

WELCOME

Thank you for coming!

We're so glad you've chosen to worship with us
this Easter Sunday.

This is a sacred time, as we gather in community to open our hearts to God.

I invite you to light a candle,
wherever you are

As our candles are lit here in our sanctuary,
to remind us of God's presence with us,
and to set aside this as a time of worship for you.

Our service will be in voice and text.

Music will be on the media viewer, so be sure that you have media turned on. .
There will be a link in Nearby Chat if you want to view the video in your own
browser.

I'm going to start our Gathering Music and run the rest of the announcements
underneath.

GATHERING MUSIC

"Here Comes the Sun" The Beatles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKLV8GCrveQ>

First United Church of Christ and Conference Center Second Life is a church with
full real life standing in the Eastern Association;
Southern California Nevada Conference of the
United Church of Christ (UCC).

And anyone you see with a "Minister" tag is an ordained UCC minister in real life.
As we like to say, it's good to be real in Second Life!

And as a UCC church, we'd like you to know that

"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here."

We celebrate God's Love everyday.

and seek to be a place of belonging for those who need it, where all people will be
included, accepted and supported in their journey of faith and their struggles in
life.

If you would like a bulletin for today's service you can find it in the red binder
in the back.

If you would like to make a donation to support this ministry

there is a donation bowl in the back,

or you can go to our website

firstuccsl.org

We thank you for the blessing of your presence and your support.

Paster Jerome will be offering a Bible Study on the Gospel of John

beginning next Thursday at 5pm SLT,

upstairs in the Gathering Room.

Next week during worship is the congregational annual meeting.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

Today's lectionary gospel reading comes from the Gospel according to Mark,
The oldest of the gospels in the Bible,

And it is the last 8 verses of that gospel.

If you look in your Bible, you may see a few others after it,

But unanimous scholarly consensus is that they were added later.
The Gospel of Mark ends with chapter 16, verse 8.
Let us listen to God speaking through the words of Mark, chapter 16, verses 1 through 8.

MARK 16:1-8 (NRSVUE)

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.
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.”
So they went out and fled from the tomb,
for terror and amazement had seized them,
and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

DRAMATIC READING

Adapted from Iona Worship Group

We went there . . .
First thing . . .
the three of us.
It was very damp . . .
there was a heavy dew . . .
you could see the sun rising.

We took some flowers . . .
I picked them on Friday . . .
and we took some perfume . . .
we thought there would be a smell . . .
you know the way corpses go . . .
I was scared.

It was just us . . .
the others wouldn't come . . .
they were scared like me.

We ran up the road . . .
we were out of breath . . .
but we walked slowly up to the grave.

We wondered about the stone . . .
who would roll it away?
We should have brought the others.
And then we looked . . .
THE STONE WAS AWAY!

I went in first.
I was terrified.
I never wanted to go.

There was nothing there . . .
there were just bandages . . .
right where we had left him . . .
But no body.
And then we heard a voice . . .
but it wasn't his voice.

It said he was risen.
It said he wasn't there.
It said we had to tell the others.
So we've to go back . . .
but who will believe us?
They'll think we're mad.

We've to tell the others . . .
but they'll never believe us . . .
they'll say that we're just stupid . . .
but the stone was rolled away . . .
and the body wasn't there . . .
and we did hear a voice . . .
AND HE IS RISEN!

FIRST MESSAGE - Pastor Yadi
Today is the day of celebration.
This morning my youngling got dressed up and my son went to church with us.
I love Resurrection Sunday!

I love Holy Week!
I cleared my projects to make it all about my family, meditation and prayer.

I told my colleagues who I do the bulk of my design work with that I was turning everything in on Friday because I would not be available on the weekend.

I said, it's my Super Bowl Sunday, so they could understand.

See they love football so they agree it was busy and important.
Yes!

The Super Bowl, especially in the United States for football fans, is a big deal. They cheer for their preferred teams and if their particular team makes it to the championship it is a bigger deal!

Then there are the cool marketing items, the cool products at fast food restaurants, and some cool merchandise out there.
The same can be said about this day of Easter as it is commercially known.

I also compared this day to the Super Bowl because people gather no matter what team they are cheering for if they are fans.
Growing up, no matter if you went to church or not, on that day everyone went to church cause grandma was or is a fan of Jesus.

Either way we know that each year the day will come to celebrate and gather.
Football fans and Jesus fans.
The day of resurrection comes every year.

Unlike the Super Bowl the characters, the teams, are the same.
We know the story.
We know that Lent is coming and then Holy Week.

Christians, and non Christians, people know it is Easter.
And yet, just like the Super Bowl there are many who will say, so what?

