

**Dear Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church Family,**

I think that it has become clear that we will continue to worship by internet virtual connection through mid-May and possibly longer as the governor of North Carolina has outlined a way forward in opening our state in his plans announced Thursday, April 23. I expect we will receive guidance from Bishop Leeland next week. The leadership team at Lake Toxaway wants to stay in compliance while continuing to explore creative ways to live in community!

As I have studied the lectionary texts for worship this week, I have been struck with the gospel of Luke's telling of Jesus's appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and how frequently our vision is clouded by news and personal tragedy in ways that prevent us from recognizing His presence among us. I have reflected and prayed this week about the places and ways that Jesus appears in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic. I invite you to consider this question and reflect how our Resurrection Vision can see Christ at work in this unprecedented time.

I have several places where I have seen the risen Lord in our midst. For one, I have embraced the idea that online church is here to stay with us! The Holy Spirit has invited me to see this as a positive because our summer membership can stay connected when you are away. We will strive to continue to get the worship bulletin and service out so that you may be involved as much as you want when you are away. I also think this virtual reality allows us to invite people into our community by an easier way; we can invite friends and neighbors to participate in a virtual service and allow them to be more comfortable on a first visit to worship with us. We can invite our members that must stay at home because of illness or longer confinement at home.

I see Christ among us in the ways that people are reaching out to each other in support! This congregation has remained firm in its commitment to provide bold financial support to our community partners. This week, the Outreach Committee has reviewed applications for our scholarship program that supports Rosman High School seniors in their pursuit of higher educational goals. Several of you have volunteered to make masks and provided them to others. I learned that some of you took food items to the Lake Toxaway Community Center and those items were taken to Seneca, South Carolina where the storms on Easter night hit hardest. You are reaching out to each other and offering to pick up things for your neighbors when you are required to make necessary trips to the grocery store. Residents of Lake Toxaway and Sapphire have purchased extra "take-out meals" from area restaurants that have been distributed in a variety of places in this community.

I pray for all of you and ask you to continue to pray for your church family as we move forward in this uncharted territory. Reach out to me with your joys and needs. I hold you close in my heart!

Faithfully,  
Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church  
Home Worship for Community Worship  
Third Sunday of Easter, April 26, 2020**

**PRELUDE**

Hymn to Joy, Albert L. Travis

**GREETING**

*L: Sometimes good things are right in front of us and we don't see them.*

***P: Our fears and our prejudices blind us.***

*L: Open your eyes this day to see the goodness of the Lord.*

***P: Open our hearts, gracious God, to receive your blessings.***

*L: Hallelujah!*

***P: Hallelujah!***

*Leader: Let us pray:*

***Loving God, come and speak to our hearts today. May we, like those on the Emmaus Road, find your words burning with hope in our lives. Strengthen us and give us courage for the journey ahead. For we pray in Christ's Name.  
AMEN.***

# HYMN

## Open My Eyes, That I May See #454 (Printed with permission)

SANCTIFYING AND PERFECTING GRACE

### 454 Open My Eyes, That I May See

1. O - pen my eyes, that I may see glimps - es of truth thou  
2. O - pen my ears, that I may hear voic - es of truth thou  
3. O - pen my mouth, and let me bear glad - ly the warm truth

hast for me; place in my hands the won - der - ful key  
send - est clear; and while the wave - notes fall on my ear,  
ev - ery - where; o - pen my heart and let me pre - pare

*Refrain*  
that shall un - clasp and set me free.  
ev - ery - thing false will dis - ap - pear. Si - lent - ly now I  
love with thy chil - dren thus to share.

wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy will to see.

