



*Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church*  
*Sunday, April 18th, 2021*

Dear Lake Toxaway family and friends,

I confess to you today (Friday, April 16), I have no clue as to where the Holy Spirit will lead me in the sermon. I usually have started a sermon on Friday morning, so when I write the pastoral letter, I have some idea as to how to connect this letter with the upcoming Sunday. Today and this week, I have sat in my chair for a few hours with little inspiration.

The Epistle lesson is speaking clearly to me this morning, however: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now: what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is (1 John 3: 1-7)."

The three letters of John in the New Testament likely are written by a pastor serving a church or churches who were struggling with love and God. The basic biblical Christian conviction is the two subjects are related intricately. If we want to love others as God intends, we need to understand and receive the love God has given us and remember we, by the grace of Jesus, are made children of God!

In our Wesleyan theology, we boldly move to claim "we will be like him." One of the Wesleyan tenets of faith is a doctrine of perfection (a holiness or sanctification understanding of grace). As Christians, we do not believe we obtain perfection; however, as God's children living in study of the Word and in community with other Christians, we grow and become more Christ-like every day, week, month, and year. This is a standard we believe God intends for us and that this ongoing transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. We have no room to boast about it; it is the work of God. If we are becoming more like Christ, we find ourselves loving others more fully and completely. We drop our human tendency to judge and take on a passionate desire to assist others in finding and claiming the love the Father offers to them.

I find the Gospel stories of Jesus' resurrection so fascinating as I contemplate God's immense love and patience with the disciples and us. Luke likely is describing the same story we read from John's Gospel last week. The detail of a locked door or an absent Thomas are not present. We pick this story up after Jesus has appeared to two individuals returning from Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus. These individuals had arrived in their village and invited Jesus to stay with them for the evening. They had talked for the day with Jesus and only recognized him as he sat down at the table and broke the bread. Then Jesus disappeared, but these two individuals returned to Jerusalem to tell the disciples and as they were sharing their experience with the Risen Christ, Jesus appears among them.

I think this is the way we share the Gospel. We tell how the Risen Christ has appeared to us. As we tell our story and experience of Christ, Jesus appears to others and begins his work of redemption, transformation, and sanctification! We find joy even in our "disbelieving and wondering" and continue as witnesses of these things.

I am praying you are experiencing Easter joy, surprise, shock, hope, love! We are gifted with a God who loved us so much he sent his only Son, Jesus, to give us eternal life. Our call is to action. I sometimes want to spend time basking in this glorious gift and this is an important part of loving God. As I continue my journey of faith, I am realizing we can simultaneously bask in God's love as we give witness to God's love for others. This is what the pastor, John, was inviting his congregation to do.

May we live in the love of God and share the love of God with others. The two are intricately related; we do not have to figure out this connection. We live it!

I am thankful to serve among you and to grow in Christ with you! We are the Easter people. May Christ's resurrection continue to bring us more fully into the image of Christ.

Faithfully,  
Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church  
Community Worship Service  
Third Sunday of Easter, April 18th**

**9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/MhxlnB9LOT4>**

**PRELUDE**

Alleluias      Robert Lau

**GREETING**

*When we are confused*

***Lord, give us peace.***

*When we are afraid*

***Lord, give us peace.***

*When we are lost in grief*

***Lord, give us peace.***

***O God, meet us in this sanctuary***

***And grant us peace!***

**HYMN #304**

Easter People, Raise Your Voices

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

**OPENING PRAYER**

***Lord, we are living in a world that behaves as though you never lived. Our eyes behold atrocities and insults that we never thought possible and that our grandparents thought they would never see again. We live in a world that is longing for proof of the Resurrection, proof of the Living Lord.***

***Lord, show us how to prove your living through our lives. Put our hands to doing what you would have done were you still on this earth. Place our feet on a path that leads others to salvation. Pull us out of our caves of isolation so that we might be seen as ordinary, living, breathing, caring people of the Resurrection.***

***When the people of the land cry out for proof that you are alive, or even that you ever existed, may we be able to offer our hands and feet and our lives as living proof.***

