

The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



PRELUDE

Sonata in C# minor, "Moonlight"

Beethoven

WELCOME

✘ **HYMN #246**

Christ Is Alive!

TRURO

verses 1, 3, 4

(✘ *The congregation may rise, in body or in spirit.*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

CALL TO LAUGHTER

ONE: This is the time to rejoice!

What better time than now?

This is the day to laugh! What did the cabbage pastor say to the people?

Lettuce pray!

How many church members does it take to change a light bulb?

Change? Christians don't believe in change!

What's the greatest joke ever?

The joke God played on death, on Easter morning!

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen, indeed: Alleluia!

RESPONSE IN SONG

"Christ Is Alive!"

TRURO

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!

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

None of us likes to look foolish, but which is sillier? Chasing after the world and all the gaudy trinkets that flatter our souls, or being a 'fool for Christ', imitating him in being a servant to others, offering ourselves in love and joy to the world? Let us admit to God the foolish choices we make each and every day, as we pray, saying,

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**You know better than we do, Amused God,
what important people we think we are.
Believing we have to be serious all the time,
we miss out on the joy of your creation.
Choosing to feast on the pain of the world,
we skip the picnic offered in paradise.
Clinging to the despair which is our best friend,
we ignore Jesus. who can bring us home to your heart.**

**Forgive us, Heart of Joy,
and make us open to the startling,
upside-down ways in which you work.
Fill us with Easter's laughter;
fill us with your healing joy;
fill us with the hilarity of love poured into us through Jesus Christ,
our Teacher and Savior.**

(We pray in silence)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

ONE: The Gospels tell us over and over again of the joy that comes to us through Christ. When Jesus was around, lives were changed, the sick were healed, the sorrowful began to laugh with delight. The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

ALL: Thank you, God, for the humor-filled Spirit that bursts out in chuckles and gales of laughter. Thank you for the joy that turns us from death to life. Thank you for your forgiveness, lifting us with glee — and send us to give away that gift to anyone who will listen to your great Easter joke. Amen.

OFFERTORY

THE LIGHT OF SERVICE

Offerings not specifically designated for the Church (including any checks with “Light of Service” or “LOS” in the memo line) will be given to an organization doing compassionate work that complements our church’s mission. This week, we share our gifts with Seeds of Peace, which organizes and implements dialogue and leadership development programs for youth and educators in communities in conflict.

ONE: God has poured gifts into our lives; we now return our tithes and offerings.

**ALL: Let us gather our gifts with grateful praise,
and offer them to God’s purposes.**

RECEIVING OUR OFFERINGS

Our church welcomes every size gift, and thanks you for your generosity.

MUSICAL OFFERING “Cum Sancto Spiritu” from *Gloria* Antonio Vivaldi

Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris: Amen.

With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father: Amen.

✠ DOXOLOGY

OLD 100TH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit ever more;
One God of grace, whom we adore! Amen.**

✠ UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God, you are powerful beyond measure.
You whisk stones off of tombs,
you defy death,
you cause life to sing out,
you even raise our hearts when they have grown heavy and tired.
So, we bless these gifts in your life-giving, joy-creating name.
By your grace, may they provide
food, healing, and laughter to a hurting, hungry world.
We pray you will use us to do the same: Amen.**

RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 133, Antiphonal

ONE: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

**MANY: It is like precious oil joyfully poured on the head in greeting,
Running down upon the chin, on the beard of the anointed,**

Running down over the collar of the anointed one's robes.

It is like the rich dew of the northern realm,

Which falls in the south on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Holy One ordained blessing,

Life forevermore.

ANCIENT TESTIMONY: John 20:19-31 *New Testament, p. 141*

SERMON "That You May Come to Believe" Pastor John A. Nelson

✘ **HYMN #247** "Now the Green Blade Rises" NOËL NOUVELET

We Feast at God's Table

INVITATION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ONE: May the God of love and ladybugs be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Children of joy, open your hearts to God.

May God fill them with laughter, wonder, and joy.

Heirs of pleasure and grace, sing songs of thanksgiving.

**With banjos and bagpipes, with snare drums and saxophones,
we will praise the Maker of all joy!**

Into the face of cantankerous chaos, God of guffaws ...

...

So, with those far-too-wise of every time,

with those who take themselves too seriously in every place,

we sing our glad song:

**Holy, holy, holy are you,
creator of dandelions and komodo dragons.**

All creation joins in the laughter caused by the empty tomb:

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes carrying the joy of God for all people:

Hosanna in the highest!

You are God, with a divine sense of humor ...

...

