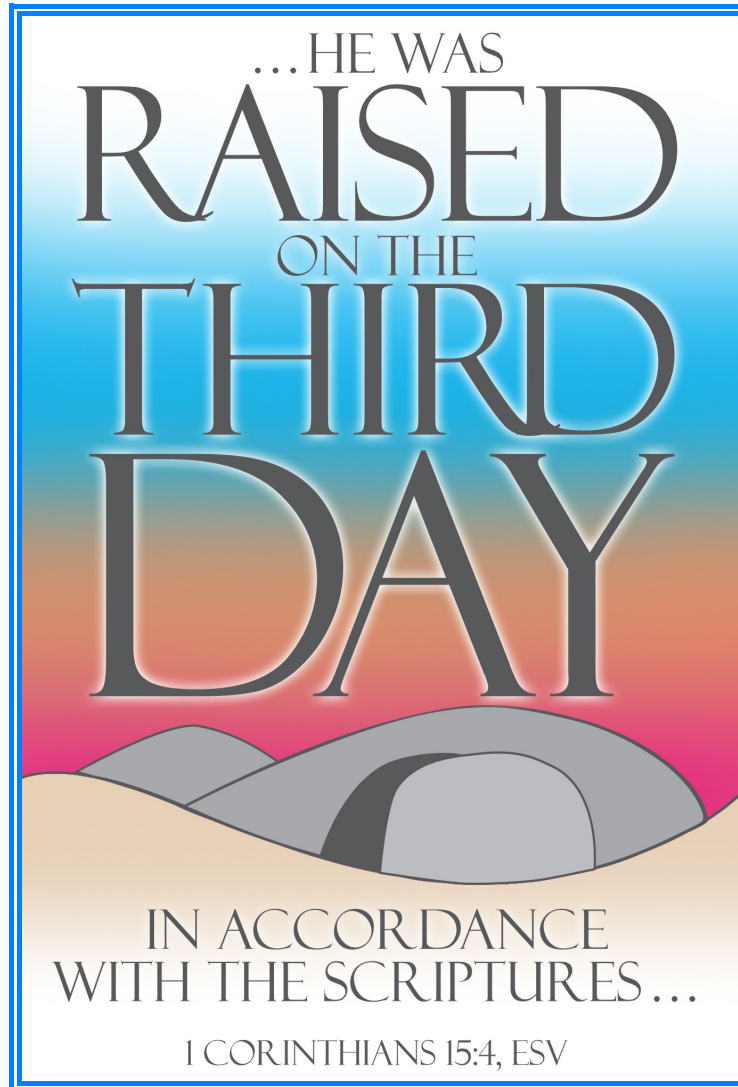


St. Paul's United Church of Christ

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551
610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org
Worship 10:30am

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you're welcome here.*



***Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Online Streaming Worship Service***

*May God's loving presence be very real to you,
and may you receive strength and guidance today
That will enable you to handle life's challenges.*



**Sunday, April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday**

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

We Gather

*We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God,
and provide for one another our love, support, and care.*

A TIME OF GATHERING

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*{To center your hearts and minds,
you are invited to individually offer this prayer silently during or before the Prelude}*

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP ^②

Holy God, we greet the dawning brightness of this special day with hopes renewed. We have known grief and sorrow, loss and tears, fears and failure. Meet us here, living Christ, for we need this time of resurrection. We need your healing presence. We need your word of greeting that welcomes us into the community of faith in spite of our doubts and faithlessness. You are the Great Teacher. We have come to learn from you. We want to be your disciples. Amen.

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

vs 1 & 2

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*INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

*GREETING *(Leader)*

Grace to you from Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and is to come.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, on this most holy morning after our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life, we gather with all the church throughout the world in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of Jesus Christ: Through light and the word, through water and the bread and wine, we recall Christ's death and resurrection, we share Christ's triumph over sin and death, and with invincible hope we await Christ's coming again.

Hear the word of God: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all humanity. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

*BLESSING OF NEW FIRE & LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE *(Leader)*

Let us pray. . .

Eternal God, giver of light and life, bless this new flame, that by its radiance and warmth we may respond to your love and grace, and be set free from all that separates us from you and from each other; through Jesus Christ, the Son of Righteousness.

Amen.

*HYMN

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

vs 3


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Our Lord Jesus Christ

LLANFAIR

Based on a 14th century Latin Hymn
4th stanza, CHARLES WESLEY, 1740 7.7.7.7. with Allotides

ROBERT WILLIAMS, 1917


Jubilantly


1. Je - sus Christ is risen to - day, Al - - le - lu - ia!

2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - - le - lu - ia!

