

Easter Sunday Resource Kit

2005

Compiled by UFMCC Staff and Volunteers

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Introduction to Easter Sunday

Resurrection Sunday, or Easter Sunday, sometimes referred to as "**The Day of Days**" or "**The Feast of Feasts,**" is the holiest day in the Christian year. On Easter Sunday, all humankind is reminded of the spiritual **dimensions of hope** – dimensions that bring **new meaning to life, even life after death**. Retelling the resurrection of Christ from the tomb provides a powerful remembrance of the message that God's abundant love and grace in Christ can never be extinguished. Pageantry, exuberance and vitality are all qualities associated with this happiest of occasions. Approach to worship on this, of all days, must be one of great joy and celebration!

White and gold are the traditional liturgical colors for Easter. You can also use colorful rainbow vestments and altar cloths; bright colors are appropriate and in keeping with the celebration spirit of Easter.

Most common Easter symbols (lilies, bunnies, chicks, eggs, etc.) were established in the **Northern hemisphere, where Spring and Easter coincide**. These symbols reflect the triumph and abundance of life (Spring) over death (Winter). Consider using additional natural symbols of new life (other springtime flowers, budding branches, etc.) or transformed life (a butterfly, for example) as appropriate to your geographic location to adorn the church.

Worship Preparation Visualization

In many churches, Easter Sunday is the best attended service of the year. It is THE service for worshippers who may attend only once a year, or those looking for a church home. Spend time sitting where the people attending the service will sit. If possible, undertake this project at the same time of day as your Easter service. Make sure all the lights are on.

From their vantage point, look at your choir/music area. Try to see it as a first-time visitor to your church will see it. Are there books, bulletins, etc. scattered around? What about chairs, musical instruments and audio equipment? Make a special point to look at the sides of musical instruments (especially grand pianos); check to be sure the church is tidy and presentable. Are the restrooms stocked and clean? Are hymnals stacked neatly? Is the entrance area swept clean?

Sample: Easter Sunday Sunrise Service

The focus for this Easter Sunday Sunrise Service is “[Mystery and Wonder](#).” To live again, after death, is a mystery and a wonder.

For Easter Sunrise Service, consider meeting outside your worship space or in a city park. Consider planting a tree and have a plaque made to honor someone in your church who has died this past year or for someone who is living whom you wish to honor. (Be sure to obtain permission from local officials if in a public park.) Invite each person who comes to the Sunrise Service bring a spring bulb (be sure to have extras on hand for those who forget or for visitors) and plant them around the tree.

While you are planting the tree and bulbs at the very beginning of the service, you might consider singing the following song.

Music: Morning Has Broken

Call to Worship

One: This morning God's love breaks through once again.

Many: We have a moment now, to feel the warmth of God's glory.
We pray new growth will burst forth.

One: This day we experience the compassion of God in Jesus the Christ.

Many: We have today to sing for Joy and to experience our passion, renewed.

One: This morning we are free because we have forgiven
ourselves and others.

Many: We are forgiven and in forgiving, we are free.

One: This is the day that our God has made,

All: We will be glad, and rejoice in it!

Scripture Readings

The Gospel John 20: 14-18

¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ ¹⁶Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Confession

ALL: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus. Thank you God, for the gift of my life.

Thank you God for the gift of the lives of those around me here in this place today.

Thank you God for this new day. Thank you God for your compassion. Thank you God for your forgiveness. Thank you God for the mystery and the wonder of life.

Sunrise Service Confession, cont.

In our gratitude, we commend our lives to you this day, we ask as we gather together in community with Christ, that we would remember your love, your kindness, your faithfulness and not take them for granted.

Forgive us again, and let us receive your gift of common union, knowing that we have been healed and blessed. **AMEN!**

Benediction

This is a new day! Go from this place knowing that you have NEW LIFE!

Share your life!

Give your life!

