

Straight from the "Hart"

March 31, 2024 Son Rise 8:00 am



HARTLAND

Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart". We are glad you are here and participating in worship through this service script. There were two worship services on this Sunday. The brief Sunrise script is immediately below, and the Main 10:00 worship begins on page 8.

Greeting

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

Welcome

Welcome to our Son rise service. Thank you for reading this script. Unbeknownst to us, sometime during the night, our Lord Jesus Christ *passed over* from death to life. This service is not about the star that peaked over the horizon, but the Son of God rose to create a new day for all creation. We get to celebrate and share in Christ's victory over death because He is Risen! **He is Risen Indeed!**

Opening Prayer

Let's pray. God of resurrection, through Jesus Christ you have offered the world the light of life. Grant that our hearts and minds may be kindled with a holy desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Call to Worship

In the Creator God's time, this world was put in place and became beautiful through the craftsmanship of his love. Remind us always as we look at sunrise, landscape, or tiny child -- to look beyond the artist brush or created thing to the artist and the creator. We have taken our places today to hear again that message that God in Christ has the capacity to change the world. Our very presence attests to the rising up of life from the tomb of despair, and to the uncontrollable power of God. It is Easter morning. Let's celebrate.

adapted from "Creator God" by John Birch, faithandworship.com and a small portion of "Call to Worship for Easter Sunday" by Ann Siddall, in *Lente to Easter liturgies: Year C*, stillpoint.unitingchurches.org.au

Music The dark night turns to day each morning, but when the Christ of new life rose, he demonstrated that a new creation is possible, it was a morning like the first morning of creation. Let's sing.

Morning Has Broken

Words: Elenor Farjeon, 1931 by permission of David Highman Assoc.

Music: Trad. Gaelic melody; harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1988
harm. © 1989 United Methodist Publishing House

Morning has broken like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
spring in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day.

Responsive Reading 1 (R- Reader, **C** – Congregation)

R: He is Risen. **C: He is Risen indeed!**

R: On Calvary's summit, there towers a cross.

C: Death gives birth to a new living, a new people, a new light.

R: Christ has brought us salvation with his death and rising again.

C: Everything comes to new birthing, all creation is reborn.

R: Christ takes into his body all our sin, enslavement and pain. As he destroys them,

C: He brings us life's abundance, life's new joy.

R: Christ brings reconciliation to all things and people with God.

C: All creation is reborn.

R: Heaven and earth are embracing. Our souls find pardon at last.

R: Heaven's gates are reopened to the sinner, to us all.

R: God's people walk a journey. Now we live, salvation is our song;

C: for Christ's resurrection has released us.

based on words of Cesareo Gabarain, in "Walk On, O People of God" in UM Hymnal (#305)

Music and with that resurrection and recreation and release, even though he doesn't force it upon us, he has earned the right to be our king. Let's stand if comfortable and sing...

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Words: Matthew Bridges, 1851, and Godfrey Thring, 1874

Music: George J. Elvey, 1868

1. Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne,
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.
2. Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
4. Crown him the Lord of love; behold his hands and side,
those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

Bible Reading 2

We crown Jesus as king because he has so graciously and thoroughly saved us. But as we live in his mercy, it is easy to forget how destructive sinning can be to our lives. Hosea very vividly describes what happens when sin begins to take its effect on an unrepentant person and nation. God speaks this through the prophet:

You are about to be destroyed, by me, although your only help is in me. So now, where is your king, where are all your leaders [that you demanded] to save you in all your cities?

Your guilt is wrapped up and your sin is stored away. Pain has come to people like the pain of childbirth. The time has come. They are at the mouth of the womb and should not delay. But they are like a child that resists being born.

Should I ransom them from the power of grave? Should I redeem them from death? O death, bring on your terrors. My eyes are closed to compassion.

Though they were the most fruitful, flourishing among the reeds, an east wind will come up from the desert. All their flowing springs will run dry and their wells will dry up. Every precious thing they own will be plundered and

carried away... They must bear the consequences of their guilt because they rebelled against their God. Paraphrased from Hosea 13:9-16 (CJB, NLT)

Sermonette The Depth of Debt

Sin against God and humanity caused the nation to go down the tubes. Leaders couldn't save them. God's patience and reluctance to punish them had benefited them to date; and he longs to give new birth, to restore the holy nation to its full potential; but they refuse to enter the birth canal; remaining unborn -- suffering the pains of a childbirth that will never happen.

There are some textual translation issues in this passage in which in some English translations seem to offer hope – the one we read almost leaned that way when it asked “Should I ransom them from the power of the grave?” like there is a possibility -- but the text is most likely



saying: I would (*have preferred*) to ransom you, I would (*have preferred*) to redeem you; but I can only wait so long -- and so he summons death's powerful sting to come to the nation. God warned the nation of its pending destruction years before it was obliterated. We should learn something from that history. Spiritual death eventually comes to persons and nations who refuse to be born anew.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote that London was draped in a deep fog. You could hear the shrill whistle of the [police] as they chased the fleeing form through the lanes. They finally corner him in the basement of the doctor's house. They shot and killed the hideous fiend. But they buried a kind-hearted gentleman named Dr. Jekyll, who had the misfortune of experimenting and concocting a potion that distorted him into the monster named Hyde. Robert Louis Stevenson was presenting through the metaphor of chemistry the battle of evil that is within each of us.

