

# *Straight from the "Hart"*

April 7, 2024 – Bright Sunday  
Enemies of Abundant Living (7)

 **HARTLAND**

Sharing the journey  
to know, love, and serve

## Welcome & Announcements

\* Good morning. Welcome to the Hartland UMC worship service script. We are glad you are participating in today's time of worship through this printed version.

**This is Bright Sunday**, my preferred title among many names it has today. Originally called God's joke or The Easter laugh, it was a way of celebrating the God's grace and mercy through the gift of laughter and joy, it was characterized by funny stories, general humor, and one I don't particularly like -- practical jokes that were done after the service. We won't be doing all that. It especially honors the spreading of the news of the resurrection of Christ – which the early church leaders described as the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead.

G.K. Chesterton once wrote: *"Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly. Never forget that the devil fell by force of gravity. He who has the faith has the fun."* Join Gary with lots of energy on the yellow font of this Bright Sunday Affirmation which is preceded by the ancient Christian greeting...



Donna Allmond (not pictured) and Kathy Novak play special music for the Bright Sunday

## **Affirmation** (P: Pastor C: Reader with Congregation)

P: He is risen!      **C: He is risen indeed!**

P: We believe in God, who made us in His image.

**C: We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like him.**

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

**C: He had the last laugh on the devil when he was raised from the dead.**

P: We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

**C: Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – He is our joy!**

Note: the ancient greeting seems to be based on Luke 24:34a where the two on the Emmaus Road went to the eleven and those with them and said “This Lord has risen indeed...” There is also a tradition that the saying became popular by Mary Magdalen when she supposedly addressed Emperor Tiberius in Rome with the words, “Christ is risen.” There are theories, but it is not known how it became a standard greeting.

The Affirmation, slightly adapted and made responsive,  
is by firstchristianchurchconroe.org

## Opening Prayer

God of joy, who holds the world in his hands. When we feel most down, you lift our hearts. During despair’s dark gloom, you strike the light of joy, surprising us with wonder and awe. Open our hearts to you and offer to you ourselves and of our resources. Open our minds to the endless possibilities you create for growing closer to you. Open our eyes to your presence in all things, allowing us to respond in joy. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

adapted from an Opening Prayer for Holy Humor Sunday,  
author unknown, 2riversunited.com

## Call to Worship

On your feet now—applaud GOD! Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into his presence. Know this: GOD is God. He made us; we didn’t make him. We’re his people, his well-tended sheep. Enter his presence with thanksgiving and praise. Thank him. Worship him. For GOD is sheer beauty, good and gracious, all-generous in love, loyal always and forever.

From Psalm 100 (MSG with CJB)



**Music** So let’s sing about his fulfilled promises and promises still being fulfilled through the resurrection of Christ, our King.

### Standing on the Promises

Words and Music: R. Kelso Carter, 1886

1. Standing on the promises of Christ my King,  
through eternal ages let his praises ring;  
glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,  
standing on the promises of God.

#### Refrain

Standing, standing, standing on the promises of Christ my Savior;  
standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God.

2. Standing on the promises that cannot fail,  
the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,  
by the living Word of God I shall prevail,  
standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

4. Standing on the promises I cannot fall,  
listening every moment to the Spirit's call,  
resting in my Savior as my all in all,  
standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

### **Responsive Reading 1 (R: Reader, C: Pastor with Congregation)**

R: The whole world is in his hands, and whether we are aware of it or not, resistant to it or not, we have been, are, and will always be in God's hands. One way the Bible conveys this truth is through popular image of pottery.

R: The potter is making something on the wheel. The clay vessel is marred. He reforms it into another vessel that seems best to him. The Lord says, "Can't I do the same with you?"

**C: As clay is in the potter's hand, so are we in God's hands.**

R: Shall the thing being formed say to the One who forms it, "Why have you made me like this?"

**C: The potter has power over the clay to make whatever he chooses.**

R: Yet the people continue to act according to their stubborn, evil hearts.

**C: And as they do, they claim there is no hope.**

R: No one takes hold of God. No one calls on his name.

