

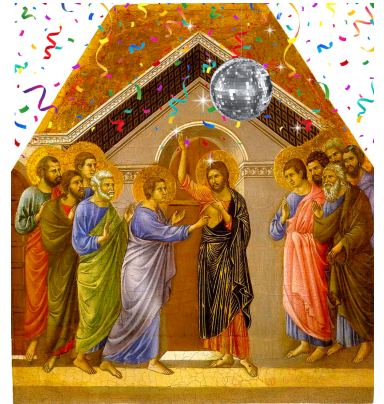
Service for the Lord's Day

April 16, 2023 — Bright Sunday

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This service has been crafted to provide churches a complete order of worship for the Sunday after Easter. Church staffs are often drained after Holy Week and Easter. This service is fully scripted so that members of the congregation may take part in leading.

As a **Bright Sunday** service, worship is filled with levity and play. (See the note about *Bright Sunday* at the end of the guide.) This is an opportunity to remember joy and to revel in the absurd beauty of the resurrection. The service is designed with multiple props and intergenerational reflections in place of a traditional sermon. Consider culminating worship with a party, including a photo booth for congregation members to snap photos that remind them of the resurrection story and its claim on them.



Leadership notes: This service is not meant to create extra work load for those who have already labored hard to craft and carry out Easter week services. *Can you pass this service off to some of your creatives, party planners, drama folks?*

Intergenerational Reflections: Five reflections are provided. Pick and choose the options which work best for your context. You likely won't have time for more than three. Consider inserting a verse from a hymn in between reflections for a *lessons and carols* feel.

Music notes: Hymn recommendations in the sample service come from the *Glory to God Hymnal*. Any upbeat, peppy Easter Hymn will work. You might consider passing out percussion instruments (egg shakes, tambourines, bells) or twirly ribbons for extra pep.

Decorations: Traditional white paraments are fine. You may also consider, adding butterflies for a pop of color and play. (Pick and choose for your budget and time allowance.)

- [Butterfly pins/stickers](#)
- [Butterfly garland](#)
- [Butterfly kite](#)
- Multi-colored streamer
- Twirly ribbons
- [Backdrop](#) for photo booth (if you choose to do one)

Props: Five intergenerational (or children's) messages are included. Each includes a list of supplies. (Do you have a craft or supply closet? Make substitutions to keep costs down. Borrow items, and remember that you only need a sampling for the congregation. Not everyone needs everything.)

- Lesson one, John 20:1-18 — Costume pieces: Costume pieces: robe costume, walking staff, sandals, toga/sheet, gauze or linen wrappings, gardening gloves, pruning shears, fake flowers, shovel, etc. (You may want additional costume pieces like hats or boas for the photo booth following worship.)
- Lesson two, John 20:19-31 — Churchy jokes
- Lesson three, John 21:1-14 — Easter trail mix (recommended ingredients listed below)
- Lesson four, Luke 24:13-49 — fun/sun glasses ([example](#))
- Lesson five, Matthew 28:1-10 — Blank speech bubble props (can be made from poster board and dowel rods or [reusable materials](#)), markers

Post Worship Party: Consider a simple party following worship (maybe even in the sanctuary) with lemonade, a snack (such as the Easter trail mix), music, and a collection of the props for people to take home or enjoy with a photo booth.

Photo booth: If you decide to have a photo booth, you may need to give some of your members written or verbal instructions. Consider having a host at the booth, who may also serve as photographer. Allow members to capture snapshots with their own phones and capture pictures for display for the congregation (web, social media, bulletin board). Worshippers can dress up with costume pieces, sun glasses, and holding speech bubble props.

Bold, italics, and boxes:

- *Italics portions* are leader parts and should be printed or on the screen for participants.
- **Bold portions** are “all” parts for the full congregation and should be printed or on screen for participants.
- Information in boxes are leader instructions or scripted leader parts.

Credit — See Worship Notes at the end of the service for information regarding credit for service components.

We'd love for you to let us know if you use the service and would be thrilled to see pictures of your congregation at worship and at play.

GOD GATHERS US AROUND THE WORD

† *You are invited to stand when you see this symbol.*

PRELUDE

Don't Stop Believin' (Instrumental)

Journey

† **CALL TO WORSHIP**

"Come to the Easter Party," Ann Weems

Say: Please stand as you are able and join in the Call to Worship which come from Ann Weems' poem, "Come to the Easter Party." All are invited to read together the portions that are in bold.