Paul used the metaphor not of chemistry but of clothing. Take off the dirty rags, and put on the clothes of dearly loved people that are chosen by God -- meaning, put to death your evil actions and be transformed, be more and more like Christ. I say “more and more” because as the little girl explained to her mother, “The reason I fell out of bed was because I went to sleep too near where I got in.” Lest we fall asleep and fall away (revert back to our Hyde-iness (from the monster of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) of our spirits that still surrounds us and seeks to once again

penetrate our lives, we must strive to let the living Christ live in us as we seek, by his gracious power a strength, to more and more, put on his character traits -- moving us farther and farther away from the old way of living.

Abraham Lincoln, when he was a lawyer, was once hired to sue someone over a \$2.50 debt. (Today that would be a little less than 100 dollars – still pretty minimal) He didn't want to do it, but his client insisted. So Lincoln asked for an upfront fee of \$10. He gave half to the defendant, who promptly paid his debt, and then everyone went home happy.

That little story illustrates that if we are the ones who commit the wrong, or if it doesn't involve us at all, then we wonder why someone would get upset and sacrifice a relationship over something so trivial. That is a legitimate argument. But when it is we who are wronged, then it is the principle of the thing, and we need to be made whole, no matter how “big or small” the issue. This is also a legitimate argument.

The principle of the thing is that we owe a debt for what we have done wrong in our lives, and we can't pay it back. We are breeched and can't be born into new... Death, grave, and hell are summoned to collect... to do their worst. Religious and political leaders that we demand to save us are powerless to help.

Then, Jesus, the Son of God is on the cross. The horrendous debt of sin is satisfied in his death. Paul takes those terrifying words of Hosea through which God summons death to come to the nation and make its sting hurt; and turns them around as a defiant taunting of death -- Where is the power of your grave now, death? Where is your sting now, death? The sting of death is sin, but thanks be to God, we have been ransomed from the grave and redeemed from death. (See 1 Corinthians 15:54-57) The debt is paid -- and we are free... free to worship our deliverer who paid the massive penalty for our debt...

In medieval times the crucifix shows Jesus as a drooping, defeated, pain-drenched figure -- a symbol of defeat by the powers of evil. But earliest portrayals of the crucifixion depict Christ with head up, the victorious challenger against all the powers of death and evil. It is not submission to the powers of evil, it is a victorious challenge over the powers of evil.

There is a sense in which both sentiments are true. Jesus did give himself over to the powers of darkness -- suffered a vicious death as a helpless victim in his human body. Not because the powers of earth were able to force it upon him, but because he willingly offered himself to us “still-in-the-womb” sinners.

But today we experience vindication and victory. We realize that the only person who ever truly lived on this planet was the one who died for us all. Jesus, *by his willingness to be born*, offers us the canal to being born again to a new life, the old chemistry, the old clothes need no longer need drag us down. We are a new creation and we are always in the process of putting on new clothes – the character traits of Christ -some of which Paul lists as compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, forgiving, loving, guided by [the hope for] peace, nurtured by the Word – and he sums it by saying, everything you do and say should bring glory to God.

Prayer

Glorious God of life, you raised Christ from the dead, so that listening, we might believe; believing, we might understand; understanding, we might obey; going out to invite all to follow you, the Bread of Life, to feast on your love forever. You reached out in your love to us so that we would touch others. You filled us with your gifts so that we could be a blessing to the world. You pierced our darkness with hope, so that we might bring healing to the broken: you raised us to new life so that your world will be filled with your life. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

adapted from a portion of "Call to Worship/Prayer for Easter 3A
by Thom Shuman, lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com

Music Because of Christ's resurrection, we know that eternal life is ours, as it is for all believers through the ages... If comfortable, let's stand together and sing

Sing with All the Saints in Glory

Words: William J. Irons, 1873

Music: Ludwig von Beethoven, 1824; arr. by Edward Hodges, 1864

1. Sing with all the saints in glory,
sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,
to the former days belong.

All around the clouds are breaking, soon the storms of time shall cease;
in God's likeness we, awaking, know the everlasting peace.

3. Life eternal! heaven rejoices; Jesus lives, who once was dead.
Join we now the deathless voices; child of God, lift up your head!
Patriarchs from the distant ages, saints all longing for their heaven,
prophets, psalmists, seers, and sages, all await the glory given.



Blessing

We bask in the glory and joy of Christ's Easter victory. Because the stone was rolled away, the "stones" which have trapped us - our worries, fears, anxieties, troubles of various sorts - need not threaten us. The power that raised Christ from the dead will also raise us from glory to glory through this life and into the next. Amen.

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