



## UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

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Office: (306) 752-2288 Email: [melfortuc@sasktel.net](mailto:melfortuc@sasktel.net)

Website: [www.melfortunitedchurch.com](http://www.melfortunitedchurch.com)

Worship Time: 10:30 AM

Ministers: All of us

Worship Leader: United Church Women

Music: Jodi Allen Corbett

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Mavis Busby

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter:

Scripture Reader:

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

**APRIL 11, 2021**

**Second Sunday of Easter - Year B**

### WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*As we gather for worship today we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANNIVERSARIES & CONCERNS:**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Christ has risen,

**All: Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

We gather to worship the risen Christ,  
Conqueror of death.

**All: Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

We lift up praise to the risen Christ,  
Redeemer of all life.

**All: Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

We give thanks to the risen Christ,  
Giver of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

Christ has risen,

**All: Christ is risen indeed!**

**OPENING PRAYER:** *(in unison)*

**Resurrected Christ,**

**the one who has overcome death and doors alike,  
we recognize that any gathering of believers is sacred.**

**Fill this space with your abundant joy and send  
out any hint of scarcity.**

**God, we know that you meet us exactly where we are.  
We thank you for coming to us in the way that we need.**

**When our faith is shaky, and we say, “unless I see...”  
you come to us with outstretched hands. Hands and sides  
which bear the marks of your sacrifice for us.**

**You give us unconditional love, unwavering presence,  
and abundant grace.**

**HYMN (MV 145) “Draw The Circle Wide”**

**PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:** *(in unison)*

**We confess that there are times when we are  
Overcome by fear; times when our faith fails,  
times when we close ourselves off to you, and times  
when we ignore the needs of others. Lord, forgive us.**

**When shadows surrounds us, show us the  
radiant power of your light.**

**When we hold on to our worldly possessions with tight fists,  
help us to use our resources for the glory of your realm. When  
our differences threaten to divide us, draw us together in the  
unity of your perfect love. Christ, forgive us.**

**We grieve the ways in which we have caused pain; the ways in  
which we have fallen short, the ways in which we have  
turned away from the suffering in our world.**

**Spirit, forgive us.**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

Our words of confession are released into the air, and in the act of speaking them aloud, we have been set free. In the stillness, God

whispers "Take heart; you are forgiven, cleansed of all unrighteousness."

**All: Praise God, in whose fullness we receive grace upon grace.**

**PRAYER RESPONSE (MV 149)** "*Peace for the Children*"

**CHOIR ANTHEM:** "*Peace to You*" - L. Larson

<https://youtu.be/j757jwm7Rc4>

## **WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD TO US**

**MINUTE FOR MISSION:**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

**HEBREW READING:**

**ACTS 4:32-35**

*The believers shared everything in common.*

**EPISTLE READING:**

**1 JOHN 1:1--2:2**

*God is light; walk in the light.*

**GOSPEL READING:**

**JOHN 20:19-31**

*Jesus appears to the disciples; but Thomas is not there.*

### **SERMON:**

**Easter Unlocked and Opened** - The Second Sunday of Easter

Every year I come to this day – the Second Sunday of Easter – and I wonder what difference last Sunday – Easter Sunday – has made. Are our lives and world different because of Easter and, if so, how and in what ways?

Look around. What do you see? Has your life changed? Are you living differently today than you did before Easter?

When I look at my life today it looks a whole lot like it did last Sunday, the week before, and the week before that. And when I look at the world today it looks pretty much the same as before.

Before Easter there was a pandemic. After Easter there's still a pandemic. Before Easter there was illness and death. After Easter there's still illness and death. Before Easter there was pain and

brokenness in the world. After Easter there's still pain and brokenness in the world.

The list of before and after comparisons could go on and on. Things today look a lot like they did before Easter. What do we do with that?

I know the usual answers. Jesus overcame death. Sins are forgiven. Love prevails. All things are being made new. Alleluia. Christ is risen.

I get that. And on most days, I believe it. I'm just not sure what all that means or looks like on a day-to-day basis. And I don't think I'm the only one who struggles with that. I think we all do, and I think that's why every year we come to this day – the Second Sunday of Easter – and hear the same gospel story. Today's gospel is the same one we heard last year on this day, the year before, and the year before that. It's the disciples' story of uncertainty, fear, and struggle with what to do with Jesus' resurrection. And it's our story with those things too.

Here's why I say that:

- Easter morning, “while it was still dark,” Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb. She saw and spoke with Jesus. He called her by name. She left the garden of resurrection, went to the disciples, and told them, “I have seen the Lord.”
- And what did the disciples say and do in response to that good news? Do you remember? Nothing. They didn't do anything. They didn't jump up and down and shout for joy. They didn't say, “Alleluia! Christ is risen!” They didn't give thanks and praise to God. They weren't filled with courage and hope. They didn't make radical changes in the way they lived. They didn't claim for themselves a new life or a new future. Instead, they locked the doors.
- Apparently, they didn't do or say anything on Easter day. And if they did, St. John didn't consider it worth including in his account of the gospel. The next thing we hear after Mary's good news is that it was the evening of Easter. The disciples were afraid. And they locked the doors of their house.

- Jesus steps into the midst of their fear. Locked doors cannot keep him out. They only serve to keep the disciples in. “Peace be with you,” he says. He breathes on them. He shares his life with them. He gives them the Holy Spirit. He sends them even as the Father sent him.
- And a week later? Nothing has changed. The disciples are in the same house behind the same locked doors. And it is hard to see or say what difference Jesus’ resurrection has made for any of them.

