

St. Andrew's United Church (Williams Lake)

April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday

(Zoom, email, regular mail)

ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

Welcome to the gathering of the family of Jesus. We gather on lands walked for thousands of years by people of the First Nations. We acknowledge the history, culture, and spirituality of the Secwépemc (Shuswap) People. We also honour the heritage and gifts of the Métis people. We remember our responsibility as persons who inhabit this land alongside our First Nations and Métis sisters and brothers. May we live the respect that our words offer.

In the name of Jesus, who is alive in each of us, peace to you.

And also with you.

*Invitation to take and release three slow, deep breaths
and allow the space you're in to become worship space for this time*

Written by Susan Lukey. Adapted by Nancy Colton.
Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 29.
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to ground and center ourselves for worship

He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah! Alleluia!

Hymn – Jesus Christ is Risen Today

VU 155

Call to Worship

The candle is lit;
the radiance of Christ shines on us;
we are gathered together – even as we are apart –
knowing that Christ is here among us.

Written by Fern Gibbard. Adapted by Nancy Colton.
Gathering, Lent/Easter 2015, page 39.
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One: Jesus said to Mary, “Woman, why do you weep?”

**All: Mary wept because
all she could see in front of her was death.
She had lost her beloved teacher and friend.**

One: Jesus says to us, “My people, why do you weep?”

**All: Because, so often,
all we can see in front of us is death.
We often lose sight of our path because of the
tears and fears.**

One: When Mary recognized the Christ, he said,
“I am ascending to my father and your father...
to my God and your God!”

**All: And so we look for the Christ
in the new life that grows within and without.
We remember that death has lost its sting.
We celebrate that we are one
with the Risen Christ –
part of the family and household of God.**

One: So we come together to worship.
Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen, indeed!

One: Alleluia!

All: Alleluia, amen!

Written by Richard Bott.

Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 43.

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Opening Prayer

Creator,
we bring our doubts and our questions,
and as you touch our unbelief,
your turn them into adventures.
Come now, O Spirit,
and create a moment of glory
where we can sense you among us
and the world can witness in us
the good news that resurrection brings.
Amen.

Written by Peter Chynoweth.
Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 44.
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Hymn – *This is the Day*

VU 412

Prayers of Confession

One: Easter morning takes us by surprise, awakening us
to the doubt and despair that have been rooted in
our lives. Let us confess to God.

(a time of silent prayer)

**All: Come to us, O God, like fresh water, softening
the soil of a parched and weary land.
We confess that hurts and disappointments harden
our hearts, frustrations and failures dry us out.
Come to us, God, with life-giving power.
Free us from resentment, reluctance, and reserve.
Remind us that in your forgiveness, we are free.
Forgiven, may we be forgiving.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Written by Éric Hébert-Daly.
Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 46.
Used with permission.

Words of Assurance

One: The stone is rolled away – we are released!
The tomb is empty – we can be free!
Christ is risen – life can be full!

All: Thanks be to God!

Written by Éric Hébert-Daly.
Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 46.
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Hymn – *Come Children Join to Sing*

VU 345

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

and they were alarmed.

But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed;
you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth,
who was crucified.

He has been raised;
he is not here.

Look, there is the place they laid him.

But go,
tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee;
there you will see him,
just as he told you.”

So they went out and fled from the tomb,
for terror and amazement had seized them;
and they said nothing to anyone,
for they were afraid.

Sermon –

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 The appearances of Jesus

Mark 16:1-18 The resurrection of Jesus

Hallelujah! He is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The women – Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome – were there. Surely there were other women, too, whose names we don't know, whose names were not recorded.

That first Holy Week was terrible and terrifying. And the women stayed. The women witnessed all of it.

Palm Sunday. Maundy Thursday – the night the disciples shared the Passover Meal in the Upper Room and Jesus washed their feet, weeping at the foot of the cross on Friday, the empty tomb.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome stayed ... and the women went to the tomb.

Women were first at the cradle, last at the cross, first at the tomb. If it wasn't for the women and their witness, we would have no knowledge of the unruly mystery of the resurrection and how it fuels faith, hope, and love in the world.

I am so glad that “when the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen they went to the tomb.” They’d been talking about the stone at the entrance to the tomb and who might roll it away for them. How could they have known they needn’t have worried about that? That the stone would be rolled away and the tomb empty? How could they have anticipated or imagined a young man dressed in a white robe would startle them with his presence and his message – “go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he

told you.”? “Do not be alarmed,” he said. And yet. And yet. “They went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them.”

There it is. The unruly mystery of the resurrection.

We’ve talked about covenants on our journey through Lent. A covenant is a promise made between people and God or God and people. What covenant is being made this morning, what’s the promise being made with us this morning? The Easter covenant is sealed with the resurrection of Jesus. What is our part of the promise?

