

Order of Worship for at Home Use First Sunday after Easter, April 19, 2020

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are blessed as you worship, that God will provide you with all hope and mercy as you enter into His Presence.

Christ is RISEN!

He is RISEN INDEED!

Today, as the joyful people of God, we are CELEBRATING our Risen LORD. Today is the Second Sunday in the Easter season, and is sometimes called BRIGHT Sunday, or Holy Humor Sunday.

This is an ancient tradition which began with the Greeks... the idea behind it being that by raising Christ from the dead, God is playing a joke on the devil. Ancient Theologians, such as Augustine, began this line of thinking, and churches everywhere are picking up the challenge. Today as we worship we acknowledge that we are in fearful and uncertain times, however, we will also turn our hearts over to God and allow hope, light, life and laughter to bubble up inside of us.

People keep asking me, "Is COVID-19 REALLY that serious?"
Listen y'all, the casinos and church's are closed. When Heaven and Hell AGREE on the same thing, it's probably pretty serious.
#saferathome

As we begin you are invited to **prepare your worship space**. This week as we remind ourselves of the Joy we have in Christ, you are invited to decorate with bright colors, flowers, or anything that brings joy to your worship space. Inserted into our worship are some unusual elements: cartoons and jokes (in video). We hope you enjoy them and allow yourself to relax and enter into worship with just a little bit of whimsy and childlike faith.

If you wish to worship via the video click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywrrPtNZ148>

Today we remember with JOY that

Jesus is the LIGHT of the world...

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed!



We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "Sing For Joy" Kathy Koch
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VATqfWM37hY>

Welcome <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7bE2JXY2dg>

Welcome to worship with Grace Presbyterian Church! We come as the joyful people of God to gather at God's throne of grace and celebrate our risen Lord. You may be wondering how we can be joyful, when we can't gather together, when the world is in peril and so many are hurting... we do so today because as Easter people, with and in faith, we know the end of the story... we may live in darkness now, but Christ IS Risen, Christ has won the victory over all darkness, pain, sorrow, sin and even death.

It is said that Charles Spurgeon was once criticized for putting too much laughter into his sermons. Some said he was "frivolous" and "lacking gravity." His reply was this: "If you only knew how much I restrain myself."

Every Sunday is a celebration of God's great love for us...called the LORD'S DAY... There is an ancient tradition which began with the Greeks... it says that by raising Christ from the dead, God is playing a joke on the devil. Ancient Theologians, such as Augustine, began this line of thinking, and churches began (on the Sunday after Easter) to focus on JOY, calling it Holy Humor Sunday or Bright Sunday. In the last several years churches everywhere are picking up the thread and on this Lord's Day, focusing on the Joy of the LORD.

Today as we worship we will, even in these uncertain times, turn our hearts over to God and allow hope, light, life and laughter to bubble up inside of us... even in days such as these... because Christ IS Risen!

Call to Worship Psalm 126 (the Passion
Translation)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-h6V832i7LA>

It was like a dream come true when you freed us from our bondage and brought us back to Zion! We laughed and laughed and overflowed with gladness. We were left shouting for joy and singing your praise.

All the nations saw it and joined in, saying, “The Lord has done great miracles for them!” Yes, he did mighty miracles and we are overjoyed! Now, Lord, do it again! Restore us to our former glory! May streams of your refreshing flow over us until our dry hearts are drenched again. Those who sow their tears as seeds^[a] will reap a harvest with joyful shouts of glee. They may weep as they go out carrying their seed to sow, but they will return with joyful laughter and shouting with gladness as they bring back armloads of blessing and a harvest overflowing!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Let us worship God!

Hymn

“Down in My Heart”

Kathy Koch, Savannah Scarlett, Georgia and Grayson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvs7c6iAhAk>

Sharing the Peace of Christ

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...

and also with you.

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, “The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you.”

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Dana

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIaRnHpADhg>

Our God is always longing for us to draw near to Him...always happy to be with us... and always ready to hear our prayers. Please pray with me...

Today, O God, we draw near to you and we breathe in Your peace and presence. We thank You for always being there when we turn to You. We turn our hearts to You in love and with joy...even as we also offer to You our pain, anxiety, loneliness, disappointment and grief.

