

**April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday
Again & Again, The Sun Rises**



The Promise by Rev. Lisle Gwynn

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.” - **Martin Luther King**

“If you can love someone with your whole heart, even one person, then there's salvation in life. Even if you can't get together with that person.” - **Haruki Murakami**

“To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.”- **G.K. Chesterton**

“Hearts rebuilt from hope resurrect dreams killed by hate.” - **Aberjhani**

“Love had raised them from the dead, and the heart of each held endless springs of life for the heart of the other.” - **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

"My heart is moved by all I cannot save; so much has been destroyed I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." - **Adrienne Rich**

“Where there is love there is life” - **Gandhi**

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*While it was still dark.
While it was still night.
While she could not see.
While she thought death held sway. While she grieved.
While she wept.
While it was still dark, resurrection began.*

PRELUDE: "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth" by George Frederick Handel;
Patty Meyer, organ

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Good morning and welcome! My name is Elisa Lucozzi and I am pastor to the beloved community that is Guilford Community Church. We're so glad you have joined us this morning for our joyous Easter Sunday and the final Sunday of our Lenten series, "Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain".

The Sunday after Easter, worship will be led by staff from the national office of the United Church of Christ, along with Conference ministers from around the country, including our conference minister the Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak.

Although we really miss being together in person, we continue to gather online because we love and care about our congregation and our community, because we want to maintain physical distancing in a way that helps us to feel connected but also keeps us all safe. Although it is hard to be physically distant from one another, we also know that it can't keep our hearts from connecting, and we know it is indeed the best way of caring for one another right now. Let us keep creating new ways of being church because we know that being church has nothing to do with a building and everything to do with loving each other. Let us gather to be the church in a new way with a welcome wide enough for all.

Let us begin as always by acknowledging and honoring this land we occupy and those First Nation people to whom this land belongs:

We gather here on the bank of the Broad Brook
in the shadow of the great Mount Wantastiquet
in the valley of the rushing Connecticut
to worship and discern together the call of God
to the United Church of Christ for these days,
let us know that we do so on the hunting grounds
and homelands of the Mahican and Penacook people,
as well as the southernmost members of the Abenaki
Tribe.

These people used this land since time immemorial
and are still among us in the present.
We offer them our gratitude and respect,
Our repentance and hope in solidarity with them...

It is a Holy Communion we share of life on earth,
of past and present, of pain and reconciliation,
of mystery and majesty...let us begin.

SILENT MEDITATION and THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Family of faith, I invite you to close your eyes.
Rest your feet on the floor beneath you.
Release any tension you are holding -
in your jaw, your neck, your shoulders, your hands, your legs, your feet.

Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out.

The Hebrew word for breath (*ruach*) is the same word for Spirit.
So as you breathe, imagine that it is God who is filling up your lungs with
energy and love. Trust that God is as close as your very breath.

Now I invite you to still your mind. Imagine your mind as a river.
Thoughts will drift into view; they always do.
However, instead of holding onto those thoughts, allow yourself to let them
float by.

And listen. Listen deep. Listen far. Listen wide. Listen.

The sound of your breath is the sound of the Divine. This is a holy space.

INTROIT: "I Believe" by Mark Miller; *GCC Virtual Choir; Cathy Hess, soloist*

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: This day is like every other day.

All: Alarm clocks beeped. Covers were removed.

Coffee was brewed. Weary bodies came to life.

One: And yet this day is like no other day.

All: For the sun rose, and we knew it was a miracle.

The tomb was empty, and they knew it was love.

One: So again, and again we say:

All: The longest night is over. Death has lost its sting. Jesus is among us.

Alleluia! Amen.

One: Again, and again and again.

All: Alleluia! Amen.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION: “Roll Back the Stone: A Litany for Easter” by Janet Morley

When we are all despairing, when the world is full of grief, when we see no way ahead and hope has gone away:

roll back the stone.