How does the unruly mystery of the resurrection fuel and feed faith, hope and love in the world?

A friend of mine likes to tell a story about the time a few years ago a young person he knew asked him if Jesus was a zombie. The presumption that zombies might be real aside, my friend asked him what made him think that. He talks about how the young person said Jesus’ resurrection reads pretty much like he was a zombie: body was gone from the tomb; he’s seen walking around and he still has the wounds of his death. My friend assured the young person Jesus wasn’t a zombie.

My friend was grateful to get out of the conversation alive, I think it’s fair to say, and yet, he says, he comes back to it every Easter.

How is Jesus alive?

We know the story....

Only days after being welcomed into Jerusalem by adoring crowds, Jesus is suddenly, shockingly, unbelievably dead, killed in a cruel and humiliating manner. His closest followers are in hiding, fearful for their own lives, grieving the end of their life with Jesus. But it’s not the end. After the sabbath Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome go to the tomb and it’s empty. He’s alive, just as promised. He appears to many and after this Jesus is gone, his followers tell the story and share his teaching – his life – with everyone they can.

The women watched him die and saw him placed in the tomb. For as much as his chosen disciples abandoned him at his arrest, the women seemed to have stayed with him. They see him die. Their experience of the resurrection is anchored in their experience of his death. They aren’t the only

ones to see him die – the Roman authorities, the Jewish authorities, the crowd who called for his death, they all saw him die. Even his closest followers thought he was dead.

So, how is Jesus alive, then?

I don't know. I'm okay with admitting that. There are many theories and explanations, I'm sure, but the circumstances of the physical appearance of Jesus simply aren't central to the meaning of the Easter story for me. Jesus is alive because death isn't the end of the story.

The power of the resurrection story is that there was death and it wasn't the end. That bears repeating. The power of the resurrection story is that there was death and it wasn't the end. And it bears repeating, just as it is, because by knowing what "was" in the story, we know what "is" in our lives.

In our own lives, we experience hurt, grief and pain. We experience the sudden shock of loss, crushing and dispiriting. We experience moments of "crucifixion." We know those moments for the feeling we experience.

But that's not the end.

Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" – am, not just "was" or "will be" – and offers life in, and after, each of those challenging and life changing moments. In our own moments of "crucifixion", we find life rising out of death. Or loss or sorrow or grief or fear. Jesus shows us the way to new life, not just in his death and resurrection, but in his life. Life comes from living as Jesus taught us to live. That bears repeating, too.

Amen.

Anthem - MAKE WAY (FOR THE KING OF THORNS)

(Credits at the bottom of the words. Thanks to Rocco for providing the words (the capital letters from his email.)

MAKE WAY, FOR THE PRINCE OF PEACE
RIDING A DONKEY DOWN THE STREET,
PEOPLE LINED UP, WAVING PALMS,
LAUGHING, CELEBRATING, THROWING ALMS.

BUT THAT WAS THEN AND THIS IS NOW
LEADERS HAVE CONSPIRED TO BRING HIM DOWN,
HE'S BEEN MOCKED AND CONSIDERED A CLOWN
NOW MOST DON'T WANT HIM AROUND.

HE HAS SURELY LOST HIS WAY,
HAS THORNS FOR A CROWN AND LITTLE TO SAY.
YET HE SAID, HE IS THE SON OF GOD,
TO FOLLOW HIM NOW SEEMS STRANGELY ODD.

MAKE WAY FOR THE KING OF THORNS
THE ONE WHO WASN'T NOBLE BORN.
HE WAS SAID TO BE THE KING OF THE JEWS
BUT HE'S NOT WORTHY TO SHINE YOUR SHOES.

MAKE WAY, FOR THE GREAT MESSIAH
LOOKING NOW LIKE A COMMON LIAR,
MAKE THE CHOICE TO FREE BARABBAS,
FOR A WHILE THERE, HE ALMOST HAD US. Oo-----

MAKE WAY FOR THE ROYAL CROSS,
HIS CRUCIFIXION WILL BE NO LOSS,
WE'LL WATCH AND THEN GO HOME
AND BE SATISFIED WITH THE MIGHT OF ROME.
MAKE WAY, [MAKE WAY,] FOR THE KING OF THORNS,
MAKE WAY, [MAKE WAY,] ONLY TO BE SCORNED,
MAKE WAY, [MAKE WAY,] FOR THE KING OF THORNS TODAY.
MAKE WAY, FOR THE KING OF THORNS.

MAKE WAY, FOR THE ONE WHO DIED,
IT'S OVER NOW, HE'S BEEN CRUCIFIED,
AND NOW THAT HE'S GONE, THIS WILL BE THE END,
WE'RE DONE WITH IT ALL, SO BE IT AMEN.*

//*End here for Palm Sun. Then start from beginning and
and sing to the very end on Easter Sun.

