

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay – Liturgy

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

Easter Sunday – April 20, 2025

### Call to Worship

Words of faith's story help celebrate this day of resurrection:

**God creates a new heaven and a new earth, be glad and rejoice!**

God's steadfast love endures forever; the Lord has become our salvation.

**The stone was rolled away—he is not here, he is risen.**

We say with joy: Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!**

Written by the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls  
Presbyterian World Service & Development Agency Easter Liturgy 2025

### \*Hymn

*Jesus Christ is risen today*

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### Prayers of Adoration and Confession

On this Easter, as on that first day long ago, you come, Steadfast Love, continuing to walk with us on this strange pilgrimage of worry, fear, and loss, showing us the good news of the empty tomb, calling us to run and tell everyone of the new life which is ours.

On this Easter morning, as on that early first morning, you wait and watch, Gardener of the seeds of love, hope, and grace you planted deep within us, as we stand amazed at the harvest of hope and life which is handed to us this day as you call us by our names.

In those early morning moments, Spirit of the broken-hearted friends, you whispered of that love which cannot be held behind the stones of our fears and doubts, of that hope which puts grave clothes into bandages for the hurting, of that grace which turns cartwheels in the gardens of our hearts, even as you whisper them to us.

On this Easter, as on every day, your grace, your peace, your love gives us new life and hope, God in Community, Holy in One

### Call to Confession

We don't have to tell you, but we need to remind ourselves, of how our actions, words, inattention cause harm to others. Yet, this is the day, as on every day, when God calls us by name, filling us with grace, and making us whole. Let us bring all we have done to God, for mercy and hope. Let us pray together, saying,

### Prayer for Forgiveness

**In our foolishness, we think this old story has nothing to do with us, God of Imagination, and so we miss the incredible news that love has triumphed over**

hate, goodness has defeated evil, that life has broken the power of death and the grave.

Yet, this is a day of joy, of wonder, of grace which never ends, God of every life, God of very life. So, may we push aside the stone of indifference we have rolled across our hearts, so we may be reminded that this old story is new every moment, that those ancient promises still hold true, that we are the ones by called by the Gardener of grace, Jesus our Brother, who calls us by name and anoints us with resurrection love. Amen.

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## Assurance of Pardon

This Easter Day, God has turned our mourning into dancing!  
God has taken off our sackcloth and clothed us with joy!  
We are God's forgiven people.  
Let us be at peace with God, with one another, and with ourselves,  
through the undying mercy of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Scripture Readings

With a dramatic monologue based on the Easter Story as told in Luke's Gospel

2025-4-20 Easter-Sunday-Dramatic-Reading-Year C. Presbyterian Church in Canada.

### First Reading: Easter Returns – Luke 23:55 – 24:3

<sup>55</sup>The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. <sup>56</sup>Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

<sup>1</sup>But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body.

### Reflection: *I witness*

It's funny looking back.  
We were so worried about that stone,  
who would move it for us so we could get into the tomb.  
There were only a few of us that morning.  
I just forget who was there besides Mary and Joanna and me.  
But we didn't think a few women could move the boulder on our own.  
Isn't that the way, though?  
You get so focused on the problem you *expect*,  
spend all your worry on that one thing –  
and then it's something completely different that changes your day –  
changes your life!  
The tomb was already open when we got there –  
like a mouth in the rock shouting at us.

But we couldn't hear its joy.  
We were so fixed on what we expected to do.  
We wanted to honour Jesus.  
Honour his body after all he'd been through.  
But isn't that the way, though?  
You have a plan.  
You know how things *ought* to happen.  
And then God turns your world upside down.  
At that moment,  
when we couldn't find the body,  
we didn't know what was going on.  
Didn't have a clue.  
I was a witness.  
I was there.  
We looked and looked,  
and all we could see was an empty stone ledge.

### **Unison Prayer**

**God of mystery, we have made it here on Easter morning, seeking to find you.  
We *know* the Easter story yet we do not always *understand* what is happening.  
Open our hearts to be surprised, just as the women were when they found the tomb empty. Amen.**

### **Second Reading: Perplexed and dazzled – Luke 24.3-5**

<sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.

### **Reflection continues: *I witness***

We were perplexed, all right.  
We had been there  
when they handed Jesus over to the soldiers.  
He could barely walk by his own strength.  
And we were there while he was hanging on that cross.  
We saw him die;  
we heard him die.  
We watched as they took his body down.  
We followed Joseph to the tomb.  
We were there, all of us women.  
I was a witness.  
We were there.  
After the Sabbath, we were ready.

We had the spices;  
we had it all worked out.  
But we weren't counting on angels.  
I ask you,  
do you expect an angel, dazzling in your eyes  
on the saddest day of your life?  
They were so bright, we threw ourselves on the ground in front of them.  
But those angels,  
they sounded as if we should have known better!  
"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"  
Well, Angel, were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Did you see him suffer?  
Did you hear him breathe his last desperate breath?  
I was a witness.  
I was there.  
My heart was broken on Friday.  
And you don't get over a broken heart in a couple of days!  
But then hindsight is so much clearer, isn't it?  
When I look back now,  
after all these years,  
I can see how God was at work.  
In Jesus.  
In our very midst.  
All those years.  
But face to face with that angel, I didn't know what to say.  
Still, my heart started to beat a little faster.  
Jesus definitely was not there.  
But I was.  
I was a witness.  
And he was not there.

