**Asbury United Methodist Church**

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**March 31, 2024**

Worship Leader: Carl Bishop Jr. Chancel: All

\* Please rise in body or in spirit

**“Look Up”**

*Easter*

**GATHERING UP**

**Music for Centering**

*Prelude ”All Glory,Laud, and Honor” Hanna Noh*

***Welcome and Asbury Mission Statement***

We are Asbury! Abundantly thankful to God; Saved by Christ’s resurrection; Blessed by God; United by Christ’s love for each of us; Reaching out to our church family and our community; Yearning to tell the Good News to all by being Christ’s voice, hands, and feet in the world.

**Announcements**

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1. Most of you have noticed **the bright blue food pantry** on the front lawn. This is an Eagle Scout Service Project. Please do not leave ANY items in the pantry at this time. Canned goods and game donations for the pantry is on hold until signage is up. Trevor is working on signs and has repaired the front door. When donations do start canned goods and small games will be the only donations allowed.

2. We are looking for **a leadership team for a Tea Party**. If you would like to help or share ideas, contact Andrea Dunn!

3. Worship leader April 7th – Joan White

**April Birthdays**

4th Nicole Minior Jones

5th Stanley French

**What’s Up?**

**When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary**

**When troubles come and my heart burdened be**

**Then, I am still and wait here in the silence**

**Until You come and sit awhile with me**

L*eader:* When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, 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.” *(Mark 16: 1-7)*

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains**

**You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas**

**I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders**

**You raise me up to more than I can be**

*Leader:*

Let us pray together:

**Ever-Living God, we come with our heads bent down sometimes,**

**overwhelmed with Good Friday news.**

**Raise us up, lift up our eyes,**

**so that we might look up and see**

**the tenacity of life in the midst of death.**

*Leader:* Hear assurance in what the Psalmist proclaims:

O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; God’s steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, “God's steadfast love endures forever.” The LORD is my strength and my might; God has become my salvation. There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly. I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.” *(Psalm 118, excerpts)*

In the name of Christ, new life is come!

**Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!**

I invite you to stand as you are comfortable.

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains**

**You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas**

**I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders**

**You raise me up to more than I can be**

**The Peace**

As a people forgiven and freed,

we reach out to lift others up, offering the peace of Christ.

Peace be with you!

**And also with you!**

You are invited to share the Peace with those around you [remembering to send your peace through the camera to those worshiping remotely].

**Welcome**

*Leader:* Please remain standing, friends! Welcome to you all! Whether you are visiting, come here often or rarely, we have all gathered to receive good news. That is what we boldly proclaim today: in the midst of all that brings us down, we can look up in this moment and know that we are not alone and that life and love wins.

Three days had passed. The women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body, according to custom. No doubt the journey to the tomb was heavy. Perhaps they approached with heads lowered in defeat and grief. But then they looked up and it changed their lives. The barrier that they thought would be there was gone and what they discovered instead was life. Will we look up? Will we look up from our complacency, apathy, fear and depression about “the way things are” and be filled with the promise of new life and hope yet again? Will we be part of the raising up of humanity? We can say yes to this, for Christ the Lord is Risen Today!

**Opening Hymn/Song**

*"*[*Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*](https://hymnary.org/text/christ_the_lord_is_risen_today_wesley)*" UMH 302 vs. 1,4,5*

**FILLING UP**

**The Word Uplifts**

*Scripture*

Acts 10: 34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality,

but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all.

That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

**Music for Soaring (Choir)**

Easter Cantata“HALLELUJAH! What a Savior!”

**Mark 16:1-8**

16:1 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.16:2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 16:3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 16:4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 16:5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 16:6 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. 16:7 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." 16:8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

**Song of Illumination**

**Song of Illumination**

**UMH#454 Open My Eyes, That I May See vs1**

Open my eyes that I may see / glimpses of truth thou hast for me.

Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

**Sermon “Look Up!”** Rev.Yohan Go

**Look Up!**

***Mark 16: 1-7***

Many thanks to the Asbury and Zion joint choir and Hanna for preparing a beautiful Easter cantata. “Happy Easter!” “Christ has risen! He has risen indeed!” Today is Easter, and we remember and celebrate the risen Christ. God raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and made him the first fruit of resurrection. Easter Sunday reminds us that our God is a God of surprises. God works in ways beyond our comprehension, turning sorrow into joy, despair into hope. But we also need to remember that resurrection happened in the tomb.

A few years ago, Barbara Brown Taylor, a renowned preacher, wrote a book, “Finding God in the dark.” Her argument is that true faith is found in the darkness. When speaking of the resurrection, she says, "The Resurrection happened in a dark cave.” The resurrection exists because there is death. Tombs are dark places and the resurrection happened in a dark cave!

We want to avoid places of suffering and struggle, but they are a part of life. I believe that at some points on our life journeys, we all have experienced situations that felt like a dark cave with no way out. Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome were the same. Their beloved teacher, Jesus Christ was killed three days ago. That was it! There was nothing they could do except anoint Jesus’ body, according to custom. No doubt the journey to the tomb was heavy. Perhaps they approached with heads lowered in defeat and grief. Furthermore, they had a concern. They were not capable of moving the big stone from the entrance to the tomb. There seemed to be no way forward and no hope left.