Although we fear change,

although we are not ready, although we’d rather weep and run away:

roll back the stone.

Because we’re coming with the women, because we hope where hope is vain,

because You call us from the grave and show the way:

roll back the stone. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: #205 “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” words by Charles Wesley, 1739; music from *Lyra Davidica*, 1708; *Andy & Robin Davis, Peter & Mary Alice Amidon, with Dwayne & Rachel Johnson on trumpet/piano.*

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

words by Charles Wesley, 1739
music Arr. from *Lyra Davidica*, 1708

1. Christ the Lord is risen to - day,
2. Lives a - gain our glo - rious King,
3. Love's re - deem - ing work is done,
4. Soar we now where Christ has led,
5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!

Al - le - lu - ia!

5. Mor - tal tongues and an - gels say:
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won,
Fol - lowing our ex - alt - ed Head,
Praise to thee by both be gi - ven,

Al - le - lu - ia!

9. Raise your joys and tri - umphs high,
Dy - ing once, he all doth save,
Death in vain for - bies him rise,
Made like him, like him we rise,
Thee we greet tri - um - phant now,

Al - le - lu - ia!

13. Sing, ye heavens, and earth re - ply:
Where thy vic - to - ry, O grave?
Christ has o - pened Par - a - dise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,
Hail, the Res - ur - rec - tion thou!

Al - le - lu - ia!

CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends, had we been there that first Easter morning,
it is likely that many of us would have been with the disciples -

hiding out in fear,
locked behind doors,
alone with our thoughts in the upper room.

I wish I could say that I would have gone with the women, that I would have
been brave and determined. I wish I could say that I would have held onto my
faith, but the truth is, we'll never know.

What I *do* know, is that Jesus came back for all of us - not the few who had
maintained faith, or the few who stayed with Him until the end.
He came back for the broken and the afraid,

for the cowardly and the greedy,
for the women in the garden,
and for the disciples hiding in the upper room. He came back for those who
betrayed Him and those who worshiped Him.
He came back for you and for me.

So, join me in the prayer of confession,
knowing that no matter where we are on the spectrum of faith, Jesus lived,
loved, and returned for us.
Let us pray.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Beloved Community, before God and before you, my family, I confess: I
have seen the sun rise and withheld my praise. I have seen my neighbor suffer
and withheld my aid. I have seen love extended and chosen to walk away. I
have seen divisions deepen and managed to remain unfazed.

**All: We hear you. We see you. You are forgiven. God's love is like the sun.
No matter how lost we are in the night, day after day, the light will find
you. Rest easy. You are held in God's warmth.**

One: Thanks be to God. Amen.

All: Now we must pray.

**Beloved friend, before God and before each other, we confess: we have
seen the sun rise and withheld our praise. We have seen our neighbors
suffer and have withheld our aid. We have seen love extended and chosen
to walk away. We have seen divisions deepen and managed to remain
unfazed.**

One: I hear you. I see you. You are forgiven. God's love is like the sun. No matter how lost we are in the night, day after day, the light will find you. Rest easy. You are held in God's warmth.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN "Butterfly Meditation" as taught by Hadley Bunting, Member In Discernment at Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC

CHILDREN'S STORY: "Jesus and the Children, a retelling of the Gospel story in Living God's Way" by Ralph Milton; *the Rev. Lee Moore with his grandsons Jacob and Marcus*

CHILDREN'S HYMN: "Easter Anthem" by William Billings, 1790; *Emma Schneider, Amelia Fontein, Arthur Davis and Guillaume Sparrow-Pepin From GCC Easter 2020*

SCRIPTURE & READINGS

"Being the Resurrection" by the Rev. Dr. Victoria Weinstein; *Lily Quintero*

The stone has got to be rolled back from the tomb again and again every year. Roll up your sleeves.

He is not coming back, you know.

He is not coming back unless it is we who rise for Him

We who lay healing hands on the reviled and rejected like He did on His behalf.