As we remember how foolish he seemed to be to many,
as we celebrate this joyous season of resurrection,
we join with those in the glad song of faith:

**Christ died, foolish in the eyes of the world;
Christ was raised, wise enough to trust you;
Christ will return, gathering us up and taking us to you,
laughing all the way.**

Is there anything more foolish than to believe ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*trespasses*)

✠ **ACT OF PRAISE** (*sung*)

GREATOREX

**Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ,
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen; Amen.**

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

We celebrate an open communion, and welcome every person to the table. We understand the sharing of the bread and the cup in Jesus' name to be a reenactment of an ancient vision of God's feast for all people. We don't require you to be a member of our church, or any church, to participate with us in this feast of grace: all that is needed is that you desire God's nurture. Today communion will be received in the pews. Please pass the tray before taking the bread or cup; allow your neighbor to serve you. We hold the bread until all are served to signify our unity in Christ. We take the cup as we are served, to signify our personal relationship with Christ. (We use gluten-free bread and unfermented grape juice in an effort to remove barriers to anyone's participation in the sacrament.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

**Foolish, foolish God, your belly laugh echoes through the world,
We have responded to your invitation to join in the Banquet.
Here we have eaten, we have drunk, we have tasted your goodness.
May the joy we find in this meal together lift up our hearts,
may we carry your laughter to the world around us,
may we live out that foolishness called love wherever we go. Amen.**

✘ **HYMN** (insert)

“Christians, We Are Made for Laughter”

HYMN TO JOY

BENEDICTION and **SUNG AMEN**

POSTLUDE

Toccata Gaelica

Hans-André Stamm



Welcome to Church!

Gathered in 1744, the Congregational Church of Salisbury is an Open and Affirming member of the United Church of Christ. It is also a welcoming home to people from a great variety of church backgrounds and life experiences. Your presence is a gift to us! We hope you will feel God’s Spirit here today through our worship and fellowship.

*We seek to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and love our neighbors as ourselves. This Church is **Open** to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment regardless of race, ancestry, class, gender identity, physical and mental ability or sexual orientation. We **Affirm** each individual as a child of God, celebrating the total identity of each person.*

*As an **Open and Affirming** Congregation, we commit to work toward ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination against any person.*

*Whoever you are, wherever you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here!*

If you are visiting us, Welcome! Please sign our guest book and introduce yourself to our Pastor or to one of the Deacons. Fill out a welcome card in the pew to join our email list. Assistive Listening Devices are available; please ask an usher for assistance.

Kindly set phones to silent (unless you’re expecting a call from Jesus).

Christ Is Alive!

246

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war where col - or,
4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the

prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.

In 1968 Easter fell ten days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and this text was written to express an Easter hope while mindful of that terrible event. Buoyed by a triple-arched tune, it affirms the presence of a wounded, risen Christ with all who suffer.

TEXT: Brian Wren, 1968, rev. 1995
MUSIC: *Musica Sacra*, c. 1778
Text © 1975, rev. 1995 Hope Publishing Company

TRURO
LM

247 Now the Green Blade Rises

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain;

love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;

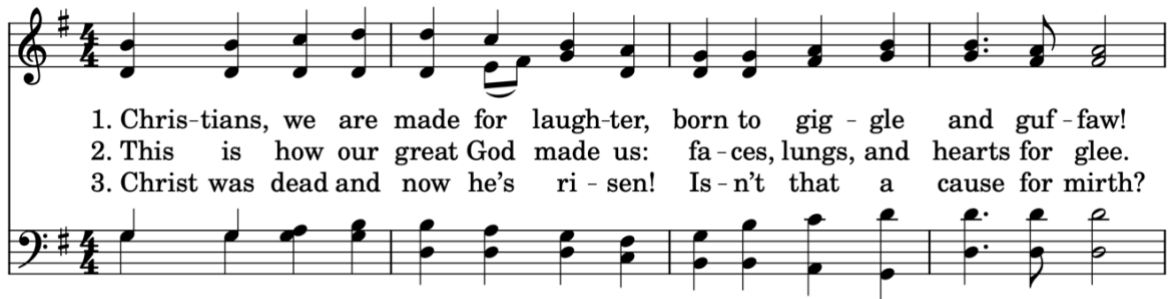
love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Although there were some traditional Easter carols, this hybrid one has been created by grafting a 20th-century English text onto a late 15th-century French tune. The allegory of the dying and rising grain as a parallel for Christ's Resurrection is probably based on John 12:24.

