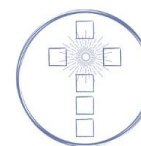




RESURRECTION STORIES:
Unlock Yours
The Season of Easter



Serve & Enrich
**Zion United Church
of Christ**

The 6th Sunday of Easter: Liberated

Prelude

Sunlit Cloisters

Gathering— This country is made up of so many who escaped to the “promised land” from oppressive regimes. Throughout history, people have had to flee situations of horror. Even within our country and in our own time, there are those who live with oppression and fear. We seek to widen our understanding of what we must do to continue to work for liberation on so many fronts.

Easter Centering Song: “Because He Lives,” 447

God sent his Son, they called him Jesus; he came to love, heal, and forgive; he lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.	Because he lives I can face tomorrow; because he lives, all fear is gone; because I know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives.
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Prayer—Loving God, we remember your Child’s commandment to love one another as he has loved us. May this time of prayer and reflection remind us of the love we have in Jesus. As we leave this sacred space, may we be filled with joy as we share his love with others.+

The Lord's Prayer (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 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.

****Hymn**

Morning Has Broken, 35

Exploring God’s Word for All Ages

An Ancient Story of Resurrection

Question: Who are those your heart is reaching out to in these moments?
Those longing for liberation, release from oppression, an end to their pain?

Story of Resurrection based on John 21:9-19

Debi Hamblet

- Reader:* Jesus made a charcoal fire to make breakfast, and Jesus beckoned the disciples to bring some of their fresh-caught fish.
- Pastor:* Abundance is meant to be shared. Jesus shows us how to serve and care.
- Reader:* Jesus said, “Come and have breakfast” giving bread and fish to each disciple.
- Pastor:* In our fear of scarcity, we sometimes are hesitant to share, but Jesus shows us how.
- Reader:* After offering sustenance to the weary disciples, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and asked: “Do you love me?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Feed my lambs.”
- Pastor:* Often we discover the love language of our faith by sharing with others.
- Reader:* A second time, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Tend my sheep.”
- Pastor:* We can grow in faith by caring for others.
- Reader:* A third time, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter felt hurt at the repeated request and said, “Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Feed my sheep.”
- Pastor:* We are called to feed and tend to the needs of all people, especially those in need of liberation from hunger and oppression.
- Reader:* Jesus reminded the disciples that we all will need help at times in our lives. Then, Jesus said, “Follow me.”
- Pastor:* We open our hearts and hands and resources to make better the circumstances of all people for living and thriving.
- Reader:* This is a Word of Hope for the people who long for it.
- Pastor:* Thanks be to the Living Word.

We Hear God’s Word—Exodus 3:1-15 (NRSV) *Collin Bennington, Debi Hamblet*

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, ‘I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned

up.’ ⁴When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ ⁵Then he said, ‘Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ ⁶He said further, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, ‘I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’ ¹¹But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ ¹²He said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’

¹³ But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ ¹⁴God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ ¹⁵God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”’: This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

Meditation

Liberated

We Gather at the Table

Hymn

We Shall Overcome, 512

Set Your Place at the Table—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— Christ invites to this table all who are ready for a resurrection in their own lives, to move beyond the limitations of the past, to move into the “new day” that God is doing in our midst, willing to let go of the pain that’s gone.

A Prayer for Transformation—Jesus, our sibling and friend, we confess that we do not always love one another. Our divisions and disagreements so often prevent us from knowing the joy of meaningful relationships. Even as we seek to follow your example, we forget that we are chosen and appointed by you to bring hope to a weary world. Help us renew our focus and live by your will...that we may follow you with joy in our hearts.+ Amen.

Assurance of Grace— Jesus no longer calls us servants, but friends. Each relationship is a new opportunity to abide in Christ’s love, and a reminder that we can start again. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!+

The Words of Institution— On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And so, we remember...we offer ourselves...we proclaim God’s love...

Blessing Our Meal— Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us a resurrection story in Christ, so that we may be a resurrection story for the world as the Body of Christ, breaking ourselves open to God’s redeemed future. Amen.

We Share the Bread and the Cup—Take now and eat, this is the body of Christ broken for you. Take now and drink, this is the cup of the renewed covenant, Christ’s blood given for you.

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.`

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—Having been nourished by the fruit of the vine at the table, we remember that Jesus has appointed us to bear fruit that will last. Fruit that will bring love and justice. Joy and hope. Bring what you can; together, the gifts we offer can transform lives.

Opportunities to Live Resurrected

May Benevolence—Strengthen the Church

****Offering Song:** “I Love to Tell the Story” (pew card)

**The Savior of our stories
has brought his peace to you;
now go and tell the story,
for others need it too.
To ev'ry one who's hurting
ring out the gospel call;**

**proclaim that Christ is risen
and grants his peace to all.**

**I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.**

We Give Thanks—Loving God, we remember that one of Christ's most important commandments is loving one another. With these gifts, help us show this love in our words and actions, caring for the vulnerable and offering hope in times of despair. Amen.+

Hymn

Here I Am, Lord, 559

Benediction— And now, may you go into the world, proclaiming liberty in all the ways you discover you can, for yourself, for others, for the world. And may the God who created you to be unrestrained in your joy and unabashed with your love for others, the Christ who showed you what liberation looks like, and the Spirit who is transforming your life even now, be with you now and evermore. Amen.

Postlude

Andante