***Empower us in this hour of worship to do your good work. Amen.***

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **\*Acts 3:12-19**

*\* During Eastertide a reading from Acts is often substituted for the lesson from the Hebrew Bible.*

- 3:12 When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?
- 3:13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him.
- 3:14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you,
- 3:15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.
- 3:16 And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.
- 3:17 "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.
- 3:18 In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer.
- 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

### **Psalm 4 (Please read responsively the bold text.)**

- 4:1 Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.
- 4:2 How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? Selah**
- 4:3 But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.
- 4:4 When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. Selah**
- 4:5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.
- 4:6 There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!"**
- 4:7 You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound.
- 4:8 I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.**

## **1 John 3:1-7**

- 3:1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
- 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.
- 3:3 And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.
- 3:4 Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.
- 3:5 You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.
- 3:6 No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him.
- 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

## **Luke 24:36b-48 (Please stand for the Gospel reading.)**

- 24:36b While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."
- 24:37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost.
- 24:38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"
- 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
- 24:40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.
- 24:41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"
- 24:42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,
- 24:43 and he took it and ate in their presence.
- 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you--that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."
- 24:45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,
- 24:46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,
- 24:47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
- 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

*L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.*

***P: Thanks be to God.***

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

***Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.***

*(Let us offer our silent confessions.)*

***Ever-present God,***

***Forgive us when we stand in disbelief,***

***and comfort us when our fears outweigh your peace.***

***God, forgive us when we become too busy to pray.***

***Help us when we fail to see our neighbors in need.***

***Abiding God, forgive us when we are overwhelmed  
with bad news, and shut down completely.***

***In these times, remind us that we are called to be  
your love-lived,***

***your faithful witnesses, and***

***your humble servants.***

***Help us to wake up to the work of love,***

***and to your renewing strength each day, we pray. Amen.***

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

*O God, hear our prayers of repentance and forgiveness,*

*and awaken us from doubt, disbelief, and distress*

*by transforming us into your resurrection joy!*

*God, we desire for your loving spirit*

*to be among us, to comfort us in our fears,*

*and to renew our faith. Amen.*

***In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.***

## **HOMILY**

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH *(The Apostles' Creed)***

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty,***

***maker of heaven and earth;***

***And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;***

***who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,***

***born of the Virgin Mary,***

***suffered under Pontius Pilate,***

***was crucified, dead, and buried;***

*the third day he rose from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

### **GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)**

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen. Amen.*

### **OFFERING**

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

### **OFFERTORY**

Meditation on "Crucifer" Charles Callahan

### **DOXOLOGY**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*Mighty God who brings life and hope out of death and despair, help us hear the invitation Christ offered to the disciples, "Touch me and see!" Make us bold to grab hold of the risen Christ – not for this day but for all our days. May we offer our gifts this morning not to the church historical—the church that was—but to a church that is becoming, that is still being born, that Christ will bring into the future. May our eyes and ears and hearts continue to hold on to him as we help Christ lead his church forward! In his name, we pray. Amen*



## **PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

## **CLOSING HYMN #318**

Christ is Alive

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

## **BENEDICTION**

## **POSTLUDE**

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing! Michel Burkhardt

## **STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS**

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, [marcus61dodson@gmail.com](mailto:marcus61dodson@gmail.com)

Organist: Charlie Steele: [cwsorgan@comporium.net](mailto:cwsorgan@comporium.net)

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, [administrator@laketoxawayumc.org](mailto:administrator@laketoxawayumc.org)

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Jacolyn Campbell

Liturgist: John Holbrook

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## ***2020 Tax Letters/Giving Statements***

The 2020 tax deadline to file has been extended to May 2021. 2020 Giving Statements were mailed in February and if you have not received yours, please reach out to Don McSwain, our Treasurer via email at [bgamedon@gmail.com](mailto:bgamedon@gmail.com).