We are so grateful today for Your understanding of all that we are feeling. You have walked on this earth, and know what it's like. In these moments we take comfort in the knowledge that You are with us, and You look with compassion on us. We come grateful for Your willingness to accept us as we are, forgive us, and put us on a better path. Help us now to change our habits, soften our hearts and clear our minds so that we are able to grow more into the likeness of Christ.

Today, we pray for the brokenness in our world. We ask for Your hand of healing to be upon all who are sick, struggling and grieving. We pray for healing by Your hand, and healing by medicines. We ask for protection as we do what must be done. We ask that You would work in mind, body or circumstance and give healing, new life, direction, joy and laughter and vitality.

We ask for Your hand to be upon all of the medical professionals. Provide them with extra measures of grace, protection from sickness, as well as energy, wisdom, and discernment.

Today God, we pray for teachers...grant them grace and wisdom to work in the new ways expected.

We lift up to you for parents... who are now teaching their children as well as many times tending to their other jobs, worried over finances or navigating family expectations...

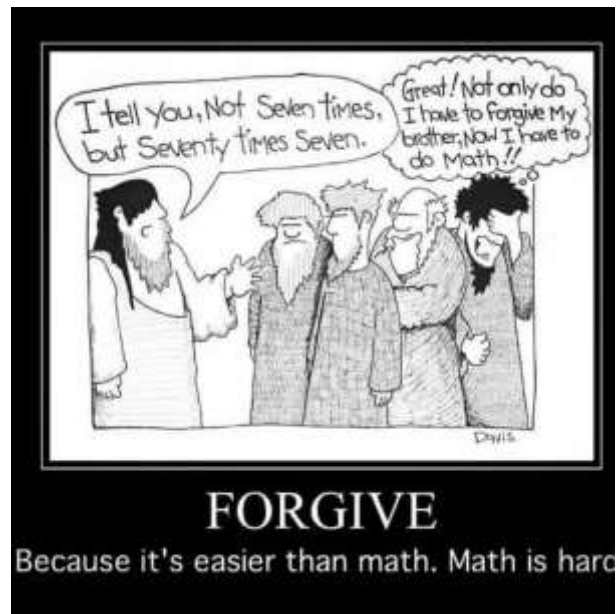
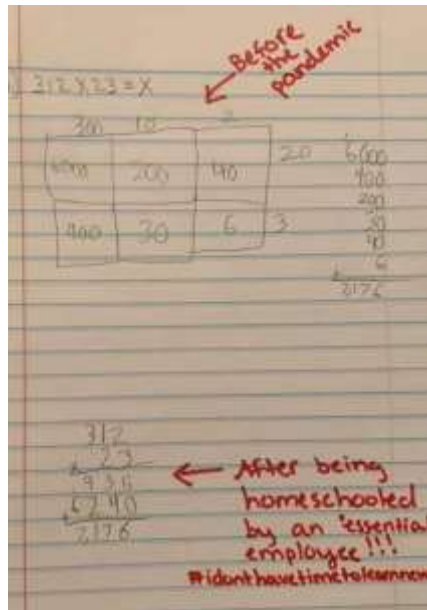
Be with those who will graduate this year, grieving what might have been... the customary celebrations and milestone moments. Grant them peace and hope that what is to come will be guided by Your hand.

We pray for our children, dealing with disrupted schedules, new teachers, and time without their social circles and friends.

Provide Your Holy Spirit to surround and gather in all who must be separated from loved ones, friends and family. Dispel all loneliness and replace it with Your perfect peace and comfort.

Lord have mercy on us. Grant us Your grace and peace... and help us navigate these uncharted waters faithfully and with joy. Help us to live into our identity as Easter People proclaiming the truth that Jesus is alive.

We pray these things as Jesus Himself taught us to pray saying... 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.



We Listen to God's Word

Hymn/Praise

Jesus Loves Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKoumRt3Jyg>

Today the children are asked to think about the butterflies and the caterpillars they cared for when they created a habitat for them in the Children's Center before the COVID-19 outbreak. What would it be like to be a caterpillar? Do you think they were afraid? Do you think they knew when they went into the cocoon that they would emerge a beautiful butterfly? Is it better to know that something good is going to happen? Does knowing help you not be afraid? Today our theme is joy. In particular our theme is the joy of knowing that God is always with us and if we follow Him, He will work miracles in our lives like the miracle of God making something beautiful out of a caterpillar.

