



## UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

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

Ministers: All of us

Worship Leader: Judy Meier

Music:

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Denise Todosichuk

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter:

Scripture Readers:

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### ORDER OF WORSHIP

**April 12, 2020**  
**Easter Sunday Year A**

#### **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:**

If you continue in life as though there were no resurrection, come here!

**Come and see the risen Christ!**

If you open your eyes but do not recognize the Holy One, come here!

**Come and see the risen Christ!**

If your life is filled with mourning, come here!

**Come and see the risen Christ!**

Come here, children of the living God!

**Come and see the risen Christ!**

## **OPENING PRAYER:**

Today the world is made new!

**Today we hear the songs of birds and angels, praising God!**

Today we recognize the signs of life all around us.

**Life that cannot be held back or destroyed; life that resists all the powers of death; life that rises triumphant!**

If we did not sing, this day, all of Creation would still vibrate with life.

**The buds would burst, the streams would chatter, the very stones would sing forth the glory of our God!**

Let us give all praise to the one who grants eternal life as a present possibility!

**Let us sing praises to the one whose love is more powerful than all the powers of this world!**

Praise to God, for death is conquered!

**Praise to God, for love endures!**

Praise to God, all the Earth!

**Praise to God, all Creation!**

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## **PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE:**

The light is breaking; the stone is rolled away!

**We are called to bear witness, in the clear light of a new day, to the triumph of love over hatred, the power of vulnerability over fear.**

**Yet we are fearful.**

**The cross still feels like the end, the finality of death and heaviness still cling to our souls.**

**We believe more firmly in the human power of death than in the power of Creation, of life despite its abundance around us.**

**Forgive us, risen Christ.**

**Forgive us for fleeing the light, for hiding our light.**

**Forgive us for the hesitant alleluias,**

**the certainty that there must be a catch,**

**the unwillingness to believe wholeheartedly in the power of love.**

**Forgive us our silence in the face of miracles.**

**Forgive us when we turn away from your presence.**

Risen Christ, roll away the stones that entomb our hearts.  
Shine your resurrection light into the shadows of our beings.

Drive out from our minds all that keeps us from the abundant life you offer.

Holy One, open us to the power of love. Amen.

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

Fear cannot drive God out.

Anger and hatred cannot separate us from the love that is willing to pour itself out for our sake.

Weeping may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

**Christ is risen. Love stands triumphant. Thanks be to God!  
Alleluia! Amen.**

## **CHOIR ANTHEM: “People Arise” – J. Martin**

Link to Melfort United Church Choir YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/0v1t1TqTggo>

## **WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD TO US**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

#### **RESPONSORIAL READING:**

**PSALM 118:1-2,14-24**  
(VU p. 837):

*God is my strength and my song.*

#### **APOSTLES READING:**

**ACTS 10:34-43:**

*Peter’s account of Jesus’ death and resurrection.*

#### **EPISTLE READING:**

**COLOSSIANS 3:1-4**

*Set your mind on things above.*

#### **GOSPEL READING:**

**JOHN 20:1-18**

*Mary and the empty tomb.*

## **SERMON:**

Moderator’s Easter Message 2020

## Transcript of Videotaped Message

Grace and peace to you, in Jesus' name. My name is Richard Bott. I'm Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

It's a strange time, isn't it?

As the world continues to be gripped by changes designed to get a handle on what COVID-19 is doing in our lives, we have this moment in the Christian calendar when we're called to celebrate—to celebrate a moment of mystery, a moment of miracle, a moment where God's infinite love caused the incredible—the resurrection of the crucified Jesus, Easter.

There's a part of me that really longs for celebration right now. I want to gather my family and my friends for a huge feast: a little bit of turkey, some stuffing, maybe some dahl roti on the side! I want to hear my daughter laughing and feel her dog rub up against my calf with a look that says, "Me, too!" I want to hear the chatter around the table and all those people I love, safe and here. I want to stand with my community of faith and sing, "Jesus Christ is ris'n today...Alleluia!"

But that can't happen. Not right now. Bringing people together continues to be a danger, and I certainly wouldn't want my desire to celebrate this moment put anyone's health at risk.

It will happen. Just not right now.

But that makes me think about Easter morning—the first one, so very long ago. Each of the gospel narratives tells us of the women rising up that first morning to go to Jesus' tomb. I can imagine them getting up, pulling together everything they needed to prepare Jesus' body properly for burial. Water to wash him, perfumes and oils, grave cloth. There had been no time to do this before the Sabbath had begun. Jesus' body had been placed in a tomb, which had been temporarily sealed up so that everything could be prepared properly later.