BUT WAIT, BUT WAIT.

BUT WAIT, HIS TOMB IS EMPTY,
BUT WAIT, THE REWARDS ARE PLENTY,
BUT WAIT, THEN THE ANGEL SAID,
"REMEMBER THE SCRIPTURES, HE IS NOT DEAD."

MAKE WAY, FOR THE KING OF THORNS,
NEVER MORE, NEVER MORE TO BE SCORNED,
AND NOW, HE'S RISEN TO THE FATHER,
AND SAVED EVERY MOTHER, SISTER, AND BROTHER!

MAKE WAY, FOR THE KING OF THORNS,
NEVER MORE, NEVER MORE TO BE SCORNED.
LISTEN TO WHAT JESUS HAS TO SAY,
LISTEN, TO WHAT HE HAS TO SAY!

MAKE WAY, FOR THE KING OF THORNS,
MAKE WAY, GET ON YOUR KNEES AND PRAY.
MAKE WAY, FOR THE PRINCE OF PEACE,
WHO PROMISES, GOD'S LOVE WILL NEVER CEASE.

©2011 updated 24,3,2021 Lyrics: Barry Sale & Rocco Catalano;
Music: Rocco Catalano;
Musicians: Janet & Rocco Catalano & Michael Bruce

Hymn – *Let Us Build a House*

MV 1

Community Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Beginning with an offering prayer:

Risen Christ:

You startled us when you came into our world.

You startled us when your love touched our hearts.

You startled us with your kindness and open heart.

You startled us when you rose from the dead.

Receive these, our gifts, we pray.

Startle us again by the good work these gifts make possible

that we may startle ourselves with our generosity

made possible by your love.

Amen. May it be so.

Written by Rob Root.

Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 48.

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(We shared the video of Murray Pruden's Easter Prayer. It's on YouTube and you can find it on the United Church of Canada's national website.)

And now, O God, we are one in prayer but bring our own thanks and concerns. If some need to say "help me", or "save me", or "hold me", or "forgive me", then let these be spoken now in the confidence of our hearts in a moment of quiet prayer.

God in Community, Holy in One,
hear us as we pray as we have been taught,

The Lord's Prayer

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

The Life and Work of our Congregation

- Rev Nancy has the week after Easter off so won't be in next week. She'll be back in the office on Monday, April 12th.
- The church office is closed for the long weekend plus a vacation/banked day. Karen will be back and the office open on Wednesday, April 7th.
- NEXT Sunday worship will be by email only. Karen will email the service from the church office. Many thanks to Lynn Blatchford for preparing the service for next Sunday.
- Book Study – the Board invites you to join them in reading and studying *Thriving Churches: Urban and Rural Successes*. (Lorraine MacKenzie Shepherd. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2021.) The plan is to read the whole book through and then meet two twice for 90 minutes to discuss aspects of the book. (The group could decide to meet three times if it wanted to.) Please let Nancy know if you'd like to participate in this book study. When the books arrive, we'll decide on the timeline and when we'll host discussions/conversations.
- Healing Pathways – The Healing Pathway practitioners of St. Andrew's Williams Lake are now gathering on Zoom on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The next session will be April 27. We will be meditating and offering healing sessions by distance to anyone who wishes to receive. To receive, contact Brenda by phone, 250-392-6428 or email, bjsmith_wl@yahoo.com.
- Newsletter – It is time to start work on a spring newsletter. Please send submissions or ideas to Heather at hawmack@yahoo.com before April 14. Thanks for your help in making this newsletter a great one!
- Mail slot & drop box – newly installed on the left-hand side front door!! The mail slot is white and double doored/flapped with weather and tamper proofing between the flaps. (It takes two hands to put the mail through.) On the inside of the church door the mail drops directly into a locked, metal box so the mail is contained and secure. Nothing will fall to the floor or into the door. Thanks to Ed and Roger for installing the mail slot, and Ed for installing the drop box.

Hymn – *It's a Song of Praise to the Maker*

MV 30

Commissioning & Benediction

One: Surely God is in this place, and in this world!

All: Help me notice!

One: We have noticed.

We have discovered.

We have understood.

We have moved from shadows into light.

Hearts have been strangely warmed.

The news of his rising lives deep within us.

Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

One: So, let us go out now, blessed to be a blessing.

Blessed by the promise of life renewed.

Blessed by the companionship of community shared.

Blessed by the presence of God,

who brings life out of death,

hope out of despair,

likelihood out of impossibility,

who holds you, loves you, stirs you

with the blessing of resurrection

this day, this night, and always.

Go in the power of the risen Christ,

for he lives within you!

All: Amen. Amen! Amen!

Written by Rob Root.

Gathering, Lent/Easter 2021, page 49.

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