We who rage for righteousness in His insistent voice,

We who love the sinner, even knowing that "the sinner" is no farther off than our own heartbeat.

He will not be back to join us at the table,

to share God's extravagant banquet,

God's love feast, all are invited, come as you are.

And so, it is you and I who must feast for Him,

must say the grace and break the bread and pass it to the left

and dish up the broiled fish (or pour the wine) and pass it to the right.

And treat each one so tenderly

as though just this morning she or he made the personal effort

to make it back from heaven, or from hell,

but certainly from death

to be by our side.

Because if by some miracle (and why not a miracle?)

He did come back,

wouldn't He want to see us like this?

Wouldn't it be a miracle to live for just one day?
So that if He did, by some amazing feat
come riding into town,
He could take a look around and say:
"This is what I meant!"

And we could say:
It took us a long time...
but we finally figured it out.

Oh, let us live to make it so.
You are the resurrection and the life.

Mark 16:1-8 *Margaret Holland, Sander Scott & David Scott*

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into 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.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Hymn #617 "Write These Words in Our Hearts" *GCC Virtual Choir*

ANTHEM: "Now the Green Blade Riseth" traditional tune arr. by Noel Nouvelet; words by John Macleod Campbell Crum, 1928; arranged by Andy Davis; *Robin Davis and Perrin Scott, Robin on dulcimer and Andy on accordion*

Now the Green Blade Riseth



1 Now the green blade ris - eth from the bur - ied grain,
2 In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain,
3 Forth he came at Eas - ter, like the ris - en grain,
4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,



wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
think - ing that nev - er he would wake a - gain,
he that for three days in the grave had lain,
thy touch can call us back to life a - gain,



love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been:
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen:
quick from the dead my ris - en Lord is seen:
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:



Love is come a - gain like wheat that spring - eth green.

SERMON: Rising with the Son

Throughout Lent, a group of us, mostly those who were regulars in the centering prayer group, with some new faces joining, have been engaged in a Lenten study which pairs the poetry of Emily Dickinson with the Scriptures for each week of Lent and Holy Week. But here's one shared with me by a colleague whose congregation is also doing this Lenten series. This one isn't in our study books, but I think it speaks perfectly of the Easter story.

That I did always love
I bring thee Proof
That till I loved
I never lived—Enough—

That I shall love away—
I argue thee
That love is life—
And life hath Immortality—

This—dost thou doubt—Sweet—

Then have I
Nothing to show
But Calvary—

I invite you to pray with me – May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in Your sight, loving and gracious God.

“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.”

Really? That’s our Easter Scripture? Come on! It can’t end like this, especially not this year! Where’s the feel-good story where Mary mistakes Jesus for the gardener and recognizes the risen Christ when He speaks her name. Where is that tender scene? No, we’re left with “they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” Afraid? Afraid of what? Perhaps they were afraid that like so many women before and after them, they wouldn’t be believed.

Afraid because Jesus’ body was gone and that must have meant foul play.

Afraid because they just encountered an angel and let’s face it, that’s not an everyday occurrence!

To be completely honest, my first reaction was “I’m not using this Gospel! I’m going to use John’s warm and fuzzy version!” But as I sat with it, more and more I realized that this “incomplete” Easter story in the Gospel of Mark may be especially fitting for this year, for this moment.

Our Gospel story begins at dawn, just before the full light of day; in fact, all the Gospels do. And it is the women, performing the duties expected of them, that are given the gift of being the first to witness the resurrection, even if they don’t yet know it. Even in death, Jesus aligned Himself with those who are considered “the other” in society.

But dawn is not the day. Easter Sunday is only the beginning: Jesus’ resurrection. It is the first Sunday of a season that is 50 days long. But what’s ahead, by definition, isn’t yet here. We call it “dawn” because its rays of light break through the shadows, but for the time being, the shadows remain.

