



Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 21, 2024

*Old First Presbyterian Church
Huntington, New York*



To all who live joyfully and long to share their excitement ... to all who mourn and need comfort ... to all who are weary and need rest ... to all who are homeless and desire sheltering love ... to all who pray or are in need of prayer ... to all who sin and need a Savior ... to all who recognize Christ in their midst and hunger to share God's love with all the world ... Old First Presbyterian Church opens wide its doors and in the name of Jesus Christ, says ... WELCOME!



All hymns and Scriptures are printed in today's order of worship, or you may look them up in the pew Bibles and hymnals. Large print versions of each are available with the usher.

*** The congregation is invited to stand in body or spirit and speak items printed in bold.**

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 22:25-31

One: From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear the Lord.

**All: The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him
shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!**

One: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

**All: For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.**

One: Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord

**All: and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done all these things.**

One: Remembering the Lord, our God, and declaring his great works among all people,
let us lift our hearts and voices in joyful praise as we worship God together!

*HYMN 251

Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

Christ has arisen, alleluia.

Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.

*For our redeemer burst from the tomb,
even from death, dispelling its gloom.*

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia! Jesus is living, alleluia!

*For three long days the grave did its worst
until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo,
and in its conquest his might did show.*

(Refrain)

*Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia! Jesus is living, alleluia!*

*The angel said to them, "Do not fear.
You look for Jesus who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.
Only the grave clothes are lying there."*

(Refrain)

*"Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus' redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won."*

(Refrain)

*Christ has arisen to set us free.
Alleluia, to him praises be.
Jesus is living! Let us all sing;
he reigns triumphant, heavenly King.*

(Refrain)

Text: Bernard Kyamanywa, 1966; trans. Howard S. Olson, 1969

Music: Tanzanian melody

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PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Holy God, first and last, beginning and end, Alpha and Omega, you alone are worthy of our praise. Sun, moon, and stars praise you! Earth, sea, and sky praise you! Every living thing praises you! In our human diversity, we praise you as well, joining our voices with all of creation, in heaven and on earth. Your Spirit moves throughout the world, revealing your love for every living thing. You fill our lives with the wonder of your love for us in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Receive our praise, for you are the source of our life and our love; Holy God, Risen Christ, Living Spirit, now and forever.

Gracious God, Jesus commanded us to love one another, so the world may know we are his followers. We confess that we do not always love the way you expect us to love, and certainly not the way Jesus has first loved us. The world has witnessed the result when the Church fails to love; our squabbling, our hypocrisy, and our lack of compassion for those who do not measure up to our inconsistent standards. Loving God, forgive us once more. Christ Jesus, continue to love us. Holy Spirit, renew our love for one another. Empower us to embody your love, so that the world may see the Risen Christ through our example and believe. Amen.

DECLARATION OF GRACE

One: The writer of the Gospel of John assures us that God is love,
and that God's perfect love casts out fear. Those who abide in love,
abide in God, and God abides in them. Claim your hope in this Good News:
All: God's perfect love abides in us through Jesus, the Christ, our Lord and Savior!
Thanks be to the God whose love and forgiveness are steadfast and sure.
May we be equally unwavering in our love and forgiveness for others.

***RESPONSE OF THANKSGIVING (HYMN 240)** *Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks (verses 2 & 3)*

(Refrain)

Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name

Spread the good news o'er all the earth:

Jesus has died and has risen.

(Refrain)

We have been crucified with Christ.

Now we shall live forever.

(Refrain)

Text: Donald Fishel, 1971

Music: Donald Fishel, 1971; arr. Betty Pulkingham and Donald Fishel, 1979

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***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: The peace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: Please turn to those around you and share the peace of Christ.

Please share signs and words of Christ's peace with those worshipping near you.

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

God of unconditional love, send your Spirit to guide and inspire us as we open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts to your Living Word. Empower us to hear your voice, calling us to receive, believe, and share your gift of love through thought, word, and deed. Speak directly to us today, opening our hearts to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, through Christ Jesus, our Savior, amen.

NEW TESTAMENT READING (p. 241 in pew Bible)

1 John 4:7-21 [NRSVUE]

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

***HYMN 451**

Open My Eyes, That I May See

Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes; illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear.
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears; illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere.
Open my heart, and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart; illumine me, Spirit divine!

Text and Music: Clara H. Scott, 1895

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GOSPEL READING (p. 109 in pew Bible)

John 15:9-17 [NRSVUE]

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

¹²This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because

I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

“Open Our Hearts & Mouths”

*HYMN 300

We Are One in the Spirit

*We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;
we are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored:*

(Refrain)

*And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;
yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

*We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;
we will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand,
and together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land:*

(Refrain)

*We will work with each other; we will work side by side;
we will work with each other; we will work side by side,
and we’ll guard human dignity and save human pride:*

(Refrain)

*All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, God’s only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one:*

(Refrain)

Text and Music: Peter Scholtes, 1966

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*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

A Brief Statement of Faith (1991)

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the One triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world.

God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Throughout today's prayer, please listen for an invitation to lift our silent prayers before God, then join in praying together as follows:

One: God of compassionate, selfless, generous, and unconditional love,

All: **Hear our prayers and empower us to share your life-changing love.**

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.

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL TO ACTION

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the greatest of all God's gifts is love. The blessings we enjoy in life speak of God's love for us. What we offer to God in return, speaks of our love for the one who has lovingly embraced us in Christ Jesus. May our gifts of time, talent, and treasure, freely and joyfully given, share God's abundant love with the world.

OFFERTORY

"I Know Not What the Future Hath" by John Greenleaf Whittier

Sanctuary Choir

If you would like to offer a financial gift during today's worship service, please do so by placing your gift in one of the two wooden boxes, conveniently located at both Sanctuary entrances.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of life and love, we are grateful for all you have given us – in creation, in shared community, and in the Church of Jesus Christ. We lovingly offer ourselves, trusting you will bless each gift through the ministries we share. May the gifts we offer be tangible expressions of your love at work in the world, for the sake of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

***HYMN 313**

Lord, Make Us More Holy

Lord, make us more holy;
Lord, make us more holy;
Lord, make us more holy,
until we meet again:
holy, holy, holy,
until we meet again.

Lord, make us more loving;
Lord, make us more loving;
Lord, make us more loving,
until we meet again:
loving, loving, loving,
until we meet again.

Lord, make us more patient;
Lord, make us more patient;
Lord, make us more patient,
until we meet again:
patient, patient, patient,
until we meet again.

Lord, make us more faithful;
Lord, make us more faithful;
Lord, make us more faithful,
until we meet again:
faithful, faithful, faithful,
until we meet again.

Text and Music: African American spiritual

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***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

*Come, O Lord, be with us. Fill us with joy and thanksgiving.
May our hearts, flow with peace. Come with your love and surround us.
Friendship and love, may they bloom and grow, bloom and grow forever.
Bless us now. Bless our friends. Bless all people forever.*

***POSTLUDE**
