

◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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◆ **Sunday April 12, 2020** ◆
Easter Sunrise Service

MELROSE UNITED CHURCH

* indicates a time to stand, if you are able
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

◆ GATHERING ◆

PRELUDE – Pastorella

J.S. Bach

** A short service upon awakening – if you are able, go outside onto your back deck, or open a window, breathe in some fresh air. Think for a moment that this air that surrounds us is also air that encircles the globe. Although freshened and renewed, it is the same air that surrounded the hill with the three crosses, and the tomb that was mysteriously opened. We are connected back through time with those who have gone before. We share the same hopes and dreams, fears and anxieties that bind us to one another. There are no strangers for we are all one – children of the same awesome God.

May this day bring you peace and contentment. May you look for it rather than the darkly shadowed news of our current pandemic. May you be filled with the grace of God on this blessed day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CHRIST IN OUR MIDST

One: The stone has been rolled away. The light cannot be held down by darkness.

All: We look to find him, for he is not there. He is here and everywhere. The light of his truth shines in our hearts.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: This morning, we would love to be out in the open air to celebrate our worship, and for some that may be possible,

but for many of us we are instead safely
tucked into our homes.

This is a day of miracles, of surprises, of glory.
Light has dawned on a shadowed hill of crosses.
A tomb is now empty.

All: Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

* HYMN: *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*

VU 155

*1 Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!
our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!
who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah!
suffer to redeem our loss, hallelujah!*

*2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, hallelujah!
unto Christ, our heavenly King, hallelujah!
who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!
sinners to redeem and save, hallelujah!*

*3 But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!
our salvation have procured, hallelujah!
now above the sky he's King, hallelujah!
where the angels ever sing, hallelujah!*

*4 Sing we to our God above, hallelujah!
praise eternal as God's love, hallelujah!
praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah!
praise the Son and Holy Ghost, hallelujah!*

OPENING PRAYER (said together) *by the Right Rev. Richard Bott*
**God of all creation,
Spirit of our hearts,
Risen Christ -**

There is no moment but this one, there is no time but now, and so we open ourselves to you.

Wake us from our sleepiness.

Open us to your impossible possibilities.

Help us to be your people, risen people of new life, now and always. Amen.

WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

A TIME WITH CHILDREN AND THE CHILD WITHIN US

◆ SERVICE OF THE WORD ◆

Reader: Cheryl Evans

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

One: Holy God. Open to us the wonder and meaning of your Scriptures so that we may ponder them and find new ways to understand them in our own personal context.

Amen.

WISDOM OF ISRAEL: Exodus 14:10 – 31 and 15:20-21

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall

never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.” The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.” Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned

to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

One: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left

the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

One: This is the good news of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION: Dejected Disciples!

Tim LaHaye and Jerry B Jenkins are authors of *The Jesus Chronicles*, a novel about Matthew's Story. These ideas and excerpts are taken from it.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were majorly confused when they confronted the empty tomb. It was the morning of the third day following the horrific crucifixion and the end of their dreams of being part of Jesus' glorious kingdom. They took their news to the rest of the disciples who had gathered for safety in the upper room.

Matthew had no idea what was in store for him. He was grieving deeply over the loss of His Lord, as were all the disciples. They were awaiting the return of the two Mary's, believing that their trip to the tomb to tend to the Lord's body would be in vain. Pilate had ensured that the Roman guards kept watch to prevent any of Jesus followers from stealing and moving his body.

Matthew rose reluctantly from his sleep. He had intended to go with the women to the tomb but they left much earlier. He headed for the kitchen where there was fresh bread baking. He felt a pang of sadness as he remembered the last meal, the breaking of the bread. He thought of how direct Jesus could be. It was this very

directness his honesty and his probing truth that had gotten him killed. Matthew woke the others and they joined him for breakfast. They had nearly finished eating when they heard what sounded like thunder in the distance and the whole place was shaken. An earthquake one said.

It was only a few minutes later they hear excited voices approaching and footsteps on the stairs. The two Marys swept in both talking at once. "We heard an earthquake" the men said. "We know" the women said. "An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the tomb and sat on it. He was as white as snow." "What of the Roman guards" the men said. "They fainted from fear" one of the Marys said. Mary Magdalene said "the angel told us" "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as He said." "That's crazy." "I don't believe it." "You're dreaming ." came the spontaneous replies. "No the angel told us to go quickly and tell you. On our way here Jesus met us saying "Rejoice." "He told us to tell you to go to a mount in Galilee and there you would believe what we are telling you. "

Matthew wanted so badly to believe them. The women wouldn't lie, would they? But, he like the others had to see for themselves. He grabbed his coat and they all headed off hardly daring to hope that it could be true.

I'll believe it when I see it Thomas muttered. And who could blame him!

INVITATION TO OFFERING

One: Let us continue to support the work of our church as we are able.

*1 Come, you faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness:
God has brought forth Israel
into joy from sadness,
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters,
led them with unmoistened foot
through the Red Sea waters.*

*2 'Tis the spring of souls today,
Christ has burst his prison,
and from three days' sleep in death
as a sun has risen;
all the winter of our sins,
long and dark, is flying
from his light, to whom we give
laud and praise undying.*

*3 Now the queen of seasons, bright
with the day of splendour,
with the royal feast of feasts,
comes its joy to render;
comes to gladden faithful hearts,
who with true affection
welcome in unwearied strains
Jesus' resurrection!*

*4 Neither could the gates of death,
nor the tomb's dark portal,
nor the watchers, nor the seal
hold him as a mortal:*

*for today amid his own
he now stands, bestowing
God's true peace which evermore
passes human knowing.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *(followed by Our Lord's Prayer)*

One: Easter morn is upon us and we are confronted with the empty tomb. Like the two Marys we do not know what to make of it. Dear God, we have never experienced physical resurrection in our lives. Yet you give us so many opportunities for new beginnings for rising up to new ways of life. You take bad situations and turn them into good.

As we move into this day with our families and we continue to face isolation from friends and loved ones, help us to find ways to stay connected, to reach out to those who have no one in their lives, and to take time to appreciate the small things we have been missing in the hustle and bustle of our busy living.

We pray for our church community – for Loretta, Flo, Fred, Vic, and Cheryl's mother. We pray for those outside our church community who are impacted in many ways by our current situation. Lord, we ask that you be with them in the ways that each one needs.

For all those that we hold in our hearts we raise up to you for their safe keeping.

(Quiet reflection)

**All: 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, and the power and the
glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

* CLOSING HYMN – *This Joyful Eastertide*

VU 177

*1 This joyful Eastertide,
away with sin and sorrow!
My love, the crucified,
hath sprung to life this morrow.*

*[Refrain:]
Had Christ, that once was slain,
ne'er burst his three-day prison,
our faith had been in vain:
but now has Christ arisen,
arisen, arisen, arisen.*

*2 My flesh in hope shall rest,
and for a season slumber,
till trump from east to west
shall wake the dead in number. [Refrain]*

*3 Death's flood hath lost its chill,
since Jesus crossed the river:*

*lover of souls, from ill
my passing soul deliver. [Refrain]*

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

One: May God keep us

In our going out and our coming in
In our lying down and our rising up,
In our work and in our leisure,
In our laughter and in our tears,
Until we meet again. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE -

Andante grazioso, Sonata #11 in A Major, excerpt, KV 331

W.A. Mozart