*I think on Easter [mornings] we should throw confetti in church!
No?*

*What about a little fanfare? A deafening drum roll?
A three-minute standing ovation?
What? Have we had the drums beaten out of us?*

*That we in the celebrative community can't really
Get excited about God's aliveness?
About God's love given to us unconditionally?*

*Have we given Easter to the lily bearers,
the bunny rabbits, the patent leather shoes?*

Let's face it: we live as though we don't believe in Easter . . .

Easter scares us

Because we're the people who can't believe

That God gives us abundant Life;

We think we have to earn it.

*In our pull-yourself-up by-your-own-bootstraps society
It's hard to remember that God doesn't buy the self-made man.*

*So we in the church spend our lives showing God
What good people we are,
What achievers we are,
How much we deserve God's love.*

**We want to pay our own way,
But Easter says it's already been paid!**

*Easter says, no matter how prodigal,
We can go home again!*

So come to the Easter party!

*Let's celebrate that amazing grace
That in Christ's resurrection
We are still loved even at our most outrageous.*

**The Lord has given us the music;
All we need do is dance it!
Come to the Easter party!**

† **HYMN #157**

I Danced in the Morning

Lord of the Dance

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Say: It can be hard to honestly examine ourselves and to reckon with the ways we have fallen short of God's dreams. It's even tougher to do that in community . . . out loud.

But on this day, we celebrate our risen Lord who walked the earth, experiencing human pains and human temptations, who defeated death, and returned to be with God's people and show God's promises. Trusting in our savior who loves us enough to experience the muck of human life and draws near again and again. Let us risk to lay our short comings before God, trusting we can be made new. Let us pray together.

UNISON PRAYER OF BROKENNESS

God of wonder, sometimes we forget to be surprised.

**Forgive us for the times when our busyness
gets in the way of noticing your presence.**

**Forgive us for the times when our familiarity with your age-old story
dulls our ability to marvel.**

**Forgive the ways we pack away curiosity,
leaving questions and wonder to children.**

Open our eyes to your works —

the bold and quiet, strange and strong, beautiful and befuddling.

Stir our desire to celebrate with you and our neighbors.

*Unzip our tight-lipped ways that we might proclaim
in head-shaking wonder, and bewildered praise:*

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

(time for silent reflection)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Allow for silence then say:

Family of God, hear and believe the Good News
the best news

the totally unexpected news!

Death could not contain our God.

The tomb was empty! Alleluia!

In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection — acts of power and surprising joy,

Christ freed us from our broken ways and their power over us.

Like butterflies emerging to new and beautiful life,

may we stretch our wings and soar in the freedom and fresh promise of God.

In Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven.

† SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Say: As those who have received the peace of Christ, let us greet our neighbors with signs of Christ's peace. The peace of Christ be with you all!

† **RESPONSE OF PRAISE #582** *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me* Glory to God

ENCOUNTERING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Say: Holy God, surprise us today. Help us find you in a fresh way as we encounter your word. Stir our holy imagination, open our eyes to the wonders of your ways. Inspire us to pay attention that we might not miss the unpredictable ways you come to us and for us. And may our reflection as a community of faith bring you joy, this day. Amen.

Instructions for Reflections:

Today's reflection is meant to come from the congregation, children's message style. You may choose to select one of the passages for a more traditional children's message or engage all intergenerationally.

A variety of post-resurrection passages are offered. *Select a few* to help your congregation get to know the breadth of encounters with Christ in the days following the resurrection. Each reflection comes with props suggestions. You don't need enough for the whole congregation, just a sampling to be spread around. Following worship, you may choose to have a party with a photo booth, providing participants an opportunity to play and remember the stories. Save some costume pieces/props for the party.

One option for the presentation of the message is lessons and carols style. You might sing a verse from an Easter hymn or break up *Joyful, Joyful* to be sung between lessons.

Note: *Some of these passages are quite long.* If you are reading several, you may want to paraphrase portions or read from a children's Bible (which is a great way for young people to participate).

INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTION: *Costume Party*

Focus: Jesus doesn't always show up the way we expect.

Supplies: Costume pieces: robe costume, walking staff, sandals, toga/sheet, gauze or linen wrappings, gardening gloves, pruning sheers, fake flowers, shovel, etc.