## ***Scholarship Committee Update***

*The deadline for applications from future scholars was April 15<sup>th</sup> for LTUMC 2021-2022. If you are interested in being a mentor for a future scholar recipient, please reach out to Cathie Fussell at [linguafrog@gmail.com](mailto:linguafrog@gmail.com) or 910-572-2167 to learn more.*

## ***Lenten Journey Thank You – It takes a village!***

Everyone played an important and impactful role during this year's Lenten journey. Thank you to those who wrote a personal Lenten devotional, the Worship committee for decorating the sanctuary, Memorial Garden, and the shroud on the cross on the hill, John and Becky Shoemaker for the wooden prayer plaque, the music and solo selections and the thought-provoking sermons.

## **PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY**

***Please pray for Mary Collins, Kitty Neff, Jan Crocker, Katherine Jeter, Marty Young, Thomas Blackstock, Marcus' nephew Steven Hudson, Cathie Fussell's nephew, Jeff Tilley, Frank Hardin, Chad & Anne Zimmerman, Madison Coleman & the Jeter family, Conor, Cynthia Wood's friends' two-year-old son.***

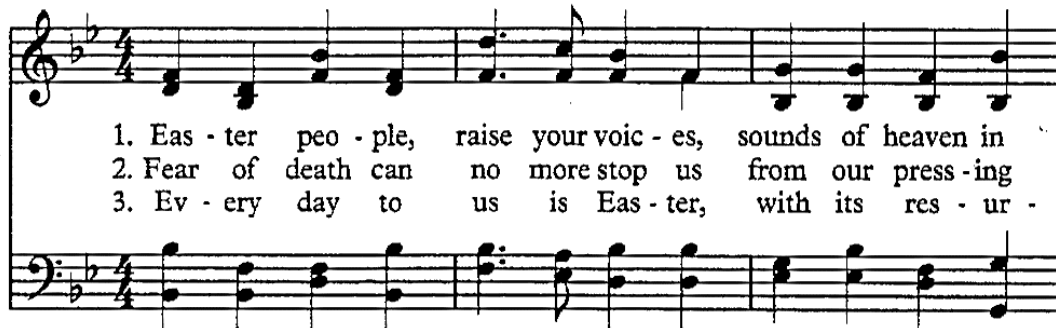
***Please pray for those with illness, upcoming surgery and recovery. Please pray for and their recoveries.***

***Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months; especially the family of Fred Collins for the passing of his mother on March 29<sup>th</sup>, Ellen Gauze, Cathy Fussell's niece, the family of Kent Garner, and the family of Dell Rearden.***

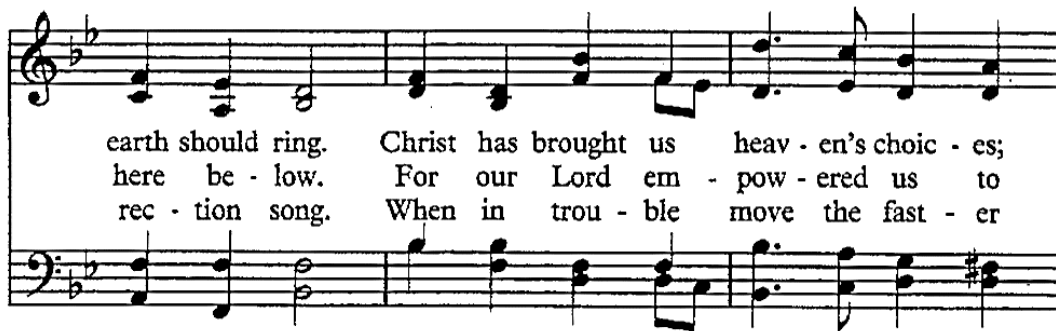
***Please pray for Molly Cammack, one of our student scholars. "I am in the process of applying for a very exciting education opportunity! Please keep me in your prayers!"***

