

# While It Was Still Dark



Easter Sunday

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

**Connect at [www.NeedhamUCC.org](http://www.NeedhamUCC.org)**

## **The Congregational Church of Needham, *United Church of Christ***

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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

## 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*

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**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.**

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**NEXT SUNDAY! Earth Day Worship  
4/24 @ 10am EDT LIVE! on-site & online via  
Zoom**

In our faith tradition, God calls us 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](http://www.NeedhamUCC.org)). Simply find our team (Congregational Church of Needham - Interfaith Walkers), then select “Join the Team.”

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Saturday ♣ June 11, 9am-1pm

# Flea *Marché*

yard sale treasures, crafts, & treats

**Itching to help?**  
We need you. Let's talk.  
Email [caroloberle@gmail.com](mailto:caroloberle@gmail.com)

## **Christ the Lord is Risen Today**

Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, glad heav'ns, and earth reply: Alleluia!

Let the Victor's people sing, Alleluia!  
Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!  
Dying once, Christ lives to save, Alleluia!  
Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!  
God has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!  
Foll'wing our exalted Head, Alleluia!  
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Alleluia!  
Our the cross, the grace, the skies, Alleluia!

## **Christ is Alive!**

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where color, scorn, or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.