**C: Yet the Lord remains the potter and his people are still the clay, the work of his hands...**

R: God patiently and mercifully lavishes his grace on those he calls.

**C: He does this to make known the power and the riches of his glory.**

based on Jeremiah 18:1ff, Romans 9:19-23, Isaiah 64:7-9

### **Theme**

The Creator works at his masterpiece. But it is marred by sin and failure and bad habits. The Creator cleans out the bad material and reshapes the remaining clay as he sees fit. It may be different than the clay expects, may be different than what

the clay used to be -- but the Potter is a professional expert, he can reshape the clay into new and good purposes.

Look at the tie. It has throughout its history undergone widely different shapes and purposes. It began as a loosely tied fabric around the neck (more like an ascot or cravat) to help hold the shirt together and to protect the Adam's apple, and to keep



some parts of the clothing from flapping around in the wind. It began as a practical and functional article of clothing. I heard once that it was developed to hide fancy buttons that the wealthy used as a means of being modest in economically mixed company. On the other side of that, they were used to hide mis-matched buttons on repaired shirts, and/or a less expensive way to add style variations to people who couldn't afford a wardrobe. And it has also become a way of dressing fancy for events or presenting yourself as your best at special events. Then to adjust for young people and safety needs of certain professions, along came the clip-on tie, then zipper ties, Wide, narrow, longer shorter, and on and on it goes. I am not saying this to argue for or against ties or particular kinds of jobs. But to illustrate the wide variation of aesthetic (appearance style) and practical, even opposite purposes (that may have been going on at the same time) that it has gone through in its history.

When I attended seminary, at least some of my professors had previously been pastors. I overheard some students question each other – “if they were really called to pastoral ministry, then why are they teaching in seminary?” The assumption is that any call/ministry must be for life or it is not a real call. But the truth is, we are called to serve God for life, and God may shape and reshape us for different roles and provide us with different gifts and skills and opportunities as we go through different stages of life; based on who we are and based on the needs surrounding us that God wants to answer. Therefore, it is never too late to begin building new habits that develop a creative constructive attitude to fulfill God's ministry.

At the age of six, his father died and he became responsible for cooking/feeding the family. At age 10 he became a farmhand making two dollars/month. He

dropped out of school at grade six because he didn't like math (who does? 😊) , and in those days there were more pressing priorities such as getting water and avoiding cholera. He lied about his age at 16 to go into the military and served in Cuba. Then he was a tire salesman, a top salesman in the state, but got fired (for his temper). He was a ferry boat operator. He delivered babies, though not licensed. He was a Gas Station owner – who in retaliation for the shooting death of his friend, shot his competition. And then, late in life, he founded KFC. Even then he kept his goal in front of him. He said, “I never had any desire to be the richest man in the cemetery”, so he donated much of his money to education and health care and the March of Dimes. There is even an annual award given in his name for an individual whose life's research has made significant contributions to sciences. Reshaping, growing, reshaping, growing... it is a lifelong process.

Which is why another popular biblical image closely related to the point of the potter is the fruit, vine, and gardener. In all the images, it is an important application that we stay focused on and cooperate with the Potter, the vine and Gardener, on Jesus who rules nature...

### **Responsive Reading 2** (R: Reader, C: Pastor with Congregation)

R: God the Father is the gardener. Christ is the true vine. We are the branches.

**C: We bear fruit only by remaining in the vine.**

R: He prunes us so that we may be more fruitful.

**C: Bearing much fruit brings glory to God and demonstrates that we are his disciples.**

R: As the Father loves Christ, Christ loves us. Remain in his love and love each other. Then the joy of Jesus may be in you and your joy will be complete.

**C: Jesus chose us and appointed us to bear fruit that will last.**

R: [So keep focused on what is important...] The disciples were in a boat but making no headway against the waves. Jesus walked out to them and told them to take courage against their fear. Peter asked to come out to him.

**C: Jesus invited him to come.**

R: Peter started, but got distracted by the wind and waves and began to sink. He cried out to be saved.

**C: Jesus caught him by the hand: Why did you doubt?**

R: They climbed into the boat and the wind died down.

