

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Easter Sunday**  
**Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin**

**Preparation for Worship**

God of life,  
we praise you for the miracle of Easter.  
We pray for great joy for ourselves and for all who  
worship today to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.  
We pray especially for those who will join us for worship  
and whose lives are filled with pain, loss, or deep sadness.  
May they sense how the resurrection is a source of great hope. **Amen.**

**Call to Worship**

Joyful is the sound we make this morning!

**For this day liberates us from doubt and fear.**

Thankful is the song we sing!

**For this day moves us past darkness and despair.**

Hopeful is the prayer upon our lips!

**For this day awakens in us long-awaited new life.**

Jesus said, "Where two or more are gathered in my name,  
I am there among them."

**Christ lives here and now.**

**He is among us at this and every moment!**

May his peace and presence be known to you.

**And also to you.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Glorious Lord of life,  
by the mighty resurrection of your Son  
you overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him.  
Grant that we who celebrate with joy  
Christ's rising from the dead  
may be raised from the death of sin  
to the life of righteousness,  
through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn #214: “Christ The Lord Is Risen Today” – First Plymouth Church**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUrtBPkc0ZY>

1. Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
 Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!  
 Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
 Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth, reply, Alleluia!
2. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!  
 Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
 Once He died our souls to save, Alleluia!  
 Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!
3. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
 Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
 Death in vain forbids His rise, Alleluia!  
 Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!
4. Soar we now where Christ hath led, Alleluia!  
 Foll'wing our exalted Head, Alleluia!  
 Made like Him, like Him we rise, Alleluia!  
 Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

**Invitation to Confession**

Even the obstacle of death has been removed between us and God.  
 If death no longer stands in our way,  
 we can be sure that our sin does not either.  
 Let us confess our sins  
 that they may be washed away by the mercy of our risen Lord.

**Prayer of Confession**

Almighty God, you have raised Jesus from the grave  
 and crowned him Lord of all.  
 We confess that we have not bowed before him  
 or acknowledged his rule in our lives.  
 We have gone along with the way of the world  
 and failed to give him glory.  
 Forgive us and raise us from sin,  
 that we may be your faithful people,  
 obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 who rules the world and is head of the church, his body. **Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Christ has been raised from the dead,  
 the first fruits of those who have died.  
 For since death came through a human being,  
 the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being;  
 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

### **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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,  
 Forever and ever. Amen**

### **Responsive Reading: Psalm 31**

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
 for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Let Israel say,  
 "His steadfast love endures forever."**

The LORD is my strength and my song;  
 he has become my salvation.

**Glad songs of salvation  
 are in the tents of the righteous:**

**"The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,  
 the right hand of the LORD exalts,  
 the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!"**

**I shall not die, but I shall live,  
 and recount the deeds of the LORD.**

The LORD has disciplined me severely,  
 but he has not given me over to death.

**Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
 that I may enter through them  
 and give thanks to the LORD.**

This is the gate of the LORD;  
 the righteous shall enter through it.

**I thank you that you have answered me  
 and have become my salvation.**

The stone that the builders rejected  
 has become the cornerstone.

**This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.**

This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Ministry of Music: "Christ Our Hope In Life and Death" – Keith & Kristen Getty**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>

1. What is our hope in life and death  
Christ alone Christ alone  
What is our only confidence  
That our souls to Him belong  
Who holds our days within His hand  
What comes apart from His command  
And what will keep us to the end  
The love of Christ in which we stand

Chorus

O sing hallelujah  
Our hope springs eternal  
O sing hallelujah  
Now and ever we confess  
Christ our hope in life and death

2. What truth can calm the troubled soul  
God is good God is good  
Where is His grace and goodness known  
In our great Redeemer's blood  
Who holds our faith when fears arise  
Who stands above the stormy trial  
Who sends the waves that bring us nigh  
Unto the shore the rock of Christ

Chorus

O sing hallelujah  
Our hope springs eternal  
O sing hallelujah  
Now and ever we confess  
Christ our hope in life and death

