

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Faster Sunrise Service



John 20:1-5

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Pastor: The Jewish authorities and the Roman state had succeeded. Thirty pieces of silver had succeeded.

All: Anger had once again pushed love out of the way and succeeded.

Pastor: Hatred and fear had once again pushed reason and justice out of the way and succeeded.

All: The power of the whip, the cross, the sword, had overcome words of forgiveness and succeeded.

Pastor: Lies had overcome truth and succeeded.

All: Darkness had once again overcome light and succeeded.

Pastor: Death and the grave once again brought life to an end and had succeeded.

Pastor: Jesus was dead: of that there was no doubt. Jesus was in the tomb and all that was left were memories, spices and a giant stone rolled to close the tomb and put a seal on death's darkest victory.

The darkness had once again conquered, and like all those thought to be the Messiah before him, this man Jesus, had failed the test and was dead!

All: Everything the world could throw at Jesus had defeated his movement, and it was over! Jesus is CRUSHED! This is the perceived reality!

The Easter Story as told by the Gospel of John

(First Apostle) Mary

Pastor: CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY!

All: CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY!

Pastor: The grave that was filled is now empty!

All: OUR LIVES THAT WERE EMPTY NOW ARE FULL!! Our lives, yours and mine, can now be fulfilled and filled with LOVE.

Pastor: The powers of this world that seemed to have once again won, and those who thought the story was over were and are wrong. Fellowship has overcome political power, love has overcome hatred, reason and justice have overcome hatred and fear, forgiveness has broken the sword, truth has beaten back the lies, light has overcome darkness, and life has overcome death.

All: OUR LIVES THAT WERE EMPTY NOW ARE FULL!

Pastor: Once we were empty and afraid but now we are full and newly alive. We are filled with God's fellowship, love, justice, forgiveness, truth, light, and above all the life of Jesus Christ. The darkness has seen the light and it has not, cannot, and will not ever overcome it.

All: Praise be to God. Jesus the Christ is raised today!

Pastor: In fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

All: Therefore: New expectations are placed on us!

Pastor: Therefore: New possibilities are open to us!

All: Therefore: New capabilities are given to us!

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, glad heavens, and earth reply: Alleluia!**

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

Benediction