**C: The disciples worshipped, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”**

See John 15:1-17, Matthew 14:22-33

**Special Music** When we find are marred with impurities, feeling detached, and are sinking in the storms of life, we can turn to Jesus and he will lift us up Listen to Cheri sing about that...

### **You Raise Me Up**

Words: Brendan Graham Music: Rolf U. Lovland  
© 2002 Universal Music Publication, Peermusic II Ltd,

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary.  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be.  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence.  
Until You come and sit awhile with me.

#### Refrain

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains.  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas.  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders.  
You raise me up to more than I can be.

Repeat Refrain



**Music** and sometimes, when needed, he lifts us unto the potter’s wheel to be reshaped, Let’s prepare our hearts for prayer by singing...

### **Change My Heart, O God (2x)**

Words and Music: Eddie Espinosa,  
© 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.  
You are the Potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.  
Change my heart O God, make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

(Repeat all)

### **Prayers**

Grant us, God, the grace to see ourselves as you see us - creatures of your making: wholly loved. In the busyness of this week, awaken us to your presence in the smiles and glances of those we meet. Shape our hearts to delight to the very full -- the gifts of each and every day.

We thank you for moments of laughter and unbridled joy you give to us: for the belly laughs of children, for artists who give us the opportunity to see the world in new ways, for the courage to smile even when difficulties arise, for those who have hope in situations others see as hopeless, for saints in the Lord who spread your joy to all of us, for friends and family who love us who pray for us, and we pray for them.

**Petitions** Specifically, today we pray for \* Ann Martin, recovering at home \* Stephen Brittain, whose successful surgery and radiation has worked, but we continue to pray for his complete recovery, \* for Fran Warthman, \* Julie Tuck, \* we are thankful for good reports, \* and for others that are on our hearts and minds...

Lord, we thank you for the great reversal of the Gospel: that the last shall be made first, that the rejected stone became the cornerstone, that those who wish to become great must serve, that the lost will be found, that the small will become great, that though you are all-knowing, you choose to forget our sins, that when we are weak, your strength shines through us, and especially because the tomb is empty, and the Light overcame and overcomes the darkness, for you conquered death itself, and it is because of this that we can live as Christ taught us to pray

### **Lord's Prayer**

includes adapted Holy Humor prayers by Pictou United Church, [pictouunited.com](http://pictouunited.com), and a portion of a prayer by April Fiet, [aprilfiet.com](http://aprilfiet.com)

### **Intro to and Bible Reading 3**

Jesus and his followers began to tour nearby villages. Jesus taught the crowds in parables and then explained them to his disciples. They crossed the lake in yet another storm that Jesus calmed after they woke him up. He healed a man possessed by many demons, which scared the townspeople, and they begged him to go away. Jesus obliged and returned to the other side of the lake where he was welcomed and healed more people. The disciples had observed everything Jesus did. Now it was their turn...

Summary of Luke 8

Calling together the Twelve, Jesus gave them power and authority to expel all the demons and to cure diseases; and he sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal... They set out and went through village after village, healing and announcing the Good News everywhere. On their return, the emissaries detailed to Jesus what they had done.

After this, the Lord appointed seventy other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to every town and place where he himself was about to go. He said to them, “To be sure, there is a large harvest. But there are few workers. Therefore, plead with the Lord of the Harvest that he [send more] workers out to gather in his harvest. Get going now, but pay attention! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. The seventy came back jubilant. “Lord,” they said, “with your power, even the demons submit to us!”

Luke 9:1-2,6,10; 10:1-3,17 (CJB)

Symbolically, some suggest that the 12 went out to the 12 tribes of Israel, and the 70 went out to the all the nations of the earth (70 nations are listed in Genesis 10 as the known nations of the earth at that time). But most important, it means the mission of God’s message and kingdom is expanding. From Jesus to the disciples to the world.

Even though Jesus said he was sending them out among wolves, and gave them instructions about what to do when they were not welcomed; Luke reports that they came back with great joy and success... Later, however, Paul describes what happened to his team when they were sent out and what it revealed about their commitment and character...