3. Unto the grave what will we sing  
Christ He lives Christ He lives  
And what reward will heaven bring  
Everlasting life with Him  
There we will rise to meet the Lord  
Then sin and death will be destroyed  
And we will feast in endless joy  
When Christ is ours forevermore

## Chorus

O sing hallelujah  
 Our hope springs eternal  
 O sing hallelujah  
 Now and ever we confess  
 Christ our hope in life and death

**Scripture Reading:****1 Corinthians 15:12-22*****The Resurrection of the Dead***

**12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.**

**20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**

**Prayer of Illumination**

God of life,  
 your Spirit raised Jesus from dead.  
 Your Spirit inspired the prophets and writers of Scripture.  
 Your Spirit draws us to Christ  
 and helps us to acknowledge him as Lord.  
 We ask that you will send your Spirit now  
 to give us deeper insight, encouragement, faith, and hope  
 through the proclamation of the Truth of Easter. **Amen.**

**“How Important Is Easter?”****1 Corinthians 15:12-22**

Susan has a niece who lives with her husband and daughter Georgia, in Sugar Grove, North Carolina. They were up to visit us during the summer of 2017. I think they even came to church with us. Here is a picture of Georgia swimming at our place. We haven't seen them since, but we keep in touch. Mind you, Georgia is a much bigger girl now and is 8 years old. During the pandemic she has been going to school online. Here is a more recent



picture of Georgia and I think she is doing some crafty kind of stuff.



Recently, Georgia had an assignment to complete for school. She was asked to answer the following three questions:

1. What do you want to learn?
2. Who do you want to meet?
3. Where do you want to visit?

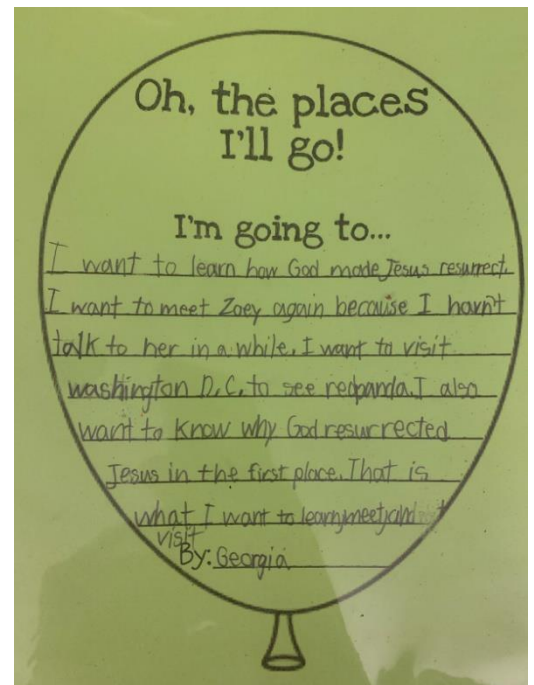
Here is what Georgia wrote down. In some of her answers she asks some very deep theological questions and that is why I want to share them with you this morning. Georgia wrote:

1. *I want to learn how God made Jesus resurrect.*
2. *I want to meet Zoey again, because I haven't talked to her in a while.*
3. *I want to visit Washington, D.C. to see red panda.*
4. *I also want to know why God resurrected Jesus in the first place.*

*That is what I want to learn, meet and visit.*

*By; Georgia*

These are some very good things. I don't know who Zoey is, but she must be a good friend. It is hard to keep track of all your friends during a pandemic. If you Google "red panda" you will see a picture and it won't be hard to understand why Georgia wants to



visit Washington, D.C.

However, it is the two things that Georgia wants to learn that I want to focus on this Easter Sunday morning.