And sure enough, shadows are everywhere today, as a deadly virus continues to sweep its way around the planet. But this fifty-day season of Eastertide Sabbath presents opportunities: hailing and encouraging vaccination, reframing acts of masking and physical distancing as life-giving acts of Easter solidarity, underscoring the importance of taking care of each other, and shining light on the inequities the pandemic has laid bare. What’s more, part of Sabbath-keeping, is remembering those who cannot easily keep Sabbath: health workers, first responders, grocery workers, and all those frontline workers whose jobs cannot be done from home, thereby redoubling our commitment to creating a world in which all may safely work and safely rest.

The shadows remain in the acts of bigotry, violence, and injustice we have witnessed, especially this past year. Again and again, we watched our Black and Brown siblings, Asian-American, women and queer members of our human family, crucified right alongside Jesus. We watched as more eyes were finally opened to fully seeing the pain and suffering of those other than ourselves, opened to more fully seeing also their resilience and joy in the face of despair. We see more people awakened and engaged in using their privilege to effect change.

Through it all, we see signs of hope, promise yet to be fulfilled. As Easter Christians, we are called on to believe and turn our faces to dawn's light breaking forth. It sounds like a song I heard some time back around Advent and Christmas: "I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining..."

It is important to remember that Easter comes not as the solution to creation's problems, but rather as profound assurance that a new, irrevocable era has begun, and in the end, love and justice, shalom and joy, will have the final word. The sun will rise!

Another reason this version doesn't sit well with us is because the story remains unfinished, like a chord that doesn't resolve at the end of a musical piece. The women run off in fright. They don't tell anyone about their experience at the tomb. So, in other words, one might call this version of the Easter story a cliffhanger – the camera closes in on the words "to be continued". We thought death had the final word, that death was the end of the story, but the empty tomb is Jesus' way of adding an "and", a holy ampersand, to the story.

But, the story does get told. We're here. We're celebrating Easter. Somehow, the women moved beyond their fears, though it would be anyone's normal reaction to be terrified by what they experienced. So, yes, Easter is here. Good Friday did not have the final voice. Life wins. Death loses its sting, and with it our fears. Therefore, as American theologian William Placher puts it: since we've heard the story "It is up to us, in our lives and our testimony, to tell it and keep it alive."

But as the women in the Gospel ask "Who will roll away the stone?" Who will roll away the stone? The stone, the fear of looking foolish which sometimes keeps us from joy, or from radical love or bold compassion? Who will roll away the stone? The stone of apathy, complacency, or supposed inadequacy? Who will roll away the stone? Do we have the audacity to proclaim life in the face of death? Are we bold enough to call out the light rising, even in the midst of darkness, even when no one else sees or believes it?

Easter is more than a promise of life beyond the grave, of happiness in heaven with our loved ones. Easter is a promise that life is good now, Easter is a promise that God's power is active in this moment, in all places, in all lives.

Easter tells us that our eternal life begins now and goes with us through death, into God's future. Easter tells us that to whatever may happen in this world, there is an answer, and that answer is love.

The meaning of this day, if we embrace the Christ of the empty tomb, is that love is the only thing that triumphs over all else. Otherwise, as Emily says, "Then have I nothing to show but Calvary."

Remember there is no situation where Christ will not be there ahead of you. We have to be brave enough to roll away the stone – those things that keep us captured and contained. We need to roll away our stones and break free of all that keeps us from bringing hope, joy, justice and love into the world. We mustn't be afraid to share this message, this message of hope. We have to be the ones to witness to it. We have to be the ones to utter those unbelievable words, "Christ is risen!", the ones who manifest the love Jesus commanded of us at the Last Supper. We have to be the ones that rise with Jesus. We have to be the ones who rise. Amen.

ANTHEM: "We Rise" by Batya Levine; *GCC Virtual Choir, Mary Alice Amidon percussion*

We Rise

By Batya Levine

melody in alto

We rise,
rise,
rise,
hum - bl - y heart - ed, Rise,
won't be di - vi - ded,
with spi - rit to guide us.

