



"The LORD is my strength" Psalm 118

**Easter Sunday**  
**March 31, 2024**  
**Manor Road United Church**  
**A congregation of the United Church of Canada**  
**240 Manor Road East, Toronto, ON, M4S 1R8**  
[www.manorroadunitedchurch.com](http://www.manorroadunitedchurch.com)

# Service of Worship

## March 31, 2024

### Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Brunch

“I am the fiery life of the essence of God; I am the flame above the beauty in the fields; I shine in the waters; I burn in the sun, the moon, and the stars. And with the airy wind, I quicken all things vitally by an unseen, all-sustaining life”

Hildegarde of Bingen

#### PRELUDE

#### EASTER VIGIL - THE EASTER TREE

I see the groaning of the windswept tree.  
Its sculptured limbs engender deep emotions in me.  
This tree stands crooked almost bereft of leaves.  
All gnarled and knotted but still it breathes.  
But where its roots are anchored deep and warm.  
One small seed is waiting silently to be born.  
And there together in the early Easter morning sun,  
The mystery of a new day, a new life has begun.  
This tree is a symbol of what life can be.  
The awe of this Easter can transfigure you and me.  
We gather by the Easter Fire, in Darkness.

#### HYMN VU 289 “It Only Takes a Spark (Pass It On)”

It only takes a spark, to get a fire going,  
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing:  
That’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it:  
you spread God’s love to everyone, you want to pass it on.

*Read from around the fire*

## **JJM - READING FROM GENESIS**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth.

**The earth was empty and dark night covered the face of the deep water, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.**

Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.

(Lighting of the Paschal Candle and congregational candles)

The Lord be with you.

**And with your Spirit.**

Let us pray.

Christ, the flame above and below, the fire within and beyond, at the sunrise and sunset, you are there, timeless, ageless wonder, in endless glory. We praise you on this morning of mornings. **Amen**

Be alive with us now. May you watch and keep us. **Amen**

God of the ages, reveal your abundance in this lighted candle, so that all who join in your mystery may be filled with your spirit. Once we were in darkness. Now we are light. Let us live as people of the light, through Christ with us. **Amen**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORY**

We acknowledge that Manor Road United Church sits on land that is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and that it is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

## **EASTER PROCLAMATION**

May this flame be found still burning by the Morning Star; the one Morning Star who never sets, Christ your Son, who, coming back from where the shadows live, has gifted his peaceful light on humanity, and lives always in our heart.

## **GATHERING MUSIC MV 51 "Yahweh Be Praised"**

**Yahweh be praised in the heavens.**

**Yahweh be praised in the streets.**

**Yahweh be praised with our singing**

when in worship we meet.

**Yahweh be praised. Yahweh be praised. Yahweh be praised.  
Yahweh be praised. Yahweh be praised. Yahweh be praised.  
Yahweh be praised. Yahweh be praised.**

## **WORDS OF WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Beloved church, behold the victory of our God:  
Jesus, our Lord, has conquered the grave.

**Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

Sin and death shall reign no more.

**Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

Let this place resound with joy.

**Christ is risen! Alleluia!**

**Thanks be to God.**

**<Turn up the Lights and the Love>**

### **HYMN VU 158 “Christ is Alive”**

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to  
the sky. Let streets and homes with praises ring. Love, drowned  
in death, shall never die.**

**Christ is alive, and comes to bring good news to this and every  
age, till earth and sky and ocean ring with joy, with justice, love  
and praise.**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

God you are great, by Jesus coming alive you pushed away the  
shadows and opened the doorway to life.

**As the rolling stones we see, light is shining in the shadows,  
make your people shout loud to Jesus' life.**

In the world, **“He is risen, indeed!” Amen**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Jesus, through the power of Spirit we have been raised from the waters of earth to share in your life.

**Yet we have not lived as Easter people.**

We are unsure of your promise, confused about your will, and afraid in the face of danger.

**Like many, we weep at the sad times, but do not know that you are with us.**

Call us by name, living Lord, that we may know you with joy.

**When we are afraid, give us courage.**

**Whenever we are distracted, help us pay attention.**

**We are sorry, help us to live through the love of God.**

**Amen**

## **SILENT REFLECTION**

### **ASSURANCE**

Listen, people: God who raised Jesus from the dead, we are alive and forgiven. **Amen**

### **SHARING CHRIST'S PEACE**

The Peace of Christ be with you.

**And also, with you!**

(Please share the peace of Christ with a hand wave)

### **RESPONSE MV 45 "You Are Holy"**

**You are holy, you show us the way, 4X**

**you show us, you show us, you show us the way. 4X**

### **ENCOUNTERING THE CHILD WITHIN**

Allison Marcaccini - Alleluia Encore

### **CHOIR ANTHEM**

**"O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing" by Anne Krentz Organ**

### **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Almighty God, by the power of your Spirit,

**roll away the stone and reveal to us the Word of Life. Amen**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **1st Reading Isaiah 25:6-9 Andrea Cabeza**

But here on this mountain, God-of-the-Angel-Armies will throw a feast for all the people of the world, a feast of the finest foods, a feast with vintage wines, a feast of seven courses, a feast lavish with gourmet desserts. And here on this mountain, God will banish the pall of doom hanging over all peoples, the shadow of doom darkening all nations. Yes, he'll banish death forever. And God will wipe the tears from every face. He'll remove every sign of disgrace from his people, wherever they are. Yes! God says so! Also at that time, people will say, "Look at what's happened! This is our God! We waited for him and he showed up and saved us!