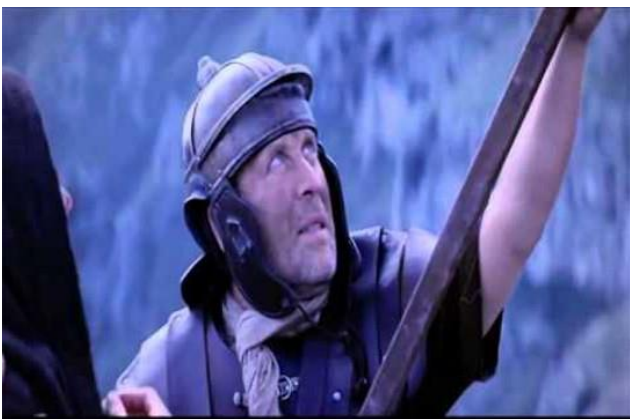
1. I want to learn how God made Jesus resurrect.

2. I also want to know why God resurrected Jesus in the first place.

Now, rather than call it Easter Sunday, we could call today “Resurrection Day”. This is what Easter is all about. It’s about resurrection – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. People have been asking these questions for two thousand years. I don’t know if my answers will satisfy you, Georgia, but I will give it my best shot.

***I want to learn how God made Jesus resurrect.***

Well, the first and earliest answer to this question is that God didn’t make Jesus resurrect. People had other explanations. Now, all four of the Gospel’s (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) make it very clear that Jesus died on the cross. All four gospels pretty much say the same thing. **46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.** (Luke 23) That is the Bible’s way of saying that Jesus died there on the cross. However, the Jewish leaders wanted to make sure that Jesus was dead, so they asked the Romans to break the legs of all three men that had been crucified. In John’s Gospel (chapter 19) we read, **32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him.** Interestingly they didn’t break the legs of Jesus. **33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.**



We don’t know if it was just a random act, **34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.** Notice that it doesn’t say that just blood came out. No, there came out blood and water. This signifies that Jesus was really and truly dead. Only after death does the blood separate into the heavy red corpuscles and the serum, which is made up of the yellowish-white watery part. So there

was no doubt in the minds of the Roman soldiers that Jesus was dead. Then Jesus was taken down off the cross and he was buried in a new tomb.

On the third day – the day we call Sunday – it was discovered that Jesus was not in that tomb. How do you explain that? Well, the Christians – that is, Mary Magdalene,

the disciples Peter and John – they went to that tomb and found it empty. Here is what Mary said. [2](#) ... **“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”**(John 20) At first they thought someone had stolen the body of Jesus. Then a strange thing happened. Jesus appeared to Mary, he appeared to Peter and John and some of the other disciples. He appeared to two men who were walking on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Finally he appeared to Thomas. [25](#) **So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”** What did all these people see when they saw Jesus? Was it just a ghost? Was it a “Casper the Ghost” kind of figure that looked like he was wearing a white bed sheet? I don’t think so. Here is what Jesus said to Thomas. [27](#) **Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”** Thomas was a skeptic. He didn’t want to believe that Jesus was alive. He wanted proof – solid proof. What did Jesus want Thomas to believe? He wanted him to believe that God had raised him from the dead; that he was resurrected and alive.



Let’s go back to your question. ***I want to learn how God made Jesus resurrect.*** Remember how I said that the first and earliest answer to this question was that there was no resurrection. The Chief Priests and the Pharisees – the Jewish leaders – went and stood before Pilate and here is what they said. [63](#) **“Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ [64](#) Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.”** .... [66](#) **So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard..** (Matthew 27)





Well, what happened? In their minds, exactly what they feared! On that first Easter Sunday morning the Bible tells us that there was an earthquake and an angel of the Lord came and rolled back the stone that covered the front of the tomb. We read in Matthew 28:4 **And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.** Later, the men guarding the tomb came and told the Chief Priests what had happened. 12 **And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel,**

**they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers 13 and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14 And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.** So the answer, Georgia, is that some people believed that Jesus didn’t resurrect. They believed that the disciples stole his body only to make it look like he had risen from the dead. Tell me, what happens to soldiers who fall asleep when they are on duty? Do they get paid extra money and do they not get into any trouble at all?

People in our day have no more desire to believe the story of the resurrection of Jesus than the Jewish authorities did. They reject anything that even hints at the supernatural. So it is not surprising that one of the more modern ideas is that Jesus did not die on the cross. He only appeared to be dead so when they took him down from the cross and put him in the tomb, he was really still alive. This is known as the “swoon theory”. Jesus was in such agony on the cross that he fainted but as he lay in that cool tomb for several days, he revived. So there was no need for Jesus to rise from the dead. He never died!

