

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Second Sunday of Easter
April 12, 2026

**** *Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

OPENING BELL

At the sound of the bell please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

Hallelujah! arr. John Carter

Martha Jones

Based on "Hallelujah" from *The Messiah*, George Frideric Handel (with apologies!!)

ANNOUNCEMENTS/MOMENT FOR MINISTRY

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on
life's journey... you are welcome here!**

OPENING REFLECTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Michael Petri

Before Easter the disciples were hiding in fear and terror.

After Easter, the disciples were people of courage and daring.

Before Easter, the disciples lost their faith when Jesus was executed.

After Easter, they discovered a new faith in the eternal love revealed in Jesus.

Before Easter, the disciples were lost in depression, despair and self-pity and confusion.

**After Easter, they saw the light of love that renewed their joy. The living, loving heart of
Christ guided them day after day.**

****HYMN NCH 238

Now the Green Blade Rises

All

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain;
wheat that in dark earth for many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,
thinking that their Love would never wake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,
Jesus, who for three days in the grave had lain,
quick from the dead the risen One is seen:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Christ's warm touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Paul

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

SIXTY SECONDS FOR PERSONAL PRAYERS/SILENT CONTEMPLATION

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Michael

OFFERTORY

Umoja Tunaimba, Victor C. Johnson

Choir

Umoja tunaimba! (United we sing!)
Imbakwa amani! (Sing for peace!)
Imbakwa furaha! (Sing for joy!)
Imbakwa endendo! (Sing for love!)
Imba! (Sing!)

****DOXOLOGY

Hal-le, hal-le hal-le-lu-ja.

All

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Michael

God of Easter, renew our faith with new revelations of love. We celebrate the ongoing mission of the church to bring help and healing. Bless us with the courage to be disciples in this era of cruelty, fear, and creeping authoritarian rule. We offer these gifts to support the courage it takes to stand with Jesus today. Amen

**HYMN

Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers (Hyfrydol)

All

Christ has risen while earth slumbers, Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised, as we doubted and denied.
Let the moon embrace the blessing; let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumor: Christ is risen, God is here!

Christ has risen to companion former friends who fear the night,
sensing loss and limitation where their faith had once burned bright.
They bemoan what is no longer; they expect no hopeful sign
'til Christ ends their conversation, breaking bread and sharing wine.

Christ has risen and forever lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled, all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen, Christ is present making us what he has been:
evidence of transformation in which God is known and seen.

SCRIPTURE

John 20:19-31

Michael

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

MESSAGE "Before Easter, After Easter" Paul

****HYMN Practice Resurrection All

Every act of **kindness** is a resurrection. Practice resurrection in your acts of **kindness**.
Every act of **courage** is a resurrection. Practice resurrection in your acts of **courage**.
loving wonder presence wholeness welcome justice

****BENEDICTION Paul

**** SONG BENEDICTION World Peace Prayer All

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe!

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL Reprise: Umoja Tunaimba Martha & Karen

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
liturgist Michael Petri
musicians Martha Jones

Acknowledgements

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