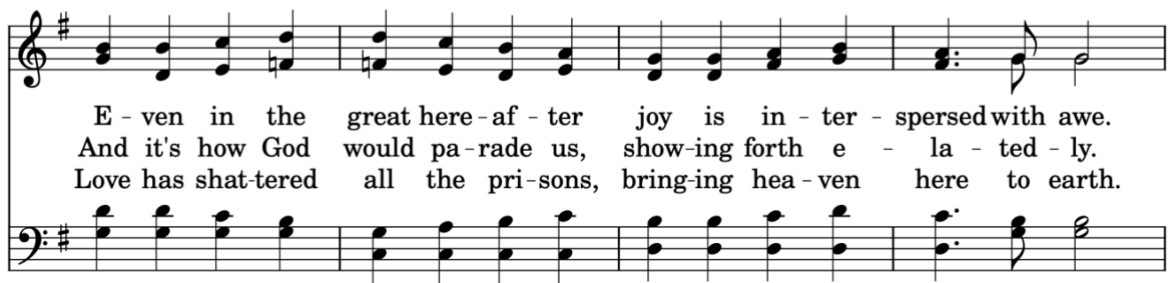
Christians, We Are Made for Laughter

Words: Jo Cassiday-Maloney, adapted

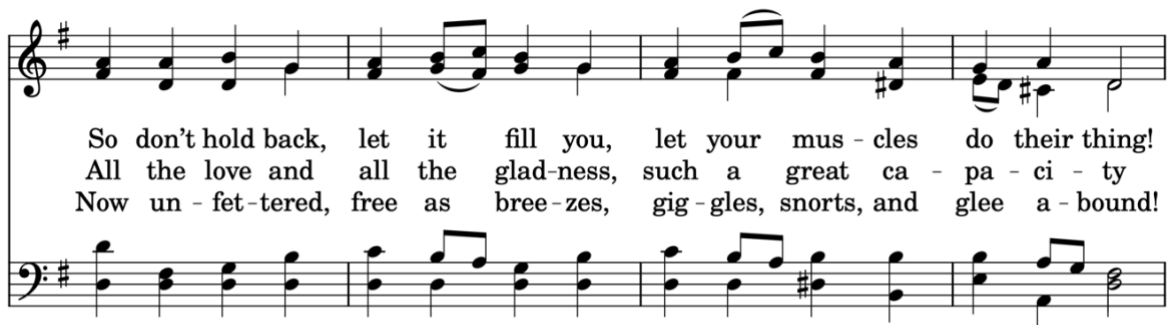
Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824



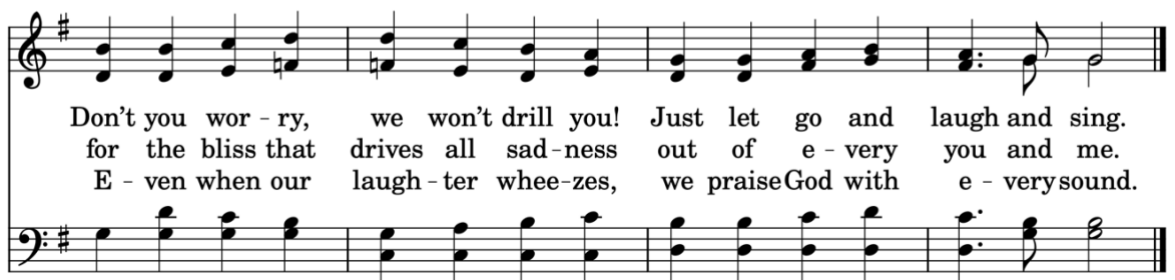
1. Chris-tians, we are made for laugh-ter, born to gig - gle and guf - faw!
2. This is how our great God made us: fa - ces, lungs, and hearts for glee.
3. Christ was dead and now he's ri - sen! Is - n't that a cause for mirth?



E - ven in the great here - af - ter joy is in - ter - spersed with awe.
And it's how God would pa - rade us, show - ing forth e - la - ted - ly.
Love has shat - tered all the pri - sons, bring - ing hea - ven here to earth.



So don't hold back, let it fill you, let your mus - cles do their thing!
All the love and all the glad - ness, such a great ca - pa - ci - ty
Now un - fet - tered, free as bree - zes, gig - gles, snorts, and glee a - bound!



Don't you wor - ry, we won't drill you! Just let go and laugh and sing.
for the bliss that drives all sad - ness out of e - very you and me.
E - ven when our laugh - ter whee - zes, we praise God with e - very sound.

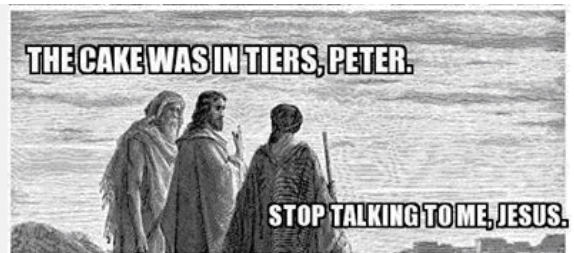
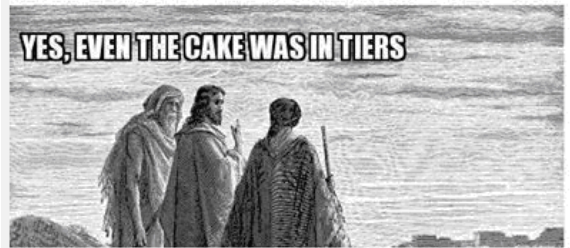
Today's Worship Leaders

Ushers: Joanne Taber, Kevin Wolgemuth
Reader: Holly Tierney • *Deacon:* Theresa Carroll, Janet Kaufman
Fellowship time hosts: Emily Elliot

Music Director: David Baranowski

Pastor and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. John A. Nelson

Today's liturgy is adapted and reprinted from *Lectionary Liturgies* by the Rev. Thom Shuman © 2024 (lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com); used by permission.



The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting in Grace • Transformed by Love • Serving with Joy

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