

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 20th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Easter Sunday
Mark 16:1-8

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has given us new life and hope.

He has raised Jesus from the dead.

God has claimed us as his own.

He has brought us out of darkness.

He has made us light to the world.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Glory to you, O God:

on this day you won victory over death,

raising Jesus from the grave

and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ:

for us and for our salvation you overcame death

and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit:

you lead us into the truth.

Glory to you, O Blessed Trinity,

now and forever.

Amen.

NEW MEMBERS

Introduction

It is always a joy for a congregation to welcome new members into its fellowship. I would like to invite the following people to come forward:

You stand before this congregation as children of God, ready to take your place in Christian fellowship.

CHARGE

Beloved, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we welcome you into this household of faith. You are no longer strangers or sojourners but are equal citizens with the saints and members of this household of faith, all of us together serving the great head of the church, Christ Jesus our Lord. You have confessed your faith in Jesus Christ by your participation in his work here in this church. Now, with this formal service, you will join us in full communion, accepting all of the privileges and responsibilities that accompany such a step of faith.

VOWS

Do you affirm once again, that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, that the Bible is God's Word revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the teachings of this church reflect this revelation?

[We/I do.]

Acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord, do you promise to fulfill the duties of membership in this local church, joining us regularly in worship, engaging with us in Christian service, participating with us in Christian fellowship, and giving of your heart and resources to further the work of the Gospel?

[We/I do.]

Church Vows

To the members of Perth Community Church, will you welcome these fellow travelers into the life of this church, accepting them as full members, extending your friendship and prayers to them and supporting them fully as one of your own?

We will, with God's help.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God may your hand ever be over these, your servants, who have made this commitment to membership here today. May your Holy Spirit always be with them, and with all of us. Lead us all, together, in the knowledge and obedience of your Word that we may continue to serve you in this life and dwell with you in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Declaration of Acceptance

In the name of Jesus Christ, we extend a hearty welcome to you. You are now full members of this church. May we, together, grow in our love of, faith in and understanding of our God, made known in our Lord Jesus Christ. We extend the right hand of fellowship to you.

Children's Hymn**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!
Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

**Almighty God,
in raising Jesus from the grave,
you shattered the power of sin and death.
We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear,
bound by the ways that lead to death.
We overlook the poor and the hungry,
and pass by those who mourn;
we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed,
and indifferent to calls for peace;
we despise the weak,
and abuse the earth you made.
Forgive us, God of mercy.
Help us to trust your power
to change our lives and make us new,
that we may know the joy of life abundant
given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.**

Assurance of Pardon

When you were dead in trespasses,
God made you alive together with him,
when he forgave us all our trespasses,
erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands.
He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.
He disarmed the rulers and authorities
and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

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.**

Hymn #249: "The Day of Resurrection"

The day of resurrection: earth, tell it out abroad,
 the Passover of gladness, the Passover of God!
 From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
 our Christ hath brought us over with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright
 the Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light,
 and, listening to his accents, may hear, so calm and plain,
 his own 'All hail!' and, hearing, may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful; let earth its song begin;
 let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein;
 invisible and visible, their notes together er blend,
 for Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 118:14-24

¹⁴ The Lord is my strength and my song;
 he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ **Glad songs of salvation
 are in the tents of the righteous:
 "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
¹⁶ the right hand of the Lord exalts,
 the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!"**

¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live,
 and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸ **The Lord has disciplined me severely,
 but he has not given me over to death.**

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
 that I may enter through them
 and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ **This is the gate of the Lord;
 the righteous shall enter through it.**

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me

and have become my salvation.

**²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.**

²³ This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

**²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "This Day of Resurrection"

The day of resurrection: earth, tell it out abroad,
the Passover of gladness, the Passover of God!
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
our Christ hath brought us over with hymns of victory.

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invisible and visible, their notes together blend,
for Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end.

**Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)**

Scripture

Mark 16:1-8

16 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples, and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸ And they went out and

fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Sermon

Easter Sunday is special.