Forgive, have compassion and let it be. **AMEN**

Worship Ideas

While you may have no shortage of worship ideas, here are a few simple ways to add new life to worship this Easter:

1. A dramatization of the selected Gospel story would greatly enliven worship. The resurrection scriptures lend themselves ideally and easily to a simple dramatic reading using several different voices and require virtually no adaptation of the text: narrator, angel(s), Mary, risen Christ, etc. Staging and costumes are not necessary, but use them if your church has the resources and inclination. This is an ancient church practice which, in fact, was the antecedent of medieval "miracle" and "passion" plays which led to the rebirth of theater in Western civilization.

A free script, called "He is Risen," may be found at Scripts 4 Christians:

<http://www.scripts4christians.com/heis.htm>

\$3.50 - A Play about Thomas' experience at Baker's plays:

http://www.bakersplays.com/store/product_info.php/cPath/8/products_id/626?osCsid=54182311bedabadc2689edaef8d9367d

A collection of Easter Dramas may be found at Meriweather Publishing for about

\$20 each: <http://www.meriwetherpublishing.com/store/d-mart.cgi?session=1108053923-1443&command=list>

A collection of downloadable Easter Dramas may be found at Lillenas Drama starting at \$10 each:

<http://www.nph.com/nphweb/html/ldol/itemIndexSummary.jsp?index=topic&topicCd=EASTE&heading=Downloadable%20Scripts&catSecCd=DOWNS>

A list of other possible Easter scripts can be found through Drama Share at:

http://dramashare.org/script_list.php?cat_id=139

2. If you're in an area where a community LGBT chorus exists, why not invite them to present special music as part of your Easter celebration? The promotion will help draw people to your services, the event can be a great way to share your church's ministry with members of the local choir, and it's a natural for generating free news stories in your local media.

After Worship Follow-up Ideas

1. The joy can continue after worship. Consider an Easter egg hunt; it's fun for kids and families and for everyone who's watching. Men, women, adults and children all enjoy this, too! Consider including a potluck meal or barbeque. If weather permits hold these activities out-of-doors. Offer a Community-Wide Children's Easter Egg Hunt. Send news releases to the local gay press, religion editors and feature writers at local newspapers and magazines. Place posters at all LGBT-friendly businesses. Send your information to the community news desks at radio and TV stations, too. (A sample press release may be found on page 16 of this document.)
2. Give special attention to visitor follow-up after Easter. Send a postcard to all visitors thanking them for their presence. Or send a series of follow-up letters to share your church's ministries, programs and services. Use your post-Easter follow-up to share information on your church and to serve as a bridge to help visitors become regular worshippers. If you need help with this, try going to www.postcardbuilder.com. They have a great selection of pre-designed postcards that you can personalize and send to your church mailing list...all online! The cards range from \$0.71 to \$0.30 each based on the quantity you are sending.
3. Consider using the time around Easter to launch new small group ministries in your church. Holiday times can be effective times for reaching new people for small group studies and events. For instance, MCC Toronto has developed a small group series around transformation using Michael Borg's new book **The Heart of Christianity - Rediscovering a Life of Faith**. To take a look at this small group series, go to <http://www.mcctoronto.com/whatwedo/ptgroups.htm>. All the resources you need for this series are posted on the MCC Toronto site and are downloadable using Acrobat Reader.
4. Make special use of your Easter services to promote upcoming events. Be sure to include a calendar of upcoming events for the next several months in all of your Easter services. Do more than share facts -- share the benefits of your church's programs, too. For Microsoft Users: If you need assistance in building a calendar and use Microsoft Word, try visiting <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/CT011371131033.aspx> for a list of downloadable, Microsoft Word Calendar templates to help you out. Simply choose the calendar you prefer, download, and fill it in. It prints directly from your Microsoft Word program.