... in everything we do we show that we are God's servants by patiently enduring troubles, hardships, and difficulties. We have been beaten, jailed, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food. By our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants—by the Holy Spirit, by our true love, by our message of truth, and by the power of God. 2 Corinthians 6:4b-7a (GNT)

**Music** In the stormy seas, in the understaffed, overworked harvest, in difficult troubles, Jesus sends us out, but before he can send us, Jesus calls us to be faithful by not getting distracted by rejection, by struggles or allurements, but by staying close to the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Potter, to the Vine, to Christ who rules the seas --- Let’s sing



## Jesus Calls Us

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1852

Music: William H. Jude, 1874

1. Jesus calls us o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea;  
day by day his sweet voice soundeth, saying, "Christian, follow me!"
3. Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us, saying, "Christian, love me more!"
4. In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures, "Christian, love me more than these!"

### **Sermon Receive and Release the Kingdom**

Before Lent, we were looking at ES Jones' Bible based plan to live abundantly – by overcoming obstacles (which he calls the enemies of life.) Today we resume the series by talking about another enemy -- attitudes of negativism and inferiority; one of my challenges.

Our readings, especially if you read the lines in between what we have highlighted, have told us that living faithfully can bring mixed reactions. Scholar Walter Brueggemann asks, *Why? Why would anyone accept the risk of facing what Paul experienced? Why would Moses go to Pharaoh's court, or Elijah face Jezebel and her priests? Why would Dietrich Bonhoeffer go to jail speaking against the Nazi regime, or Martin Luther King Jr march; or thousands of lesser-known people run similar risks and threats?*

The answer is that there are holy compulsions that are deep and inescapable and resonate within our best selves — the self that is made in the image of the creator God who wills shalom – peace and wholeness for his world.

Pharaoh, Jezebel — the world — pressure us to conform to the status quo of a divided, distracted life. Criticizing until we believe that we cannot be productive enough, that life will knock us back down into ineffectiveness and hopelessness. Giving in to fear, procrastination, and enjoying wallowing in the gloominess of the "I can't" -- paralyzes our pursuit of God's dreams for us, and strangles the pursuit of the creative, abundant life, forcing us to settle for stumbling along short of our full potential. But without taking such risks, as Neil Simon wrote, Michelangelo would have painted the Sistine floor.

It is these negative and inferior attitudes that need to be kicked to the curb and submit to God's reshaping of us to become our best selves, individually and corporately – together.. We are designed for positive, productive creativity, not so

that we can feel superior (Romans 12:3), or set goals that are unrealistically high, setting us up for failure, or setting goals too low, setting us up for insignificance – but setting goals that will stretch us, with God’s help to productive and effective in our growth in our spirit and life. Jones’ warns us not to look too long at ourselves, which will tempt us to think too much or too little of ourselves; but rather to keep our gaze on God. The most beautiful spirits in the world are the ones who lose themselves in a cause greater than themselves. And if we are gazing into the face of Jesus, we cannot gaze on our troubles, our sins, our failures. That doesn’t mean we live in denial and don’t deal with them as if they don’t exist, but we look through the issues to solutions, just as Peter finally looked past the waves to see Jesus.

Yes, he got focused on the wind, and the problems and not the solution...and it pulled him down quickly. But at least he knew to whom to call when he got into that fix. And you got to give him credit — he was willing to take a risk and get out on the waves while everyone else stayed sitting in the relative safety of the boat.

In my first church, a parishioner was unhappy and wanted me to preach about depression. In that setting, I thought it was a good idea, so I did, and we all got more depressed. Because although we talked about solutions, the real focus was on the problem – that is what everyone was paying attention to. When I figured what happened, I began to preach on joy and it lifted our sorrow a little bit.

I don’t know if it is still true, but Jones said that airplanes in France provided a cup in front of each passenger with a sign reading “for air sickness”. The display suggested to the passengers that they were going to get sick, and more people did so because of that. In English planes, the notice reads “If you feel indisposed the steward will help you.” They drew attention not to passenger, or to the sickness (so much), but primarily to the steward and solution; and far fewer people got sick.