3. But the pains which He en - dured, Al - - le - lu - ia!

4. Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - - le - lu - ia!


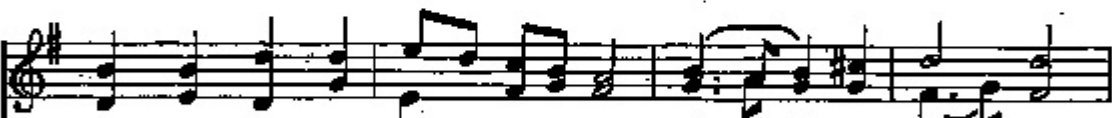



Our tri - um - phant ho - ly day, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Un - to Christ, our heaven - ly King, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Our sal - va - tion have pro - cured; Al - - le - lu - ia!

Praise e - ter - nal as His love; Al - - le - lu - ia!





Who did once up - on the cross, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Who en - dured the cross and grave, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Now a - bove the sky He's King, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Praise Him, all ye heaven - ly host, Al - - le - lu - ia!




Suf - fer to re - deem our loss, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Sin - ners to re - deem and save. Al - - le - lu - ia!

Where the an - gels ev - er sing, Al - - le - lu - ia!

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, Al - - le - lu - ia! A - MEN



***CALL TO PRAYER**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray....

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** ③

Leader: With the fire of Easter in our hearts, the story of salvation in our ears, the waters of baptism on our brow, and the bread and cup of the risen Christ to nourish us, let us pray for new life in the world, in the church, and among us now.

God of new life, on this most holy morning, the fire of your love for the world burns brightly. By the power of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, guide the nations of the world that wars may cease and needless human suffering be alleviated. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of new life, on this most holy morning, your church has heard again of your marvelous deeds, which have won salvation for the world. Empower your church to boldly proclaim Jesus' death and resurrection in all times and places. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of new life, on this most holy morning, the sun shines in the heavens, declaring your glory. Preserve our planet by your mercy, and enable us to care for the creatures that dwell on the earth, in the sky, and beneath the seas. Lord in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of new life, on this most holy morning the darkness is oppressive to those who wander homeless, to those who suffer from addictions, depression, or illness. Illumine them with resurrection's hope, for in you even the darkness is as the light. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of new life, on this most holy morning we give you thanks for the gift of holy baptism and for all in this place who seek to grow in its graces. Enrich those who teach the faith and those among us who are being nurtured and shaped by your grace. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of new life, on this most holy morning you hold us in communion with all who are united with Christ in life and in death. Keep us ever mindful of our fellowship with your saints of every time and place. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Hear our prayers, God of new life, for the sake of Jesus, crucified and risen, our Savior and Lord, in whose name we pray.

ALL: Amen.

We Repent

This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace, hear the assurance of our forgiveness, and then give God our thanks and praise.

*CALL TO CONFESSION[®] (Leader)

The risen Christ invites us to get rid of all the crumbs of malice and evil that linger within us, for they multiply like yeast in times of difficulty. It is not easy to identify the potential malignancy within us when everything is going well. We open ourselves to self-examination and humble confession to our God.

*CONFESSION OF SIN[®]

We cannot truly worship you, loving God, until we recognize how unloving we have been. We cannot truly live until we admit the many ways we have been dwelling in death. We cannot know forgiveness until we honestly face the wrong we have done and the good we have neglected. We admit before you now the anger and spite we have carried in our hearts, the doubts and fears we have allowed to paralyze us, the misplaced priorities that have led us away from your will and way. Help us break down the barriers we have erected so we can experience new life today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON[®] (Leader)

God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right finds forgiveness and acceptance. The One who came to embody love among people is ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. In Jesus' name, our sins are forgiven, and we are being saved. The grace of God is extended to each of us on this day of resurrection. Praise God! **Amen.**

{Please be seated}

We Hear the Word of God

*We seek to learn more about God's love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.
We believe the Bible to be the "inspired word of God."
Gospel (which means "Good News") refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians' most central books of the Bible.*

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

First Lesson: [Acts 10:34-43](#)
Second Lesson: [Revelation 3:15-22](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Mark 16:1-8](#)

HYMN

"Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er"

vs 1, 2 & 3

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er

VICTORY 8.8.8. with Alleluia

Latin: 17th century
Tr. Francis Pott, 1859

Arr. from G. P. Sante da Palestrina, 1591
William H. Monk, 1861

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

1. The strife is o'er, the bat - tie done; Now is the
2. Death's might-iest pow'rs have done their worst, And Je - sus
3. On the third morn, he rose a - gain Glo - rious in
4. Lord, by the stripes that wound - ed thee From death's dread

vic - tor's tri - umph won; Now be the song of
has his foes dis - persed; Let shouts of praise and
maj - es - ty to reign; O let us swell the
sting thy ser - vants free, That we may live and