Setting the stage: You will need to dress someone up. You might choose three different people, one volunteer who is re-costumed, or yourself

Say: *Let's find ourselves in the place in the story where Mary bumps into Jesus and thinks he is the gardener. She does not recognize him.*

- *What do you imagine Mary is used to seeing Jesus looking like in his every day life? (Robe, sandals, walking stick, Torah . . . As participants respond, have the volunteer dress like everyday Jesus.)*
- *Now, when Mary was going to the tomb, she probably wasn't expecting to see her teacher and friend looking the way he had when he'd been alive. Maybe she was expecting the stone to be in front of the tomb. In Mark's gospel, we hear that Mary Magdalene and a bunch of other women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices to make sure it was ready for burial. What do you imagine they would expect Jesus to look like/be wearing in that case? (In the first century, bodies would have been anointed with expensive perfumes, wrapped in a shroud, the face covered, and hands and feet bound. Consider making a speedy mummy-like wrap.)*
- *But when Mary bumps into Jesus, who does she think he is? The gardener. Do you think he picked up some poor gardener's clothes? What would you expect someone who looked like a gardener to be wearing? (Dress the volunteer as a gardener as folks respond.)*

We have no idea what Jesus was wearing when Mary encountered him . . . only that until he spoke to her, Mary didn't know who he is. Why do you think that might be? (Allow people to respond.) Have you ever had an encounter and then after the fact thought 'maybe God did that'?

Wrap up: Pull together the threads of response or offer a reflection with some of these thoughts:

- Jesus did something totally unexpected. How could Mary be expected to recognize Jesus when his resurrection was so completely mind-boggling?! God does unexpected things, and if we don't take the time to hang around and pay attention, and allow ourselves to have an encounter, we might miss it.
- Sometimes in our grief and confusion we can miss the presence of God in our lives. The story of Jesus' death and resurrection teaches us that there is nowhere that God won't go for us and that in the tomb-side moments of our lives, we can count on God to show up, even when can't spot God in our midst.

Pray: *Holy God, stir our confidence in your presence. Remind us again and again that even though we don't always recognize you in our midst that we can count on your to be near. Amen.*

INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTION: *Jesus Explains the Joke*

Focus: Jesus doesn't leave friends and followers behind

Supplies: A few jokes, cymbal (not required), sign "Foolishness of Gospel Comedy Club"

Setting the stage: Gather a few church-y jokes. You may choose to have volunteers lead them. Knock, knock jokes work great because they can get the whole congregation involved. [Check out this list of jokes from Women's Day magazine](#) for fodder.

Say:

The early Greek Christians were the first to celebrate "Bright Sunday" or "Holy Humor Sunday" on the first week following Easter. Since then, Christians in many traditions have gathered on the Sunday after Easter to worship through "joy and laughter." Many include jokes with the idea that Jesus played the ultimate joke . . . getting the last laugh over death.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, we hear "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed. But it is the power of God for those of us who are being saved." And so I welcome you to "Foolishness of the Gospel Comedy Club."

(Deliver a few of your jokes. You can clash the cymbal at the punchline if desired.)

Ask, have you ever told a joke and seen glazed looks and realized that no one was getting it? And so you explain the joke and find it getting less funny all the time. If Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate joke over the powers of sin and death, it seems that he doesn't worry about explaining the joke.

In our passage for today, Jesus appeared to the disciples not once but twice. The first time he appeared, the disciples were in a locked room, and he appeared out of nowhere. And he showed the marks of his wounds to the disciples. He told them "Peace be with you and promises them forgiveness." But Thomas wasn't there.

Understandably, Thomas was skeptical. He didn't get it. He didn't see, after all. And so Jesus appeared once more . . . in the same locked room. And Jesus fully explained the joke (if you will) that he is indeed risen, that death could not contain him. He invited Thomas to touch the marks on his hands and the hole in his side. He made sure Thomas had the chance to understand. Jesus doesn't leave anyone behind.

We are invited to be a part of that tradition - to share the stories, to make sure we don't speak of our faith and God's story in ways that are only accessible to insiders. We are invited to honor others in their doubts and learnings trusting that God seeks to make God's self known, showing up again and again, even to those who seem to be the most faithful disciples.