Easter Sunday is a little different than any other Sunday in the Christian Year. You see we often have people join us for a Christmas Eve service, or some other special service like a wedding, a baby dedication, a baptism, or a funeral, however, Easter Sunday is a regular Sunday Service for those of us who come every week.

So many Christians make it special in their own way. Some get up early and have a big breakfast before they come, some of you were here this morning to greet the dawn with prayer and praise to our Lord, some have brought along friends and family who do not always attend.

Easter Sunday is a day that many take a little more care in their appearance, a clean shirt, maybe a new tie or dress, or if you visit a church where people really get into it you may see more than a few Easter bonnets in the congregation.

To us Easter is special, but it is all because of what happened that very first Easter almost 2000 years ago.

That Easter Sunday was very different. On that Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, got up early and went to the tomb in which the body of Jesus Christ had been lain to anoint him.

When they arrived at the tomb, an angel tells the women that Jesus Christ was not there, that he had risen, and Mark ends this First Easter Sunday with these words

Mark 16:8

⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The women did not get up early, have a nice breakfast and get dressed up to celebrate the risen Lord, like we do. Instead, they were shocked, astonished, and amazed by the truth that the body of Jesus Christ was no longer in the tomb, that he was indeed risen.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ changed everything for his disciples.

On Good Friday we focus on Jesus on the cross when he bore our sins and paid the debt we owe with his blood and his life.

And there are lots of people for whom this is a major focus of their faith. The crosses that hang in the Roman Catholic denomination all have Jesus Christ upon the cross because they have such a focus on sin and the debt which Jesus Christ paid for his people.

If you look at the cross in most mainline Christian churches, you will see an empty cross. A reminder of the Good News of the Resurrection, of the hope we have in Christ.

That the climax of the ministry that our Lord and Savior took part in when he was walking upon this planet 2000 years ago was not when he died upon the cross, instead it was what happened three days later when these three women went to his grave to anoint his body.

The climax is the empty tomb, the resurrection of the Lord and the defeat of death, and the hope of new life that is shared among all who have committed their lives to the Lord.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have a living hope because of that empty tomb. When the Bible talks of hope, it is not in the same way that we talk about hope in the world today. We might say, 'I hope that I do well on this test or in this interview.' We might say, 'I hope the weather is good that day.' We use the word hope almost as a form of wishful thinking. We use it when we are uncertain of the future and want the best.

The word that we translate from Greek into English as 'hope' does not mean this kind of hope. Instead, when we see hope in the Bible it means something closer to expectation. For Christians hope is about expecting something in the future, it is a feeling, a conviction that something will happen even though we see no evidence of it happening right now.

I am sure some of you are saying that sounds a lot like faith, and it does, however, there are some important and subtle differences between hope and faith.

Hope is the expectation that those things in which we have faith will become true.

Hebrews 11:1

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith and hope go hand in hand. For true faith to materialize in your life you need to have a glimmer of hope in the truth of the Scriptures.

Faith considers the truth of God in the here and now, and when that faith moves beyond the here and now into the future, we begin to understand hope as it is meant to be understood Biblically. We have expectations for our future because we have true faith in the Lord now.

Faith is the foundation of hope.

Hope grows on Faith.

Then hope invigorates and strengthens our faith.

The empty tomb gave the three women who arrived there to anoint the body of Jesus that kind of hope, not the “I wish that Jesus were alive kind of hope,” but ‘The Lord is risen’ kind of hope.

When the three women run from the tomb, they have no proof that Jesus is indeed risen, they have no idea why the tomb is empty, what caused the stone to be rolled away or who the man who spoke to them actually is, they actually do not know much at all.

The women probably had a million questions going through their minds about what had just happened. But their faith, feeds their hope, and off they went to share the news with the others.

This is a good reminder for all of us, especially those of us that are struggling with our faith at times. It is ok to struggle, it is ok to have questions, it is ok to not know. Those three women had no idea what was about to happen as they shared the tale of the empty tomb with the others.