***Please pray for all student scholars.***

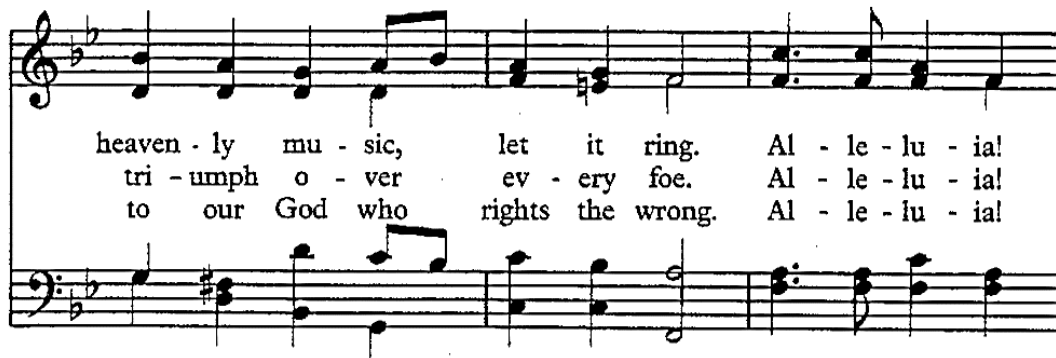
## Easter People, Raise Your Voices 304



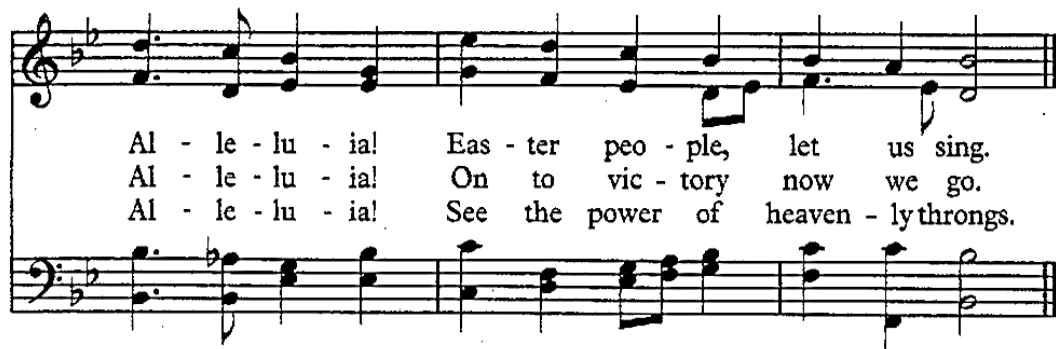
1. Eas - ter peo - ple, raise your voic - es, sounds of heav - en in  
 2. Fear of death can no more stop us from our press - ing  
 3. Ev - ery day to us is Eas - ter, with its res - ur -



earth should ring. Christ has brought us heav - en's choic - es;  
 here be - low. For our Lord em - pow - ered us to  
 rec - tion song. When in trou - ble move the fast - er



heav - en - ly mu - sic, let it ring. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 tri - umph o - ver ev - ery foe. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 to our God who rights the wrong. Al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia! Eas - ter peo - ple, let us sing.  
 Al - le - lu - ia! On to vic - tory now we go.  
 Al - le - lu - ia! See the power of heav - en - ly throngs.

WORDS: William M. James, 1979  
 MUSIC: Henry T. Smart, 1867

REGENT SQUARE  
 87.87.87

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# Christ Is Alive

318

1. Christ is a - live! Let Chris-tians sing. His cross stands  
 2. Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant  
 3. Not throned a - far, re - mote - ly high, un - touched, un -  
 4. In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,  
 5. Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with  
 years in Pal - es - tine, he comes to claim the  
 moved by hu - man pains, but dai - ly, in the  
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, he suf - fers still, yet  
 this and ev - ery age, till earth and all cre -

prais - es ring. His love in death shall nev - er die.  
 here and now and dwell in ev - ery place and time.  
 midst of life, our Sav - ior in the God-head reigns.  
 loves the more, and lives, though ev - er cru - ci - fied.  
 a - tion ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

WORDS: Brian Wren, 1968, alt.  
 MUSIC: *Psalmodia Evangelica*, 1789

TRURO  
 LM

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