Pray: *Dear God, thank you for the way Jesus broke down the walls between us and you, by sharing simple stories, by returning again and again to build confidence in his presence, and by the ultimate act of love his sacrifice and resurrection. May we join in sharing his story in ways that draw the circle of faith ever larger. Amen.*

INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTION: *You Bring the Snacks!*

Focus: We encounter Christ in simple acts of community

Supplies: Easter Trail Mix

(See suggested meanings for components. You may mix any combination of items that you choose. Be sure to read labels. *Hint: Plastic Easter eggs make great containers.*

- Easter snack mix (nut-free)
 - Mini-marshmallows — White reminds us that through Jesus' death and resurrection, all the muck and mire of sin were washed away, creating a blank slate; marshmallows are springy and bounce back like Christ who returned to life; colored marshmallows are like small Easter eggs which remind us of new life
 - Life Cereal (NOT Vanilla Yogurt Crunch) — Jesus is the resurrection and the *life*, through Christ's acts of power and sacrifice, life wins out over death; cereal is a very basic ordinary food reminding us we don't need fancy items to encounter Christ
 - Goldfish — Reminds us of Jesus encountering the disciples on the beach, in their regular stomping ground; the fish symbol (Ichthys) went on to be a sign for Christ followers in a world that was not ready for them
 - Chocolate chips — May represent the stone rolled away from the entrance of the tomb; chocolate chips are not really appetizing to look at but surprisingly delicious, reminding us that we can often see signs of beauty in difficult things
 - Snyder's Pretzels — Shaped like a hug - God holds us in an eternal embrace; three loops can represent the trinity, ever intertwined
- Easter snack mix (gluten-free)
 - Mini-marshmallows — Note above
 - Chocolate chips — Note above
 - Lucky Charms — Symbols in the charms may equate to faith (rainbow, heart, clover - three-leaf), reminds us of other symbols that help us explain the difficult components of faith (empty cross, butterfly, fish); cereal is a very basic ordinary food reminding us we don't need fancy items to encounter Christ
 - Swedish fish (will get hard, so add just before worship) — See Goldfish note above
 - Snyder's Gluten Free Pretzels — See pretzel note above

Setting the stage: If you are okay with people eating in the sanctuary, have volunteers distribute the snacks. If not, have a sample as a visual and distribute upon departure.

Say:

We often think that to have an encounter with God, we have to set a fancy spread — candles, and silence, with everything just perfect. In this story, however, we find that Jesus has headed out to meet the disciples in their every day routines. They were fishermen; they had returned to what they knew — fishing. Jesus shows up, offers some helpful advice, and then invites them to breakfast on the beach. It's not anything fancy; just a community of believers breaking bread over their ordinary catch of fish.

Even today, we can have encounters with Christ when we take the time to break bread with one another. We don't have to wait until we can do it up perfectly. Our sacraments remind us of that. In ordinary bread and wine/juice, and in water from the faucet to the font, we encounter our God. Jesus made sure that we didn't need access to anything from a royal palace; we can find Christ in the every day.

Today, you have trail mix to remind you that we can encounter Christ in simple acts of community. This is nothing special, just basic grocery store goodies. (Explain what your ingredients mean.) May these ordinary, every day goodies, shared in the community of God's people remind us that Christ is with us now and always.

Note: This is a good segue to communion if you will have communion. You may also invite attendees to share in the simple act of breaking bread (through snack mix) now or after worship. If you have extras, people may take some to a friend.

Prayer: *Holy God, thank you for reminding us in the simplicity of water in a baptism font, bread shared in communion, and fish cooking over a fire on the beach that when we gather together in your name you are with us. Help us to recognize your presence in your every day provision and in the company of those who love you too. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

—
Luke 24:13-49

INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTION: Resurrection Colored Glasses

Focus: Christ is present; sometimes we need a little help seeing

Supplies: fun glasses, sun glasses (party pack)

Say: *In our story today, Jesus encounters two followers on the road to Emmaus, but they don't recognize him. They walk along sharing stories of faith. They even invite him into their home for dinner and rest. But they have no idea who is present with them. The scripture says, "Their eyes were kept from recognizing him." Why do you think they were unable to recognize Jesus while he was in their midst?*

(As people respond, repeat their answers, and provide them with a pair of glasses (encourage them to put them on) . . . for recognizing Jesus. If you need to feed responses, consider: grief, exhaustion, the absurdity of a risen person going for a walk, the craziness of Jesus going for a walk with ordinary people after rising.)

Today, we can also have trouble recognizing the presence of God in our lives. Imagine that the glasses I handed out helped <name recipients wearing glasses> to recognize the presence of God. What are some of the things that keep us from recognizing God's presence that might be filtered out? Or what are some habits or practices that might help the eyes to see?

(As people respond hand out more glasses. Responses could include filtering out: busyness, worry about _____, grief, popular culture noise, jadedness.

Responses could include practices of prayer, silent reflection, devotion, partner discernment.)

