

Straight from the "Hart"

March 31, 2024 Easter Worship 10 am

 **HARTLAND**

Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Greeting

He is Risen! **He is Risen Indeed!**

Welcome

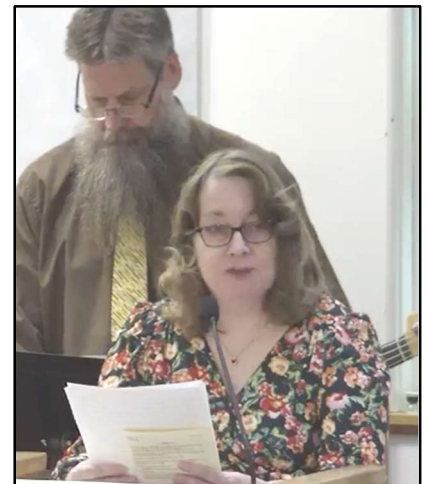
Good morning. **Welcome** to the Hartland UMC sanctuary, whether you are here in person or at home. We are really glad you are here and participating in today's special Easter worship.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, we gather and we give of our resources and of ourselves because your Son, the Lord of life, by submitting to death, conquered the grave. By being lifted on a cross he drew all peoples to you. By being raised from the dead, he offers to restore to humanity what has been lost through sin and he opens the way to everlasting life. Grant that our hearts be opened to see and grasp the renewing resurrection power of your Spirit with us, that we too may rise from the death of sin to abundant life -- now and forever. Amen.

Call to Worship

We are not eye-witnesses to an event, as were Mary and the disciples; we have not journeyed through a dangerous city to seek answers or consolation; we have not seen angels gathering at the rim of this day, or wept in the garden this morning because we could not find Him. But we are here to attest to a story that has not lost its power during twenty centuries of change and conflict. We are here because those before us carried this story as if it were precious gold; cherished it as if it were the key to a hidden wisdom. It was kept secret to generations past, but now it is revealed to God's people – that the riches and glory of Christ are for everyone – this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This is the assurance of sharing his glory.



adapted from "Call to Worship for Easter Sunday" by Ann Siddall, in Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C, stillpoint.unitingchurches.org.au, and Colossians 1:26-27

Music and this is possible because Christ is Alive. Sing with the praise band

Christ the Lord is Risen Today (He's Alive)

Words: Charles Wesley,
New Words and Music: Kirk Kirkland
© 2014 McKinney Music, Inc.

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O Death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Dying once he all doth save, Alleluia!
Where thy victory, O Grave? Alleluia!

Chorus

He's alive, he's alive! Night has gone and dawn has come.
He's alive, he's alive! Death has lost and life has won! He's alive!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Chorus (3 x)



Music And because he is alive, we too are alive and we know tomorrow, and our ultimate destiny, is in God's hands. You may be seated as you sing with us,

Because He Lives (Amen)

Words and Music: Matt Maher, William J Gaither, Gloria Gaither, Daniel Carson,
Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jason Ingram © 2014 Hanna Street Music

I believe in the Son. I believe in the risen One.
I believe I overcome by the power of His blood

Chorus

Amen, amen. I'm alive, I'm alive because He lives. Amen, amen.
Let my song join the one that never ends, because He lives!

I was dead in the grave. I was covered in sin and shame.
I heard mercy call my name. He rolled the stone away.

Chorus

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, every fear is gone.
I know He holds my life, my future in His hands.

Chorus

Amen, amen. Let my song join the one that never ends,
because He lives! because He lives!

Responsive Reading 1 (R: Reader, C: Congregation)

Let's pick up the story from where we left off a couple days ago.

R: As Jesus' body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law. After [Sabbath], as the next day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the grave.

C: Suddenly there was a violent earthquake.

R: An angel of the LORD came down from heaven, rolled away the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow.

C: [The guards were paralyzed with fear].

R: The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. Come and look at the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell the disciples that he has been raised from the dead and is going ahead of you to Galilee."

C: So they left the tomb quickly, frightened yet filled with joy, and they ran to give the news to the disciples.

R: Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Shalom!" They came up and took hold of his feet as they fell down and worshiped him.

C: Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee and they will see me."

