

HE GAVE US NEW BIRTH

into a Living Hope
through the Resurrection
of Jesus Christ from the Dead

1 Peter 1:3

Knowing-Jesus.com

LIGHTING THE ALTAR CANDLES

MUSIC TO PREPARE US FOR WORSHIP Sue Koeppel, Musician

EASTER WELCOME

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

Easter Blessings! Welcome to worship this Easter Sunday 2022. So glad you're here and online to celebrate the living hope we know in Christ Jesus. Before we begin worship, I have just one announcement. Our Spaghetti Lunch and Supper fundraiser is Thursday, April 28th. Do you have tickets? Are you selling tickets? We have some very tenacious ticket sellers. One such person's secured deliveries to 4 new places. She came to the church to drop off ticket money this week and as she left, engaged a man in a conversation that ended in a Spaghetti Lunch and Supper ticket sale. She has plans to walk her neighborhood to sell tickets once the weather's better. She even wondered if we should have a team sitting outside Handy Foods to sell tickets. Who is this tenacious ticket seller? It's Sharon Nelson. My suggestion to you....BE A SHARON AND NOT KAREN!

Now, let's allow this Easter Video to prepare our hearts for worship.

“ALIVE” EASTER OPENING VIDEO”

†**SHARING OUR GATHERING WORDS** Lorrie Mc Callister, Liturgist

This new day is fresh with possibility to encounter the Living Christ.

With bright eyes, let's search.

This new day is fresh with possibility to understand the Living Christ.

With engaged minds, let's ponder.

This new day is fresh with possibility to be moved by the Living Christ.

With compassionate hearts, let's feel.

This new day is fresh with possibility to respond to the Living Christ.

With rock solid devotion, let's follow.

This new day is fresh with possibility to serve the Living Christ.

With humble intention, let's act in ways that show the world the Living Hope of Christ, our Lord.

This new day is

fresh with possibility to praise the Living Christ.

With strong voices, let's sing.

OPENING SONG "Christ the Lord is Risen Today"

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PRAYER INTRO We pray to tell God how much we love God. Sometimes we pray because there's nothing else we can do but pray. We pray to know God more fully? And, to know our own heart more fully? We pray to receive from God. We pray to learn to depend on God. Paul said it. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Prayer helps us hope...And, so we give our hearts to God in prayer this Easter Sunday morning...Let's pray...

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ, when everything was dark, when it seemed the sun would never shine again, when everything seemed hopelessly lost; your love broke through. Your love's soo strong

soo wide, soo deep death can never hold it, stop or contain it. Today we celebrate that living love, a love that dances and spreads and bursts forth with resurrection hope, with living hope. Help us always to depend on your living, loving presence with us.

- you are with us in every conflict-ridden time to guide and direct us

- you are with us in every time of grief and sorrow to comfort, counsel and bless us

- you are with us in every time of temptation to strengthen and inspire us

- you are with us in every time of loneliness to cheer and keep us company.

- you are with us in every struggle,

-you are with us in death to bring us into the glory of your eternal peace and

presence. You have been, You are, and you will always be with us. God of Grace

and God of glory, we praise you for you are the source of living hope. And, we pray

the love and hope of Easter lives in us each day and that we spread that living hope

to the world through Christ's living, loving Spirit, the same Spirit that joins our

hearts and voices in prayer to you, praying...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

PRAYING IN SONG “Because He Lives”

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TODAY’S SCRIPTURE READING Lorrie McCallister, Liturgist

John 20: 1-18 (NIV) Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

MESSAGE “Living Hope”

Pastor Cheri

For many, Easter’s barely a blip on the calendar, do an egg hunt with the kids, get them baskets full of sugary goodness, have a family get-together and call it a wrap. For some Easter involves church; for many in our Post Christian world, it

