be healthier. I think a church meeting is more successful the more laughter there is, I think a funeral is more real the more laughter is punctuated amongst the tears. And even worship itself, is improved when laughter greets us in the midst of the moment. There is of course a place for solemnity and respect but then I don't think that laughter is disrespectful — as a matter of fact if it's used well; used to lift people up instead of bring them down — laughter has the ability to draw people in, to widen the circle and to help people feel included, There is nothing like laughing with someone to feel closer to them.

So why do we laugh – we laugh because we find something funny- because something catches our fancy, tickles our funny bone, delights our sense of fun. Here in church, we can laugh because we know that God is good. We can laugh because of the wonder of all that God does. When we read our scripture, we encounter many funny stories, many preposterous events, many encounters with characters that require a sense of humour and a sense of the ludicrous to understand.

Biblical humour is the humour of those who know how to love. It is not nasty or cruel. It helps us focuses on the absurdity of some of our human traits, things like – our pride – our silly habits – our strange ways of thinking and speaking, and then when we laugh at these traits of ours, they are transformed, and so are we.

Take this morning's reading from John – It is pretty clear in the story that we just read that the Easter feeling is missing, the wonder and awe that Mary experienced in the garden has faded as the day goes on and we find the disciples in a locked room, away from the crowds afraid for their life. There is not a lot of humour here. I imagine that they are all subdued and quiet and still in deep grief. The evening after the resurrection – the disciples are locked away in fear – afraid that they too may be branded as treasonous and sent to a cross, afraid that they may not know what to do next because it was Jesus who set their agendas and now with him gone they are at loose ends, with no direction, no purpose – what do you do when the one who gave your group meaning and cohesion is no longer with you? Afraid, lost and grieving and locked in a room, this is where we find the disciples, this Easter eve.

And here is the part that I love, here is the part that I think is truly another Easter moment – in the midst of the fear, in the midst of the trepidation, in the midst of the confusion, and grief and loneliness, the Christ comes – and the Christ comes even though the way is barred – the Christ comes, even though the door is locked – the Christ comes even when no one is expecting him – the Christ comes. Peace says Jesus – and he shows his scars – Peace be with you – says Jesus again –and now – go and share the Good News – go and live the gospel- and then he breathed on them...Breath – life – ruah – Hebrew word for spirit – Jesus breathed on the disciples enlivening them and releasing them

from their fear, their grief and their lack of purpose – this moment – this moment the disciples are gifted with Easter – these disciples have had the resurrection blown into them. – there must have been much laughter as Jesus was among them again -and they must have felt deep, deep joy in that moment of resurrection as they witnessed God's biggest joke of all – the joke played on death. But Thomas wasn't there – and he did not witness these events and as much as the other disciples try to convince him of the Christ coming in their midst – he refused to believe – how true is this for us too, that as much as we may want to believe based on another's experience, as much as we wish we could jump on the bandwagon – unless we experience it ourselves it has no meaning, the stories of others just don't do it for us – we want our own moment – we want to have Christ come to us. And here it comes again...God getting in, – Easter – not more than a week later, the Christ comes again – comes again to Thomas and he is able to touch the wounds and feel the presence and be transformed – and share in the laughter and feel the joy and be Easter transformed like the rest of the disciples. God's laugh at death – and the world changed for Thomas too!

New life began because God played a joke on death. The disciples were released from their fear and stuckness – and they were then able to leave that room of the shut door and begin to live into their new life, and begin to live as new people, sharing the good News of God in their way through their own encounters with the Divine and their life with Jesus, This was Jesus gift to them. This is what living Easter is all about – these resurrected disciples are living the good news, they are sharing their lives, sharing their property, sharing themselves with each other and the world – and God is getting in and the kingdom has come....too bad it does not last – but for a moment when the disciples were living the Easter resurrection – the kingdom came...and the laughter rang out!

You have heard of laughter therapy or that laughter is the best medicine. It's true, when we laugh, we release the body's natural healing enzymes called endorphins. Singers get that kind of release when they sing. Runners and bikers get that running high from endorphins.

You get endorphins from

- hugs,
- from chocolate
- from listening to music
- from getting a massage
- and from having a great big belly laugh.

That reminds me of the two cannibals who were sitting together, feasting on a clown. One cannibal turned to the other and (looking mildly perplexed) said, "Does this taste funny to you?"

Humor releases endorphins. It's one of the things God grants us with as a gift. It is one of the ways that God grants us healing, Reinhold Niebuhr, the great theologian, says . . . that 'the very essence of sin is taking ourselves too seriously,' If that's true, the very essence of grace is to receive the gift of laughter, especially when the joke is on us, particularly when the most laughable incongruities consist of the gap between who we are and who God would have us be."

We human beings are funny, and we often take ourselves too seriously. Let's face it we need to laugh — laugh at ourselves, laugh at the world, laugh with God because we do some pretty foolish things.

So, let's thank God for the gift of laughter, and senses of humour and joy and love, for it is what make life worth living. Let's thank God for life and laughter and hope and humour, and jokes and joy and jest. Let's remember not to take ourselves too seriously — and thank God especially that God does not take us too seriously too! Amen.

