

Immanuel United Church
Easter Sunday Service
April 4th, 2021

Please prepare “paper hearts”.

You may write the names of people/God’s creation you would like to hold onto this Easter Sunday on the paper hearts. They may be used as a reminder that we are held in a love that never dies.

Prelude:

As we prepare now to worship together while apart, I invite you to take three, deep breaths, and allow your space to become worship space for this time.
(A time of silence)

Lighting the Christ Candle:

The images our Bible uses to reveal the fullness of Jesus’ grace often cause us to ponder. They can be large: **“I am the light of the world.”**

They can be outside the range of our experience: **“I am the good shepherd.”**

Today we hear an image offered that is close to all of us:

Vine and branch,

Sun and soil,

Fruit and pruning.

We light this candle acknowledging Jesus, the true vine.

(On the screen, the images of vine and branch, Sun and soil, fruit and pruning, light of a candle follow. Light a candle)

Hymn: VU 409 ***Morning Has Broken***

<https://youtu.be/we-n-ZmglT0>

Scripture: Mark 16:1-8

https://youtu.be/MYOXK3CV_wo

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.’ So

they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

1st Reflection: At Dawn

If someone you love has died during the novel coronavirus pandemic, you have come to grief in an exceptionally challenging moment in history. You may have been separated from your loved one as they were dying. You may have been unable to view or spend time with the body after the death. You may have been prevented from having the full memorial you wanted because of gathering and travel restrictions. And people who care about you may not have been able to be near you to support you in your grief. These and other pandemic-related barriers to the cultural grief rituals we rely on may be making your grief journey especially painful.

I am sorry you have been so deeply affected by this hardship.

Alan D. Wolfelt, a grief counsellor, says that ceremony helps mourners through the early days and weeks of their grief and can also support their healing in the months and years to come.

The memorial does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It also helps provide us with the support of caring people. Wolfelt shares 10 freedoms with affirmation and ideas. Here are the first four freedoms.

1. You have the freedom to embrace ceremony.
2. You have the freedom to hold an immediate private ceremony. Ask a spiritual leader, officiant, family member, or friend to help you plan a simple online meeting using Zoom or other way. You can also hold a small candle-lighting ceremony at your dining-room table.
3. You have the freedom to plan one or more ceremonies to be held later. Especially if you couldn't have the ceremony you wanted at the time of the death, you can still hold one or more memorial ceremonies in the months to come, when gathering and travel restrictions are lifted. Remember that a delayed ceremony is a much healthier choice for your family than no ceremony.
4. Yes, you have the freedom to have more than one ceremony!
Ceremony helps grieving people heal. And multiple ceremonies are especially helpful in supporting families through complicated loss circumstances. For example, you might have an online ceremony now followed by a full ceremony and gathering later this year and then a smaller graveside or scattering ceremony on the anniversary of the death. You will find that each time you hold a ceremony, your grief softens and integrates into your ongoing life a bit more.

Commemorating in Community
We remember friends and families of Immanuel:

who died, and their families who grieve, during the COVID time

whose beloved partner or family member is in hospital or in a personal care home

Whose jobs are lost and affected

and all who grieve with other losses — being cut off from family and friends, freedom to go out, missed opportunities, miscarriage, ...

I invite you to make paper hearts. On them you may write the names of the people/God's creation you would like to remember in prayer. The hearts may be used as a reminder that we are held in a love that never dies.

We offer prayers for the hope of renewal which Easter brings.

Passages from March, 2020 to Present
(of Immanuel United Church members)

Calnek, Ethel	March 3, 2020	Kroeker, Murray	November 22, 2020
Peters, Peter	March 15, 2020	Currie, Edwina	December 9, 2020
Hector, Lois	August 15, 2020	McGregor, Joan	December 26, 2020
Newton, Margaret	October 6, 2020	Hughes, Elsie	January 17, 2021
Yahiro, Meg	October 23, 2020	Scrapneck, Ed	January 25, 2021
	Bilous, Anita	March 8, 2021	

Hymn: VU 708 **My Lord, What a Morning** (African-American Spiritual)
<https://youtu.be/LBRodCQS-v8>

Refrain: **My Lord, what a morning. My Lord, what a morning.**
My Lord, what a morning when the stars begin to fall.