Reading of the Word

John 20:19-31

Lynne Zenier

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz4DR8L-Vg>

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." ²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Message

“From Doubt to Joy”

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nBMWlucXGo>

Today, people of God, we are CELEBRATING our Risen LORD. As we mentioned earlier, there is an ancient idea which began with the Greeks... that, by raising Christ from the dead, God is playing a joke on the devil. Early Theologians, such as Augustine, began this line of thinking, and churches everywhere are picking up the challenge to be joyful and celebrate God's victory over evil.

Today in this service we are celebrating with joy and allowing hope, light, life and laughter to bubble up inside of us... even in these uncertain times. We should be joyful, we should laugh in the face of challenge, after all, Paul says; “nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus and if Christ is for us who, or what, can stand against us.” This is the reason for joy. On top of that, laughter, and joy are good medicine. I think some of the best medicine is laughing at ourselves when we take ourselves too seriously.

So here is a reason to laugh and celebrate, “I heard that the Presbyterian church has reported no drop in attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak!” See what I did there? It was a joke...you know, low attendance...oh come on it's funny!

We can also laugh a little at others...I heard the Baptists have been thrilled with these COVID-19 restrictions as now everyone has to dance at least 6 feet apart!

Today's text is one that takes us from fear, terrible fear to real, tangible, palpable joy. This text reminds us of our reason to celebrate and joy that is found in the unexpected grace of God. This is the kind of joy that wells up inside and pushes out all fear and uncertainty. This is the kind of joy I think we are looking for today as we face isolation and economic trials.

So here is the deal in this post Easter text. Jesus has come back from the dead. But most of the disciples have not seen him. They have only heard from the women who went to the tomb. Well, John and Peter went also, but John was the youngest, just a kid, and Peter was emotional, impulsive and a little ADHD so, you know, can you really believe those people.

So, other than Peter, John and the Marys, the disciples who had not seen Jesus had to rely on the word of others. They knew Jesus was the messiah. But now their messiah was dead and their lives at risk. The Roman and Jewish leaders wanted to kill the remaining followers of Jesus and now the disciples were alone; their vision of the future was crushed, and hope was gone. They were hiding, unable to move. They were afraid and cowering behind locked doors. It is in this fear that Jesus comes to them and changes their vision, restores their hope. In the darkest moment, Jesus comes to His faithful followers and brings them joy. He moves them from fear to joy with a reason to celebrate. He simply comes to them and reveals the truth. When the followers of Jesus doubt, like Thomas, Christ says, “come and see, touch my wounds, stop doubting, believe.” To this Thomas responds, “my Lord and my God.” Have you ever been in a place of hopelessness and fear where there is nothing good on the horizon? Maybe you felt like the disciples hiding in the upper room like the disciples before Jesus showed up. The most scared I have ever been was on a camping trip I went on when I was 13 years old. I had signed up for a wilderness summer school class and the final event was a mountain climbing trip to Devils Peak on Donner Pass in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. On the second day we reached the top of the peak and started down. To come down the backside of the peak we had to cross an ice patch that was probably 20 yards across and 100 yards long. It was located on the shady side of the mountain and in a very steep crevice which made it look like an arctic glacier ready to create an avalanche to your average 7th grader. It was solid ice, but our teacher / guide said we could probably walk across it if we were careful. And so, we began crossing it spaced out with about 10 feet between each of us ascending the hill. About halfway across the ice I, not being the most coordinated one of the bunch, slipped and began sliding down the mountain. I slid past my friend, Anthony Vance at an ever-increasing rate of speed. I slid past Eric the guide frantically reaching for him, but he was too smart and stepped out of the way. Then I saw my last hope to survive this desperate situation, Keith Gallepego! Keith was right in my path so I grabbed onto him hoping he would stop my slide. No such luck, Keith simply fell down and we careened down the ice together. I hit a soft spot in the ice and began to slow as I dug my big L.L. Bean hiking boots into the ice. Keith was wearing Puma tennis shoes (the coolest of all 1970’s tennis shoes but not so good for ice climbing) so I did the smart thing. I let go of Keith and dug my feet in and slid to a stop. Keith, however, plummeted into the rocks below bouncing off the rocks and rolling under the ice. He was injured but ok. Our friendship, however, would not survive.

