

**The Worship of God**  
**March 31, 2024**  
**Easter Sunrise Service**

**Gathering Music**

**Chiming of the Hour**

**Greeting**

*As the sun creeps over the horizon, you and two companions have come to anoint the friend you have lost – one last, sad act of kindness to the most beautiful and giving person you knew. Suddenly, nothing is as you expected. Jolted out of your grief, you remember his promises. And in joy, you run to tell the tale to others who loved him...only to be dismissed as speaking foolishness. Yet in your heart, you know that the experience of resurrection has changed everything – it has changed YOU! And it will change the world.*

**Call to Worship (Bob)**

Shout for joy. ***The tomb is empty.***  
Clap your hands. ***Death is cheated.***  
Dance and sing. ***Christ is risen.***  
Christ is risen, indeed.

**Easter Prayer**

*God of mystery, God of wonder and love, God of resurrection and new life; last night we wept, because we thought you were dead. This morning, like Mary in the garden, we mistake you for someone else, and ask where you have gone. But you have wakened us to sunshine, opening our eyes to daffodils and dogwoods, filling our ears with birdsong, filling our ears with joy. For you are not dead, but risen, and live among us now. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia. Amen.*

## **Easter Hymn**

“Christ the Lord Has Risen Today”

*Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia  
Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia  
Rise your joys and trumpets high; Alleluia!  
Sing ye heavens and earth reply; Alleluia!*

*Love’s redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight the battle won; Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids Him rise; Alleluia!  
Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia!*

## **Scripture Reading**

John 20: 1-10

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed 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 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus’s head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

## **Responsive Reading (Kathryn)**

Look! The dawn is breaking.

Morning is on its way.

See on the hillside the sun is beginning to rise.

***Leave us alone and let us sleep.***

***We want to forget about the terrors of the night.***

***We want to shut out the darkness.***

Look! The tomb is open. A new day has begun.

***Leave us alone and let us grieve.***

***We have lost our hope and all our dreams are dead.***

## **Scripture Reading**

John 20: 11-18

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look[a] into the tomb, 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir,[b] if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew,[c] “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

## **Responsive Reading**

But look! The grave is empty. The stone is rolled away.

*An empty grave? A vacant shroud?  
Then hope is reborn, and the dream is alive again.  
Death has been swallowed up by victory.  
Rejoice, for the day of resurrection has come at last.  
Alleluia!*

## **Prayer of Confession**

*God of new awakenings, we confess that we would rather stay asleep. We are afraid to hope and have our hopes shattered. We are afraid to dream and have our dreams deferred. Break us open like the tomb so that new life may pour forth. Give us the faith to believe, to hope, to dream anew. Let us live as people of your resurrection. Amen.*

## **Words of Assurance (Psalm 118)**

God's steadfast love endures forever!  
God hears and answers our prayers.  
God has become our salvation.  
Behold, we shall not die, but we shall live!  
There is nothing more we need.  
We have a witness in our heart  
That we are deeply loved,  
And in that love, forgiven.  
It is marvelous in our sight.

## **Joyful Response**

### **Closing Prayer, not printed (Bob)**

God of endings and new beginnings, we come to worship and to praise.

We come to abandon our pretenses and to offer up our hopes and dreams, that you may breathe new life into them. Shake us from our slumber and awaken us to our own resurrection. Open our eyes to the new day dawning in our hearts. Let us rejoice and be glad, for life has triumphed over death! Alleluia. Amen.