doesn't. When I was a kid, Easter was BIG, like really BIG. There was never a question. Easter Sunday meant worship. For me ... just like winter's Christmas, spring's Easter was a special day, a day that deserved a new church dress, anklets, a bonnet, a little purse and maybe even new shoes. (Like this picture) Were you raised with white shoes for spring and summer? Black for fall and winter. The Easter bunny always left two baskets for us, one at home and one at Grandma and Grandpa's. For Jon, the tame Easter bunny left pastel eggs and candy inside his Grandma and Grandpa Stewart's house; but the wild Easter Bunny left naturally dyed wild eggs outside. I'll never forget the year the Easter the bunny left me a candy car. The car's body was made out of a strawberry Three Musketeer's, my very favorite candy bar. The car had Life Saver wheels, and a marshmallow peep driver. It was THE BEST. Don't ya just love Easter candy! Jelly beans, Reese's eggs, Cadbury eggs and peeps! To this day, I love those hard sugary pastel Easter egg candies. I think the reason I like them so much is because my siblings hated 'em, so I got all theirs. Growing up, the Saturday night before Easter definitely NOT as exciting as Christmas Eve, but I remember having to shower and wash my hair so my mom could set my hair in curlers. My hair's naturally curly. I didn't need curlers. So, when my mom tried to comb out my curled hair there'd be these impossible lumps all over my head. Hated sleeping on curlers. (See the lumps?) Hated the way they made my hair all lumpy. Hated the anklets I was forced to wear, too. But, always loved my new Easter dress. Off we went to church all dressed up in our Easter Sunday best. Easter Sunday meant a packed church. Had to leave a little earlier to make sure we got our place in our pew. It was hard to sit through church knowing we'd be going to Grandma and Grandpas for Easter dinner and ANOTHER Easter basket. We sat on the side of the church that faced this mural. Every Sunday FOR 13 years, I stared at that mural. It's the mural on the wall of the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rock Falls Illinois. The mural depicts Mary weeping outside Jesus' tomb Easter morning. What are you feeling as you look at the mural? Imagine Mary's feelings. Grief, fear, despair, sadness maybe even anger. So devoted, she's gone to his tomb to anoint her favorite Teacher's body with burial spices. But, he's NOT there. Was there more violence and shame? Another scandal to endure? Did someone do more denigrating of Jesus' person and mission by taking his body? The mural invites us into Mary's agonizing sorrow and hopelessness. These days, it's not hard to relate to her feelings. We're enduring, enduring a pandemic, enduring an economic crisis, enduring a mental health crisis, racial tensions, protests, mass shootings, a highly polarized political climate, an insurrection, record-breaking inflation, and now the war in Ukraine. This is Russia's worst confrontation in decades. The world's on edge. This nation's on edge. Do you feel like you're living on edge? The last two years have felt like we're

living the movie Jumanji. And don't we worry about what's coming next. It's not hard to relate to Mary. Life can feel so hopeless. Hopeless can easily become the lens through which we view life. About life, how hopeful would you say you are?

Still, most days I'm beyond a 100% hopeful, an eternal optimist. HOPE's one of my favorite faith constructs, hope, love and grace! Hope drives me. Hope sustains me. Like love and grace, hope's everything to me. So much so, over my 16 years in pastoral ministry, God's inspired me to lead community worship services to help the community hope when all seemed hopeless. First in Earlville, after the very talented, whole future ahead of her senior class president was T-boned in a very serious car accident. A man from Mendota suffered a stroke and crashed his car into hers. There was so much hope she'd survive and until there wasn't. She died almost a month after the crash. Like Mary, the entire community grieved. Bright pink and neon green bows of solidarity and support were tied around the town's every post and pole. I led a Service of Hope to help the community find hope again. When I served in Prophetstown, 7 business burned to the ground. Two days after the fire I led the community in a prayer service in the park. A year later I led the community in a celebration of hope. I called it Hope Prophetstown Strong. All of it meant to support the community and help them hope again. And, here at Ottawa First, we've endured some very tragic and hard losses together. Sudden deaths and the tornado. Remember very early on, when our financial future seemed pretty hopeless...I remember the worship service where I challenged us to hold onto hope with the words the prophet Jeremiah received from God that say: I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope. When everything seems so hopeless how can I hope? How can I preach hope? Truth is I preach hope to help me keep on hoping, especially when so much of our circumstances, church, culture, nation and world suggests otherwise. HOPE! But, you might be like other parishioners over the years who've said things to me like, "Pastor, you're always so hopeful. You're a real Pollyanna! Or, how can you hope at a time like this?" "You still have hope even in the face of such a tragedy?" Even my kids have said, "Mom this is not the time to get all hopeful and optimistic on me." Hope's what helped me hang on these last two very hard years. You see, we don't hope in our abilities. We don't hope in our circumstances. We don't hope in our elected officials or our government. We don't hope in our military might. We don't hope in our money and investments although all of that's helpful to living life. My friends...we hope because God gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Easter changes EVERYTHING. Easter's every day Good News is: hope. Easter hope's a vibrant, life-changing living hope. Imagine the hope that coursed through Mary's heart to fill her soul when she heard the resurrected Christ speak her name