D.S.
praise be - gun:
joy out - burst:
joy - ful strain: Al - le - lu - ia!
sing to thee:

We Respond with Thanks

*We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped,
we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have
learned more about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by
re-affirming our faith in God,
praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world,
and giving of ourselves for the sake of the mission and ministry of Jesus
Christ.*

{Those who are able, please rise}

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison) "Apostles' Creed"

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended to the dead;
on the third day he rose again,
ascended into heaven,
and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

{Please be seated}

OFFERTORY INVITATION ^①

Leader: When we have seen the Christ,

People: that makes all the difference in our view of life.

Leader: When we have encountered life,

People: we can no longer pursue the ways of death.

Leader: When we realize how much we have received from a loving God,

People: our gratitude pours forth in eagerness to share good news with the world.

RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

[Online Giving](#)

[Click here](#)

{Those who are able, please rise}

*OFFERTORY PRAYER ^② (Leader)

Almighty God, we consecrate all we have brought to share, that the message of today may spread through the streets and across the lands, beginning within these walls and bursting out for all the world to hear and observe. May the glad songs motivate practical ministries. As forgiven and forgiving people, we take new life into the marketplace, into our jobs and schools, into our social life and leisure hours. May all we offer express true thankfulness. **Amen.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion ^{①④}

*The Sacrament of Holy Communion is the central act of Christian worship, bringing us more fully together with one another and the Triune God, through the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
(Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26, Luke 22:14-23, John 13:21-30)*

*INVITATION

Leader: Dearly beloved in the Lord: Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood, that it might be the abiding memorial of his atoning death; the seal of his perpetual presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit; the mystical representation of the sacrifice of himself on the cross; the pledge of his undying love for his people; and the bond of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time.

ALL: The celebration of the Lord's Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. What we do here is not merely with signs, but with the realities these signs represent. We seek to approach the Lord's Table rightly, striving to be devout and repentant, with a believing mind.

Leader: We cordially invite to partake of this Sacrament all who are truly grieved and penitent for their sins, who look to the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation, who abide in the fellowship of his Church, and who desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways. To all such the compassionate Redeemer himself says: Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

*COMMUNION PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader:

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who made humankind in your own image, and whose tender mercies are over all your works.

We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none.

We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless.

We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory. We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory.

We give thanks to you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy.

{Please be seated}

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader:

Lord, we remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**ALL: Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Ordained Minister:

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We offer you these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service in behalf of all people.

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, both here at this table in this sanctuary and in the homes of those who are gathered as the church even though separated by physical distance, and bless us that as we receive them at this table and in our homes, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united in communion with Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things.

ALL: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *(Unison)*

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: grant us peace.

CALL TO THE SUPPER

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.
Come, for all things are ready.

BREAKING THE BREAD, RAISING THE CUP, AND SHARING THE ELEMENTS

*{For those who have the pre-filled cups:
open the first seal - unleavened bread wafer}*

Pastor: The Body of Christ broken for you. Take and eat.

People: **Amen.**

{You may eat the bread}

*{For those who have the pre-filled cups:
open the second seal - the fruit of the vine - grape juice}*

Pastor: The Blood of Christ shed for you. Take and drink.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

{You may drink the wine or grape juice}

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: **Amen.**

We Are Sent Out

*In response to God's love and grace,
we go out into the world to share God's Good News
through our words and actions.*

*COMMISSION ²

Leader: Continue to sing the glad songs of victory.
Dare to live the welcoming message of God's grace.

People: **Christ has appeared to us in the joy of this day.
We have been empowered to reach out to others.**

Leader: The One who was rejected holds the key to life.
The key of unconditional love is passed on to us.

People: **We have seen the risen Christ, and we are changed.
We have been chosen as witnesses to resurrection.**

ALL: **Amen.**

*BENEDICTION

*SENDING HYMN

"Christ Arose"

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*{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us,
as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world}.*

Christ Arose 357

It was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him. Acts 2:24

1. Low in the grave He lay- Je - sus, my Sav - ior! Wait - ing the
 2. Vain - ly they watch His bed- Je - sus, my Sav - ior! Vain - ly they
 3. Death can - not keep his prey- Je - sus, my Sav - ior! He tore the

*Refrain
faster*

com - ing day- Je - sus, my Lord! Up from the grave He a - rose, With a
 seal the dead- Je - sus, my Lord! He a - rose,
 here a - way- Je - sus, my Lord!

might - y tri - umph o'er His foes. He a - rose a vic - tor from this
 He a - rose!

dark do - main, And He lives for - ev - er with His saints to reign. He a -

rosel He a - rose! He a - rose! Hal - le - lu - jah! Christ a - rose!
 He a - rose! He a - rose!