Easter Sunday Worship Suggestions

Scripture and Contemporary Readings

<p>1. From the Revised Liturgical Calendar Acts 10:34-43 <i>or</i> Jeremiah 31:1-6 Colossians 3:1-4 <i>or</i> Acts 10:34-43 John 20:1-18 <i>or</i> Matthew 28:1-10 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24</p>	<p>3. From May Sarton: The extreme delicacy of this Easter morning Spoke to me as a prayer and as a warning. It was light on the brink, spring light After a rain that gentled my dark night. I walked through landscapes I had never seen Where the fresh grass had just begun to green, And its roots, watered deep, sprung to my tread, The maples wore a cloud of feathery red, But flowering trees still showed their clear design Against the pale blue brightness chilled like wine. And I was praying all the time I walked, While starling flew about, and talked, and talked. Somewhere and everywhere life spoke the word. The dead trees woke; each bush held its bird. I prayed for delicate love and difficult, That all be gentle now and know no fault, That all be patient -- as a wild rabbit fled Sudden before me. Dear love, I would have said (And to each bird who flew up from the wood), I would be gentler still if that I could, For on this Easter morning it would seem The softest footfall danger is, extreme . . . And so I prayed to be less than the grass And yet to feel the Presence that might pass. I made a prayer, I heard the answer, "Wait, when all is so in peril, and so delicate!"</p>
<p>2. From e. e. cummings: i thank you god for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes (i who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth day of life and of love: and of the gay great happening illimitably earth) how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any lifted from the no of all nothing human merely being doubt unimaginable you? (now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened)</p>	<p>4. For stories of resurrection and communities turning around to embrace young queer people look over this series of articles in the Washington Post on "Young and Gay in Real America: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49856-2004Sep25.html.</p>

Calls to Worship

Option #1

One: Listen! Hear the remarkable Good News to which we bear witness. Our Savior who was dead is alive!

All: Christ is risen!

One: Our Beloved, betrayed, abandoned, crucified and buried is alive again!

All: Christ is risen!

One: The power of death and fear are broken and no longer hold us captive because Christ lives!

All: Christ is risen!

One: The power of God's love cannot be destroyed. Christ is victorious. Let us celebrate this most joyful of all days! Christ IS risen!

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Option #2

One: Each seed buried in the ground

Many: contains the promise of life that will spring forth.

One: Matter is neither created nor destroyed,

Many: only changed in form.

One: Our bodies contain elements that were part of primal seas

Many: when waters first flowed on earth.

One: All of creation teaches us about resurrection ...

Many: All of creation celebrates the life that God gives.

One: Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed!

Communion Liturgy

One: God be with you

Many: And also with you

One: Lift up your hearts

Many: We lift them up to God

One: Let us give thanks to God

Many: It is good to give God thanks and praise

One: It is a good and right and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks and praise to you, O Giver of Life. We celebrate this day Christ's victory over death. We know now, O God, that you will do whatever it takes to find us, to save us, to redeem each one of us, and to embrace us in your loving arms. In humble and joyous thanksgiving, we lift our voices with those of angels and of archangels and of the company of heaven as we sing to you this hymn of unending praise.

Confession

From the midst of the ashes of our lives, we turn to You, O God and lift our hands and voices. We plant new life in the soil of our lives and trust the rain of our tears and the sun of our spirits to join You in creating a more loving, tender world. May we know the blessing of forgiveness and share it in turn. May our time together bless the earth, each other, our own lives, and You. Alleluia!

Music Resources

Is your church without an on-going Sunday choir? Easter can be an ideal time to launch a new choir. Use this holiday to begin a new ministry -- a new ministry which can be sustained and become a year-round ministry. Below, you will find a list of hymn suggestions.

If you have access to professional or excellent amateur musicians (instrumentalists or vocalists) use them on Easter. A few specific ideas:

- Easter is a great Sunday to have brass instruments like trumpets for opening fanfares or to enhance choir or congregational singing. (Choral, Solo and Instrumental music selections are listed on page 15 of this document.)
- The praise words "hallelujah" and "alleluia" especially are particularly associated with the Resurrection. Follow them as clues leading to music which may be appropriate to the occasion. There is even a vast repertoire of choral and solo vocal literature setting these words alone in almost every style imaginable.

Introductory Notes

In preparing this resource, we have attempted to reflect the diverse musical traditions found within the MCC. Using the General Lectionary (Cycle 'A') as a basis, we have suggested musical selections from three distinct musical traditions: Liturgical/Traditional, Gospel/Evangelical and Praise/Worship.

