

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LACONIA
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 5, 2026 9:30 A.M.

EASTER SUNDAY

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING AND JUST PEACE CHURCH



REV. ELIZA TWEEDY, PASTOR
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Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey
You are welcome in this place.

Introit **Christ Triumphant, Ever Reigning**

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship**

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed!

We praise Creation's God:

Blessing and honor, glory and power!

Let each single voice praise God:

Blessing and honor, glory and power!

Let all voices together praise God:

Blessing and honor, glory and power!

Let the great multitude of nations praise God:

Blessing and honor, glory and power!

With all Creation we praise God:

Blessing and honor, glory and power!

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Hosanna to the King!

Hymn 230 **Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain**

Tim Hazelton, Trumpet

Prayer of Confession***

Almighty God, Creator of the heavens and earth, we confess that we do not always live into the message of hope and salvation, the promise of eternal life.

We live in ways that make the here and now more important than the future.

We live in ways that put ourselves and our own success first over the needs of others and the long-term needs of the world.

Forgive us for our selfish ways and call us into the path of Christ, who humbled himself and gave himself up for us on the cross, so that death might be no more and that all can share in the joy of salvation and eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Moment of Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will

be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Beloved, hear the good news: even death cannot stop the love of Christ, in which we are all forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.

Anthem **Glory to God** **George Frideric Handel**

Scripture **John 20:1-18**

Sermon

Pastoral Prayer

Invitation to the Table+

On the night of betrayal, denial, and desertion, Jesus prepared his disciples for life beyond the tomb. He demonstrated with wine and bread what he would later perform in his flesh and blood.

Jesus wanted them to remember and to understand his solidarity and his sacrifice.

Jesus still prepares a place for each and all of us at this table. Will you come?

In awe and wonder, humility and thanksgiving, we come to the table to feast with the Risen One.

Communion Prayer

Prayer of Our Savior

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Blessing of the Elements

Sharing of the Elements

All of the elements are non-alcoholic and gluten-free. Please take from the trays as they are passed, and hold the elements so we can all partake together.

Prayer of Thanksgiving+

Holy One, thank you for this feast at your table. As we receive bread and cup, may we encounter your grace and be filled with your love. May we go forward from this table with great joy, ever seeking your resurrecting presence among us and discerning your call for us to be present for our neighbors in the world. By your spirit, we pray.

Holy, Holy, Holy One, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God. Hosanna in the Highest!

Invitation to Offering

Offertory **Now the Green Blade Riseth** **John Carter**

Prayer of our Savior

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Reading 4 Matthew 26:47-56

Granville Barrows

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. **48** Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." **49** At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. **50** Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands-on Jesus and arrested him. **51** Suddenly one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. **52** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. **53** Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" **55** At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a rebel? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. **56** But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Blessing of the Elements

Holy one, we remember that when the time was right, you sent Jesus to be among us.

Born into this life, seeing your grace revealed in all things, he laughed with those who laughed, and mourned with those who mourned. Through your love, he healed our brokenness, he welcomed the outcast, he challenged those in power and the structures that kept them there.

And he called us back to your love.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christ laughs and cries, heals and welcomes, challenges and loves, again and again and again.

We have been told that, on the night before he was taken to be tortured to death on a cross, Jesus sat with his disciples, and ate with them, in a meal of remembrance.

Jesus took a loaf of bread, asked your blessing upon it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:

"Take this – all of you – and eat it. This is me. My Body. Given for you. Each time you eat it, remember me."

Close to the meal's end, he took a cup filled with wine, asked your blessing upon it, and gave it to his disciples saying:

"Take this – all of you – and drink it. This is me. This is my promise in my life's blood - poured out for you and for the world. Each time you drink it, remember me."

O God of all, we ask your blessing upon this bread and this cup, and upon all of us who renew our covenant with you. Through this meal, may we be one Body in Christ, renewed and blessed in your holy love. Amen.

Reading 5 Matthew 26:57-27:2

Beth Shehadi

57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. **58** But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. **59** Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, **60** but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward **61** and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" **62** The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" **63** But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." **64** Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of Power
and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. **66** What do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death." **67** Then they spat in his face and struck him, and some slapped him, **68** saying, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?"

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A female servant came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." **70** But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." **71** When he went out to the porch, another female servant saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene." **72** Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." **73** After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." **74** Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. **75** Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. **2** They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

Reading 6 Matthew 27:11-26

Catherine Tokarz

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so."

12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. **13** Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" **14** But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. **16** At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus[g] Barabbas. **17** So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" **18** For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. **19** While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." **20** Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. **21** The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." **22** Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" **23** Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." **25** Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" **26** So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified.

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.*

Prayer of Dedication*

Holy Love, receive these gifts as seeds given in thanksgiving for your generosity. Let us rejoice in giving just as the sun dances in its power. Help us to nourish these offerings to meet the needs of our community and to witness your goodness. We dedicate them to the flourishing of your kingdom. Amen.

***Hymn 233**

Christ the Lord is Risen Today

***Benediction**

Benediction Response

Peace be with You Alleluia

Laura Belanger

Postlude

Toccata in C Minor

Leon Boellmann

Written in 1895, Boellmann's Fiery Toccata is the 4th movement of his famed Suite Gothique. The 2nd movement, Menuet, was played for the Postlude on March 22nd.

*** Please stand**

written by the Reverend Susan A. Blain and posted on the United Church of Christ's **Worship Ways website. http://www.ucc.org/worship_worship-ways

***written by Rev. Mindi, on her **Rev-o-lution** blog. <http://rev-o-lution.org/> and Romans 8:38

-written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ, and posted on the United Church of Christ's **Worship Ways** website. http://www.ucc.org/worship_worship-ways

Coffee Hour Happy Easter! All Church Coffee Hour

Book Club – April 22nd 1p.m. in the Library Cherished Belonging by Gregory Boyle

Women's Breakfast April 15th, 8:30AM at the Water Street Cafe

Men's Breakfast April 17th, 8:00 AM at the Water Street Café

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ministry of the church!



<https://www.laconiaucc.org/giving/>

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you want to revisit? Or
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