TEXT: Robert Lowry
 MUSIC: Robert Lowry

CHRIST AROSE
 6.5.6.4, with Refrain



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² *Led by Love* by Lavon Bayler. (1996). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

³ *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. (1995). Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis and Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia.

⁴ Reprinted with permission from *Sundays and Seasons*. (2020). Augsburg Fortress.

⁵ Reprinted with permission from the *Order of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States*. and/or *The Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*. (1985). New York: United Church Press.

⁶ Reprinted with permission from *Sourcebook of Worship Services*

⁷ scouting.org - resources for Boy Scouts of America

⁸ Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2020).

⁹ *Lecturn Resource*. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.

¹⁰ Sunday Sermons Preaching Resources. (2017). Margate, NJ.

¹¹ Edmonds, Robert Lee (Editor). (2008). *In Our Own Way; Living a Scouting Life Through Faith; A Handbook of Prayer and Devotion*. Dallas, TX: Red Honor Press

¹² Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.

¹³ Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.

¹⁴ The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz

¹⁵ The Love Feast liturgy was primarily designed and written by United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia A. Wilson (2018) at umcdiscipleship.org, with adaptations from: the Rev. Tamie Scalise, Richard Stowe (author of *The Love Feast*), moravianmusic.org, moravian.org, and the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz.

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Resources are edited and adapted for use in this worship service.



The Flow of the Worship Service

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

- (1) God welcomes us and invites us
- (2) We respond to God's call by worshipping Him
- (3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace
- (4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace
- (5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon
- (6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer
- (7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure
- (8) We experience greater oneness with God and each another through Communion
- (9) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others

† Prayer List †

Please lift up those listed here in your prayers this week.

“Pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” ~ James 5:16b

Medical Concerns:

Sam B.
Rich D.
Rob & Jodi S.
Jim S.
George M.
Starr M.
Paul P.
Robin L.
Alex
Jacob E.
Fred R.
Ella L.
Terry O.
Rev. David K.
Diane M.
Lori & Ryan B.

Medical Concerns:

Ann H.
Lenna H.
Mildred U.
Julie R.
Jim & Donna K.

Mourning:

Family & Friends of Marilyn W.
Family & Friends of Barb B.
Family & Friends of Rev. Bill W.
Family & Friends of Elaine R. (mother of Barb D.)

Social Concerns:

Those impacted by COVID-19
Those working on a vaccine for COVID-19

Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you.

All are welcome to add names to the prayer list.

Names are generally left on the list for about four weeks.

Please let us know if you would like a name to remain longer or shorter.

*If you would like someone's name added to the prayer list,
please contact the church office at 610-621-5770 or office@sprucc.org.*

††† General Announcements †††

Welcome!

We are glad that you are here to worship with us virtually. May you find the worship and message meaningful and satisfying to your soul. May your week be blessed.

In-Person Worship

On April 25, Good Shepherd Sunday, we will return to a hybrid worship service. Worship will be offered both virtually and as an outside in-person worship in the church parking lot at 10:30am.

In-Person Sunday School

Beginning Sunday, May 2, 2021, the church will be returning to in-person Sunday school for children and adults. Classes will begin at 9:00am and finish at 10:00am.

Although currently we are still not meeting in-person, the youth can continue to learn about God's Word through the information available on our website. We have Sunday school music, videos, and an assortment of other materials that are available for downloading. Click on this link for [Sunday school for youth](#).

We also have devotional music for all ages on our website, courtesy of Pastor Bob. Click on this link for [Devotional Music](#).

For our Sunday school [COVID-19 Safety Precautions](#) click on the following link:

<http://www.sprucc.org/news-a-events.html#COVID19Precautions>

To have a copy of the precautions mailed to you, please call 610-621-5770.

Telephone Live Streaming & Playback Worship

This service is being offered to those who do not have internet access. You may call us at our toll free number **1-888-649-5770** and listen to the worship service live using a landline or cell phone. (No internet, smartphone, tablet, or computer is necessary - this works with a standard corded phone, cell phone, or even with a rotary phone). You also have the option for the church to automatically call you when the live stream worship begins (rather than you calling the church); which you can sign up for at the above toll free number, or you can call the church office, and we can add you to the call list. If you have any questions, difficulties, or issues, please let us know by calling the office at 610-621-5770. There is no charge to you for this service. If you know of someone who does not have internet access, please let them know of this feature, especially as they cannot log onto the website and find out about this themselves.

