

While It Was Still Dark



Easter Sunday

4/17 @ 10am, LIVE! On-Site & Online

Connect at www.NeedhamUCC.org

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CHORAL INTROIT

What Wondrous Love Is This

Chancel Choir

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this! that caused the Lord of bliss,
to bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the heavy cross for my soul!*

*And now from death we're free, we'll sing on, we'll sing on,
and now from death we're free, we'll sing on!
And now from death we're free, we'll sing and joyful be,
and through eternity, we'll sing on, we'll sing on,
and through eternity we'll sing on!*

WELCOME

Rev. John MacIver Gage & Rev. Maddie Foster

THE STORY OF THIS DAY

While the music begins to play, you are invited to come forward and use your own flowers or those provided to “bloom” the cross.

HYMN

Christ the Lord is Risen Today (see below)

SERMON

“While It Was Still Dark”

Rev. John MacIver Gage

PRAYER LITANY

One: There's a path that winds its way through darkness. We would choose to avoid it if we could. But we awake in the night to an unexpected calling. God says, “Come, there are gifts in the dark.”

Many: Setting aside sight and certainty, we engage our whole hearts to learn to walk in the dark.

One: Like Moses, we enter the cloud of unknowing on the mountaintop to learn truths hidden by the glare of artificial light.

Many: Like Mary, we delve into the tomb to encounter a mystery shrouded in shadow:

One: That while it is still dark, while it is still night, while we cannot see, while we think death holds sway, while we grieve, while we weep,

Many: while it is still dark, resurrection begins.

All: Let us worship God in spirit and in truth, in word and in deed.

SHARING OUR PRAYERS (“O God, hear our prayer”)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using these or whichever words are closest to your own heart)

Our Father in heaven, holy is your name. Your reign come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM

Now the Green Blade Rises, arr. D. McCullough

Chancel Choir

*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain, wheat that in dark earth many days has lain.
Love lives again, that with the dead has been. Love is come again like wheat arising green
In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain, thinking that we would never wake again.
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen: Love is come again like wheat arising green.
Forth he came at Easter like the risen grain, he that for three days in the grave had lain.
Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen: Love is come again like wheat arising green.
When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain, your touch can call us back to life again.
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been: Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

HOLY COMMUNION *(together, using whatever food & drink you have on hand)*

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PART OF THE GOOD NEWS

HYMN

Christ is Alive! (see below)

CHARGE & BLESSING

*Some of our flowers today have been given to the glory of God and
in loving memory of Fritz & Esther Ohrn*



LAST CHANCE! Donate to Help Ukraine: All donations will go directly to Diakonia Kościoła Ewangelicko-Augsburskiego w RP, a Polish Lutheran group that is working on the ground to help the millions of Ukrainian refugees both in Poland and Ukraine. **You may give online through PayPal [here](#)** and selecting "Ukraine Relief from the dropdown menu. You also may send a check, made out to The Congregational Church of Needham with "Ukraine" in the memo line. **Please give generously.**



NEXT SUNDAY! Earth Day Worship

4/24 @ 10am EDT LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom

In our faith tradition, God calls to be stewards of creation, to “take care of it and look after it” (Genesis 2:15). But as Buddhist teacher, activist, and poet Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us, that “it” is us, and we care for the earth not out of external obligation but from an intimate place of love. Now, when creation is suffering so, it’s a good time to remember that... and to say it, out loud, maybe even write it down.



Save the Date & REGISTER NOW!

Family Promise Metrowest Walk to End Homelessness

Natick based Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) runs four programs which provide a continuum of support to families in varying stages of housing insecurity. Our church is a support congregation for the Shelter Program. A major source of funding for FPM is the annual Walk to End Homelessness. This year our church is teaming up with Temple Beth Shalom in Needham to offer an Interfaith walk Saturday 5/14 @ 9:30-11am from our

church to the temple and back. **Register NOW** at

<https://familypromisemetrowest.salsalabs.org/walktoendhomelessness> (or clicking the Walk to End

Homelessness link on our webpage at www.NeedhamUCC.org). Simply find our team (Congregational Church of Needham - Interfaith Walkers), then select “Join the Team.”



Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day,—
Let the Vic - tor's peo - ple sing,— Al - le - lu - ia!
Love's re - deem - ing work is done,—
Soar we now where Christ has led,—

Mor - tal tongues and an - gels say:—
Where, O death, is now your sting?
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won,— Al - le - lu - ia!
Fol - l'wing our ex - alt - ed Head,

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high,—
Dy - ing once, Christ lives to save,— Al - le - lu - ia!
Death in vain for - bids Christ rise,—
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise,—

Sing, glad heav'ns, and earth re - ply:—
Where your vic - to - ry, O grave?
God has o - pened par - a - dise,— Al - le - lu - ia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,—

Christ is Alive!

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris-tians sing. The cross stands
2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift and war, where col - or,
4 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The melody is primarily in the upper staff, with accompaniment in the lower staff.

em - pty to the sky. Let streets and homes with praises
years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing, here and
scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet loves the
this and ev - ery age, till earth and sky and o - cean

The second system of music continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. It features similar rhythmic patterns and chordal structures.

ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
now, and touch - ing ev - ery place and time.
more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
ring with joy, with jus - tice, love and praise.

The third system of music concludes the piece. It features a final cadence with a double bar line at the end of the upper staff. The lower staff also concludes with a double bar line.