This creates an even bigger problem for us as Christians. If Jesus never died, then what did he accomplish on the cross? The answer is nothing. Jesus went to the cross for one specific purpose and that was to bear the sins of guilty mankind in his own body. We celebrate Communion to remind us that on the cross Jesus’ body was broken and his blood was shed to cleanse us of our sins.

Even people within the church don't want to believe in the supernatural resurrection of Jesus. They do believe that Jesus died. It is pretty hard for any thinking person not to believe that. But then these people talk about the "Easter faith". What is the Easter faith? Well, these unbelieving people would say that Jesus didn't really physically, bodily rise from the dead, but in time the disciples came to believe that he had. That is the "Easter faith". That's like saying, "I knew there was no Easter Bunny!" but then going on to say, "In time I came to believe that there is an Easter Bunny!" That doesn't make any sense.



Georgia, I can't tell you the "how" of Jesus being resurrected, because the Bible doesn't tell us how. It only tells us that it was God's mighty power. Listen to these verses from Ephesians 1 which speak of [19](#) ... **the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might [20](#) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.** We can see the mighty power of God all around us. Look around Sugar Grove and see the mountains and the valleys, the



rivers and the fields, the animals and the livestock. Look up into the night sky and see the moon and all the stars that make up our galaxy and know that there are many more beyond what we can see. Who put all that in place? It was God. And how did he do it? All the Bible tells us is that it was God's mighty power. Now, if God can do all that, how difficult can it be for him to raise a man from the dead?

***I also want to know why God resurrected Jesus in the first place.***

This was the second thing you wanted to learn, Georgia. It is a very important question to ask. Let's think about this for a moment. Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem. He lived with his family until he grew up to be a man. Then he spent three years going about doing good and teaching people about God. Later he was arrested and died on a cross. Now let's suppose that after he died, Jesus remained

dead and that God didn't resurrect him. How would he be different from any other person? What would make him so special that millions of people believe in and follow him? After all, there are many people who go about doing good and teaching about God. Some of them are the founders of religions other than Christianity. They all eventually die. Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important?



Did you know that there is one whole chapter in the Bible that talks about nothing else but the resurrection of Jesus? It is 1 Corinthians 15 and it was written by the Apostle Paul. In the first part of this important chapter, Paul talks about the **fact** of the resurrection. By that I mean, he talks about how it really happened and was not just a fairy tale like the Easter Bunny or Cinderella.

**3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive.**

Let me explain what this means. First Paul is saying, "This is very important! What I am going to tell you is the most important thing!!"

1. **Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.** We have already talked about how important the death of Jesus is. He really did die on the cross. He didn't just faint. He died on the cross for our sins. He died for all the things we have done wrong and for all the ways that we can be rebels against God's laws. "**In accordance with the Scriptures**" means that it was written down in the Old Testament part of the Bible **long** before Jesus was born.
2. **That he was buried.** After Jesus died, they took him down off the cross and put him in a tomb. There was no doubt in the minds of the Roman soldiers that Jesus was dead. There was no doubt in the minds of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus that he was dead when they bound him up in grave clothes and laid him in the tomb.
3. **That he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.** That is, God resurrected Jesus three days after he died. This didn't just

happen. It too was written about in the Old Testament part of the Bible long before Jesus was born. You see Georgia, all this was part of God's plan. It was not just how things happened to turn out.

4. **That he appeared ...** Paul wanted to make sure that the report that Jesus had risen from the dead didn't just come from one person's feverish imagination. No, Jesus had been seen alive by many people. Five hundred witnesses to someone's being alive is a lot of witnesses. The resurrection of Jesus by God was an event that many people were eye witnesses to. Like the Civil War and 9/11 it was an historical event, not a myth or fairy tale.

