



# EASTER

## A SUNRISE CELEBRATION OF THE RESURRECTION

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SUNDAY

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APR  
4

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2021

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

# WELCOME

Sunrise Easter Service  
April 4, 2021

Thank you for joining us for worship.

To decrease the risk of COVID for all gathered, please observe the following:

- Wear a mask
- Maintain social distance from other worshipers
- Remain seated for the service

## CHIMING OF THE BELL

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Beloved church, behold the victory of our God: Jesus, our Lord, has conquered the grave.

Many: **Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

One: Sin and death shall reign no more.

Many: **Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

One: Let this place resound with joy.

Many: **Christ is risen! Alleluia! Thanks be to God.**

## OPENING PRAYER

HYMN 232

*Jesus Christ is Risen Today*

EASTER HYMN

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

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

*But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!  
our salvation have procured. Alleluia!  
Now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!  
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!*

*Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
praise eternal as God's love. Alleluia!  
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!*

The festival of the Resurrection of the Lord (or Easter Sunday) is the center of the Christian year. On this occasion the church joyfully proclaims the good news that is at the very heart of the gospel: that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Theologically speaking, the faith we claim and the life we live depend on the affirmation, celebration and proclamation of Christ's resurrection.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Lord Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit we have been raised from the waters of baptism to share in your glorious resurrection. Yet we have not lived as Easter people. We are unsure of your promise, confused about your will, and afraid in the face of danger. Like Mary, we weep at the tomb, but do not recognize your presence. Call us by name, risen Lord, that we may know you with confidence. Whenever we are tempted to fear death, give us courage to confess your Easter victory. Whenever we are distracted by petty conflicts, keep our minds on your reconciling love. Whenever we are overwhelmed by the power of evil, reveal again to us your triumph over the destructive powers of oppression. Forgive us our sin and let our lives be a testimony to your salvation through the love of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

*(Let us now continue our confession in silence.)*

KYRIE

*Lord, have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

HOPSON

*Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.*

*Lord, have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Hear the Good News! The Easter message is clear and sure: God raised Jesus from the dead. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Many: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

HYMN 581

*Glory Be To The Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen, amen.*

## PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

### FIRST LESSON

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

Before God's majesty and

holiness we become painfully aware of our selfishness and disobedience. We repent of our sin and ask God's forgiveness. We cannot earn God's forgiveness by our repentance. Nor can

we ever be worthy of God's mercy. It is only in the assurance of God's prior mercy given freely to the undeserving that

we dare make our humble confession before God. Confession of sin therefore takes us back to our baptism. In the waters of Baptism, washed in the name of

the triune God, we receive God's assurance of forgiveness and cleansing. Claiming the promises of God sealed in our baptism, we boldly confess our sin and accept forgiveness. We are confidant that in our dying to sin and old destructive ways, the God of boundless grace raises us to new life.

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

First Corinthians offers a window on a congregation and preacher trying to sort out the real-life implications of the gospel. How should Christians live in a culture at odds with their confession of faith? What commitments and practices enable Christians to honor one another in the midst of differences of opinion? Paul reminds us that at the heart of all that we do and say is the Good News of Christ's Resurrection. This joyous Easter Day should color all that we do and say as people of faith.

Want to learn more about the Scripture used in worship this week? Listen to our podcast Rocket City Lift! Found on iTunes, Spotify, Sound Cloud, and Google Podcast.

## SECOND LESSON

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to 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.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

MARK 16:1-8

## SERMON

*"Terror and Amazement"*

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

## HYMN 826

*Lift High The Cross*

CRUCIFER

*Refrain:*

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

*Come, Christians, follow where our Savior trod,  
the Lamb victorious, Christ, the Son of God. (Refrain)*

*All newborn servants of the Crucified  
bear on their brow the seal of Christ who died. (Refrain)*

*O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
your death has brought us life eternally. (Refrain)*

*So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
praise to the Crucified for victory. (Refrain)*

## RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

### PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*(Your commitment to the Church and to living out this life of faith is an act of worship. You are invited to place your offering in the collection plates near the entrance.)*

## OFFERTORY

### DOXOLOGY 606

*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

In grateful response for the abundance of God's grace, we offer ourselves to be instruments of God's peace, love, and justice. As stewards we give from what God has given us, acknowledging that the world is not ours but God's. Our offering is the whole of our lives.

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

*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.*

*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.*

*Women and men, in age and youth,  
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth,  
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.*

*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.*

#### THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

##### INVITATION TO THE TABLE

##### GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: **We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

One: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, eternal God, creator and ruler of the universe. At your word the earth was made and spun on its course among the planets. Your hand formed us from the dust of the earth and set us among all your creatures to love and serve you. When we were unfaithful to you you kept faith with us, your love remained steadfast. When we were slaves in Egypt, you broke the bonds of our oppression, brought us through the sea to freedom, and made covenant to be our God. By a pillar of fire you led us through the desert to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life. You spoke of love and justice in the prophets, and in the Word made flesh you lived among us, manifesting your glory. He died that we might live, and is risen to raise us to new life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name saying:

Many: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

One: You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, whom you sent to save us. He came with healing in his touch, and was wounded for our sins. He came with mercy in his voice, and was mocked as one despised. He came with peace in his heart, and met with violence and death. By your power he broke free from the prison of the tomb, and at his command the gates of hell were opened. The one who was dead now lives. The one who humbled himself is raised to rule over all creation, the Lamb upon the throne. The one ascended on high is with us always, as he promised.

We give you thanks that on the night of his arrest Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup, saying: This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts, we take this bread and this wine from the gifts you have given us, and celebrate with joy the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen. We join tighter and proclaim:

**Many: Great is the mystery called faith:  
Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.**

One: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world. Nourished at this table, O God, may we know Christ's redemptive love and live a new life in him. Help us who recognize our Lord in the breaking of bread to see and serve him in all whose lives are broken. Give us who are fed at his hand, grace to share our bread with the hungry and with the hungry of heart. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory, and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. We ask this all in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, offering together the Lord's Prayer, saying,

**Many: 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.**

#### SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*(Please open your communion bread and cup now. The minister will lead you in eating and drinking together.)*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Eternal God, we praise you that your glory has dawned on us, and brought us into this Day of Resurrection. We rejoice that the grave could not hold your Son, and that he has conquered death, risen to rule over all powers of this earth. We praise you that he summons us into new life, to follow him with joy and gladness. By your Spirit, lift us from doubt and despair, and set our feet in Christ's holy way, that our lives may be signs of his life, and all we have may show forth his love. Praise, glory, and thanksgiving to you, our God, forever and ever. Amen.**

## SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH THE WORLD

HYMN 248

*Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!*

HYMN TO JOY

*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!*

## CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

### WORSHIP LEADERSHIP:

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger,  
Senior Pastor

The Rev. Brett Gudeman,  
Associate Pastor

Dr. Patricia Hacker,  
Director of Music

Kathy Gillmore,  
Director of Christian  
Education

Video and Sound:  
Mike Hyatt, Tom Stroud,  
Brian Bulger, Jeff Hyatt

# First Presbyterian

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