



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**IN THE GARDEN
EASTER CELEBRATION**

www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome

In the Garden Easter Celebration
April 4, 2021

PRELUDE

Easter Blossoms Forth, Martha Main

WELCOME—At dawn on that first Easter day, the women came to the tomb in their sorrow and in their grief. Then suddenly the earth shook, and a light shined bright, as the Good News was proclaimed: “Do not be afraid...[Jesus] has been raised from the dead.” From that empty tomb of grief and pain, hope sprung forth, as the morning sun dawned.

WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP—Shout for joy. The tomb is empty. Clap your hands. Death has not won. Dance and sing. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed! Let us worship.~

HYMN

In the Garden, Zion Virtual Choir

GATHERING— God of grace and power, we come rejoicing in Christ’s empty tomb. We come trusting in the good news that tells us Christ is with us. For the Risen Christ is living proof that You care about our lives, O God. The Risen Christ offers to us glimpses of hope, even in our tears. As the tomb is not quiet. It speaks. It proclaims! It is a promise of eternal life! Thank you, gracious and almighty God. Amen.+

SPECIAL MUSIC

He Arose, Collin Bennington

THE GOOD NEWS PROCLAIMED

Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he^{*} lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘‘He has been raised from the dead,^{*} and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’’ This is my message for you.’ ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’^{*}

HYMN

Christ is Alive, Martha Main

MEDITATION

Take the Garden with You

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD WITH OUR GIVING

Invitation – In gratitude for the gift of new life in Christ, let us bring our gifts and our offerings this day.~

April Benevolence – Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) was our main benevolence offering in years past, and we are highlight it for the month of April. The majority of this important offering stays right here in our own Indiana-Kentucky Conference to support the conference staff who serve our

congregations and the variety of programming and education our conference provides local congregations and pastors. The rest of this offering goes to support our wider church family in the United Church of Christ, here in the United States and through ministries we share with partners around the world.

You can mail your offerings to our office. We check the mail regularly.

Zion United Church of Christ
8916 E. Troy Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46239

Or, you can donate through our website through our secure PayPal button at www.zionuccindy.net/donate. Please know that PayPal receives a 2.2% processing fee and a \$0.30 transaction charge. You are able to set up reoccurring, monthly payments.

We Give Thanks – God of love and grace, for the love and life that you give us in Christ, we offer you these signs of our gratitude; for the compassion and mercy that you give us in the Holy Spirit, we offer you our thankfulness and praise. Receive these gifts in your holy name. Amen.~

SPECIAL MUSIC

Kaylee Gephart

WE GATHER AT THE TABLE



Set Your Place at the Table—Communion was first celebrated in the homes of those in the early church. Friends and family would gather together to pray, singing songs, and break bread. We carry on that tradition today. Whatever you have on hand to celebrate communion will work just fine, because this ancient ritual is not about what we use for this meal or where we partake of it.

Instead, it is about the act of remembrance. So gather around the table, prepare your place, and remember that Christ is in our midst.

Our Invitation—Throughout our Lenten journey we have acknowledged our brokenness and our need for healing. We have heard the stories of how Christ bore witness to the pain of the world and, instead of turning away as so many had done, he responded with healing care. At Christ's table we remember that Christ would take upon himself the brokenness of the world so that he might pour out that healing care and tender grace to all. In the breaking of the bread,

we proclaim that in Jesus Christ there is the promise of new life, hope of healing, and a multitude of mercy.

We Acknowledge Our Brokenness— God of resurrection grace, help us in our pain, despair and fear so that we are not prone to follow the path of hopelessness. Help us, to instead, be like the Risen Christ, and rise up, as a brave and holy people, living beyond our pain, despair and fear by remaining hopeful in your steadfast love. Help us, we pray. Amen.+

We Are Assured of Grace— God hears our prayers of grace and mercy, and raises our countenance from despair, into resurrection joy! God meets us in our human suffering, comforts us in our tears, and offers to us new hope, Hallelujah!+

The Words of Institution—We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples saying: ‘This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, Jesus also took the cup after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ’s death and celebrate Christ’s resurrection, and await Christ’s coming again.+

Blessing Our Meal— Bless this bread and this cup, the wheat and the grape, the farmer and the harvest, the seed and the sower. These simple elements are shared in community, so that we may taste and see your goodness and become one body in Christ. For it is through Christ, in Christ, and with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forevermore. Amen.+

We Share the Bread and the Cup – (*Taking the bread*) Take and eat, this is Christ’s body broken for you. (*Taking the cup*) Take and drink, this is Christ’s blood shed for you and the forgiveness of sins.

We Give Thanks— Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior’s presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ’s body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our redeemer. Amen.’

HYMN

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

WE ARE SENT FORTH WITH A BLESSING—May God’s abiding love and hope give us new life. May God’s unmerited grace and mercy keep us hope-filled. And may God’s healing, compassionate care, and abounding peace be with you. For Christ is risen! Praise God! Out loud but muted. **Hallelujah!**+

POSTLUDE

Easter Memories, Martha Main

Worship Notes: ~ Scifres, Mary; Beu, B. J.. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2021. Abingdon Press. ‘UCC Book of Worship. +UCC Worship Ways.