We rise, all of the children
Rise, elders with wisdom
Rise, ancestors surround us Rise!

We rise, up from the wreckage
Rise, with tears and with courage
Rise, fighting for life We rise!

10

In hope, in pray'r, we find our-selves here. In hope, in pray'r, we're right here.

19

In hope, in pray'r, we find our - selves here.

24

In hope, in pray'r, we're right here. And we

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We know the fear of the upper room.
We know the feeling of hard days and long nights.
We know the grief of the tomb,
and the particular ache of saying goodbye.

We know the pain of Good Friday,
And we know the darkness before dawn.
And still,
and still,

We believe.
We believe that again and again,
the sun will rise.
Again and again,
God will draw near.
Again and again,
we will march toward justice.

Again and again,
the tomb will be empty.
Again and again,
love will win.
Again and again,
God will lead the church.
Again and again,
and again and again,
we will be loved.
The journey will not be perfect.
We will need to rise *before* dawn.
We will need angels along the way.

But again and again,
the sun *will* rise.
We believe. Amen.

Introduction to Prayers of the People

This is the time in our service where I invite your prayers – prayers of concern or sorrow, prayers of celebration and joy. If you have something or someone you would like our gathering to pray for, you can type it into the comments section that accompanies this live feed.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: “Risen Lord, Hear Our Cry” by Katherine Kussmaul; *Margaret Holland*

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Risen Lord, hear our cry for help –
for those surrounded by the shroud of death
for those covered by the mantle of dying
for those hemmed-in by illness, visible or veiled.
Hear our cry for help...
for those weighed down with worries
for those carrying the burden of distress
for those overwhelmed by isolation.

Hear our cry for help...
for those who are weary
for those who are tattered and worn
for those who collapse from exhaustion
hear our cry for help...

Risen Lord, hear our cry of thanksgiving –
for the graciousness with which You hear
for the patience with which You listen
for the grace with which You care.

Hear our cry of thanksgiving...
for the ways You accompany us through deep valleys,
for the ways You lead us to still meadows
for the ways You provide all we need.

Hear our cry of thanksgiving...
for transforming death in resurrection life,
for blessing and breaking ordinary bread,
for opening our eyes to recognize You
hear our cry of thanksgiving...

Risen Lord, hear our cry for communities of faith –
that we retain memory of being together,
that we embrace unity in the reality of distance,
that we foresee a future side-by-side, hand-in-hand.

Hear our cry for communities of faith...
that we sense purpose beyond ourselves,
that we perceive the needs of creation,
that we stretch ourselves to respond.

Hear our cry for communities of faith...
that our ways be formed by Your way,
that our lives be shaped by Your life,
that our love be Your love.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us using whatever words help us to embody its promise. May we bring about one small glimpse of the (kingdom) of God, a kin-dom where all are well, all are fed and free, where all are whole, where all know love, where *all* know they are beloved.

Let us pray: Our Father, (Our Father/Mother, Our Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom (kin-dom) 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 trespasses against us and lead us not into

temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom (kin-dom), the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Hymn #278 “Hear our Prayer, Oh Lord” GCC
Virtual Choir

CALL TO OFFERING by Carol Penner

God of great gifts, this morning we give You praise. We give You glory. We give You thanks! With resurrection humming in our hearts, our minds are tuned to Your song of peace! We joyfully present these gifts to You, a tangible chorus of thanksgiving, a harmony of hope for Your kingdom come! Amen.

Supporting the church and the mission of the church is more important than ever. You can still send in your weekly offerings to the church via US mail **38 Church Dr. Guilford, VT 05301** or consider using our online "offering plate" by going to the church's website and clicking the [PayPal donation button](#) on the home page. So, now let us gather up all these offerings, as well as the offering of our time and talents, and dedicate them to the resurrection of the world.

