

**Holy Communion, Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

**Closing Hymn**

*Thine Is the Glory*

Hymn 122

**Easter Blessing and Charge (Responsive)**

**Postlude**

*Festive Voluntary*

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Liturgy and artwork are from *A Sanctified Art*, LLC, which we have used throughout the Lenten season. Thank you to Melissa Meade, Heather Skiver, Leonard Blankner, and David Kemp for providing voice for today's music.

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**Highland Presbyterian Church  
Maryville, Tennessee**



**Sunday, April 4, 2021  
Easter Sunday  
Holy Communion Sunday**

***Our Mission:**  
Highland Presbyterian Church seeks to be a diverse and inclusive Christian Community as we embody the love and forgiveness of Jesus by serving the community and the world, drawing people to Christ.*

**Prelude**

*Crown Him Lord of All*

Ellor / McDonald

*Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain*

Sullivan / McDonald

**Welcome**

Dr. Cynthia M. Benz

**Opening Words (Responsive)**

One: This day is like every other day.

**All: Alarm clocks beeped. Covers were removed. Coffee was brewed. Weary bodies came to life.**

One: And yet this day, is like no other day—

**All: For the sun rose, and we knew it was a miracle.  
The tomb was empty, and they knew it was love.**

One: So, again and again, we say —

**All: The longest night is over. Death has lost its sting. Jesus is among us.  
Alleluia! Amen.**

One: Again and again and again —

**All: Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

*Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*

Hymn 123

**Call to Confession**

Rev. Matthew Benz-Whittington

**Prayer of Confession & Words of Forgiveness (Communal)**

**Beloved Community, before God and before you, my family, I confess:**

I have seen the sun rise and withheld my praise.

I have seen my neighbor suffer and withheld my aid.

I have seen love extended and chosen to walk away.

I have seen divisions deepen and managed to remain unfazed.

We hear you. We see you. You are forgiven. God's love is like the sun.

No matter how lost we are in the night, day after day, the light will find you.

Rest easy. You are held in God's warmth. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Time for the Children**

"CICI"

**Prayer for Illumination**

Dr. Cynthia M. Benz

**Scripture**

**John 20:1-18 (from The Message Paraphrase of the Bible)**

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, breathlessly panting, *They took the Master from the tomb. We don't know where they've put him.* Peter and the other disciple left immediately for the tomb. They ran neck and neck. The other disciple got to the tomb first, outrunning Peter. Stooping to look in, [the other disciple] saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but, he didn't go in. Simon Peter arrived after him, entered the tomb,

observed the linen cloths lying there, and the kerchief used to cover his head not lying with the linen cloths, but separate, neatly folded by itself. Then, the other disciple, the one who had gotten there first, went into the tomb, took one look at the evidence, and believed. No one yet knew from the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. The disciples then went back home. But, Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been laid. They said to her, *Woman, why do you weep? They took my Master, she said, and I don't know where they put him.* After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But, she didn't recognize him. Jesus spoke to her, *Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?* She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, *Mister, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him.* Jesus said, *Mary. Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, Rabboni! meaning "Teacher!"* Jesus said, *Don't cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene went, telling the news to the disciples. I saw the Master!* And, she told them everything [Jesus] said to her.

**Sermon**

**Special Music**

*Easter Is Here*

*(Performed by Melissa Meade, Heather Skiver, Leonard Blankner, David Kemp, and Jussarra Horton)*

**Affirmation of Faith (Communal)**

**We know the fear of the upper room.**

**We know the grief of hard days and long nights.**

**We know the pain of the tomb, and the particular ache of saying goodbye.**

**We know the pain of Good Friday, and we know the darkness before dawn.**

**And still, and still, we believe.**

**We believe that again and again, the sun will rise.**

**Again and again, God will draw near.**

**Again and again, we will march toward justice.**

**Again and again, the tomb will be empty.**

**Again and again, love will win.**

**Again and again, God will lead the church.**

**Again and again, and again and again, we will be loved.**

**The journey will not be perfect.**

**We will need to rise before dawn. We will need angels along the way.**

**But again and again, the sun will rise. We believe. Amen.**