They just went and did God’s bidding.

As we walk in faith there will be many times when we do not have a plan, we have no idea what we are meant to do and may be unsure and have no confidence in what we can even do. We need to know that even if we have no plan, no confidence and no idea, God does. And in that we can have hope, we can be assured that even as flawed as we are, even as much as we struggle with our faith, our God is risen and he is with us, which means even when we think all of the worldly odds are against us, we have hope, because our God can do the impossible.

The empty tomb of Jesus Christ gives us hope. Not a hope-so, wishful thinking kind of hope, but a know-so, expectation kind of hope.

Faith followers of Jesus Christ have hope of forgiveness, hope of peace, hope of salvation and hope of Heaven.

All centered around Jesus Christ. Resurrection is the basis of hope and faith.

If Jesus Christ had died upon the cross and was still in tomb on that Easter Sunday the Gospel would be meaningless, the forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation with God would be hopeless, our lives today would be joyless, and our future would be pointless.

As the women walked to the tomb they expected to find death, and instead they found new life. This is the walk we take every Holy Week, We walk from the death on the cross, something we all know is true, to the resurrection. We stand with those three women and Christians throughout the last two centuries, experiencing the impossible, death defeated, and new life began.

As Christians we focus a lot on the price Jesus paid upon the cross, the debt of our sins, often so much that we forget resurrection and its importance in our faith. Yet the living God always finds ways to remind us of the truth of his resurrection.

Death is the last great mystery, as the majority of the world believes it is the final curtain, the big ending to which there is no encore. However, for Christians it is a not the end, it is a transition.

Jesus revealed the true nature of death; he died and showed us that there is life beyond death in this world.

In doing so Jesus reminded us through his resurrection that we have hope in something greater than this world. This is the Easter message, our God is a Living God, and we have hope,

In his death Jesus defeated the devil, then he defeated death, and even though the devil and his minions fight against the Light of the Lord and the truth of the Gospel at every opportunity, we do not need to worry, because Jesus is alive, and our hope is in him and not the things of this world.

We do not worship some dead god; we worship the Living Lord. A God that has told us to bring our burdens to him.

We do not have to seek him out, because he is always with us. We do not need to worry when our faith falters and we have trouble walking with him, because he walks alongside us. There will be times in our walk of faith when we wonder if Jesus sees us, hears us, or is even with us and we can have faith that through it all he is with us, and we can have hope, because we know that his will is always being done.

Later this year we will look at the Gospel of John and its description of the resurrection, it says.

John 20:1-8

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and

said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.

They ran to the tomb, not strolled, not walked briskly, they ran, it was a foot race between these two men to see the empty tomb. Just the chance that it was true filled them with hope, the expectation of the empty tomb gave them purpose.

Genuine hope, genuine faith is doing as these two disciples did, running towards something and expecting it to be true, even when everything in the world tells us it is impossible.

Christians have that kind of hope.

A hope that looks forward to the impossible, trusting in a God that is the creator, sustainer, and redeemer of all things.

On that First Easter Sunday, John and Peter ran to the tomb filled with hope at finding a resurrected Christ.

What hope did you bring with you to this church this Easter morning?

A hope for Easter eggs?

A hope for a nice meal?

A hope for good fellowship?

A hope for beautiful music?

A hope for a good message?

A hope for peace in your life?

A hope for some answers about your faith?

A hope for some guidance or direction in a world that seems to be spinning out of control?

The Good News is that the Risen Jesus Christ gives us a living Hope.

To understand that, we need to go back to the cross, back to Good Friday. Jesus Christ was betrayed, was ridiculed and persecuted, was lied about, was tortured, was spit upon, was mocked, and he suffered the cruelest form of death known to mankind in his crucifixion. His body put through extreme punishment not because of anything which he did, but because of everything we do. He died for our sins, and then three days later he rose from the dead, defeating death itself.