at his tomb. Everything changed that very first Easter morning. Changed everything then. Changes everything now. Changes how we view what really matters in life, changes our perspective on how we face death and endure the loss of loved ones, changes how we view evil and suffering, changes how we see ourselves, how we see God, how we view history and how we'll live into the future. Jesus' life, death and resurrection shows us something about hope. Hope doesn't come from ignoring life's pain and suffering, hope comes from enduring the pain and suffering with a tenacious faith, with a living hope. Living hope remembers how God's acted in our lives in the past. Living hope remains in all our dark, empty tombs only to discover God is with us in every darkness. Living hope lives into the future trusting God will use the ashes of our pain, suffering and loss to birth some new thing. Easter celebrates a living hope that's a forever relationship with our loving God. Easter is a love and a light that shines living hope over death's shadows. Living hope trusts good will ultimately defeat evil. The late Billy Graham used to say, "I've read the last page of the Bible, and everything is going to be alright." Easter means there's hope, not just any ole' hope, not just a new hope; Easter means our hope is living hope. And, I wonder? Do you have a living hope? Hope's so important, hope's been researched. Turns out, when we have a clear hope, like the clear and certain knowledge our hope lives, when we have a clear hope, we're more likely to take the action needed to make our goals a reality. Hope pushes us to act, to put one foot in front of the other, to do something positive. How do we hope? We spend time with God. We seek to understand the person God's created us to be, our gifts, our strengths, our resources, our successes and our failures. We develop hope by making positive contributions to whatever we're a part of. We develop hope by consciously making the choice to trust God and proactively hope even in the face of life's every hard challenge great and small. We develop hope by confronting, not denying reality. Hope faces and admits what we have control over and what we don't. We hope by making hope our coping strategy. Hope helps us cope! Coping hope is living hope. Hope acts to help us see our reality and then focuses us on God possibilities. People who cope with hope are happier. People who cope with hope envision a better future. My friends, cope with a living hope, hope for every tomorrow, not because we know what tomorrow holds but because we can know who holds tomorrow. Christ's Spirit is our living hope; the living hope that forgives, that frees us from past, that knows love's power, that's strength when ours is lost. Hope's the anchor for our soul in life, in death and in life beyond death! Makes us all ETERNAL optimists! My prayer for you this Easter is that you know beyond any dark, shadowy doubt the living, loving hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, then may your living hope move you to do what you can to change the way things are. May your living hope move you to pray for an end to violence, evil and

injustice. May your living hope move you to hold onto Jesus' words to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me." May your living hope move you to go out into the world to share that living hope with everyone you meet. Christ is risen! Hope lives.

INVITATION TO GIVE God gave it all once and for all and God is still giving. God gives the living hope we know in Christ Jesus. Because God always gives us everything we need; we take this Easter opportunity is to give a gift that spreads Christ's living hope beyond the walls of Ottawa First United Methodist Church and into the community. There are envelopes in the pews or at each exit. Offering receptacles are also at each exit to receive your gift. If you're online you invited to send your gift to the church or use our website's secure Paypal giving option. But, now let's bow our heads and hearts to pray, thanking God for the opportunity and ability to give a gift.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION God of Every Good and Perfect Gift: This morning we give you praise, we give you glory, we give you thanks! We give you our gifts with resurrection hope, with a living hope humming in our hearts. Giving tunes our minds to your song of peace! And, so we joyfully give you these gifts, a tangible chorus of thanksgiving, a harmony of hope for you to use our gifts, just like you use us to bring your kingdom love to earth in Ottawa and beyond just as it is in heaven! We pray it so in the name of our source of living hope who is Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

†**CLOSING SONG** "He Lives" # 310

†**BENEDICTION & SENDING FORTH**

Be sent forth this Easter Sunday with Paul's words to the Romans and to us...May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope, an eternally optimistic, living hope.

AMEN

MUSIC AFTER WORSHIP

Sue Koeppel, Musician