DOXOLOGY: *Katharine, Breunig, piano*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION by Bret Myers

We are an Easter people! We believe that faith can move mountains, and that caterpillars can be transformed into butterflies. We trust that with Your grace present, even the smallest act of kindness, the shortest practice of goodness, or the slightest gesture of generosity, can have significance well beyond all expectations. With that faith, we rise. With that faith, we are resurrected into new life. With that faith, we give – freely and joyfully, and so, now we give out of what we have, to bless those who have not, in order to bear witness to, and to inspire, a spirit of resurrection – in ourselves, and in others. Amen

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION by Maren Tirabassi

Invitation to Communion

For Holy Communion this morning, I invite you to lend Christ your table, as the woman with the Upper Room, lent Him the Passover table, and two friends from Emmaus, welcomed to their table one they thought was a stranger. Lend Christ your table, your bread, your cup and your open-to-strangers heart.

Words of Remembering

We come from heart-felt “Hosannas,”
and a long season
of feeling like withered fig trees.

We come from an alabaster jar
abundance of love and hard questions.

We recognize experiences
of betrayal, denial,
and the feeling that everyone we love
has fallen asleep and left us alone,
so we recognize this holy story.

We remember Jesus washed feet
and offered a covenant
of Himself broken and poured out
for a small group of followers long ago
and for us in our time,

and was risen on Easter
though, even in the joy of resurrection,
He kept blessing and teaching,
accepting hospitality
and giving us hope to eat.

Prayer of Consecration

As is the tradition in silence or with music playing – breaking, touching or
lifting the bread, pouring, touching or lifting the cup

Host of our salvation and visitor to our lives, send Your transforming power
upon this Bread and Your freely given love upon this Cup. Risen Christ, live in
us that we may live in You. Amen

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: The Bread on your table is blessed and broken, a meal of grace.

Unison: Sharing love, we will never be hungry.

Leader: The Cup on your table is blessed and shared,
like the overflowing of tears and joy.

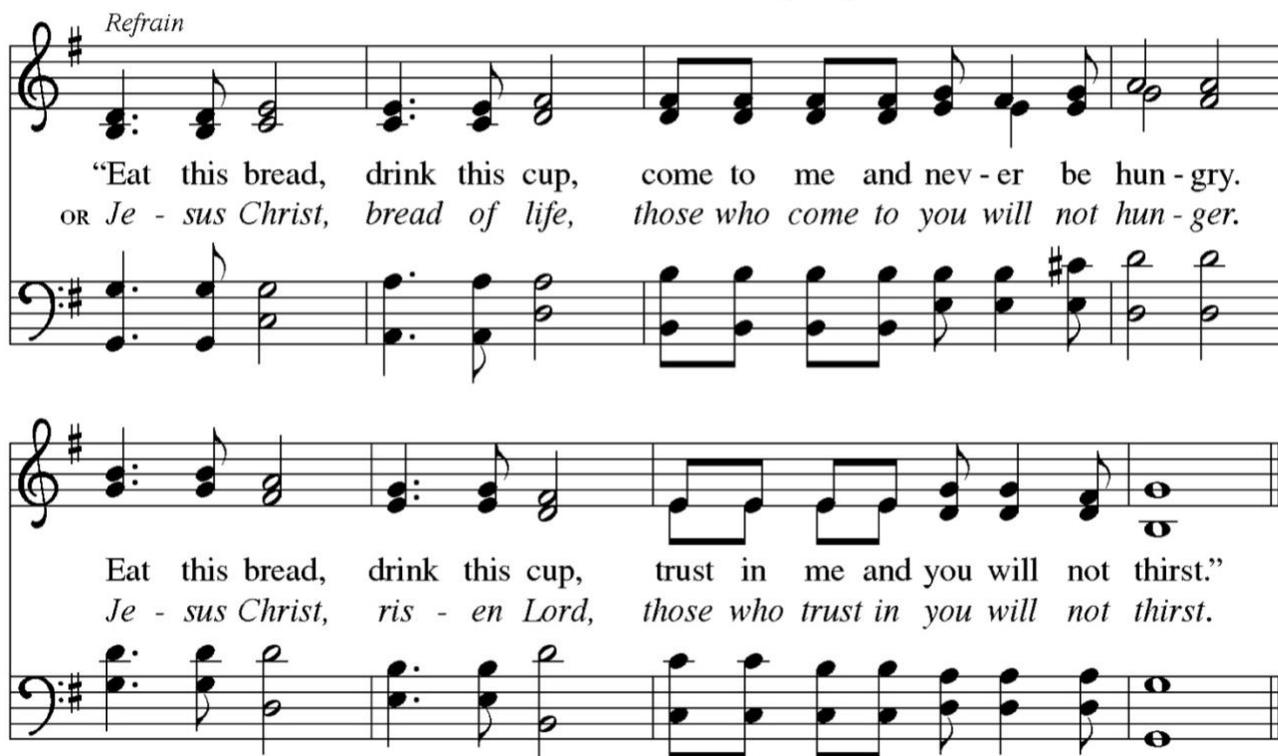
Unison: Drinking deeply, we will never thirst.