This means that we can have hope even when our lives are full of:

Betrayal
 Ridicule
 Persecution
 Pain
 Sickness
 Suffering
 Death

We can have hope because he lives.

Jesus's death and resurrection brings us hope even in the worst of this world.

Paul proclaimed this truth to the Romans.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

This is the message of the Gospel; this is the message of Easter Sunday.

We have Hope:

In the midst of difficult days.
 In the midst of challenges and concerns.
 In the midst of a difficult diagnosis.
 In the midst of pain and suffering.
 In the midst of fears and troubles.
 In the midst of our faults and failures.

We can have hope in all things because, 'He is Risen'.

Let us pray,

Like Your Only Son in Suffering and Glory

Lord God, heavenly Father,
 in your fatherly goodness
 you allow your children
 to come under your chastening rod here on earth
 that we may be like your only Son

in suffering here
 and in glory hereafter.
 Comfort us
 in temptations and afflictions
 by your Holy Spirit
 that we may not fall into despair,
 but that we may continually trust
 in your Son's promise
 that our trials will endure but a little while
 and will then be followed by eternal joy.
 In patient hope,
 help us overcome all evil
 and at last obtain eternal salvation;
 through your Son,
 Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Easter 4, Jubilate

Hymn #258: "Thine Be The Glory"

Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
 endless is the vict'ry Thou o'er death hast won.
 Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
 kept the folded grave-clothes where Thy body lay.

Refrain:

Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
 endless is the vict'ry Thou o'er death hast won.

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb.
 Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
 let His church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
 for the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting. [Refrain]

No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life!!
 Life is nought without Thee; aid us in our strife;
 make us more than conqu'rors, through Thy deathless love;
 bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above. [Refrain]

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Holy Supper that we are about to celebrate
is a feast of remembrance, of communion, and of hope.

We come in remembrance
that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent of the Father into the world
to assume our flesh and blood
and to fulfill for us all obedience to the divine law,
even to the bitter and shameful death of the cross.
By his death, resurrection, and ascension
he established a new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation,
that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken by him.

We come to have communion with this same Christ,
who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world.
In the breaking of the bread, he makes himself known to us
as the true heavenly bread that strengthens us unto life eternal.
In the cup of blessing, he comes to us as the vine,
in whom we must abide if we are to bear fruit.

We come in hope,
believing that this bread and this cup
are a pledge and foretaste of the feast of love
of which we shall partake when his kingdom has fully come,
when with unveiled face we shall behold him,
made like unto him in his glory.

Let us Pray,

All-powerful God, I am sinful. Nothing I can do can save me. I turn away from my sin, and I flee to you. I need you. I need the life-giving death and resurrection of Jesus. Send me your Spirit so that I can be made new. Thank you for offering me forgiveness. Thank you for taking the punishment I deserved. Thank you for loving me more than I could possibly imagine. **Amen.**

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you;
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts;
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy
to give you thanks and praise,
eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe.
At your word the earth was made
and spun on its course among the planets.
Your hand formed us from the dust of the earth
and set us among all your creatures
to love and serve you.
When we were unfaithful to you
you kept faith with us,
your love remained steadfast.
When we were slaves in Egypt,
you broke the bonds of our oppression,
brought us through the sea to freedom,
and made covenant to be our God.
By a pillar of fire
you led us through the desert
to a land flowing with milk and honey,
and set before us the way of life.
You spoke of love and justice in the prophets,
and in the Word made flesh you lived among us,
manifesting your glory.
He died that we might live,
and is risen to raise us to new life.
Therefore, we praise you,
joining our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the faithful of every time and place,
who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name
in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

You are holy, O God of majesty,
and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,
whom you sent to save us.
He came with healing in his touch,
and was wounded for our sins.