You'll hear the trumpet sound to wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall. (Refrain)

You'll hear the sinner cry to wake the nations underground,

Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall. (Refrain)

**You'll hear the Christian shout to wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall. (Refrain)**

Prayers:

**We gather to remember, Loving God.
We gather to remember life, O Risen Christ,
To wonder about death,
To celebrate that you are with us —
Every moment in this journey of life.
We bless you for the love
That calls us to life,
That calls us to live,
That calls us to live anew.
Help us to remember that life — all life — is yours.
A gift of overwhelming wonder! Amen.**

Sacred Song: **Hold On** (Negro Spiritual, sung by D.E.M.)
<https://youtu.be/TfvLZjofEXA>

**2nd Reflection:
Holding our grief and the place of love in our lives
In the hope and the resilience of Easter**

The ending of the Gospel tells us the wonder of Easter. The sacred story of our ancestors who witnessed, at dawn, before the Sun rose on that first Easter morning. Women were weeping at the stone of the tomb and the other disciples were hiding in their room, frightened and anxious.

The women were then greeted by the angel who nudged them to remember what Jesus and the prophets had been teaching: the hope and faith in resurrection. "Why are you looking for Jesus here?" Later, all the disciples both women and men, and all of the family of Jesus, remembered what the Holy One taught them: "Go to Galilee!" and meet him there, the place where Jesus first called them and they found each other. Remembering the beginning in the place that seems the ending and impossible. Jesus, who is One with the Creator and the Spirit, "will be with us, always, to the end of the age."

Easter Message continues... (Richard Bott & Alydia Rae Smith)
https://youtu.be/MYOXK3CV_wo

The Anthem: **Hallelujah Chorus** (G. F. Handel) in Spain
<https://youtu.be/9jynUQjIXxM>

Holy Communion

In the name of the One who said,

“I am the bread of life,”

I invite you to come and eat.

In the name of the One who said, **“I am the true vine,”**

I invite you to come and drink.

In the name of the One who said,

“Love one another, as I have loved you,”

I invite you to the table of Jesus Christ.

MV 121 *Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah!*

(Rob and Marg Smith, Jim and Joy Jost, Ron and Eileen Metcalfe)

Hey now! Singing hallelujah! Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah! The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts in prayer.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

MV 121 *Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah!*

(Rob and Marg Smith, Jim and Joy Jost, Ron and Eileen Metcalfe)

Hey now! Singing hallelujah! Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah! The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

Hallelujah, thanks and praise, ever-living God,

worker of wonders, maker of miracles,

author of all life and giver of life eternal!

Out of chaos and fear **you bring beauty and hope.**

Out of despair and death **you create courage and new life.**

And so, with the risen Christ,

who makes all things new

by the power of their resurrection,

we join in the song of a new day,

to sing your praise:

MV 121 *Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah!*

(Rob and Marg Smith, Jim and Joy Jost, Ron and Eileen Metcalfe)

Hey now! Singing hallelujah! Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah! The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

Loving God, Holy One,
we offer you praise and thanksgiving over this bread and cup,
**because in Jesus Christ, your only Child,
you have joined yourself forever to us,
uniting heaven and earth.**

Now, therefore, we gratefully remember:
Jesus' birth into our humanity,
baptism for our rebirth,
compassion for our suffering,
intimacy with our frailty,
bearing of the cross with its death,
and rising from the tomb by the power of God.

On the night before he died,
it was Jesus who took a loaf of bread,
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,
"Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me."
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,
"This is the new covenant; remember me."

We remember Jesus' death.
We proclaim Christ risen.
We await the full revelation of love incarnate.

Distribution:
Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.
Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

Prayer after Communion as Benediction:
Eternal and gracious One,
though we live in a world of need,
**here we have tasted your goodness
and hungered for a world more just.**
Though afflicted by brokenness and division,
**here we have heard your call
to be a people of healing community.**
Though daily we touch our limits,
**here we have received
the fullness of your grace.**
Send us forth, O God,
in faith, in hope, and in love.

Amen.

Hymn: VU 179 *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks*