



## Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

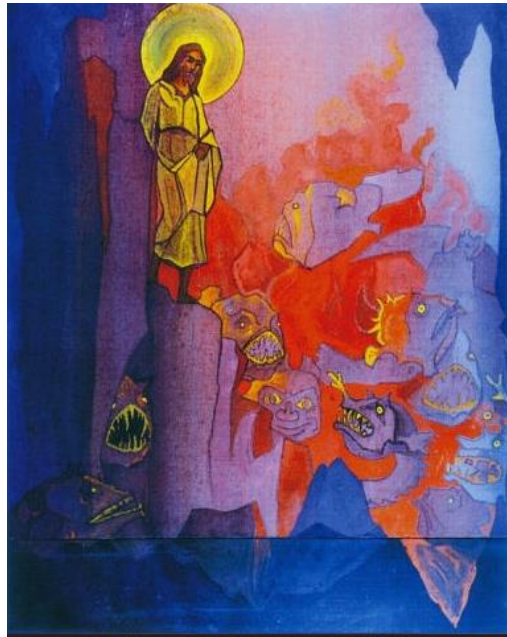
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April 16, 2023 – 11:00 am

*Second Sunday of Easter*

*Bright Sunday*



"The Harrowing of Hell," Nicholas Roerich c. 1933

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age." Matthew 28:19-20 (CEB)

## GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*Welcome to our service of worship. Although we are worshipping in a variety of locations, we still affirm that God is present in our worship, whether in-person or virtually. Our prayer is that all who worship with us this day will truly feel the presence of God in this time. Know that you are loved and we are so glad you are here! Parts of today's liturgy are from Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill, *Fire and Bread: Resources for Easter Day to Trinity Sunday* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2006); and Ruth Burgess, *Summer: Liturgical Resources for May, June and July* including Eastertide and Pentecost (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2020).*

*Today is a Sunday of joy and laughter. The second Sunday of Easter has been observed as "Holy Humor Sunday" in western churches since the 1200s, and prior to that as "Bright Sunday" by early Greek Christians. The week following Easter has been ones of joy and laughter for centuries as Christians gathered, and partied, in celebration of the resurrection. Early theologians from Augustine to Gregory of Nyssa argued that God played a practical joke on Satan by raising God from the dead, calling it "risus paschalis" (the Easter laugh)*

### TRINITY CHIMES

**PRELUDE:** *The King in Triumph*

ROSS ANDERSON

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #122:** *Thine is the Glory*

EDMOND LOUIS BUDRY

Thine is the glory,  
Risen, conquering Son;  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won.  
Angels in bright raiment  
Rolled the stone away,  
Kept the folded grave clothes  
Where Thy body lay.

**Refrain:**

Thine is the glory,  
Risen, conquering Son;  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won.

Lo! Jesus meets us,  
Risen from the tomb;  
Lovingly He greets us,  
Scatters fear and gloom.  
Let the church with gladness  
Hymns of triumph sing,  
For the Lord now liveth;  
Death hath lost its sting. **[Refrain]**

No more we doubt Thee,  
Glorious Prince of life!  
Life is naught without Thee;  
Aid us in our strife.  
Make us more than conquerors  
Through Thy deathless love;  
Bring us safe through Jordan  
To Thy home above. **[Refrain]**

**\*OPENING SENTENCES**

"WHEN FLOWERS BLOOM," LIZ DELAFIELD

When flowers bloom in the desert,  
Christ is risen. ***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

When enemies sit around tables and talk about peace,  
Christ is risen. ***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

When people stand up for what is right in the face of great evil,  
Christ is risen. ***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

When, despite hardship and struggle, people sing and dance,  
Christ is risen. ***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

When prison bars are shattered  
by the cry of "Freedom!,"  
Christ is risen. ***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

When in our wounded and broken world,  
life triumphs over death, peace over war, hope over fear,  
freedom over captivity, love over hate,  
Christ is risen. ***He is risen indeed.***  
***Alleluia, Alleluia!***

Let us worship our God.

**\*SONG OF ADORATION #243** (*Glory to God*): *Be Not Afraid* (sung 3x)

TAIZE COMMUNITY

Be not afraid; sing out for joy!  
Christ is risen, alleluia!  
Be not afraid; sing out for joy!  
Christ is risen, alleluia!

## LITANY OF PRAISE

"GOD HAS MADE LAUGHTER FOR US," DAVID COLEMAN

Christ is risen; He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Risen in quiet and mysterious darkness before the chorus of the dawn.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed!***

Risen with glory and grace in reserve, and authority beyond measure.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed!***

Risen to prove violence is no solution; to offer us peace and life in all its fullness.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed!***

For God has taken into his own flesh the sin of the world.  
The last laugh is God's laugh; God has the last laugh:  
For freedom comes beyond the cross,  
for peace comes beyond the violence,  
for friendship comes beyond the betrayal.  
For life comes beyond the crushing of life.