He came with mercy in his voice,
 and was mocked as one despised.
 He came with peace in his heart,
 and met with violence and death.
 By your power he broke free from the prison of the tomb,
 and at his command the gates of hell were opened.
 The one who was dead now lives.
 The one who humbled himself is raised to rule over all creation,
 the Lamb upon the throne.
 The one ascended on high is with us always, as he promised

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts,
 we take this bread and this wine
 from the gifts you have given us,
 and celebrate with joy
 the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ.
 Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
 as a living and holy offering of ourselves,
 that our lives may proclaim the Christ is the bread of life:

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
 we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
 until you come in glory.**

Gracious God,
 pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
 and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,
 that the bread we break
 and the cup we bless
 may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.
 By your Spirit make us one with Christ
 that we may be one with all who share this feast,
 united in ministry in every place.
 As this bread is Christ's body for us,
 send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.
 Intercessions for the church and the world may be included here.
 Nourished at this table, O God,
 may we know Christ's redemptive love
 and live a new life in him.
 Help us who recognize our Lord in the breaking of bread
 to see and serve him in all whose lives are broken.
 Give us who are fed at his hand,
 grace to share our bread with the hungry
 and with the hungry of heart.

Keep us faithful in your service
 until Christ comes in final victory,
 and we shall feast with all your saints
 in the joy of your eternal realm.
 Through Christ,
 all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father,
 with the Holy Spirit in the holy church,
 now and forever.
Amen.

Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in
 all places:

The Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. AMEN.**

Communion

We celebrate this feast in obedience to Christ's example and mandate.

[as the minister breaks the bread]
 The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread,
 and after giving thanks to God,
 he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
 "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me."

[as the minister lifts or pours the cup]
 In the same way he took the cup, saying,
 “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
 shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
 Whenever you drink it,
 do this in remembrance of me.”

Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup,
 you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord
 until he comes.

Congregation of Jesus Christ,
 the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him
 and trust in him alone for their salvation.
 All who are truly sorry for their sins,
 who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus
 as their Savior,
 and who desire to live in obedience to him as Lord
 are now invited to take part in
 the table of the Lord.

Taking of the bread

Take and eat.
 This is the body of Christ, which is [given] for you.
 Do this, remembering him.

Drinking of the cup

This cup is the new covenant
 sealed by Christ’s blood,
 which was shed that the sins of many
 might be forgiven.
 Drink from it, all of you

Prayer after Communion

Loving God,
 you graciously feed us
 with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.
 May we who have received this sacrament
 be strengthened in your service;
 we who have sung your praises
 tell of your glory and truth;
 we who have seen the greatness of your love
 see you face to face in your kingdom.
 For you have made us your own people

by the death and resurrection of your Son, our Lord,
and by the life-giving power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer
(Congregant Prepared)

Closing Hymn #275: "Jesus Shall Reign" (V 1,4,5)

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run;
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring
the honours due our glorious King;
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the long Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Risen and reigning Lord,
truly you are a high priest
who has passed through the heavens.
Truly you were tested as we are,
and yet were without sin.
With boldness we approach your throne,
deeply assured of your mercy and grace
in our time of need.

Your rising and your reigning
give hope to your people.
May all who live without hope today
taste and see that you are good.

Your rising and your reigning call us, your people,
to testify to your goodness.
Equip each of us today
to be bold witnesses of Easter news.

Your rising and your reigning
call all the nations of the world
to stop their scheming and seek your peace.
May your Spirit convict all people
to submit to your rule and to pursue true peace.

Your rising and your reigning
call each of us to turn from the path of death
to the path of obedience and life.
Send your Spirit to strengthen our resolve,
and help us to live as people of life and light.

Your rising and your reigning
bring life and light and healing.
May all who suffer in the valley of the shadow of death and disease
know your healing presence.

Your rising and your reigning
are firstfruits of all that is to come:
justice, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit.
May your kingdom come quickly.

May we, your Easter people,
never fail to bless and thank you
for your immeasurable love and sure promises.
All praise to you, risen Christ,
who with the Father and the Spirit lives
in perfect communion forever and ever. **Amen.**

Benediction

Grace to you and peace
from him who is and who was and who is to come,
and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. **Amen.**