Wrap up: Explain that after worship everyone will have a chance to try on resurrection glasses as part of the post-worship party. *Even without the glasses, we can be certain that God is with us. And in the absence of glasses, we may cultivate habits that help us to recognize the presence of God.*

This is a good segue to communion if you will have it.

Pray: *Dear God, thank you for being with us. Help us to be more attentive to your presence. May we do our part to strengthen our perceptions of you through Sabbath, prayer, and time set aside to be with you. May we be willing to be surprised by your presence even with all the distractions that dazzle us every day. Help us to see you and know you, O God. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

—
Matthew 28:1-10

INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTION: *You Know You Make Me Want to Shout!*

Focus: Those who witness Christ's resurrection don't keep it to themselves

Supplies: Blank speech bubble props (can be made from poster board and dowel rods or [reusable materials](#)), markers; 2+ volunteers

Say: *Imagine that you are one of the two Marys. You have gotten up at the crack of dawn to go to the tomb. When you get there, an earthquake shivers the ground. Then an angel (whose clothes are so incandescent, they look like white lightning!) glides down from heaven. When the angel gets to the opening of the tomb, he rolls it away and then plops down on top of it like waiting for the show to start.*

The guards are shaking in their shoes and stand stock-still like mummies. And the angel turns to you and says, "Don't be afraid. Jesus isn't here because he's been raised from the dead. He's gone ahead of you. You're going to see him.) Imagine all the feelings that are stirring inside you at those words. And you head back to Galilee in a rush, the words swelling in your throat waiting to spill out to the disciples.

Before you get there, though, you bump into Jesus himself. You fall on your knees and worship him. He tells you you don't have to be afraid and says once more to "Go and tell my [followers] that I'm headed into Galilee. They're going to see me there."

We know as the story goes on that the guards who witnessed the tomb-side miracle were bribed by the chief priests not to tell. But the story got out any way. Imagine those first few moments with Jesus' disciples? What do you think the women said? What do you think you would say if you were them?

(As people respond, have volunteers write the responses on speech bubbles and have participants hold them over their heads. Responses could include: *Wow!, You'll never believe*

what happened!, You will see Jesus! Jesus goes ahead of you! It was crazy! Christ is Risen!

(**Hint:** Have at least two volunteers to help you to make distribution efficient. You may want to premake speech bubbles for the party.)

We don't know what the women told the disciples. Matthew's gospel ends with this story. But we know that the good news got out. The women told of the amazing tale of an angel in lightning white, an earthquake, an empty tomb, a risen savior. They did not keep the story to themselves. When we have experiences with God, we are called to tell. The act of telling God's story may not come naturally, so we practice putting words to our faith.

Wrap up: Invite participants to practice telling the story in one of these ways:

- Create a cacophony of story-telling by having people show together phrases from the speech bubbles you created.
- Have alternating sides of the worship space shout when prompted: *Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!*
- Sing, [*Allelu*](#) with the congregation rising to sing their part

Let participants know that after worship, they'll have a chance to write their own words of surprise and joy on speech bubbles to take home or use as props in the photo booth.

Pray: *God of the greatest story ever told, may we not be afraid to tell it. Amen.*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Choose from two choices
from *A Declaration of Faith*

Say: Please stand as we join together in stating what we believe using words from <insert name of creed>.

**In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
God kept his promises.
All that we can ever hope for
was present in Christ.
But the work of God in Christ is not over.
God calls us to hope for more than we have yet seen.
The hope God gives us is ultimate confidence
that supports us when lesser hopes fail us.
In Christ God gives hope for a new heaven and earth,
certainty of victory over death,
assurance of mercy and judgment beyond death.
This hope gives us courage for the present struggle.**

How do you understand the love and power of God?

Through Jesus Christ. In his life of compassion, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead, I see how vast is God's love for the world — a love that is ready to suffer for our sakes, yet so strong that nothing will prevail against it.

What do you mean when you speak of "the resurrection of the body"?

Because Christ lives, we will live also. Death is not the end of human life. The whole person, body and soul, will be raised from death to eternal life with God.

What do you affirm when you speak of "the life everlasting"?

God does not will to be God without us, but instead grants to us creatures — fallen and mortal as we are — eternal life. Communion with Jesus Christ is eternal life itself.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Say: There once was a family sitting in worship. As the offering plate was being passed, the mother could see her son's reluctance to drop his dollar in the plate. She did some on-the-spot reasoning and said, "You don't want that money, honey. It's tainted!"

