

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

April 26, 2020

Easter 3 – Holy Humour Sunday

Today's service is a modern adaptation of an old Christian custom found in Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox communities, where people gather for a day of joy and laughter with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Early church theologians wrote about Christ's resurrection as God's wonderful 'last laugh' over sin and evil and death. They called it the risus paschalis—the Easter laugh.

Easter is when God laughs out loud, laughs at all the things that snuff out joy, at all the things that pretend to be all-powerful, like cruelty, madness, despair, evil and death.

Jesus sweeps them all away with his wonder-full resurrection laughter.

We invite you to relax, have some fun and share in God's Easter Laugh.

PRELUDES: Two Preludes on Psalm 23

Percy Whitlock

WELCOME

LIFE and ACTION of the COMMUNITY OF FAITH

GREETING TO ONE ANOTHER

CALL TO WORSHIP

PRAYER OF APPROACH

OPENING HYMN: VU232¹ "Ode to Joy"

Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,

flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 18: 9-15

PSALM 23: VU747²

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed;
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever!

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 5: 38-41

ANTHEM: "Sing a Happy Hallelujah"

Colin Gibson

REFLECTION: "God's Joyful Surprise"

HYMN: "When Laughter Fills the Air (Tune VU477)

You never saw this world so good
when laughter fills the air;
that laughter is God's heart alive
within creative flair,
accessible by prayer.

Yet deep within this world we see
the brokenness and pain;
when transformed into wholeness at
the touch of God's own reign,
we celebrate again.

For even in the midst of sin
does Jesus reach our soul;
to walk with us in healing touch:
forgiving is his goal,
in mirth we are made whole.

The strangeness of our lives is such
we wonder and we fear;
but hear the message of the Christ
who whispers in our ear,
"To me you are most dear."

So in the joyful dance of faith

let us go forth and say
that even when the clouds draw nigh,
it is a Son-y day,
and chuckling, we obey.

Unknown Author, *Gathering LEP 2007*, p 43

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

THE NEW CREED

We are not alone,
we live in God's world
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN: VU624³ "Give to Us Laughter"

Give to us laughter, O Source of our life.
Laughter can banish so much of our strife.
Laughter and love give us wholeness and health.
Laughter and love are the coin of true wealth.

Give to us laughter as sign of deep joy;
let us in laughing find Christian employ,
joining with stars and with bright northern lights,
laughing and praising and sharing delights.

**Why do we worry that we will lose face?
Why act like king for the whole human race?
Often in family, and often with friend,
laughing at pride causes anguish to end.**

**Even in sorrow and hours of grief,
laughter with tears brings most healing relief.
God, give us laughter, and God, give us peace,
joys of your presence among us increase.**

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.....

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Recessional on “Ode to Joy” Carolyn Hamlin

Leading in worship today are Rev. Joanna MacQuarrie; Robert Grandy, Minister of Music; Chris Freeman, Choir, Worship Leader; Laurel Robinson Lachance, Choir and Dave Freeman, Choir, Technical Production.

Credits:

¹Tune: Ludwig van Beethoven, Arr. by Hodges; Public Domain Text: Henry van Dyke, Reprinted under One License A-726544

²Scottish Psalter; Music: Jessie Seymour Irvine. Reprinted under One License A-726544

³Tune: © 1974, Ron Klusmeier (admin. Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188)
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TODAY'S ORGAN MUSIC

PRELUDES: The first two verses of today's Psalm 23 will be musically illustrated by a “Pastorale” and a “Preamble” by the British organist and composer Percy Whitlock (1903-1946). A student of Vaughan Williams, his music was influenced by the music of Stanford, Rachmaninov and even Gershwin! Both pieces come from a set of “Seven Sketches for Organ” written in 1934, while he was Organist at St. Stephen's Church, Bournemouth, where after 1932 he was that town's official organist, playing at the local pavilion theatre. The gently lilting Pastorale features a reed stop and soft flutes, while the Preamble features a cornet sound with flutes and strings. Whitlock's untimely death in 1946 of tuberculosis just before his 43rd birthday robbed us of more fine works by this “post-romantic” composer.

ANTHEM: Both the words and music of “Sing a Happy Hallelujah” come to us from New Zealand. The hymns of Shirley Murray, who passed away in January of this year, are now found in more than 140 hymnbooks around the world. Composer Colin Gibson has written music for several of her texts. He writes that her texts are “distinguished by their use of inclusive language, their bold appropriation of secular terms and their original poetic imagery drawn from nature and domestic life.” With its references to God's humour and laughter, this hymn is so suitable for today's “Holy Humour Sunday”.

POSTLUDE: We journey down to the States for the Postlude, and to the music of Carolyn Hamlin, long-time organist at First Baptist Church, Easley, South Carolina. Her Recessional on “Ode to Joy”, based on today's Opening Hymn, is a spirited setting of the tune, using the organ's majestic reeds and bright mixtures.

OFFERING

Your donations are appreciated and used carefully to further Christ's work in the world. In these weeks, when gatherings are not possible, please make donations to Trinity UC and to the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada by using Canada Helps, a Canadian not-for-profit organization. Just go to Trinity's web page <http://trinitypeterborough.com> and click on the “Donate Now” button located at the upper right hand side of the page. Canada Helps will issue you a tax receipt in Trinity's name. Cheques may also be placed in the secure mailbox located beside our main door under the covered portico.

**Trinity United Church
360 Reid Street**

Peterborough, ON K9H 7G6

Telephone: 705-743-3301

Email: trinitychurch@cogeco.net

Minister: trinityminister@cogeco.net

Confidential Pastoral Care: 705-874-8603

Website: www.trinitypeterborough.com

During Covid-19 the church office is closed. However the Minister and office staff are working from home and may still be reached at the above list.