R: The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go.

C: When they saw him, they bowed and worshiped him...

Luke 23:55-56 (NLT), From Matthew 28:1-10,16-17a (primarily CJB, NLT)

Special Music It makes us wonder what will happen when Jesus suddenly appears before us and says “Shalom, Greetings” Listen to this theme...

I Can Only Imagine

Words & Music : Bart Millard © 2001 Simpleville Music
adm by EssentialMusicPublishing

I can only imagine what it will be like
when I walk by your side.
I can only imagine what my eyes would see
when your face is before me.
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.

Chorus

Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel?
Will I dance for you Jesus or in awe of you be still?
Will I stand in your presence or to my knees, will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all?
I can only imagine, I can only imagine.



I can only imagine when that day comes
and I find myself standing in the Son.
I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever worship you.
I can only imagine, yeah. I can only imagine.

Chorus 2x

I can only imagine, I can only imagine.
I can only imagine, I can only imagine.
I can only imagine when all I will do is forever, forever worship you.
I can only imagine.

Music Even knowing what we know, it is hard to imagine what it will be like and what we will do when we finally see him face to face. Early on that first morning, Mary, leaving the angels in the empty tomb, lost in grief and confusion, turned and met Jesus and didn't even recognize him. But once she knew, she tried to cling to him... (Jn. 20:11-18) This event inspired the words we sing in preparation for prayer. Let's sing...

In the Garden

Text: C. Austin Miles, 1913
Music: C. Austin Miles, 1913; adapt. by Charles H. Webb, 1987
© 1989 UM Publishing House

1. I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses,
and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

Refrain

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own;
and the joy we share as we tarry there,
none other has ever known.

Pastor's Prayer

Let's pray. Lord, all week, ever since Jesus marched into Jerusalem on the donkey, we have felt the pressure of the world to change our hearts' cry from "Hosanna, behold the king of the world who comes in Lord's name" to "Crucify him". Release us from evil, and destroy the innocent one." Moreover, we argue with your Son when he predicts his death, and our denial. We fail to support him in the garden. We scatter like frightened children at his arrest, only discreetly showing up again while your Son hangs on the cross. It is the most horrible reality, but through it, your most beautiful dream is fulfilled -- the salvation of the world, the sting of the great shadow of sin and death has been ultimately defeated.

Praises and Petitions And that is why we pray for each other, those we will be naming * and others that are pressing heavily on our hearts. * Becky is asking us to pray for a car accident fatality that occurred on US 23 this morning. * There have been many losses amongst us, friends and family and distant relatives. * We continue to pray for Fran Warthman, * we pray thanksgiving for those people who are listed in memory of honor the flowers that were given to brighten our sanctuary today, * we pray for one of my friend's sister, Julie, who is fighting lung cancer, and the progress seems to be going well, but we lift her up.

Lord, where there is hate from fear, or from hurt, grant healing and love; where there are wrongs, may we find forgiveness to receive and to give. Grant those who doubt the needed seed of faith keep going, for those in depression, direct them to hope; where there is confusion and feeling lost, provide your beacon, and for those who are suffering in any way, may you restore the joy of your salvation like the dawn of a new day. Help us to see beyond our own comforts to bring comfort to others, to understand others even if they never try to understand us; and to give love freely.

Today, Lord, with the resurrection, we find that Jesus' crucifixion and death are not the last word. Here is the greatest sign of your forgiving love: Jesus received the worst we humans could devise, and you did not retaliate. You did not annihilate. Even the worst we can do will not deter you from the desire to embrace us in

friendship, and to eagerly seek to continue living on in us. And that, Lord, is why we want to serve you, the living Savior of our lives who is still in the world today. So, we open our hearts and lives to you, letting you enter and live in us. Grant us the ability to live the words that you taught us to pray, and today we will sing it.

Lord's Prayer (sung)

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Jesus replies to the disciples' question about who will be greatest in his kingdom. Jesus calls a child (who had no status in their culture) and said those who become humble like a child will be the greatest, and children should be welcomed (valued), but beware if you lead one of them into sin... or are the source of another's temptation. Don't play around with temptation, ruthlessly eradicate it from your life... Then he talks about the joy of bringing someone back who has wandered away, and the strategy for dealing with those who sin against you to hopefully bring reconciliation, and this brings up a question.