O - pen my eyes,  
O - pen my ears, il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
O - pen my heart,

WORDS: Clara H. Scott, 1895  
MUSIC: Clara H. Scott, 1895

OPEN MY EYES  
88.98 with Refrain

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Sometimes our hearts ache within us, O Lord. Like those travelers on the Emmaus road, we feel the deep sadness about losing Jesus. Our sadness finds its roots in many things and we feel as though we cannot escape it. It becomes part and parcel of our conversations. Deep within, our spirits long for release and we silently cry. Forgive us when we close our eyes to your presence. Heal our brokenness. Bind up our wounds. Place us on the path of healing and help us to be people who will bring compassionate caring to others, for we ask these things In Jesus' name. AMEN*

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*Dear friends, let your hearts be healed. God is here with you, right now, and walks with you into the world. Do not fear! Peace be with you all. In the name of Jesus, the Christ, you are forgiven. Amen.*

***In the name of Jesus, the Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to God!  
Alleluia!***

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **Acts 2:14a, 36-41**

2:14a: But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

2:36 "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

2:37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2:39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

2:40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

2:41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

### **Psalms 116:1-4, 12-19** (Read responsively.)

116:1 I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.

**116:2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.**

116:3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.

**116:4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray, save my life!"**

116:12 What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?

**116:13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,**

116:14 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

**116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones.**

116:16 O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds.

**116:17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.**

116:18 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

**116:19 in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!**

### **1 Peter 1:17-23**

1:17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

1:18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold,

1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

1:20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.

1:21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

1:22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

1:23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

### **Luke 24:13-35**

24:13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

24:14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

24:15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,

24:16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

24:17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

24:18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

24:19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

24:20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

24:21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

24:22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

24:23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

24:24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

24:25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

24:26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

24:27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about

himself in all the scriptures.

24:28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

24:29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

24:30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

24:31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

24:32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

24:33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

24:34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"

24:35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## **HOMILY**

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH** (United Church of Australia)

*We believe in one God,*

*the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

*We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One,  
confessing him as Lord to the glory of God the Father.*

*In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,*

*we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church,  
the Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation.*

*We acknowledge that we live and work  
between the time of Christ's death and resurrection  
and the final consummation of all things which he will bring.*

*We are a pilgrim people,*

*always on the way towards a promised goal;  
on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments,  
and we have the gift of the Holy Spirit  
in order that we may not lose the way.*

*We will live and work within the faith and unity  
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church,  
bearing witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift and his will.*

*We affirm that every member of the Church  
is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified.*

*Together with all the people of God,  
we will serve the world for which Christ died.*

*And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.*

## **OFFERING**

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

The Joyful Eastertide, arr. Charles Callahan

## **DOXOLOGY**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*God of righteousness, God of mercy: We have been called through the apostles to live in reverent fear – not a fear that immobilizes, but a fear that empowers us because we know how much is at stake. We know there are implication for what we do and what we don't do. Dedicate the gifts we give this morning to do the things your heart longs for your church to do; help our eyes to be opened to where you would use us. We pray in the name of our risen savior, Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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

## Christ Is Alive #318 (Printed with permission)

RESURRECTION AND EXALTATION

### Christ Is Alive

318

1. Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. His cross stands  
2. Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant  
3. Not throned a - far, re - mote - ly high, un - touched, un -  
4. In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,  
5. Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with  
years in Pal - es - tine, he comes to claim the  
moved by hu - man pains, but dai - ly, in the  
scorn, or wealth di - vide, he suf - fers still, yet  
this and ev - ery age, till earth and all cre -

pris - es ring. His love in death shall nev - er die.  
here and now and dwell in ev - ery place and time.  
midst of life, our Sav - ior in the God - head reigns.  
loves the more, and lives, though ev - er cru - ci - fied.  
a - tion ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

WORDS: Brian Wren, 1968, alt.  
MUSIC: *Psalmodia Evangelica*, 1789  
Words © 1975 Hope Publishing Company

TRURO  
LM



## **BENEDICTION**

*People of the Road, rejoice, for God is with you. Bring God's love and peace to all whom you meet even in a time where we use new ways to engage with others. Live in peace now and forever, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! **Amen.***

## **POSTLUDE**

Trumpet Tune in D, C.S. Lang

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