

SOJOURNERS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“A safe place to begin. A safe place to begin again.”

April 18, 2021

In the morning at 10:00am

Third Sunday of Easter – “Christ Among Us”



“We are a community of faith called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in the way of Jesus, by including all peoples in all walks and ways of life, in our life of worship and celebration, nurture and growth, love and service.”

~ Covenant of Sojourners Congregation

Prelude

Gathering Music “Now the Green Blade Rises”

words by John Crum, 1928; tune “Noel Nouvelet,” 15th century French

Now the green blade rises from the busied grain;
Wheat that in dark earth for ay 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.

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Call to Worship

Bob Garrity

Liturgist: Christ is Risen, and greets us with peace.

All: *Out loud but muted*

The peace of Christ is among us, indeed.

We are witnesses of God’s glory and steadfast love.

The transforming love of Christ is among us, indeed!

Come, let us worship.

Invocation

God of love and light, we come as witnesses of your glory and faithfulness, amazed to discover your transformative love. Come Dear God, abide within us, that your grace may be revealed anew each day. Awaken within us the call to love one another, in the ways your love has been made real through Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

All: *Out loud but muted*

Ever-present God, forgive us when we stand in disbelief, and comfort us when our fears outweigh your peace. Forgive us when we become too busy to pray and help us when we fail to see our neighbors in need. Be near to us, Abiding God, when we are overwhelmed with bad news, and shut down completely.

In these most difficult times, remind us that we are called to be examples of your love and to be your faithful and humble servants. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Liturgist: Friends, hear this good news. Our Compassionate God, has awakened us from doubt, disbelief, and distress by imbuing us with resurrection joy!

All: *Out loud but muted*

Amen and Thanks be to God!

Collections Cart

Bob Garrity

This is the time the children usually collect donations of food for the food bank from the congregation. The Food Bank and other organizations still need your donations, perhaps even more now than previously. It may be easier right now to contribute financially to the [Blue Ridge Area Food Bank](#).

Time with Children

Kathy Doby

Contemporary Reading

Bob Garrity

Robert L. Brawle: *"The empty tomb does not explain Jesus' resurrection; Jesus' resurrection explains it."*

Scripture Lesson: Luke 24:36b–48

Bob Garrity

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 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." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.

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." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 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, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

Liturgist: *This is the Word of God, for the People of God!*

All: *(out loud, but muted)*
Thanks be to God.

The Sermon / Message

Pastor Morgan

Pastor: The Lord be with you
And also with you
Let us pray.

All: *(out loud, but muted)*

Dear God, even as we rejoice, during this Easter Season and revisit the good news of the resurrection, seeds of disbelief remain among us. Open our eyes that we may see more clearly this amazing thing you have wrought among us. Grant that we may embrace and spread the extraordinary news of the resurrection in such a way that the light of Jesus may be seen in all that we do and say. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Pastor: Sojourners, as we present our gifts, let us give thanks for God's steadfast love by being witnesses to those who are hungry for food, encouragement, and relationship.

Let us also witness to those who are poor in spirit, by allowing God's Spirit to loosen our grip on belongings and possessions, in order to awaken every troubled heart.

And lastly, by our joyful giving, let us offer ourselves in gratitude and with generosity, as witnesses to God's goodness.

This is our opportunity to give to the family that nurtures us in new growth. *[We urge you to visit [our webpage](#) and click on the "**Donate or Pledge Now**" tab, to present your gifts.]*

Dedication

All: *(out loud, but muted)*

God of Grace and Mercy, we offer a portion of our time, spiritual gifts, and resources as a sign of our love for you and the world. Bless these offerings that they may be used to bring healing and hope to a hurting world. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Joys and Concerns

Rev. Karen Mann

It is more important than ever to hold one another in prayer. If you are participating in this service at-home, we invite you to light a candle and remember your fellow Sojourners in prayer. If you are watching live from home, we invite you to leave a comment, on the "Chat" screen, with your joys or concerns, now. Please remember that this is a PUBLIC forum and can be seen by anyone.

Pastoral Prayer by Pastor Morgan

Closing Hymn

“Love’s Redeeming Work is Done”

*words by Charles Wesley (1707-1788); music by Alex Majjas, 2007
(formerly minister of music at Christ Episcopal in Charlottesville)*

Love’s redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won.
Death in vain forbids Him rise,
Christ has opened paradise.

Chorus:

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.

Lives again our glorious King,
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Once he died our souls to save:
Where the victory, O grave?

Chorus:

Soar we now where Christ has led,
Following our exalted head.
Made like him, like him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!

Chorus:

Closing Comments by Pastor Morgan

Benediction

And, let us go forth as witnesses to God’s hope of justice, peace, grace, and love.
Fully believing that Christ is among all humanity, now and always. **Amen.**

Contact Us:

Interim Pastor: Dr. Marvin L. Morgan
mlmorg@bellsouth.net

Faith Formation Director: Kathy Doby
kathy@sojourners-ucc.org

Church Administrator: Lance Allen
churchoffice@sojourners-ucc.org

Church Office: 434-977-1481
www.sojourners-ucc.org