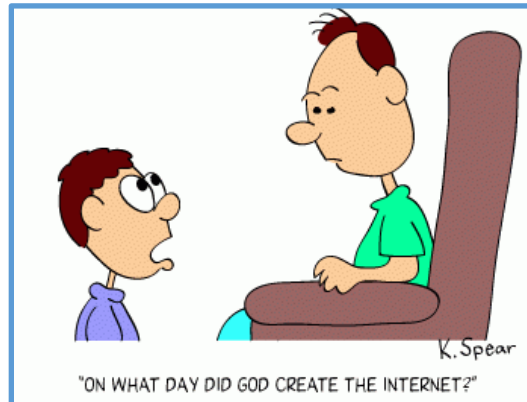




Holy Humor Sunday
April 12, 2026 10:30 a.m.



Cartoon by Kevin Spear 2005 www.kevinspear.com

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Today we celebrate the ancient tradition of “Risus Paschalis,” which means the “Easter laugh.” For centuries, the days after Easter were observed by the faithful as “days of joy and laughter” with gatherings of storytelling, joke swapping, picnics and parties to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. The custom was rooted in the writings of early church theologians, who explored the idea of Easter as “God’s Supreme Joke played on death.”

(from The Joyful Noiseletter, The Epistle of the Fellowship of Merry Christians, April 2005.)

RINGING THE BELL

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

PRELUDE "Voluntary in A"

William Selby

***CALL TO WORSHIP (2)**

One: O Great Laughing God, we come to praise you with joy for the gift of the resurrection.

All: We come longing to be surprised by your presence in our worship and world.

One: We thank you that you have given to us the gifts of laughter and delight.

All: These things give hints to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth.

One: May we find that in giving ourselves up to laughter there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing.

All: Let us make a joyful noise to the Lord!

***GATHERING HYMN:** “Sing a Happy Alleluia” (tune: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You”)

**Sing a happy alleluia, sing it out with heart and style—
we're the echo of God's laughter, we're the image of God's smile.**

**Refrain: Alleluia, all creation, alleluia, everyone!
Alleluia, all creation, alleluia, everyone!**

**We're the proof of God's good humor, we're the twinkle in God's eye,
made to shine, reflect the glory, given light and space to fly. Refrain**

**Sarah laughed at God's good timing, Mary sang and David danced,
Jesus smiled and hugged the children—so is life for us enhanced. Refrain**

Blessed Interruption

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen! All: Alleluia! We laugh with joy!

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (3)**

Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously,

when we don't claim the happiness that is rightfully ours as your children,
when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world.

Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (silent confession)

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE (3)**

The Gospels tell us over and over again of the joy which comes to us through Christ.

With Jesus, lives were changed and the sorrowful began to laugh with joy.

The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

Thanks be to God!

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE "Sing a Happy Alleluia" v.4**

**Every day sing alleluia! We are loved, though so absurd,
human, foolish, chosen people, God still takes us at our word! Refrain**

***PASSING THE PEACE**

CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

CHORAL ANTHEM

Blessed Interruption

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen! All: Alleluia! We laugh with joy!

LISTENING

God speaks to us in the Word proclaimed.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING John 20:19-31 Pew Bible p.883
A Word of God that is still speaking, **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

Sarah Fredriksen McCann



SILENT MEDITATION

HYMN OF REFLECTION “Give to us Laughter” *text by Walter Faruharson*
Tune: “Be Thou My Vision”

**Give to us laughter, O Source of our life.
Laughter can banish so much of our strife!
Laughter and love give us wholeness and health.
Laughter and love are the coin of true wealth.**

**Give to us laughter as sign of deep joy;
let us in laughing find Christian employ,
joining with stars and with bright northern lights,
laughing and praising and sharing delights.**

**Even in sorrow and hours of grief,
laughter with tears brings us healing relief!
God, give us laughter, and God, give us peace,
joy of your promise among us increase.**

RESPONDING

We respond to God's Word through our prayers and our gifts.

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM: RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

INVITATION

The church is a community of people with varieties of gifts, united by the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is the spirit of caring for one another, of forgiving, of helping each other, of love revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This church is a people of God, with a diversity of needs, ideas, and visions, inspired by the Spirit present at the baptism of Jesus and renewed through the words and deeds of Jesus. May that same Spirit rest upon us all.

By our baptisms, we find our common ground within the covenant community. When one family member suffers, all suffer together. When one family member rejoices, all rejoice together.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

Do you believe in God? **I believe in God.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? **I believe in Jesus Christ.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? **I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

WELCOME AND RECEPTION

Let us, the members and friends of Hope United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ:

We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church.

We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ.

By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's love and be witnesses of our risen savior.

GREETINGS AND PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Blessed Interruption

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen! All: Alleluia! We laugh with joy!

NAMING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

Blessed Interruption

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen! **All: Alleluia! We laugh with joy!**

OFFERTORY "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" William B. Bradbury;
Arr. David Paxton

(A QR code at the end of the bulletin is available for online giving.)



* RESPONSE OF PRAISE (tune: "Lasst Uns Erfreuen" *The Hymnal* #15)

Praise God, the Giver and the Gift,

Hearts, minds and voices now uplift, Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise, praise the breath of glad surprise, Freeing, uplifting, opening eyes.

Three-In-Oneness, Love Communing, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Blessed Interruption

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen! **All: Alleluia! We laugh with joy!**

*COMMISSIONING HYMN: “ Hark! The Herald Angel Said”

Words by Paul Lintern (v. 1) & Jonathan Hauze (vv. 2-3)

**Hark! the Herald Angel said why seek Jesus with the dead?
He’s not here, as you can see, grave cloths lie where he would be.
On your way not tell the others, Jesus will be with his brothers.
Sisters, too, he wants to see the hills of Galilee.
Hark! the Herald Angel said He is risen from the dead.**

**Two disciples walking down to Emmaus with a frown:
Jesus walked and talked with them, hearts were low and eyes were dim.
To the stranger they both said: Stay with us, for night’s ahead.
Jesus blessed and broke the bread, and their hearts within them sped:
Now our eyes have seen the Lord! Now our hope has been restored!**

**When the doors were locked in fear, Christ the Lord again came near.
Peace be with you! twice he said, Now I send you in my stead.
Take the Spirit and forgive, Show the world that I do live.
Let my love cast out all fear, Trust that I am always near!
Witness to the Risen One, Share my peace with everyone!**

*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Prelude in Classic Style" Gordon Young

SENDING

With God’s blessing, we are sent forth to follow Christ in the world.

Worship Endnotes

- (1) Adapted from Feasting on the Word: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1; Kimberly Bracken Long, editor.
- (2) Adapted from www.thejoyfulnoiseletter.com, “Holy Humor Sunday” resources.
- (3) Adapted from www.re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/03/holy-humor-sunday

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Bulletin, *noun*;
1. something to read during the sermon;
2. a fan used in churches without air conditioning;
3. your receipt for attending church.

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