SONG: VU352 I Danced in the Morning vs 1-5

Words & Harmony: Sydney Carter Music: Shaker melody. Words & Harmony copyright © Hope Publishing Company, Stainer & Bell Ltd. Music: Public Domain.

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
they came with me and the dance went on.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame,
they whipped and they stripped and they hung

me high,
and left me there on the cross to die.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
they buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

They cut me down and I leap up high,
I am the life that will never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the lord of the dance, said he.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

OFFERING INVITATION:

The pastor of a tiny country church had been having trouble with stewardship and tithes and offerings. One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we receive the offering, I would like to request that the person who stole the eggs from Widow Jones's chicken coop please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. God doesn't want money from a thieving sinner."

The offering plate was passed, and for the first time in months everybody gave.

SONG: MV191 What Can I Do? x2

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What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share. X2

PRAYER

Bless these offerings, O God, as echoes of our laughing hearts. That you should love us, absurd as we are, that you should call us, as flawed as we are, inspires us to share the twinkle in your eye, to become the proof of your good humour in service to others. Bless us in our ministries as images of your smile. Amen.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Mission & Service stories

SUC-Dodie

Changing the Narrative: Young Voices for Climate Justice

In 2024, Mission and Service partner the World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific collaborated with the Bangladesh Student Christian Movement on a workshop called "Youth leading Change: Climate Justice through Cultural Movement." Through discussions and activities, it aimed to raise awareness among young people about climate challenges and empower them to take local actions. Over four days, 50 passionate students from various regions of Bangladesh came together to address the critical issue of climate change. They explored the severe impacts that climate change has on communities and livelihoods in Bangladesh, particularly the displacement caused by floods. Floods force families to migrate to Dhaka, now one of the world's most densely populated cities. The heart-wrenching stories of displaced families deeply resonated with the participants, igniting their determination to drive change. Equipped with knowledge and tools, these young leaders are now poised to advocate for climate justice and inspire their communities.

Your generous support of **Mission and Service** helps make empowering work like this possible. Thank you.

HOLY HUMOUR INTERRUPTION

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large tray of apples. A nun lettered a note and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching."

Moving along the lunch line, at the other end was a large tray of chocolate chip cookies. A girl wrote a note, which she put next to the tray of cookies, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples." A preacher was completing a temperance sermon. With great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river!" The congregation nodded their approval. With even greater emphasis he added, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river, too!" The people clapped and were saying "Amen." And then finally, he concluded, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river!" As he sat down, the song leader then stood up quite cautiously and announced, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365: "Shall We Gather at the River."

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Amid the laughter and celebration of this day, it's good that we pause and remember that many carry burdens that need not be carried alone. God of grace, God of love and laughter, we thank you that we are so wondrously created and that we are made for relationship with you and with one another. We thank you for laughter with friends and loved ones. We thank you for the laughter of children and the song it creates in our hearts.

By your great, unending love, you inspire in us a spirit of imagination and creativity. Help us to use that spirit to play more, to laugh more, and to create beauty in every way possible. Remind us to laugh out loud, for doing so will heal some of the wounds within us. Not all, but some. God, we pray

for those among us and in this world who cannot find their laughter today, for those who are grieving or suffering illness of body, mind, or spirit; for those who are lonely and in need of someone to share their time and friendship; for those who have not yet moved into the season and spirit of Easter and find themselves still in the gloom and pain of Good Friday... May these and the troubles of all your people be soothed, blessed, and comforted by your holy presence. May we each find the laughter within us that sets our spirits and our world free, and in that freedom, may we take your love into every part of our lives. These and all the prayers of our hearts we offer now in the name of Jesus, who taught these words that we now sing

SONG: VU 959/974 The Lord's Prayer VU 959 with Amen's VU 974

Music VUV 959: David Haus © 1986 G.I.A. Publications, Inc. Music VU 974: Jim Strathdee© 1985 Desert Flower Music.

Words: Public Domain

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
forgive us our sins

as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil
for the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
Now and forever.
Amen! Amen!
Hallelujah, amen!

SONG: VU642 Give to Us Laughter vs 1-4

Words copyright © 1974 Walter Farquharson Music copyright © 1974 Ron Klusmeier.

Give to us laughter, O Source of our life.
Laughter can banish so much of our strife.
Laughter and love give us wholeness and
health.
Laughter and love are the coin of true wealth.

Give to us laughter as sign of deep joy;
let us in laughing find Christian employ,
joining with stars and with bright northern
lights,
laughing and praising and sharing delights.

Why do we worry that we will lose face?
Why act like king for the whole human race?
Often in family and often with friend,
laughing at pride causes anguish to end.

Even in sorrow and hours of grief,
laughter with tears brings most healing relief.
God give us laughter, and God, give us peace,
joys of your presence among us increase.

BLESSING

The Laughing One called us together
so we could share in the laughter of life.

The Laughing One sends us out,
to carry the joy of life and love to the world.

Go out to laugh, to live to love. And when you hear a good joke...
remember that sharing is a great thing!

SONG: VU 167 Christ is Risen – round

Words: Anonymous Music: Hasidic folk melody

Public Domain

Christ is risen from the dead, glory, hallelujah! 2x
Jesus Christ is risen, glory hallelujah! 2x