

Welcome to
WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH
A Member Congregation, International Council of Community Churches



March 31, 2024

EASTER

10:00 a.m.

7 Valley Road, Watchung, NJ

Phone: (908) 755-5020

Website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org

Email: admin@wilsonmemorialchurch.org

MARCH 31, 2024

EASTER

10:00 AM



Please rise as you are able, in body or in spirit

Bold print indicates a unison reading.

PRELUDE

Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Ricky Francese

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Candle this morning shines to remind us of New Life!



HYMN

I Believe

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist, Sophia DiAndrea

Yesterday we thought death had won.
Yesterday we thought all was lost.
Yesterday we thought Christ was gone.

But not today.

Today we know that love has won.
Today we know that hope is real.
Today we know that Christ is here.

We have a reason to hope.

We have a reason to sing!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Christ is risen today.

OPENING PRAYER

God of new beginnings, on that first Easter morning, the disciples struggled to hear the good news. Doubt clouded their minds. Negativity took root and hope vanished with a simple shake of their heads. As we return to this familiar story, help us to hear differently. Open our ears that we might hear the sound of Alleluias ringing through this text. Open up our minds that the mystery and joy of Easter might feel within reach. Open up our hearts that we might believe the unbelievable. And like Peter, in this discovery, may we move closer to you. God of the empty tomb, we are hungry for your good news. With hope in our hearts we listen, and we pray, amen.

HYMN #447

Because He Lives



PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

(All who wish are invited to participate verbally in our prayer of reconciliation.)

The stone is rolled away and the angels say, “He is not here!” We assume their news is fake. The women tell the story, but we do not want to hear it. Peter runs to the tomb, but we do not understand.

Forgive us, God,

for thinking an empty tomb is nothing more than a story told to children.

Forgive us

for seeing discarded burial cloths and still holding tight to death.

Forgive us

for pushing away reasons to hope when you are alive and well in the world. Teach us to see what you see. Unravel the threads of our unbelief. Amen.



ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY

Easter Sunday

by: Rev. Sarah Speed

I cannot stay away on Easter Morning.

Like Peter,

I would run if I could.

Stop the car,

pump my arms,

take the church steps two at a time, all to know—

Did it happen?

Did it really happen?

Is evil no match for love?

I'd slide down the center aisle.

I'd grab the mic to ask

the angels,

the heavens,

the children,

Were the stories true?

And in response, the choir would sing, "Alleluia."

The children would flower the cross.

The preacher would tell me the stone was rolled away.

The people would pass the peace,

and welcome strangers,

and make room in the pews.

And with faith over doubt,

I would hope.

For I imagine that all of that ordinary holiness would be enough for Peter,

and it would be enough for me.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Respond with "**Here our Prayer**" or "**We are Grateful**"

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

ANTHEM

Holy Forever



DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly host,

praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.



PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

 **GLORIA PATRI**

**Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.**

SERMON

Looking for Life Among the Dead

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege

ANTHEM

That's My King

 **BENEDICTION**

Jesus asked the disciples, “But what about you? Who do you say that I am?”
Church, what do you say?

**Jesus is a hand reaching out in the storm,
the voice of truth spoken over us,
and love without walls.**

**Jesus is justice for the weary,
healing for the hurt,
and welcome for the stranger.**

**Jesus is teacher, Messiah, and friend— with me on the mountain
and beside me in the valley.**

**Jesus is a star in the night,
and the love that knows my name.**

POSTLUDE

Various Melodies

Ricky Francese

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Happy Easter

The flowers that grace the Sanctuary this morning is from
THE FLOWERS ON THE RIDGE

Musicians: Daniel Chapman, *Saxophone*; Mike Leon, *Guitar*;
Noah Mattison, *Trumpet*; Anthony Sabino, *Bass*; Marty Scott, *Trombone*

Sunday Music Series: Sunday, April 14th at 4pm. Join us as we welcome R&B artist "*Jacqui Grace*". Purchase your \$10 tickets after Worship Services.

Starfish food request: Please consider donating pasta, tomato sauce, diced/canned tomatoes, cereal (non-family size), and tuna.

Prayer Request: Cameron Hall, Peter Della Ventura, Joe Higgins

Care Team: An information session will be held during our April 7th coffee hour for those interesting in restarting our Congregational Care Team. The CCT is made up of members of the congregation who would be willing to send cards, organize meals, visit, or call those who cannot make it out to church, etc. Please see Michael for more information.

Mission Trip Corner:

All ages trip to support the work of Urban Promise in Camden New Jersey July 28-August 2. We will all support the trip to Camden by either direct participation (applications due by March 29th) or by participating in some of the following opportunities:

- **Pasta Supper** April 28th 4pm
- **Somerset Patriot Game** April 16th 6:35pm
- **Community Flea Market** June 1st 9am-2pm

Contact Kendal MacTaggart at kendalmactaggart@gmail.com
Tickets for events can be purchased at coffee hour or online.

How to Support the Work of Wilson Memorial Church

In Service: You are invited to place your offerings in the plate at the back of the Sanctuary.

By Mail: Gifts can be sent to the office at: 7 Valley Road Watchung, NJ 07069

Online: Use our secure giving portal by clicking the “Giving” link on our website; www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org

Text-to-Give: Text WILSONCHURCH to (908) 460-8818 and follow the setup prompts for your first time. Once set up, you can simply text the gift amount to the above number.

Follow us on social media   @mywilsonchurch

Digital copies of our bulletin are available:



How to reach Pastor Michael: You can schedule an appointment online at calendly.com/michaeldroege or call the office for assistance at (908) 755-5020. In any kind of crisis, you can always call Pastor Michael at (908) 755-5589

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege, Pastor

Timothy Walton, Director of Music & Worship Arts

Ricky Francese, Accompanist

Jacob Feldman, A/V Specialist

Tina Kelly, Administrator

Harold Kreis, Sexton

The Rev. Barbara Peters, Pastor Emerita

Lisa Renaud, Frippery (908)625-5042