Weekly Lectionary Bible Study

Every Tuesday morning Zion UCC of Womelsdorf offers a Zoom Bible Study based on the scripture passages for the coming Sunday. You may use any version of the Bible. The study goes from 9:00 to 9:45am most of the time. They would be happy to have you join them! Zoom login information may be found on our [website](#).

Visitation Care Team

Our Visitation Care Team (VCT) is composed of lay members who have been trained for visitation. If you are in need of prayer, a visit, or just a listening ear, they are here to be of support to you. To contact the Visitation Care Team with a visitation request or to share information about a potential care need email the VCT at CareTeam@sprucc.org. For more information, go to our "[Visitation Care Ministries](#)" page at www.sprucc.org under the "ministries" tab.

For the week of April 4 the Primary VCT is Geri Gammel, the Secondary VCT is Rob Seifrit.

For the week of April 11 the Primary VCT is Jon Henning, the Secondary VCT is Phleane Kissling.

Earth Day Cleanup

Join us to help clean up our town! The Youth Group will be picking up litter in Robesonia on this coming Saturday, April 10 starting at 1:00pm to do our part for Earth Day. **Everyone** is invited to meet the Youth Group in the church parking lot with your bright clothing, gloves, trash bags, etc. to pick up trash throughout town.

Reservoir Hike

On Saturday, April 24, the Youth Group, friends and family members, will be meeting at 1:00pm at the Robesonia Reservoir to walk the trails there. Mike Pastor will be our guide. The weather at that time should be warmer, making for a pleasant day to take a hike. Bring water and snacks for yourself. **ALL are invited.** Please join us.

About Today

Church Season: Easter - Easter is the 50 days from the Saturday of Holy Week to Pentecost. Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is the most joyful season of the church year. The first Sunday of Easter, Resurrection Sunday, is the highest and holiest day of the Christian Church.

Color of the Paraments (cloths on the altar and pulpit):

White - symbolizing the defeat of death and the darkness of sin with the resurrection to eternal life.

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year B**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Mark.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church).

This Sunday, April 4, 2021, Lectionary Reading for Easter Sunday.

Acts 10:34-43 *or* Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *or* Acts 10:34-43;
John 20:1-18 *or* Mark 16:1-8.

The Acts of the Apostles

The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles (NT) are attributed to Luke "the beloved physician" written around 59-90 A.D. This is essentially volume 2 of the Gospel of Luke. The Book of Acts records the ministry of the early church after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, and guides us how we are to live, act, work, and be the church.

Isaiah

The book of Isaiah (OT) is attributed to three prophets. The first of whom is from where the book gets its name, and is about Isaiah's call to become a prophet and his prophecy that Jerusalem will face God's judgement regarding its immorality in order to be God's Holy City (chaps. 1-39, written 738-688 B.C.), the second is about living in exile in Babylon (chaps. 40-55, written 597-539 B.C.), and the third is about the return from exile to Judah and the rebuilding of the Temple (chaps. 56-66, written 520-515 B.C.). A prophet is one who is divinely appointed by God to lead and instruct.

Psalm 118

This is an OT song of thanksgiving, used by an individual within the temple to give praise and thanks to God for God's deliverance in times of distress. This is one of the "Egyptian Hallel" praise psalms (Psalms 113-114 commonly sung before the Passover meal, and Psalms 115-118 sung afterwards). This psalm lifts up images of the Holy City of God and the gates by which the righteous will enter. "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD."

The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

This NT Epistle (letter) was written by the Apostle Paul between 53-54 A.D. to a gentile congregation he had founded several years earlier in Corinth (the capital city of the Roman province of Achaia, a large and prospering urban center that was ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse). This letter is in response to issues within the Corinthian church, in particular factions caused by one-upmanship and privatization of faith. Paul encourages humility, unity within diversity, and witnessing to God's grace. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and church leader, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Paul wrote more of the NT than any other person.

The Gospel According to John

John is the latest of the four Gospels, written around 80-90 A.D. probably in Ephesus, and attributed to John the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple of Jesus. This Gospel was "written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

The Gospel According to Mark

Mark's Gospel is the oldest and shortest of the four Gospels, written between 65-75 A.D. Papias, a church leader in the 2nd century, reported that this Gospel's author is Mark, a follower of Peter who wrote this Gospel after Peter's death.

Next Sunday, April 11, 2021, Lectionary Reading for Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1 - 2:2; John 20:19-31