The lists below were formulated using eight denominational or general-use hymnals, along with other musical resources. You will find listed the Hymn names (the Title or opening line), along with the Hymn-Tune name. Some lyrics will need to be inclusified.

In this issue of the Music Resource Kit, we have also included the actual Hymn Number from each of the source hymnals. When available, we've provided sources to help you find less well-known music for inclusion in the musical worship of your church.

Hymn Sources

B=Baptist Hymnal (Southern Baptist)-Convention Press, 1991

E=The Hymnal 1982 (Episcopal, USA)-The Church Hymnal Corp., 1985

G=Praise Hymns & Choruses "The Green Book" (Non-Denom)-Maranatha, 1997

H=Hymns For The Family Of God (Non-Denom)-Paragon Associates, 1976

M=United Methodist Hymnal-The UM Publishing House, 1989

N=New Century Hymnal (U.C.C.)-Pilgrim Press, 1995

P=Presbyterian Hymnal-Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990

W=Worship (Roman Catholic)-GIA Publications, 1986 (Future Use)

Z=Songs Of Zion (Methodist/Afro-Centric)-Abingdon, 1981

Congregational Hymns

Christ Is Risen	Text: Nicolas Martinez, 1960; Pablo Sosa, 1960 (Cantico Nuevo-UMC)	B 167 N235 M 313 P 109
Christ The Lord Is Risen Today	Text: Charles Wesley	B 159 G 017 H 289 M 302 N 233/240(alt.) P 113(alt.)
Come, You (Ye) Faithful, Raise The Strain	Text: St. John Of Damascus; c. 8th Century Tune: Sir Arthur S. Sullivan c. 1872	E 199 M 315 N 230 P 115
Peter, Go Ring Them Bells	Traditional	Z 097
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah	Text: Wm. Williams, 1745; John Hughes, 1907	B 056 E 690 H 608 M 127 N 018(alt.) P 281
Jesus Christ Is Risen Today	Text: 14th century Latin; Robert Williams, 1817	E 207 H 297(alt.) N 240(alt.) P 123
The Head That Once Was Crowned With Thorns	Text: Thomas Kelly, 1820; Tune: Jeremiah Clark (famous for his 'Trumpet Tune') c. 1707	E 483 M 326 P 149
Camina, Pueblo De Dios or "Walk On, O People Of God"	Text: Nicolas Martinez, 1960; Pablo Sosa, 1960 (Cantico Nuevo-UMC)	M 305 N 614 P 296
All Heaven Declares	Noel & Tricia Richards (Integrity Music, 1997) CCLI #120556	G 003
Glory To The Lamb	Bill Batstone (Maranatha Music, 1993) CCLI #1187268	G 28
Crown Christ (Him) With Many Crowns	Text: Matthew Bridges, 1851; Tune: George Elvey, 1868	B 161 E 494 G 021 H 345 M 327 N 301 P 151
Easter People Raise Your Voices	Text: William James, 1979; Music: Henry T. Smart, 1867	B 360 M 304

Additional Hymn Options

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus	(text, William C. Dix; tune: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard)
A woman in a world of men	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, Brian Wren; tune: LARCHES, Veronica Bennetts)
Christ Arose	(text and music by Robert Lowry)
Christ is Alive!	(text, Brian Wren; tune: TRURO, Thomas Williams)
Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!	(text, Brian Wren; tune: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig von Beethoven)
Christ whose glory fills the skies	(text, Charles Wesley; tune: LUX PRIMA, Charles Gounod)
Come ye faithful raise, the strain	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, St. John of Damascus; tune: ST. KEVIN, Aurthur S. Sullivan)
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah	(African-American spiritual text and tune)
I know that my redeemer lives	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, Samuel Medley; tune: SHOUT ON, American folk hymn)
I know that my redeemer lives	(text, Samuel Medley; tune: DUKE STREET, John Hatton)
Jesus Christ is risen today	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, Latin trans. from 14th century, et.al.; tunes: EASTER HYMN, from Lyrica Davidica or LLANFAIR, Robert Williams)
Now the green blade rises	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, John M.C. Crum; tune: NOEL NOUVELET, traditional French carol)
O Life that maketh all things new	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, Samuel Longfellow; tune: TRURO, Thomas Williams)
Sing with all the saints in glory	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, tune: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig von Beethoven)
That Easter day with joy was bright	(text, Latin 5th century; tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Trier, adapt. Michael Praetorius)
The day of resurrection	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, St. John of Damascus; tunes: ELLACOMBE, Wirtenberg or LANCASHIRE, Henry Thomas Smart)
The strife is o'er	(text, Latin 15th century; tune: VICTORY, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina)
Thine is the glory	found in The Hymnal Project of MCC San Francisco (text, Edmond L. Budry; tune: JUDAS MACCABEUS, George Frederick Handel)