Now was that time.

I can imagine these disciples, women who had followed Jesus through his ministry, making their way to the tomb as the sun slowly began to move towards the horizon, the sky beginning to glow. I can imagine their sadness, their grief. The one they had understood was Messiah, a man who had taught and healed and ate and laughed and cried with them, was dead. When I imagine this scene, I imagine them walking quietly, their conversation muted by their sadness.

But here's the thing: Although they didn't know it, Easter had already happened. Before they got to the tomb, they were grieving. When they got to the tomb, they were confused. Jesus' body was gone. The resurrection had already happened, and no one in the world knew about it.

The women were the first evangelists of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They took that story back to the rest of the disciples, and from there on Christ's good news spread throughout the world. But at the time of Easter itself, that moment in human time when the resurrection happened, no one knew except God.

I think that's what I'm going to hold on to this Easter. God is doing things. Mysterious things. Miraculous things. Incredible things. Resurrection things. Whether we know about them or not.

And we will celebrate those things with great joy and wonder-filled alleluias—when the time is right.

But, for now, I'm going to join Mary, and with wonder and hope whisper, "Rabboni! Teacher!" with all of my heart.

Blessed Eastertide, beloved. Be well and remember: Christ is with us.

Alleluia. Alleluia! ALLELUIA!

Amen.

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Link to moderator's message on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/gQe5mYfTasg>

## **OUR RESPONSE**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:**

We have seen our God! By God's grace and in God's own holy love, we turn our hearts to the divine that surrounds and upholds us.

Yet we are called, not merely to see our God, but to help make our God visible in this world: to do the work of love put into action in service to the Body of Christ.

And so, we pray for all for whom crucifixion still seems a clearer reality than resurrection; for those who are hungry, or unsure when and where their family's next meal will be,

**help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are ill or in pain; those who are swamped in medical bills; those who struggle still to receive adequate care,

**help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are living with mental illness, who suffer all the more from stigma and shame and social exclusion,

**help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who work long hard days for inadequate wages, and for those who will not give up a bit of comfort so that all might have justice,

**help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are living in places of violence and fear, where families have been torn apart, and trauma is a way of life,

**help us to be your light, O Christ.**

Help us to learn that even in the midst of despair, there may be love; even in the midst of fear, there may be comfort; even on Good Friday, there is the seed of Easter. May we nurture God's light and God's love into this world that is in desperate need of healing. May we be the active promise of new life in this community, and the blessing of God's love and grace to all who are in need. May we receive the Good News: Christ is Risen! Love has conquered death! and return to the work of discipleship with joyous hearts and praising hands. In the name of the risen Christ we pray:

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER:** *(in unison)*

**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 and ever. Amen.**

### **SENDING FORTH**

#### **Easter Prayer (VU 188):** *(in unison)*

**God of grace and glory, by the death and resurrection of your Beloved Child your reign of wholeness has been unleashed within our bent and broken world.**

Open us to your empowering grace that we may be bearers of your world-redeeming love; through the resurrected Christ, our dignity, our power, and our peace. Amen.

## **COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:**

Go out into the world, aware of the presence of new life continually around you. Go out, living in the promises of the God who will not abandon us, but whose love endures forever.

Go out into the world, proclaiming the Good news:

We have seen our God!

**We have seen our God!**

Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed!**

## **PRAYER RESOURCES:**

*\*Seasons of the Spirit – Seasons FUSION Lent-Easter 2020; Flames of the Spirit, Resources for Worship Like Bread for the Journey; Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1 Advent through Pentecost Worship Companion; The United Church of Canada Lent-Easter 2020 Year A Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission.*

## **NEXT WEEK'S (April 19, 2020) READINGS:**

*Acts 2:14a, 22-32;*

*Psalm 16;*

*1 Peter 1:3-9;*

*John 20:19-31.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

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## **THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH:**

### **Pastoral Care - Contact Information**

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

**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've changed your address or phone number, please advise the Church Office so that we can keep your information current.

Thank you!

**FundScrip Deadline for March**

The next FundScrip deadline is Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. The gift cards will be ready for pickup on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Stewardship Seconds*

*Many in our times have seen death. Christians cannot be silenced because, in addition, they have seen an empty tomb, heard Jesus speak, and even caught glimpses of his mystery and presence.*