### **Unison Prayer**

**God of mystery, we can understand why those women were perplexed.  
We know the Easter story but we do not understand *how* things happened as  
that day dawned. Yet your gift of hope is dazzling to us, too. We would like to  
believe that death is not the end. And so we sing our song in hope:**

### **Third Reading:** Remember? Luke 24.5b-11

He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary

Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

**Reflection continues: *I witness***

Remember how he told you...

Remember?

Of course we remembered being with Jesus in Galilee.

We women were always there,  
watching, listening, herding the children, organizing lunch.

Of course we remembered Jesus in Galilee.

How he spoke.

How he taught us that God's kingdom was like a woman baking,  
flour up to her elbows, waiting for the yeast to rise.

Jesus had been watching us, listening to us, too.

I remember

how he loved the children near by, under his feet.

I remember how he loved a good meal, a good laugh.

I remember how he loved to tell a good story,  
how he made me think.

I was there in Galilee.

I was a witness.

I remember when he told us that the Son of Man would be rejected and killed.

But I didn't want to hear it.

I didn't want to believe Jesus would *die*.

Not so soon.

Not in so much pain.

I remember

but I didn't want to.

Not then.

Then again, hindsight is so much clearer, isn't it?

When I look back now,

after all these years,

I can see how God was at work.

In Jesus.

In our very midst.

Right beside us all those years.

I remember his clear hope

that all God's people would come from east and west, from north and south  
to eat together in God's kingdom.

I just didn't understand Jesus would have to *die*  
to bring people to the table together.

To make peace between us.

Still, I remember when he was dying.  
With his last breath, he said to God,  
“Into your hands I commend my spirit.”

I was a witness.

I was there.

And now I see he was giving his spirit to us;  
putting his spirit into our hands  
so that we can take his peace with us wherever we go.  
To bring all God’s people to the table together.

Jesus rises in us,  
in his friends,  
in our broken hearts.

He rises to put us back together again  
so we can befriend the world,  
make peace for all God’s people in his name.

Hindsight is so much clearer, isn’t it?

When I look back now,  
I can see how God was at work.

In Jesus.

In our very midst.

And still is.

That morning,  
when we remembered what we’d known all along,  
we ran back to tell the others.

Jesus is risen.

And we’ve got work to do – in his name.

You know what those disciples said?

It’s all idle chatter.

An old wives’ tale.

But I know.

I was there.

I was a witness.

And as Peter found out,  
Hindsight is always so much clearer!

**Fourth Reading:** Amazed by grace! Luke 24:12

<sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

**We Respond to God’s Word**

## Invitation to the offering

You plant the seeds of grace, peace, love, and justice into our hearts, God of every morning, and with the tangible gifts we have as well, we can offer new hope and healing to those around us.

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We gather our gifts together and present them as an offering of gratitude and praise.

## Prayers of the People

God of power and possibility, you broke open the tomb that held our Lord.  
Now break open your church, worried over differences and disagreements,  
uncertain about the way ahead in mission and service.  
Guide us with your wise and creative Spirit.  
Resurrect, renew and revive your church!

God of resurrection and new life, you broke into the hearts of Jesus' fearful friends.  
Now break into our relationships with one another.  
Where they are vibrant and life-giving, nurture them.  
Where they are strained by misunderstanding or neglect, reconcile them.  
Heal us with your merciful and engaging Spirit.  
Resurrect, renew and revive our life together!

God of might and mercy,  
you broke open the schemes of those who stood in the way of your love.  
Now break open the governance of your world.  
Stir the minds and hearts of leaders to work for justice and equitable sharing.  
Where laws are corrupt, where deception masquerades as truth,  
and where people suffer under the schemes of those who lust for power,  
confront people with your Spirit of truth and compassion.  
Resurrect, renew and revive the community of nations!

God of healing and hope,  
you broke the bonds of death which tried to shackle new life.  
Now break into situations of illness, pain, grief, and loss.  
Wherever people are sick in body, mind, or spirit,  
and wherever people mourn the loss of a loved one or a cherished future,  
embrace each one with your Spirit of comfort and courage.  
Resurrect, renew and revive our lives!

God of Easter Renewal and Resurrection,  
you have broken into our lives again this day.  
Break into all our moments of celebration and joy,  
As well as the circumstances we name in silence before you.  
By your Spirit, give us gratitude, generosity  
and the grace to understand each other.

Resurrect, renew and revive our souls and spirits!

Now we pray in one voice the words that Jesus gave us:

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Sunday. April 20, 2025. Year C.

## Lord's Prayer

**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**

## We are Sent out as God's People

## Hymn

*Lord of the dance*

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## Benediction

We have encountered the God  
who has power over even death.  
We are witnesses to what God has done.  
Go now, as long as God gives you breath,  
as witnesses to others,  
sharing the joy of what God can yet do  
in their lives and ours,  
through Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

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## Postlude