Now there I was stuck on the side of a mountain sitting on Ice that was trying to kill me and I was fresh out of friends. The first words I heard from our guide were, “don’t move!” I have never been more scared in my life. And the only words he had for me were “don’t move!” I wasn’t going to move. In fact, had it not been for a long rope I would still be there today frozen with fear and friendless. I was so scared that I couldn’t move, I couldn’t breathe, I couldn’t think. Well, I did think that if I did get off the ice then Keith Galepego might kill me for pushing him into the rocks below. Nevertheless, I was sure I was going to die up there on that hill like the Donner Party had 100 years before. **But it did not turn out that way.**

Eric had a rope. He had trained in the French Alps as a guide. He repelled down to Keith, helped him up with some minor first aid and then threw me the rope and helped me off the ice. There was no better feeling in all the world than when the safety rope was thrown to me and Eric said; “listen to me and I will get you out of this.”

Isn’t it funny that things usually don’t turn out the way you think when you are scared? In fact, God often uses our times of desperation in ways that we would never expect. In ways that get us to listen and trust Him.

For 15 years I have been thinking that we need to be more digital at our church. People said we should be on social media and we should film our services. I said that is great, but we cannot afford it and we are too traditional to keep up with the social media crowd. Now, when our survival as Grace Presbyterian Church is on the line, it took us one week and our only technology is the cell phone I carry in my pocket. I think God has come to our rescue but not in the way I expected. I think He said, “Listen to me.” I think maybe I had not been listening and now the very thing I was afraid of has become our lifeline.

For the disciples in the upper room, everything changed when Jesus revealed himself. They no longer were afraid. In fact, they became heroes and martyrs for Christ. They started His church that has blessed, served and changed western culture for 2000 years.

For me, I got off that mountain, left my fear behind and now hold a memory that has changed my view of faith and fear. I also lost a friend in Keith Galapago, but what are ya gonna do?

Even in fear we have hope in Christ. We know no matter how bad it gets; in the end we win! John Kraczinski (Jim of the office) says “no matter how dark it gets there is always light”. That is our reason for Joy.

Hymn

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

Lisa Elliott and Dr. David Dorway

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kY_2vAtvgWo

We Respond to the Voice of God

Tithes & Offerings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYKTqmkkT-s>

In these moments, remember and share ways that God has brought light and life, joy and other blessings into your life this past week. In addition, share ways you will offer yourself to God today and in the days ahead. Take this time to return your tithe to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link:

<https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“Celebrate Jesus”

Kathy Koch and Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVUM7hZLRVM>

Offertory Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xShHAgINsMQ>

Please pray with me: God of life and abundance, bless us as we offer all that we have and all that we are, Your tithes and our offerings, our time, talents, and energies. We pray that all would be a blessing to Your kingdom, and a witness to the joy we have in you. Grant that we would have open hands and joy-filled hearts, opportunities to share the joy we have in You, with the world, that Your Kingdom would be blessed, in Jesus name, Amen.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Song

“In Christ Alone”

Kathy Koch and Savannah Scarlett

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1Dg5AUncY8>

Benediction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEaWLSydoYI>

Celtic Blessing (An ancient prayer for happiness and joy)

May flowers always line your path and sunshine light your day.

May songbirds serenade you every step along the way.

May a rainbow run beside you in a sky that's always blue.

And may joy fill your heart each day your whole life through.

Postlude

“Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

Dr. David Dorway

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxAB2stQD_c

As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.

In Need of Prayer

Violet Cross (*Spanish Hills Wellness Suites*)

Mary Gafford (*Summerlin Hosp.*)

Dolores Harris (*Merrill Gardens*)

Mary Phillips (*Legacy House*)

Bill Franklin (*Summerlin Hosp.*)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Alice Black, Bill Carlston, Bob Clark,

Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie Everhart,

Joice Franklin, Greg Holt, Pam Kodey, Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon,

Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Beth More, Don Neeley,

Maggie O'Donnell, Alice & Gary Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Russ & Pat Reid,

Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Marty Swartout, Nick Vogelzang, Sharon

Wilson, Dick Wohletz, and Lynne Zenier.

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020

Randy Innis 3/18/2020

Clark Trapp 3/18/2020

Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020

Ted Phillips 4/1/2020

Violet Cross 4/4/2020