COMMUNION HYMN: “Eat This Bread” by Jaques Berthier, Les Presses de
Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc.; *GCC Virtual Choir*

Eat This Bread

Jesus Christ, Bread of Life

Refrain



“Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev - er be hun - gry.
OR Je - sus Christ, bread of life, those who come to you will not hun - ger.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.”
Je - sus Christ, ris - en Lord, those who trust in you will not thirst.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system is labeled 'Refrain' and contains two lines of lyrics. The second system contains one line of lyrics. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with chords and single notes.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: In thanksgiving for this meal of grace and in the holy dispersion of virtual worship, we claim the risen Christ's love found on every table. Let us pray ...

O Holy One, we come to You with lilies and tears, with personal Alleluias we whisper, that soar like the greatest choir. We claim the resurrection for those we love who are tenderly sheltered in Your arms and name the resurrection as Your invitation to all the weary, all those who need hope. May our lives become Your table in all the world.

THE CLOSING HYMN: “Let It Rise” by Steven Hurd *as taught by Dr. Kathy Bullock to choir members of the 2nd Congregational Church, Londonderry VT, Westminster West Congregational Church, Brattleboro's First Congregational and Centre Congregational Churches and the Guilford Community Church.*
Dr. Kathy Bullock arranger, piano, soloist; Steve Rice, percussion

BENEDICTION: “Seen: A Blessing For Easter Day” by Jan Richardson

You had not imagined that something so empty could fill you to overflowing, and now you carry the knowledge like an awful treasure, or like a child that curls itself within your heart: how the emptiness will bear forth a new world you cannot fathom, but on whose edge you stand. So why do you linger? You have seen, and so you are already blessed. You have been seen, and so you are the blessing.

There is no other word you need. There is simply to go and tell.
There is simply to begin.

As you leave this space,
may your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm -
again and again and again,
until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. Amen.

THREEFOLD AMEN: Hymn #291

POSTLUDE: "Hallelujah Chorus" George Frederik Handel; Rachel Johnson, piano; Dwayne Johnson, trumpet

For Further Prayer and Reflection:

World's Largest Virtual #Hallelujah Chorus

"300+ members of a world-famous choir combine with over 2,000 voices worldwide in an incredible musical tribute to Jesus Christ.

Roll Away Your Stone by Mumford and Sons

[Rise Up](#) by Andra Day

Pride (In the Name of Love) by U2

I offer this as a tribute to Dr. King in remembrance of the 63rd anniversary of his assassination.

Easter Sea Shanty – a song telling the story of Jesus and Easter for kids young and old.

Southland Christian Church Easter According to Kids