Summary of Matthew 18:1-20

Then [Peter] came up and said to him, “Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?” “No, not seven times,” answered [Jesus], “but seventy times seven!

Because of this, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared with a king who decided to settle accounts with his deputies.

Right away they brought forward a man who owed him many millions; and since he couldn't pay, his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold to pay the debt. But the servant fell down before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ So out of pity for him, the master let him go and forgave the debt.

“But as that servant was leaving, he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him some tiny sum. He grabbed him and began to choke him, crying, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ His fellow servant fell before him and begged, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused; instead, he had him thrown in jail until he should repay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were extremely distressed; and they went and told their master everything that had taken place. Then

the master summoned his servant and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt just because you begged me to do it. Shouldn't you have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And in anger his master turned him over to the jailers for punishment until he paid back everything he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat you, unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts." Matthew 18:21-35 (CJB)

Music This being forgiven and offering forgiveness is central to our faith, for it is what keeps us on the path to heaven, reconciled with God and with each other, for as this next song expresses that while we may doubt and fail and deny, Christ has risen to continue the process of our transformation into what we are meant to be Let's sing.

Christ Has Risen

Words: John Bell © 1988 WGRG The Iona Community (Scotland),
adm. by GIA Publications
Music: William Moore

Christ has risen while earth slumbers, Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised, as we doubted and denied.

Let the moon embrace the blessing; let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumor: Christ has risen, God is here!

Christ has risen for the people whom he died to love and save;
Christ has risen for the women bringing flowers to grace his grave.

Christ has risen for disciples huddled in an upper room.
He whose word inspired creation can't be silenced by the tomb.

Christ has risen and forever lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled, all who find religion strange.

Christ has risen, Christ is present making us what he has been –
evidence of transformation in which God is known and seen.

Sermon Released from Debt

I confess, I have a terrible habit. I'm punny. It rarely translates to funny, but I do manage to get people to exercise their groaning muscles once in a while. I play with words in my head all the time -- sometimes they just blurt out. Mary Jo said she was getting her dog fixed, and I said, "I didn't know it was broken." It just happens...

Once I was checking a couple books out of the library for Ben. This was not local, this was I a previous place. The lady behind the desk said she could help me as soon as she finished writing a note on a post it. As she was wrapping up this note,

she was talking to herself -"What day is it? Two two", she answered her own question. But I chimed in anyway, "Yep, it is ballet day". She took the books I had set on the counter and pulled them to her. She opened the first one to stamp it and then stopped. She looked at me and said, "What did you just say?" "I said it was ballet day." She looked confused so I explained. "You said it was two two (tutu) day, so..." She joked that for that she wouldn't check out my books.

Our sunrise service began with the song "Morning has broken". I love the song for a couple reasons, it mentions a blackbird, and my initials are caw and so I love crows who are one of nature's vacuum cleaners, and I like cleaning. But many years ago, my vice of wordplay took over and now I cannot sing the song without thinking of an alternate lyric: ♪ Morning has broken, please come and fix it.

Well, sometimes life is broken, and we are broken, and we feel like we are beyond repair -- or all those other "re-: words of our Lenten cross. Return, Resist, Resolve, Repent, Reconcile, Renew, Reset. All of these are words of repair and healing, but we can't seem to get them done, or at least it feels like it is beyond us to do. Today's text has to do with how to fix what's broken in us and in our world.

We live in a Broken World

The reading said that Jesus was talking about the importance of not breaking others or ourselves by sin, and to go out of our way to work for unity. But how does that work in a world that is hostile, and out for itself, and takes advantage of others and calls the meek weak and sees those who follow Jesus in his life of loving service as "golden opportunities" people who they can take an unfair advantage – In this setting, won't noble character traits (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22)) become impracticable in this culture? Won't it allow sin to flourish, turn Christians into doormats, and invite abusers to continue their abuse? Won't justice go right out the window?