In the next paragraph, Paul finally gets around to answering your question. You see, even in Bible times, there were people who argued that there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead. If that was true, then there were certain other things that were also true:

1. **13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.** The Bible teaches that there is a pattern. First, God resurrected Jesus, but it doesn't stop there. Next the Bible says that the same is true of all Christians when they die. When a Christian dies, that person doesn't just get buried and there is nothing after that. No, when we die, we will get resurrected one day just like Jesus. That is what heaven is all about. It is about getting resurrected and going to be with Jesus.
2. **14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.** That means that if God didn't resurrect Jesus, then your minister and your Sunday School teacher are just wasting their time. It means that what we believe as Christians is worthless, because it is all based on the resurrection of Jesus. If God did resurrect Jesus, then what the Bible teaches is true. If God did not resurrect Jesus, then the Bible is just a bunch of lies and tall tales.
3. **17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.** If God did not resurrect Jesus, then what we believe about God, the Bible and Jesus is useless. We are still in our sins. We are still lost sinners and that is a terrible place to be in.
4. **18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** "Fallen asleep" means people who have died. All the Christians we love who have died are simply gone. We are never going to see them again.
5. **19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.** If our Christian life only gives us hope and makes this life better rather than meaning we have real hope for a real future with God, then how sad is that? I think it is very sad. We sing hymns at church and songs in

Sunday School and it is just stupid – a complete waste of time. We are deluded. We have been deceived. We have been misled.

There is one more thing that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that I want to share with you Georgia. **32 ... If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”** If God did not resurrect Jesus, then we can live our lives any way we want. We can lie, cheat, steal, get drunk and do whatever we want. We don't have to follow any of God's rules, because tomorrow we die and that will be the end of everything. There is no heaven or hell. When we die, there is just nothing! We have no hope and we have no future.

Georgia, if I were to end at this point, then it would be very, very sad. So let me finish by saying this. **20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead!** This is not just something I believe. This is something I know! I know that Jesus is alive because he lives in me. Jesus didn't just change what I believed. Jesus changed me. And so on this Easter Sunday I am able to sing all those wonderful hymns about his resurrection.

You are a very special and smart girl Georgia. Thank you for asking these important questions. I am very proud of you.

Love,  
Uncle

**Hymn: “Resurrection Hymn” by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgE\\_E7yaz4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgE_E7yaz4)

1. See what a morning, gloriously bright  
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem.  
Folded the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light  
As the angels announce Christ is risen.  
See God's salvation plan, wrought in love  
Borne in pain, paid in sacrifice.  
Fulfilled in Christ the Man, for He lives.  
Christ is risen from the dead.
2. See Mary weeping. Where is He laid?  
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb.  
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name,  
It's the Master the Lord raised to life again.  
The voice that spans the years,  
Speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us.  
Will sound till He appears,

For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead.

3. One with the Father, Ancient of Days,  
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty.  
Honour and blessing, glory and praise,  
To the King crowned with pow'r and authority.  
And we are raised with Him,  
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered.  
And we shall reign with Him,  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead.

### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) **We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer.** This note from our treasurer.

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com) Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (eg Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.**

### **Invitation to the Offering (Romans 12:1,2)**

**I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

### **Offertory Prayer**

Living God, you have given us so much in Jesus Christ:  
hope, joy, and peace.  
Above all, you have given us life!  
What can we give in return?  
If the whole world were ours, it would not be enough.  
What little we have we humbly offer to you.  
A thousand, thousand thanks are due,  
dearest Jesus, unto you. **Amen.**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

O Holy God, beyond our imagining and yet near to us as flesh to fingernails, we come before you this Easter day in gratitude. We confess, O God, that we like to think of Easter as a sunny and warm day, full of light and sweetness, redolent of all that is fragrant in springtime. Yet no matter what the weather outside, on this day your world remains in so many corners a dark and stormy place, sunk deep into the cold winter of sin and evil. Those who first witnessed your Son's resurrection found it to be a fearful and fearsome event. For you, O great God of surprises, crashed into our reality with something new and unexpected. But on this morning, we do not want to forget the darkness of last Friday afternoon and the way by which the Easter victory, about which we so happily sing this day, came about. We cannot forget the sacrifice, the bloody death, the God-forsaken pain of it all. This clash between your kingdom and this world was fierce.