Jesus is free, but the disciples have imprisoned themselves. The tomb is empty, but the house is full. The stone has been rolled back from Jesus’ tomb, but the doors of the disciples’ lives are closed and locked. And they’re afraid of what is on the other side of those doors.

That sounds a lot like life today. I wonder what doors of your house you have closed and locked. What are you afraid of? And what will it take to unlock the doors of your house?

I’m not asking about the house in which you are social distancing or quarantining. I am asking about the house of your heart, the house of your imagination, the house of your creativity. I want to know about your house of love, your house of compassion and empathy, your house of hope and courage. Tell me about the house of your marriage, the house of your parenting, the house of your forgiving. In what ways have you used or allowed guilt, regret, disappointment, anger, resentment, sorrows and losses, wounds and hurts to lock the doors of your life? What houses your deepest longings and desires? What houses your dreams, delights, and the things that enliven you and make your heart beat faster? What doors need to be unlocked and opened in order for you to live more whole heartedly?

As long as we remain behind the locked doors of our houses nothing will change. The world today will look the same as it did before Easter. Our lives today will look the same as they did before Easter. If today our lives and world look the same as they did before Easter, then you and I need to start looking for and unlocking some doors.

Every time we unlock and open a door in our house we step into our own resurrection. Easter makes a difference. And the Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Easter is Jesus inviting, asking, calling, insisting, and wooing us into life and more life. It means the unattainable is within reach. The impossible is possible. The never before imagined doesn't sound so crazy. And maybe there really are unicorns everywhere. Easter is Jesus' promise that there is a future on the other side of our locked doors. But it is up to you and me to unlock and open those doors.

Did you notice that in today's gospel? Jesus did not unlock the doors for the disciples. They would have to do that for themselves, and so do you and me. No one else, not even Jesus, can open the doors you've locked. No one else, not even Jesus, can open the doors I've locked. That's for you and me to do. That's our Easter life, and you and I already hold in our hands the key.

What doors will you unlock and open today?

Sermon was written by Michael K. Marsh  
"Interrupting the Silence"

## **OUR RESPONSE**

### **OFFERING:**

*As we continue to worship together remotely, we remind you the work of our church continues. You can offer your gifts by sending an e-transfer to [melfortuc@sasktel.net](mailto:melfortuc@sasktel.net), or by mailing or dropping off your offering to the church office.*

### **OFFERTORY HYMN (MV 182) "Grateful"**

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (in unison)**

**Ever-present God, we desire to walk in the warmth  
of your sacred light.**

**We testify all that we have seen, heard, and felt.**

**We declare your matchless grace to the rest of  
creation, so that all may hear.**

**Thank you for meeting us where we are.**

**Grant us your peace in the face of uncertainty.  
Help us to live as those who have encountered the  
resurrected Christ. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE:**

Welcome Light, Love, and Hope of God. Surround us with a warmth of the Holy Spirit. Demonstrate your never-ending grace to us. Inspire within us this same grace to offer to others.

Enhance our senses to recognize your presence in the world, so that we may see, hear, and touch the ways you participate in our everyday lives. Awaken our souls to the injustices that are prevalent within our cultures.

Grant us eyes to see those who are overlooked. Grant us ears to hear cries for help. Grant us hands to extend to those in need.

May we advocate for the voiceless, the parentless, the homeless, and the disadvantaged. Infuse empathy in us so that we may offer dignity to those we help.

Grant us the wisdom to empower them in the midst of their plights. May we act out of justice, may we love mercy, may we walk humbly with you, O God.

## **SENDING FORTH**

**HYMN (VU 87)** *“I Am the Light of the World”*

## **COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:**

May your lives reveal the Resurrection to the world, and be a living testimony of the love of Christ.

May you walk in the overwhelming abundance of God’s provision.

May you live joyfully and love fully with your heart and soul.

Go now in the peace and presence of the Resurrected Christ.

Amen.

## **CHORAL BLESSING (MV221)**

*“I am Walking a Path of Peace”*

## **SPECIAL EASTER MUSIC TO ENJOY:**

<https://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=1C911JNU>

**PRAYER RESOURCES:**

*\*Seasons of the Spirit – Seasons FUSION 2021-2022; The United Church of Canada Lent. Easter 2021, Year B, Gathering Resources for Worship Planners.  
Used with permission*

**NEXT WEEK'S (April 18, 2021) READINGS**

Acts 3:12-19

1John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH**

Wednesday, 21st @7 pm – Choir

Friday, April 23rd @10 am – Pastoral Care

**Pastoral Care – Contact Information**

Should you need emergency pastoral care please call Ron Nielsen @  
306-921-7794 or 306-752-4119.

**Notice of Death**

Helen Fennell

Date of Death: March 25, 2021

Please remember her family in prayer

**Transfer or Applying for Membership**

If you wish to transfer or apply for membership in our church, please contact the church office or a member of the Membership Committee.

**Changes to Contact Information**

If you have changed your address or phone number, please advise the Church Office so that we can keep your information current. Thank you!

**FundScrip for April**

The FundScrip deadline for April is Thursday, April 28th. It will be ready for pickup on Thursday, May 6th.

***Stewardship Seconds***

*Christians are ones who cannot keep silent and cannot keep their gifts to themselves.*