

## Welcome

### Announcements:

Special offering for April will be UMCOR. The Easter Offering has been designated to Frontera de Cristo; Fair Trade Coffee is back! See Carol Quasula to order yours. (Not sure what else you want to put in here)

### Fellowship of Love

### Song-Christ the Lord is Risen Today

### Call to Worship

L: We don't know where to find Jesus.

**P: The days have been dark. The news has been sad.**

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L: We don't know what to do with our grief.

**P: The cross has claimed his life.**

**The tomb has shrouded our hope.**

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L: We don't know where to turn for comfort.

**P: Who has stolen him from us? Why are we alone at the tomb.**

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L: We don't know where to look for answers.

**P: Tears and sorrow blind us in our grief. We don't know where to find Jesus.**

**Unison Prayer**

**P: God of mystery and might, on a dawn shrouded in grief and pain,**

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**you surprise us with the light of your wondrous love.**

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**We come to the tomb expecting death, but find life instead.**

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**Take us back to that moment, when fear was healed by hope and death was banished by life.**

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**In the holy awe of Easter morning, may we sing out our joy, for Christ, our Lord, has risen today! Amen.**

L: As we come to this time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

**Offering/Song-Lord of the Dance**

**Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10 NRSV**

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he<sup>[a]</sup> lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead,<sup>[b]</sup> and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” <sup>8</sup> So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

L: The Word of God, for the people of God.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

## **Meditation**

He is Risen!

I'm going to start our mediation this morning with something you probably don't expect. I'm going to start by talking about Taylor Swift. Bear with me here. I know many of you don't know her music, and some of you love it, but what I want to say may help you understand some of what the resurrection means. When I was writing this message, I was listening to her music. I just needed something on while I worked, but it got me thinking. You see, Taylor Swift had her "Eras" tour a couple of years ago. This was a massive worldwide tour that celebrated all her music over the years. What I was thinking about is that really successful musicians are able to reinvent themselves over the years; they have different "eras" or segments of their career, where they develop their sound or lyrics in different directions.

I could have selected any musician to demonstrate this. The Beatles played with multiple formats and styles. U2, one of my favorite bands, reinvents itself almost every decade stylistically and thematically. This message, of course, isn't so much about music, and definitely not about Taylor Swift primarily, but about the idea that we go through times in our lives that change us. Segments, eras so to speak, that are different from

one another. Sometimes we can look at our lives and see it. For instance, I can look at my life and can distinctly see different spots like before I had kids, when I had kids at home, and even now, the slow transition to no kids at home.

These eras are often defining moments of our lives where we are still very much who we are, but something has changed. Fundamentally, we are the same, but we understand ourselves differently from the way we were. The story of the resurrection was the start of a new era with God. A new way of viewing who we are, of being in relationship with God, a new and different way of being. The announcement in the Gospel of Matthew, "He has been raised from the dead." A shift in human understanding and in our motivations as Christians.

As Christians, there is a clear shift from a pre-resurrection understanding to a post-resurrection understanding. Things are different, we are different. At the time of the Gospel story, what was to be different remains to be seen. I think all of us have had some experience of God where we know we were different afterwards. Maybe God showed us something about ourselves, maybe we understood what God wanted us to do with our lives or a situation, and things were never the same after that.

This is part of what it means to be a Christian. Because in the moment of Jesus' resurrection, the world and the universe changed.

Here's the hard part, though. For many of us, it can be difficult to see ourselves before Christ and after Christ. We don't have music playlists to live through our eras of change, and pictures won't really do this change in our life's justice. Instead, we lose sight of the future. You see, the resurrection is not about the past as much as it is about the present and the future. In Matthew, when the resurrection is revealed, we have two things happen. First, Jesus is recognized by the two Mary's, and they worship him, an in-the-moment response. Second, Jesus reminds them that he is going ahead of them.

There are two responses to Jesus today: one is worship. The other is to live for the future, not to be locked into the past. While there are defining moments in our past, eras that we lived through and grew with, and that changed who we are. It is how we respond to Jesus today and how we live into a relationship with Jesus in the future that matters the most. Worship is more than what we are doing today on Sunday; it is the acknowledgment of God in your life. And Christ in the future is more than waiting to be in

heaven when you die, it's about knowing that Christ is everywhere now and in everyone we meet.

This Easter, remember how you have been changed. How you have grown! It is great to be alive with you today and great to be alive celebrating our risen Savior. No matter how bad it seems. Life Is Good! Amen.

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING for Easter Day  
Communion Liturgy  
UMH pp.66-67**

L: The Lord be with you.

**P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**P: We lift them up to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

L: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

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When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,  
brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way  
of life.

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And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise  
your name and join their unending hymn:

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**P: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

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L: Holy are you and blessed is your

Son Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

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By your read mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

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Once we were people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

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On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

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When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

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On the day that you raised him from the dead, he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread,  
and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

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And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with the Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**P: Christ has died;**

**Christ is risen;**

**Christ will come again.**

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L: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

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By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**P: Amen.**

**Communion**

**Songs-Because He Lives, The Old Rugged Cross**

**Benediction**

**Song-I am the Resurrection**