



April 5, 2026
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Easter Sunday Meditation

"Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there."

Clarence W. Hall

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ
Mt Hope 8:30am Greenfield 9:50am
Easter Sunday / *They Left the Tomb*

April 5, 2026
Grace 11:00am

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

Inspired by Psalm 118

O give thanks to the Holy One, for God is good; God's love abides, endures, and prevails forever!

Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!

In distress, I call. In grief, I cry. In despair, I come. The Holy One answers. The Holy One comforts. The Holy One comes.

Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!

God, my refuge and confidence, surrounds me with strength and victory! Exalt God's holy name!

Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!

* *Invocation*

Holy One, just as they came to the tomb to honor you on that early Easter morning, we gather to praise you this day. May our alleluias resound in adoration and shared joy that you are risen and we share in the promise of new life. May we encounter your glory in this assembled community as we follow you from the empty tomb into the possibilities that await. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

“Christ Arose”

Mt Hope VH #133

Greenfield CH #357

Grace VH #133

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

Holy Love, in every ending, there is a beginning. In the same way, beginnings signal an end. May the promise of new life enable us to end the things that do not serve us, to end the attitudes that do not honor you, and to end the ways in which we are complacent and complicit in the world. Empower us to leave those things in the tomb and follow your trail. Jesus, you have demonstrated the path of your kingdom, keep us on the road of abundant and transformed life as revived and encouraged participants in your resurrected and glorified body. Grant us grace when the realities of life overwhelm, threaten to consume us, and mire us in the past. For the newness of life, we pray. Have mercy on us, Holy One. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Beloved, Jesus is risen. The Holy One is yet alive, and therefore, doing a new thing. Receive the grace of God that requires no resurrection to rise to meet us in our weakness. Embrace the grace of God to move forward boldly in new life. Hold fast to the grace of God to guide you in living the resurrected life.

Psalms Reading

Psalm 118:1, 14-24 NRSV

¹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

¹⁴ The Lord is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;

¹⁶ the right hand of the Lord is exalted;
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸ The Lord has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*
Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

John 20:1-18 NRSV

TH #497

The Resurrection of Jesus

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, ¹² and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus 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.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not touch 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.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn*

“He Lives”

Mt Hope VH #137

Greenfield CH #368

Grace VH #137

Today's Message



Communion Litany

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed!

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

* *Easter Hymn* “*Christ the Lord is Risen Today*”

Mt Hope VH #132

Greenfield CH #367

Grace VH #132

Invitation to Communion

On the night of betrayal, denial, and desertion, Jesus prepared his disciples for life beyond the tomb. He revealed through bread and cup what he would later perform in his flesh and blood.

Jesus wanted them to remember and to understand his solidarity and his sacrifice.

Jesus still prepares a place for each and all of us at this table. Will you come?

In awe and wonder, humility and thanksgiving, we come to the table to feast with the Risen One.

We remember as Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover Feast in the Upper Room, Jesus took a loaf of bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you."

After the meal, Jesus took the cup and gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, poured out for you. As often as you drink it, do so in remembrance of me."

God of the Resurrection, send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, so that the bread we break may be for us communion in the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing which we drink may be for us communion in the blood of Christ; and that being built up in love, we may be strengthened in the unity of the faith and come to full maturity in Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray together ...

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.

May his example inspire us; may his presence empower us until all the world knows that the victory has been won.

Worthy is the Lamb of God, the Lamb that was slain, to receive all power and wealth, wisdom and might, honor and glory and praise. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Come for all are welcome

Prayer

This has been no ordinary meal. We have been fed and nourished with the life of our Risen Lord Jesus.

We go from here, refreshed and eager, to share that life with others. In the name of our Risen Lord, we pray. Amen.



The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

Holy Love, receive these gifts as seeds given in thanksgiving for your generosity. Let us rejoice in giving just as the sun dances in its power. Help us to nourish these offerings to meet the needs of our community and to witness to your goodness. We dedicate them to the flourishing of your kingdom. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn*

“Thine is the Glory”

Mt Hope VH #134

Greenfield NCH #253

Grace VH #134

** Benediction*

May the tomb be just a stop
Reminding us that God's reign knows no bounds
The realm of God's possible knows no limits
God's presence always remains
God's protection endures
God's glory radiates the day and the night
And the power of Christ lives in us.

May we go forth from the tomb
Renewed and rededicated to witness to this good news
To live the resurrected life in spirit and in truth
And to be the good news in the world God loves.

** Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

** Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

They Left The Tomb: Service Prayers for Resurrection Sunday Year A was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.