Peter takes a stab at the solution. The standard of the 1st century was three times you forgive, the 4th time -- well, they probably aren't really meaning it -- for being sorry has always meant that we truly regret what we have done (or not done), will strive correct the situation and not repeat that action again, or not fail to take action again.

Peter more than doubles the standard of grace, "Shall we forgive 7 times?" Matthew doesn't explain whether this is for different offenses by the same person, or the same offense repeated

Forgiveness Releases

over and over. We'll leave that for the legal brains to figure out...

The answer Jesus gives kind of makes it a moot point anyway. It can be translated as 77 or 70 x 7. Either way, if we you are getting out your calculators, you are doing the wrong thing. You've missed the point. There are no limits.

We may not be able to approve of what someone has done or not done, may not be able to maintain the same kind of connection with them, (you don't leave an embezzler in charge of the treasury) -- there are still consequences for sin and law breaking; but as challenging as it is, we strive to do our very best to respect and love them as one of God's creations who has value.

It is a lot easier to say that than to bring into reality. And Jesus says to do it endlessly. And it sounds as absurd now as it did to them then.

Jesus goes right on to explain. The kingdom of heaven is like this, and we heard the story fully: (and he should know what heaven is like since he came from there). The kingdom of heaven is like a king who calls his servants to account. One servant is way over his head, drowning in red ink, sinking like a rock. The original language said he owed 10,000 talents. Scholars calculated that the average manual laborer's wage then, after 15 years, would add up to 1 talent. Alexander the Great's annual income from taxes was less than what he owed. This guy wasn't going to pay this back anytime soon. The king in the story wants to cut his losses by selling off the family.

He begs. His debt is canceled. On his way out, someone owes him a very small amount of money. He fails to forgive. Other servants see, and report to the king, who drags him back in, restores the debt and throws him into jail.

The kingdom of God is not so much about receiving what we deserve -- justice meted out to sinners; but it is about the **Limitless Grace** character of God, and Jesus says the character of God is wrapped up in *limitless* grace and mercy and love. And if we are to live in his kingdom, we have to follow the culture of the kingdom, which is to display overwhelming heart felt mercy to others because that is what we have received it from God.

If I receive forgiveness and am released from a great debt -- that is wonderful. But then if I don't pass compassionate graciousness on, then my peers don't forgive me, and in fact, they rat me out. Then the king hauls me back in and I lose my initial forgiveness. Being generous, (7 instead of 3) but still limiting the scope of forgiveness becomes a slippery slope.

A Way of Doing Culture

We cannot believe everyone should forgive me, and everyone should forgive everyone else, but then make exceptions when I am the one who is hurt. It simply will not work. We will end up with a collective of exceptions and divisions, and (revenge in the name of justice) that escalates to judgments and divisions throughout the land about who is worthy and who is not worthy, and where does one cross that line from which there is no return? And who has the right to draw those lines in the first place? Surely this can't describe God's kingdom -- it is an escalation of non-forgiveness after non-forgiveness from the bottom servant who didn't forgive all the way up to the king, who now doesn't forgive.

I think I told you about Brother Angelo, the Franciscan monk who was cleaned his simple mountain hut in anticipation of a visit from St Francis. He says his prayers, sweeps the hearth, hangs a kettle over the fire, and sits back to wait. Three outlaws come to the door begging for food. Angelo is frightened and angry and judgmental and condemns them and warns them that they were on their way to a place that is the opposite of heaven. Then he sends them away empty-handed.

Someone once warned that "Some have so stressed holy living that we've justified angry judgment and anyone who doesn't live up to (our perception of) what that is supposed to look like. The back side [the dangerous temptation] on the emphasis of holy living is a lack of gracious forgiveness for others." Those people who hold contrary opinions and perform contrary behaviors – Christ died for them too... so if we follow Jesus, as his people, who are we to think and do differently?

Francis arrives. Angelo tells him about his unwelcome would-be guests. Francis sends him into the mountains with [food and drink], to find them and ask their forgiveness. Angelo is indignant. He cannot see the robbers as human, much less ones that God loves. But he is obedient. He tracks them in the snow, finds them and makes amends. Sometime later, the legend goes, those robbers leave their cave and join the order.