Shocked, the little boy dropped the dollar into the plate. As kids do, he had a few questions. Tugging on her sleeve, he whispered loudly enough for everyone to hear, "Mommy, why was the money tainted? Was it dirty?"

"Oh, no dear," she replied. "It's not dirty. It's just that 'taint yours and 'taint mine."

...

All that we have been blessed with is a gift from God — our talents, our treasure, everything. Our offering is a time to give thanks to God for the blessings of our lives by returning some of the gifts we have been given. Let us now say thank you with the gifts of our offering.

† DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Lasst uns erfreuen

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts.
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

† PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Say: God of joy and surprises, we give thanks for the ways you show up for us over and over again: in the pink of sunrise, the voice of a friend, embracing us in our grief, and swirling with joy in our celebration. Please accept these gifts as a sign of our gratitude. Show us how to use these gifts and the gifts of our lives in ways that tell your unexpected story and ever-present love. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Note: This prayer takes the form of call and response. You may want to print the call and response in the bulletin and practice before beginning. Over and over throughout the stories of encounters with Christ following the resurrection, he tells them 'peace be with you' and 'not to be afraid'. We take those words to heart as we turn to God.

Leader calls: Christ, you are our peace!

All respond: Hear our alleluia!

Prayer

Holy God,

all powerful, ever surprising, here and there and everywhere,
we come before you with hearts and minds reawakened to your presence with us.
We are in awe, O God, of the lengths you will go to be near to us, to redeem us, to set us free.
Christ, you are our peace! **Hear our alleluia!**

Thank you, O God for the ways you show up for us:

beside an empty tomb

or at a graveside we wish was empty but instead reminds us of a loved one gone,
in the gurgle of a baby's first coos,
and in the in the silence after the doctor's bad news.

Christ, you are our peace! **Hear our alleluia!**

We give you thank for your presence when are dancing in celebration.

We thank you now in the quiet of our hearts for signs of life and joy in our lives . . .

Christ, you are our peace! **Hear our alleluia!**

We thank you even more that when there seems to be no peace,

when the news seems bad,

when we are lonely or afraid,

when we are misunderstood or can't understand

that you never cease to show up for us.

And so we pray in the quiet of our hearts for

for the places in our communities and our world where violence rages . . .

for the leaders of our churches, and governments of all levels and sizes . . .

for those who are suffering . . .

for those who haven't encountered your good news . . .

for the human-made barriers that we construct to inclusive community . . .

We pray that we will recognize you in our midst, O God,
and that we will help others to sense your presence too.

Christ, you are our peace! **Hear our alleluia!**

And Hear us now as we join our voices, your people in one prayer that you taught praying (lead into the Lord's prayer)

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 evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

BEARING GOD'S WORD INTO THE WORLD

† **HYMN #239**

Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!

Gelobt Sei Gott

† **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Note: The benediction is designed to align with the focus statements for the Intergenerational Reflections. You may whittle it down to connect with the components you choose to incorporate.

*Go now, trusting that our persistent God
who showed up to Christ's followers again and again
shows up for you too.*

*Go,
with hearts open to the possibility of God's surprises,
with the assurance that Christ is ever seeking to be known by you,
with a spirit of hospitality to break bread and share time,
with a commitment to witness to the love, mystery, and power of God
in the raising of your voice and the sharing of your life.*

**Go, trusting that God — creator, redeemer, sustainer,
goes before us and beside us always. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

Shout (Instrumental)

The Isley Brothers

WORSHIP NOTES

This order of worship is provided by the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation (OPSF), which seeks, equips, and supports Christian leaders. Learn more about at www.opsf-omaha.org.

Today's bulletin art is an adaptation of *Duccio di Buoninsegna – The Maesta Altarpiece, The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, 1308* (Public Domain, [Wikimedia Commons](#))

The Call to Worship, “Come to the Easter Party,” by Ann Weems, appears in the book *Reaching for Rainbows: Resources for Creative Worship*, Westminster John Knox Pres, 1980.

The Sunday after Easter is also known as ***Bright Sunday, New Sunday, and Holy Humor Sunday***. Early church theologians like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John of Chrysostom reflected on the idea that through the resurrection, God played the ultimate joke on the devil. Bright Sunday serves as a day of joy and laughter with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Some church goers play practical jokes on each other, drench each other with water, tell jokes, and dance in celebration, all as part of “*Risus paschalis* — the Easter laugh.”