As we turn to solutions in Christ, we discover that we don’t simply belong to the kingdom, the kingdom and its resources belong to us. (Jesus said the poor in spirit, possess the kingdom. (“for theirs in the kingdom of heaven”) (Matthew 5:3). The wealth and power of the kingdom is available to those who are humble, teachable, and willing to commit to it... If we are not, we cannot receive from it. Thomas Huxley compared it to science, in which the prerequisite of a good scientist is to be able to sit before facts as a child, humble and teachable; prepared to give up preconceived notions and to follow humbly when nature told them how it works... and as the scientist does submit to nature’s truths, he or she becomes a master in that field.

Likewise, as we surrender to the kingdom of God, we begin to absorb it and its powers, and we become more and more skilled in representing the culture of the kingdom by our lives. Receptivity and Response are the two sides of breathing — in the kingdom and in life. Everything grows and develops by this “*receive and respond*”. John wrote in the introduction to his gospel: “As many as received him, he gave the right, or many translations say -- the power -- to become children of God” (John 1:12). The vineyard story tells us that a plant cannot stand, and certainly cannot bear fruit by being proud, self-sufficient, or unresponsive. It grows by surrendering, adjusting, receiving, and clinging to and remaining in the vine that gives life. It receives from the air and soil and sun, and the love and care of the gardener, and gains power to become – what it is meant to become.

If receptivity is breathing in the resources of the kingdom, response is exhaling the kingdom’s self-giving love. Paul tells us we have received God’s grace, but if we do nothing with it; if we just irresponsibly hoard it to ourselves, it will go to waste. (2 Corinthians 6:1,11-13). Jones says: Love lets you receive from the other person; but just as truly, it makes you respond by giving of yourself to the other person.

Of course we cannot control how others will respond. Jesus predicted mixed results. He got mixed results himself, for that matter. But what will we do in those challenging times.

Avid rock climber Jim Collins climbed something called “the Crystal Ball”, a silver granite wall with a baseball-sized quartzite handhold about 50 feet up. He attacked the rock and made it to a point about 10 feet below the crystal. He ran into trouble, chose wrong and made a bad move. It stressed him out. His partner Matt replied, “You’re only three moves from the crystal. You can recover.” But Jim yelled, “Off!” and letting go of the rock and fell with the safety rope in a controlled descent.

When confronted with the moment of commitment and pressing on, the moment of intense challenge, he chose failure instead of fallure. Fallure is when you fall onto your safety rope after doing everything you can possibly do and in doing so you slip or make a mistake and you fall. Failure is when you just give up and let go. In fallure you fall; in failure, you give up and quit. He completed the climb another day, but that day he felt he didn’t simply fall, he failed.

Jesus expects there will be falls, when no matter what we do, we won’t always succeed in the desired response. He doesn’t expect those he sent out to succeed in every town and house that they entered. While Jesus expects falls, setbacks, Jesus hopes there will not be failures, he hopes we will not give up on the mission

and return home, but when responses fall short of what we hoped, we will keep moving forward to the next opportunity.

In this process we will discover strengths and weaknesses. The temptation will be to focus on the weaknesses and to retreat. We paralyze ourselves by allowing any chance of fallure or failure to dominate and pollute our minds. We make decisions based on fear instead of on faith, and in the process, we sabotage our own best efforts. We need to concentrate on real risks, not ones that we fantasize about. We need to focus more on the actual probability of something going wrong and less on the consequences of thsse very unlikely cases that could *possibly* happen if everything fell into place just wrong. And realize that even if all that happens, we can still keep pushing forward – it is not the end of the road.

Jones uses this simple image to express this: A man got into his car, which had an adjustable seat that didn't easily slide. He called to his wife in the back seat, 'Please kick me forward, dear.' Life is bound to kick us, for we all get knocks. The important thing is the direction we allow that kick to drive us. Make life kick you forward! Allow God to turn your failures and fallures into fruitfulness.