Today we do praise you for all the might, power, and creativity by which you won the victory, Father. We praise you for raising from the dead our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the great shepherd now of all of us sheep who follow him. But because we cannot and must not forget also the darkness of sin that even still is around us, we make petition this morning for all people anywhere and everywhere who continue to feel crucified by a cruel world and yet do not perceive any Easter. We pray for refugees, for tortured prisoners, for the innocent victims of war. We pray for abused children and battered women, for stricken families from whom a loved one has disappeared without a trace. We pray for the homeless poor and those victimized and diminished by racism, discrimination, and oppression of all kinds.

We pray for all those who can see no Easter light because all that is good and lovely has been eclipsed by a depression that will not lift, by chronic pain that will not abate, by a stretch of unemployment with no end in sight, or by a job that is slaying the spirit day by day because the work seems so meaningless. O Lord, the things that led Jesus to the cross have not yet disappeared from the face of the earth. The need for resurrection remains stubbornly present in the lives of millions. Make us, O Spirit of the living God, life-giving spirits to minister to those in need this Easter Sunday and always.

Right here in this congregation there are also needs aplenty. So, we make petition for the widow or widower who marks this Easter for the first time without a beloved spouse who died since last we observed this holy day. Be with anyone who feels that he or she needs to believe in the resurrection more than ever but is finding it more and more difficult because the absence of that dear person is too real to deny,

too total to grasp. We pray for those who are sick this day or who are worried about a loved one who is very ill.

And be with each of us gathered for this service. Thank you for all who have given of their time to make this service possible. Thank you for the glorious Easter hymns, old and new, which speak to us in a meaningful way of the Resurrection of Jesus. Above all we thank you for the presence of the Spirit of the living Lord, Christ Jesus. As we encounter nothing short of your very self here this morning, may we know for sure that we have indeed been in your sacred presence, and may this encounter in turn embolden us to live an Easter life not only now but also in the days to come and forevermore. Help us to take what we experience and learn here and to allow it to set a holy tone for us always and everywhere. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ. **Amen.**

**Hymn:** "Risen" by Shawna Edwards (No on-screen lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCQsK1t9EKY>

1. When darkness veiled the sky the day that Jesus died  
 In agony upon the bitter cross  
 They took His body down and laid it in a tomb  
 His friends believed that everything was lost.  
 But when the third day came, the darkness turned to light  
 For Mary heard her name and saw the living Christ.

**Chorus**

Risen  
 To set the captives free  
 Risen  
 To ransom you and me  
 To bind up every broken heart  
 To conquer death and sin.  
 Risen  
 To bring us home again.

2. And in that barren place the world forever changed  
 For hope was born when Jesus rose that day  
 And still His wounded hands reveal the love He has  
 For every fallen soul He came to save  
 And He will come again, and one by one we'll rise  
 To praise His holy name and see the living Christ

**Chorus**

Risen  
 To set the captives free  
 Risen



To ransom you and me  
 To bind up every broken heart  
 To conquer death and sin.  
 Risen  
 To bring us home again.

Alleluia, He lives  
 Alleluia, He is

Risen  
 To set the captives free  
 Oh, He is risen  
 To ransom you and me  
 To bind up every broken heart  
 To conquer death and sin.  
 Risen  
 To bring us home again.

Risen

## **Benediction**

As Christ burst forth from the tomb,  
 may new life burst forth from us  
 and show itself in acts of love and healing to a hurting world.  
 And may that same Christ, who lives forever  
 and is the source of our new life,  
 keep your hearts rejoicing and grant you peace  
 this day and always.

Go forth in joy to love and serve God in all that you do.

**We are sent in the name of the risen Christ.**

Let us bless our Lord.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

May the God of peace,  
 who raised to life the great shepherd of the sheep,  
 make us ready to do his will in every good thing,  
 through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

**Alleluia! Amen.**