But then they looked up and it changed their lives. The barrier that they thought would be there was gone and what they discovered instead was life. When they entered the tomb, an angel announced that “Jesus has risen!” For us, death is the ultimate end but the empty tomb stands as a symbol of Christ's victory over death and sin, and, thus, it becomes the unshakable cornerstone of our hope. This Lenten season was a little different for me. I had three funerals for members of Zion church in a month. The power of death and the grief that comes with the loss of loved ones is so real. But I could also feel what "Resurrection happened in a dark cave” means. At a funeral where the power of death is vividly felt, we, Christians, proclaim the hope of resurrection and eternal life. This faith in the resurrection in Christ gives us comfort and hope.

The hope of Easter is that God is not done with us! God raised our Lord from the dead and still raises us from despair. So don’t look down, look up! Look up at what God is still doing in your lives and the world! Share this resurrection hope with your neighbors. Christ has risen! He has risen indeed! Amen.

**BUILDING UP**

**Up to Something Good**

*Prayers of the People*

*Leader:* Over the course of the six weeks of Lent, we sang Psalm 114 as a way of centering our hearts for prayer. The use of incense has traditionally been used by many religions as a way of seeing the intentions of our hearts lifted to a higher realm. Ancient and modern Christians continue this tradition. If you like incense, we invite you to get some for your home as a way of being reminded every time you light it that you are being lifted up, that you can uplift others, that you can be up to something good.

**Let my prayer rise up**

**like incense before you,**

**the lifting up of my hands**

**as an offering to you.**

***Sharing Joy***

We call upon you, O God, in the midst of the fullness of life — the joy and the sorrow. We pray that we can be “up to something good” for our selves, our neighborhoods, and our world. We lift our thankful hearts for these acts of uplifting goodness:

**Let my prayer rise up**

**like incense before you,**

**the lifting up of my hands**

**as an offering to you.**

***Sharing Concerns***

Even today, O God, when we proclaim that there is always life in the midst of death, we have much to lament. Incline your ear and extend your love and healing power for these laments:

**Let my prayer rise up**

**like incense before you,**

**the lifting up of my hands**

**as an offering to you.**

**Pastoral Prayer** Rev. Yohan Go

Gracious and loving God,

We give you thanks for your love, your grace, and your power on this blessed Resurrection morning! We thank you for the Asbury family and friends who have gathered this morning to celebrate the risen Christ. We are especially grateful for the risen Christ, who has become the cornerstone of our everlasting hope. Help us share the gospel of your resurrection with people around us and live as Easter people.

God of us all,

Today, we gather to remember Jesus, who healed the sick and raised the dead. We remember Jesus, who gathered children to himself and dealt kindly with sinners, tax collectors, and others despised by society. We remember Jesus, who suffered and died at our hands and was risen again.

Almighty God,

We celebrate the fact that death could not hold Jesus in the grave! We celebrate that not even death is able to separate us from the love of God! We celebrate the new life that we have in Christ! Because he lives, we can face tomorrow unafraid and also cast our cares and concerns upon you. Listen to our prayers for our family and friends near and far. Roll away the stone that blocks them from seeing your light of resurrection, so that we can celebrate the joy of the risen Christ together.

We call upon you, O God, to give us the strength and courage to be up to something good for the sake of The Good. In this moment — in our mind’s eye — we imagine and offer our commitment to one small thing that will lift someone up, elevate and affirm the good when we see it, and bring a bit more calm or joy where we are. And if we find we are not up to it, we pray we can accept the goodness of others and feel your encouraging love.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray…

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

**Let my prayer rise up**

**like incense before you,**

**the lifting up of my hands**

**as an offering to you.**

**Uplifting Messages of Support**

*Offering/Offertory*

**Offertory Music**

“An Irish Prayer”by Alice Pace and Ned Quist

Doxology

“What R U Up 2 for My Sake?”

What are you up to for my sake?

What are you up to “for the Good?”

Would you come now, follow, join up?

Let us take up, wake up anew,

Let us build up, fill up with you!

Let us lift up

the gifts we raise up.

For the sake of,

for the shape of,

heaven on earth.

**Offertory Prayer** Rev. Yohan Go

Spirit of Resurrection, we ask you to raise up these gifts

in ways that we could not imagine.

Lift up our heads and our hearts as Easter people

who refuse to believe that

there is something we can be up to for the Good of this world.

So be it! Amen.

**LIVING IT UP**

**Closing Hymn/Song**

*“*[*The Day of Resurrection*](https://hymnary.org/text/the_day_of_resurrection_earth_tell_it)*” UMH 303 vs. 1,3*

**Blessing for the Journey**

And so now go into the world,

remembering that whenever you feel down, you can look up.

Look up and notice the life can’t help itself… it continues renewal all around you.

In spite of what you are feeling at any one time in your life,

know that you are loved, that your life matters,

that your life can be uplifted and you can uplift those around you.

You have all you need to be up to something.

When someone asks you, “What are you up to?”

you can respond,

**“With God’s help, I’m up to something good!”**

Let the people say,Amen!

**Amen!**

**Music for Movin’ on Up**

*Postlude “Because He Lives” Hanna Noh*