Vocal Selections (Choral and Solo)

Alleluia! For Christ Is Risen Today (John 20: 1-18)

Info: J.S. Bach (Concordia) SATB Medium-Easy

Broken And Spilled Out

Info: Text: Gloria Gaither; Music: Bill George, 1980

As sung by Steve Green (Gaither/YellowHouse Music, 1984)

Found in the collection: 'Steve Green-People Need The Lord'

Sparrow Music #70083

Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28: 1-10)

Info: Johannes Brahms (H.W. Gray/ CPP-Belwin) SATB Easy

As The Deer

Info: Martin Mystrom (Maranatha, 1984) Meditative/Placid

Also available in Praise Hymns & Choruses "The Green Book" #89

(Maranatha Music, 1984 and 1997) CCLI #1431

Instrumental Selections

All Creatures Of Our God And Sovereign (King)

Info: Piano/Organ Duet, Moderately Easy

'Best Loved Hymns-Duets For Piano & Organ

Robert Graham (Beam Me Up Music/ CPP-Belwin) #F16910DX

Christ Doth End In Triumph

Info: Organ/Trumpets, Advanced/Difficult Organ Part

'Sound The Trumpet, Volume II, Music For Organ & Multiple Trumpets'

From Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' (Joyous triumph of the Resurrection)

Dale Tucker, ed. (HW Gray/ CPP-Belwin) #GB00674

Now The Green Blade Rises

Info: Organ/Trumpet Duet, Medium

'Sacred Solos For Trumpet And Organ'

Lanni Smith (Lorenze Publishing) #PP316-C2

Sample Press Release

The following news release may be easily adapted for all Easer-related services and programs. Simply copy the following text onto your church letterhead, replacing all sections in parentheses with your local information. Double-space the text, and add your local contact information at the end, to give reporters a way to follow-up for additional information. Be creative with your press mailing list. Send your news release to all of the local religion editors at your mainline newspapers... to the public service directors at your local radio stations... and to the editors of all gay newspapers and magazines that serve your area. Be sure your press release arrives with plenty of time before the news deadline -- you may need to call to find actual deadline dates. Feel free to edit or add to this sample news release as appropriate to your ministry setting:

**Title: (Church Name) Metropolitan Community Church
To Offer (Community-Wide Easter Sunrise Service/ Easter Egg Hunt, etc.)**

(Your Town) -- (Church Name) Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which meets at (Street Location), will hold its annual (Community-Wide Easter Sunrise Service/Easter Egg Hunt, etc.) at (time) on Sunday, (date) at (location).

According to (Name of Senior Pastor), the service will feature a brief Easter meditation and special music by (name of choir and/or soloists).

(Church Name) MCC is a member congregation of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), a Christian denomination with a positive, affirming ministry to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. MCC includes more than 250 local congregations in 235 countries, and 43,000 members and adherents. Each year, more than 225,000 persons attend MCC's services and programs.

For additional information on (Church Name) MCC, contact the church office at (Area Code/Phone Number) or by e-mail at (Church E-Mail Address).

(OPTIONAL: Information on the church's services and program may also be found on the Internet at (<http://www/Your Church Website Address>). (END OF PRESS RELEASE)

Source Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to <http://www.missionresources.com/drama.html>, the source of all links to Christian drama sites.

Our thanks go out to Randall Busby for compiling the music resources listed by Hymnal under “Music Resources” as well as the Vocal and Instrumental selections provided.