St. Francis had learned from his own experience. He was known to have a weak stomach. One day, he was riding a horse when he crossed paths with a leprous man. The smell of the disease made him gag, so he turned his horse around to go another way. But then he sensed God's Spirit convict him. Following Christ and avoiding compassion for that man cannot co-exist, the Spirit told him. He sensed what that leper must have felt when had turned his horse around. He turned his horse back and went to him, and dismounted, took a knee and kissed the man's

hand as if he were a king. I'd call it his accurate application of what it means to kneel and wash feet in loving service, we've talked about that over the last few weeks. Franciscan biographers identify this moment of compassion as Francis' true conversion moment. He sensed the pain of a leper and selflessly entered into it,

In contrast to the world's escalation of judgment, God's kingdom is based on an escalation of mercy and pardon. As God is limitlessly merciful to us, we must strive to be merciful to one another. Forgiveness must spread and escalate from the individual choices to form a way of living in community.

**Escalation – of Mercy
is other centered**

There's an unbreakable bond between the forgiveness of God and the forgiveness we are to offer one another, making it illogical and impossible for us to accept the mercy of the Lord and then refuse to extend that mercy to others. God is challenging us to be transformed by his forgiveness into the kind of people who can do the hard work of forgiving others, so that it can escalate into a community -- a society of merciful people.

Jesus, even on the cross, forgave with an understanding for those who clearly didn't understand what they were doing. They were victims of their broken world - - we all are victims of our broken world -- but in Christ, we are released from our brokenness, and we don't have to be victims enslaved to sin any more. New life is available. Because Christ defeated the division, the brokenness that leads to spiritual death; he **releases** us to new life. He sets us free. He releases us for our sake, yes, but not only for our sake -- we are released to love as he loved, live as he lived, so if Jesus loved and forgave and did not hold a grudge – not even on the cross – and not for the sake of only his own spirit, but for the sake of everyone's spirit and our life, -- if he does all this, then how does that speak to how and why we *return* and *resist* and *resolve* and *repent* and *reconcile* and *renew* and *reset* and *release* ourselves to God and offer God's release to others?

~~Lenten~~ Easter Cross Candles

Return, Resist, Resolve, Repent, Reconcile,

Renew, Reset, Release (★ = "Therefore we relight the [Candle name])

and so we turn to our Lenten cross candles today – except now we've renamed it our Easter cross... We've been talking all Lent about some of the challenges of consistently doing well in following Christ and the things we saw him do again and

again. And our cross has gotten dimmer and dimmer each week until there was no light left on Good Friday. But today, because of Easter, we find that the world failed to get rid of the one light that mattered – the Light of the world. [Light the white Christ Candle] And because he lives, he released within us God's power, the Holy Spirit --- and as we cooperate with him, he releases us from the struggle and helps us with his power and over time it becomes easier and easier and more and more natural -- the sooner we start and the longer we are at it, the easier it becomes... So the Christ Candle is the Candle of Release...

- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to **return** to God daily. (Light ashen candle) If we want to get really good at something, then we have to keep coming back to it again and again. We go to God in prayer, we go to God in study, we go to God – daily, so we can stay on track with him. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to **resist** temptation. We no longer need to fall into old or new activities that are not good for us or others. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to maintain **resolve**. We need not settle for wishful thinking. We can keep pushing forward to be our best at what God wants us to become, for we can keep moving toward our goals, or better, toward God's goals for us. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to **repent**. We no longer have to be sorry only if we get “caught”. Now we are granted a sincere sorrow for the damage done to ourselves and others, to repair what we can, and to do it no more. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to **reconcile** strained relationships. We need not settle for alienation or surface-y relationships, but can move into deep and meaningful relationships. Yes, it does take two, but we can always do what is within our power to do. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to truly **renew** ourselves. We will not settle for escapism but can continue to put fresh and full energy into worthy goals. ★
- * Because he is risen, he releases us from the inability to **reset** our lives. When we realize something isn't working like we want it to, we can now get on a better track and move forward from right when things stopped working. He allows us to reset our lives. ★

So to put it in as simple terms as is possible -- Easter is about



Jesus conquering the negative power of sins' dysfunction that has been trying to "put us out" and its deadly consequences, and giving us the ability to live a full and positive and meaningful life. And to bring my terrible punning back – even when we do happen to act like a cad, (that is a word that means less than honorable, not right, can't live up to what we want to live up to) if we are acting like a cad, Jesus is able to help us bury that in the tomb and give us new life -- which is represented by easter eggs, from which we can begin to grow. So the next time you eat a Cadbury egg, remember the next time you act lie a CAD, remember that Jesus can help you BURY it and give new life.