Transform setbacks into opportunities for something positive. For examples, people experienced as re-covering alcoholics turn that into an opportunity to help people still struggling with that. The mother who lost her child due to a drunk driver founded MADD, the man whose child was murdered founded America's Most Wanted. They turned their tragedy into an opportunity to try and prevent others from experiencing the same thing they went through, moving the world closer to shalom, making it a brighter place.

At the very least, if we find we are not strong in one area, we focus on another area we are strong in and build on that. As a general lifestyle, we are not to focus on the "nos" of what we cannot do, and we focus on the "yes", on the strengths of life that we can do. You are not inferior if you have taken hold of a superior God, and God has already taken hold of us (Philippians 3:12). Don't look back, for the kingdom of God to which you belong is forward-looking."

See God's vision for your future, (not your vision – his vision for your future) and in faith, say "yes" to it and begin to put it into action, even if it is just a very small first step. But take that step toward that future. Way back in 1979, rock climber Collins (we mentioned him earlier) faced a smooth, slightly overhanging 100-foot slab of red rock in Colorado's Eldorado Canyon. No one had ever free-climbed it before, which meant ascending the rock entirely under the climber's personal

power, using ropes only for safety (not for climbing). It was considered impossible. Collins envisioned that the next generation of climbers would come to consider it routine. So he imagined how a climber in 1994 (this was 1979) has those future climbers would tackle it. And with that vision, he managed to climb to the top, amazing and confusing many of the best climbers of his own day.

With only basic words of instruction, Jesus told disciples to hit the road, and they had the audacity to believe that they could succeed. There would be no limit to what they could do. And we see the results today – churches all over the world. Climb out of negativism and inferiority and into your new future. Focus your heart and mind on where Jesus is leading you. Perhaps like the disciples, when it is over, you will return to Jesus amazed and rejoicing over what had been accomplished. As you go out each day and as you settle down each night; say, 'I can do all things through [Christ] who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13). It will start to get into our subconscious and push out those negative things that say "I can't." It will help make us positive and creative in how you go about allowing God to fulfill his mission through us each day.

Jesus' followers were sent out like lambs among wolves, but the Shepherd was always with them. We are never alone. You may have heard Native American tales of how they trained their boys in courage by making them spend a night in the forest amid the wild animals alone. They felt dreadfully alone on the night of testing; but when the day began to dawn, they would see their father behind a nearby tree, bow at the ready. He had been watching all night to ensure that no harm would come to his son. Sometimes when the wind and waves crash high, it is hard to see, to realize that God is with us – but he is there in the midst of every storm, which should make us – not think negatively. He is with us. He cares. So with that in mind, receive the resources of the kingdom by focusing on Jesus and respond by releasing those resources to others to make a difference in your world...

## **Prayer**

Let's pray. Lord, when I focus on me, I deteriorate and so do my relationships. But when we gaze on you, we find our truest selves and we grow. We ask that you bring clarity to our focus. Turn our weaknesses into your strength. Help us not to run away from obstacles. Help us to hold nothing back and to give our all, and in so doing receive your victory and then release your powers unto fruitful usefulness, creating a positive difference in our world. We know this is possible because Christ

is risen and he brings to us his friendship, growth in grace, and power to resist the those naysaying voices that are within us and about us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Music** Let's sing Christ is Risen, the reason all this is possible.

### **Christ is Risen**

Words: Brian Wren, 1984 © 1986 Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Polish carol; arr. by Edith M.G. Reed, 1926

1. Christ is risen! Shout hosanna! Celebrate this day of days.  
Christ is risen! Hush and wonder; all creation is amazed.  
In the desert all surrounding, see, a spreading tree has grown.  
Healing leaves of grace abounding bring a taste of love unknown.
2. Christ has risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair.  
Walk with gladness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.  
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend;  
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy of peace shall never end.
3. Christ has risen! Earth and heaven never more shall be the same.  
Break the bread of new creation where the world is still in pain.  
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"  
God the First and Last is with us. Sing Hosanna everyone!

**Blessing** Now breathe in the kingdom, and breathe out its powerful love, and regardless of whatever may happen, know that you are never alone, and your lives will bring glory to the Father, through the power of the Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.