### **2nd Reading I Corinthians 15:1-11 Mike Russell**

Friends, let me go over the Message with you one final time—this Message that I proclaimed and that you made your own; this Message on which you took your stand and by which your life has been saved. (I'm assuming, now, that your belief was the real thing and not a passing fancy, that you're in this for good and holding fast.)

The first thing I did was place before you what was placed so emphatically before me: that the Messiah died for our sins, exactly as Scripture tells it; that he was buried; that he was raised from death on the third day, again exactly as Scripture says; that he presented himself alive to Peter, then to his closest followers, and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time, most of them still around (although a few have since died); that he then spent time with James and the rest of those he commissioned to represent him; and that he finally presented himself alive to *me*. It was fitting that I brought up the rear. I don't deserve to be included in that inner circle, as you well know, having spent all those early years trying my best to stamp God's church right out of existence.

But because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. And I'm not about to let his grace go to waste. Haven't I worked hard trying to do more than any of the others? Even then, my work didn't amount to all that much. It was God giving me the work to do, God giving me the energy to do it. So whether you heard it from me or from those

others, it's all the same: We spoke God's truth and you entrusted your lives.

### **3rd Reading John 20:1-18 Alydia Smith**

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, gasping for breath. "They took the Master from the tomb. We don't know where they've put him."

Peter and the other disciple left immediately for the tomb. They ran, neck and neck. The other disciple got to the tomb first, outrunning Peter. Stooping to look in, he saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. Simon Peter arrived after him, entered the tomb, observed the linen cloths lying there, and the kerchief used to cover his head not lying with the linen cloths but separate, neatly folded by itself. Then the other disciple, the one who had gotten there first, went into the tomb, took one look at the evidence, and believed. No one yet knew from the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. The disciples then went back home.

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been laid. They said to her, "Woman, why do you weep?"

"They took my Master," she said, "and I don't know where they put him." After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't recognize him. Jesus spoke to her, "Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?" She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, "Sir, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him." Jesus said, "Mary." Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, "*Rabboni!*" meaning "Teacher!" Jesus said, "Don't cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went, telling the news to the disciples: "I saw the Master!" And she told them everything he said to her.

## **RESPONSE**

Hear the Wisdom told to us through the Ages.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **HYMN VU 170 “O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing”**

**O sons and daughters, let us sing! The King of heavens, the glorious King, o’er death and hell rose triumphing.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**So, on this holy day of days, with faith in God our voices raise in laud and jubilee and praise.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**SERMON “Mary Ran, I Have Seen the Lord ”**  
**The Rev. Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea**

## **SILENT REFLECTION**

### **DIVERSITY CREED**

For The Great Diversity, You Have created Creator, we come to you.

**We are grateful for the gift of life and the joy that it can bring.  
For the great diversity you have created in our world.**

We pray for those who suffer from discrimination because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, skin colour, culture, mental health, age, and neuro diverse status.

**For those who do not feel safe.**

Help us to end homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia, economic phobia, mental health phobia and all forms of discrimination and hate.  
**Show us the way to make this world a better place for all.**

### **OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND WORK**

**<Write prayers and hang them on the tree>**

## **OFFERTORY INSTRUMENTAL**

### **RESPONSE MV 183 “I’m Gonna Shout, Shout”**

**I’m gonna shout, shout, shout out my love for Jesus, for Jesus!  
I’m gonna shout, shout, shout out my love for God’s most holy child!  
For whatever I might do today, at home, at school, at work, at play, I’ve got Jesus’ love deep down inside of me!**



## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

God you are great, by your grace, please accept the fruit of our labor and the offering of our lives.

*Glory and praise to God*

***Whose word brings life!***

## **RESPONSE MV 52 “Alleluia”**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

For the people, in the whole world.

We celebrate the feast of Jesus’ resurrection,  
we may renew our faith and strengthen our voice;  
God of Resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the poor and the stranger,  
that they may receive a place of refuge, hope, and hospitality;  
God of Resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the sick and those in distress, that they may find healing for their  
pain and be restored to fullness of life;  
God of Resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For our neighbors, that together we may dwell in harmony;  
God of Resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

## **THE LORD’S PRAYER**

As a mother nurtures her children. Let us pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom  
come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our  
daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin  
against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil,  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and  
forever. Amen**

## **HYMN VU 186 “Now the Green Blade Rises”**

**Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;**

**love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
love is come again, like a wheat arising green.**

**When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
your touch can call us back to life again,  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;  
love is come again, like wheat arising green.**

## **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

### **RESPONSE MV 209 “Go, Make a Difference”**

**Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world.  
Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world.**

## **POSTLUDE**

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