The first laugh and the last laugh are God's.  
And God has made laughter for us.  
Alleluia, Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed!***

## OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

### A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of new life, of joy and of laughter,  
meet us here today:  
in this place,  
in these stories,  
in our hearts

Speak your word to us, fill us with your Spirit,  
that we may be in on your joke,  
and share that joy with the whole world. ***Amen.***

## ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

**PSALM 40:9-10**

PEW BIBLE, 695

**MATTHEW 28:16-20**

PEW BIBLE, 1214

The Word of the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God.*

## AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

### OFFERTORY

**\*DOXOLOGY #428:** *We Give Thee But Thine Own*

WILLIAM WALSHAM HOW

We give Thee but Thine own,  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

### \*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY #108** *Christ is Alive!*

BRIAN WREN

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
To distant years in Palestine,  
But saving, healing, here and now,  
And touching every place and time.

Not throned afar, remotely high,  
Untouched, unmoved by human pains,  
But daily, in the midst of life,  
Our Savior in the Godhead reigns.

In every insult, rift and war,  
Where color, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
And lives, where even hope has died.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
Good news to this and every age,  
Till earth and sky and ocean ring  
With joy, with justice, love and praise.

## TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"LITURGY FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY," THOM M. SHUMAN

None of us likes to look foolish. But which is sillier: chasing after the world and all its gaudy trinkets which flatter our souls, or being a "fool for Christ," imitating him in service to others, offering ourselves in love and joy to the world? Let us admit to God the foolish choices we make each and every day...

*Silent prayer*

Amused God,  
you know better than we do what important people we believe we are.  
Believing we have to be serious all the time,  
we miss out on the joy of your creation.  
Choosing to feast on the pain of the world,  
we skip the party offered in paradise.  
Clinging to the despair which is our best friend,  
we ignore Jesus who can bring us home to your heart.

***Forgive us, heart of joy,  
and make us open to the startling,  
and upside down,  
ways in which you work.  
Fill us with Easter's laughter;  
fill us with your healing joy;  
fill us with the love poured into us  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.***

**AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE**

The gospels tell us over and over again  
of the joy which comes to us through Christ.  
When Jesus was around, lives were changed:  
the sick were healed, the sorrowful began to laugh.  
The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

***Through the Holy Spirit,  
we are gifted with joy.  
We are sent forth to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bring healing to the broken,  
to anoint everyone with the oil of gladness.  
Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.***

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE:** *He is Lord* (Choir will sing first, then congregation)

*He is Lord! He is Lord!  
He is risen from the dead and He is Lord.  
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.*

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

**THE WORD IN MUSIC:** *He is Risen*

NANCY PRICE/DON BESIG

**THE WORD PROCLAIMED**

**Sermon:** *"The Punchline"*

REV. PHILLIPS

## EASTERTIDE PRAYER

"LITURGY FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY," THOM M. SHUMAN

Imaginative God,  
you smiled and the sun burst  
through the shadows of chaos;  
you laughed,  
and all that is good and beautiful  
was given shape by you;  
you chuckled,  
and the platypus splashed  
in creation's fountain.

Laughing Jesus,  
snickering at the feeble attempts  
of the Evil One,  
you showed us  
how to resist temptation;  
giggling at sin's desperate desire  
to hold on to us,  
you released us by your love;  
howling with laughter  
at death's foolish belief  
that the tomb could hold you,  
you burst forth into the kingdom  
as the stars pealed with joy.

Spirit of Easter,  
as you fill us with new life,  
may we delight in sharing it with others;  
as you tell us the good news  
which can never be taken from us,  
may we rejoice in offering it  
to the broken, the sad, the lonely;  
as you tickle us with grace,  
may we give it away  
with laughter on our lips  
and joy in our hearts.

God in Community, Holy and One,  
our hearts overflow with wonder  
as we say together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.*

**\*CLOSING HYMN #104:** *Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna*

BRIAN A. WREN

Christ is risen! Shout hosanna!  
Celebrate this day of days!  
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:  
All creation is amazed.  
In the desert all-surrounding,  
See, a spreading tree has grown.  
Healing leaves of grace abounding  
Bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits  
From the caverns of despair.  
Walk with gladness in the morning.  
See what love can do and dare.  
Drink the wine of resurrection,  
Not a servant, but a friend.  
Jesus is our strong companion.  
Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven  
Nevermore shall be the same.  
Break the bread of new creation  
Where the world is still in pain.  
Tell its grim, demonic chorus:  
"Christ is risen! Get you gone!"  
God the First and Last is with us.  
Sing Hosanna, everyone!

**\*SENDING**

"OPENING AND CLOSING RESPONSES FOR EASTERTIDE," RUTH BURGESS

A great mercy and a sure hope  
A new birth and a deep peace  
A strong love and a rich blessing  
***God is sending us out in joy***

**CHORAL BLESSING:** *Lead Me Lord*

**POSTLUDE:** *Festal Fanfare*

STEVEN SCOTT

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*\* Please stand in body or spirit.*

## This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup> - Second Sunday of Easter

11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> - Third Sunday of Easter

11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)



### Session

**Moderator:** Rev. Jon Phillips

**Clerk:** Randy Cousins

**Treasurer:** Glenn Patterson

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### Class of 2023:

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Randy Cousins  
Shelby Smith

### Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell  
Kim Snyder  
Tracey Troxler

### Class of 2025:

Donna Mitchell-Ayers  
Tina Patterson  
Nancy Purcell

### Staff

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