Prayer Lord, lift our vision, so that we understand how each of our individual lives -- connect to form a way of living as a society -- help us to do individually what we hope to see in our world – and thus may your kingdom come and your will be done, where grace and mercy dominate the culture. May your foresight of how to fix a broken world become clear to us so that we may begin to live it out -- not out of duty, or subjection to our king, but for the victory of grace, the heart of love, the gratitude for salvation from an eternal, unrepayable debt of sin and death; and for the joy of making a difference in ushering in your wisdom and rule...

Communion

Invitation And one of the traditions Jesus started to help us future generations experience the release of his living presence in our life as a united faithful people is the sacrament of Communion. Through this sacrament, we are reminded of the price Jesus paid for our freedom from sin's power and penalty. He invites **all** who believe in and who strive to follow his ways to participate to be strengthened by his love and life.

Music of Preparation

Let's prepare our hearts for Communion by singing

Christian People, Raise the Song

Words: Colin P. Thompson, 1975 Words by permission of St Andrew Press
Music: J. Horn's Gesangbuch, 1544; harm. from The English Hymnal, 1906

1. Christian people, raise your song, chase away all grieving.
Sing your joy and be made strong, our Lord's life receiving.
Nature's gifts of wheat and vine now are set before us;
as we offer bread and wine, Christ comes to restore us.
2. Come to welcome Christ today, God's great revelation,
who has pioneered the way of the new creation.

Greet the Christ, our risen King, gladly recognizing,
as with joy we greet the spring out of winter rising.

Confession

Let's continue to prepare our hearts through confession.

Redeeming God, you bring life out of dead ends, and hope in the midst of despair. Forgive us for doubting, for our hesitant obedience, our cautious compassion, our too-frequent reluctance, for failing to live in tune with your love, and your light. Even when our faith falters, you do not lose faith in us. You continue coming to us, offering to rekindle in us in your love, acting with justice, living out hope, inspired and inspiring others.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Christ forgives sins, overcomes fears, comforts cries, and breaks down barriers to his love and peace. Know that through the risen Christ, we are forgiven and at peace. Let's give thanks:

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection

of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the day you raised him from the dead he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and at home, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

The Bread and Cup

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." [Take and eat].

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." [Take and drink],

Communion Blessing

Holy, gracious, God, in this sacrament, your offer and promise of life is made tangible. We have

tasted your nourishing, nurturing presence; By your grace, we have now accepted you again into our hearts and lives. We rest in the depth of your love; and we give you thanks. As a Son, you belong to the family forever. And if the song sets you free from slavery to sin, then you will be free indeed. portion

adapted from "Prayer of Thanksgiving" by Joanna Harader

spaciousfaith.com and John 8:35b-36

Music We know it is true because God has left the cross and tomb and lives in us!
Let's sing

He Lives

Words and Music: Alfred H. Ackley, 1933

1. I serve a risen Savior, he's in the world today;
I know that he is living, whatever foes may say.
I see his hand of mercy, I hear his voice of cheer,
and just the time I need him, he's always near.

Refrain

He lives, (he lives) he lives, (he lives) Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, (he lives) he lives, (he lives) salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.

2. In all the world around me I see his loving care,
and though my heart grows weary, I never will despair.
I know that he is leading through all the stormy blast;
The day of his appearing will come at last.

Refrain

3. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the king!
The hope of all who seek him, the help of all who find;
none other is so loving, so good and kind.

Refrain

Blessing Now as we go, glory in the hope and joy of Christ's resurrection. Because the stone was rolled away, and the Light of the world lives on, the darkness that threatens to extinguish us will fail, for the power that raised Christ from the dead will release us from the power of sin and raise us from glory to glory through this life and into the next. Amen.