I'm not talking about those who have other Holy Days, or religion.
I'm talking about those who might have been raised Christian and have walked away.
Or those who want nothing to do with such faith or others.

The Super Bowl or Easter, it's just another day.
Sure it comes every year.
Sure people are excited about it, party, get dressed, get together, and so what?

For many people religion no matter which one it is has created division and they don't want anything to do with it.
And yet for others it is Christianity that people can't get away fast enough from it.

I asked two former Christians, one older and one in his twenties, why they dislike Christianity?

The older one said, "Christianity and Colonialism go hand in hand."
Another one said to me, "Christianity and nationalism go hand in hand."

And many others had in common one or two of these reasons:

Christians can be divisive, extremist, homophobic, trans-phobic, suppressive, none-democratic, they want absolute power, selfish in their actions, and the list can go on and on!

Could we possibly disagree with that?
How many times have I wondered, why am I a Christian?

Can anyone relate to this?

Friends, we might not have chosen what religions we might have been born into, if at all.

We might not have chosen to go to church as younglings, or do confirmation.
Or to have been Baptized as a child.
Perhaps, we did not choose the church we went to.

But then why do you choose this now?

Perhaps, it all comes down to who Jesus is today in our lives.
What Jesus' life reflected in the gospels.

The baby born, the child at the temple, the man in ministry helping, supporting, healing, and then being betrayed.
The betrayal, the death, and now the resurrection.

A resurrection that places in your hands the choice to say yes or walk away.
The forgiving and loving character of Jesus even for those who miss the point of all he stands for and all he is.
A gift that says forgiveness, grace, and love is there no questions asked, and no strings attached.

And so, today is a big deal for me to celebrate, because it leveled the playing field in the world for me.
This act of love and redemption has conquered death and given me a fighting chance to seek justice, equity, life, and wholeness.
Sure, we still encounter death, devastation, pain, and whatever life brings.

But I no longer have to be alone in my journey through life.
And I no longer fear death, for it did not and does not have the final word.

I'm not a football fan and I don't care about the Super Bowl.
But I love the commercials during the game and the halftime show, sometimes.
I will still show up for the food.

I might not get excited about the entire commercialism of Easter but I will still buy into it.
I will still dress my youngling up and do the whole celebration.

For on this day my friends I will celebrate my redemption, the love and grace pour into me each and every day.

So I invite you to reflect on this and perhaps just like me you say, I'm a follower of Jesus Christ, no further explanation needed.

And may our lives and actions say this all year round until we cheer together again, he has risen, risen indeed!

Hallelujah and Amen.

Crowder- "Grave robber"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxnZgM9YXy0>

SECOND MESSAGE - Pastor Kris

It's a little unsettling, right?

The way Mark ends his gospel account.

Where's Jesus?

No post-resurrection appearances.

And where are the male disciples?

Instead, there are just three apparently timid women,

An empty tomb,

A young man dressed in white,

The hope that Jesus has gone ahead,

that we'll see him somewhere down the road.

And - fear?

Not so comforting.

John's version, with the garden, and the gardener,

And Mary hearing her name,

Recognizing Jesus.

A much more satisfying account, I used to think,

than women trembling in fear.

But according to scholar Marie Noonan Sabin,

They women weren't "afraid."

They were shocked, perhaps,

Or astonished,

But really that word is better translated as "awe" or "holy ecstasy."

It's the same word used earlier in Mark

For the disciples' response when Jesus stilled the stormy sea,

And when he was transfigured on the mountain.

It is a word for a change in human perception,

When eyes are opened,

And they see through to the divine.

When the text uses the word to describe male disciples,

It is translated as "awe,"

But when it's women involved ...

You get the picture.

These three women weren't silent because of fear,

they were awestruck, speechless.

An appropriate reaction when ordinary people are touched by the divine.

It was an experience beyond words.

They weren't timid,

These women were the first to realize the magnitude of what had happened.

Their eyes were opened.
In contrast to the many times in Mark the male disciples are clueless.
This is part, according to Sabin, of a pattern in Mark
Of moving women who were on the margins of the story
To the center.
All the gospels testify to the presence of women as key witnesses to the
resurrection,
But in various ways, Matthew, Luke and John's accounts
Also downplay the significance of that.
But Mark, ending with ordinary women being the only ones present to this divine
revelation
Signifies the new reality of the Kin-dom,
And the radical inclusion of all,
Even those who were on the margins.
And the ending is abrupt on purpose.
It leaves room for God to keep disclosing the meaning of this miracle and mystery,
And for us in our ordinary lives and communities.
To live out its promise.
May our eyes be opened as well.
Amen.

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDDn_abC-N4

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Worship is a time when we,
as a community,
join our hearts together,
to connect to God and to each other.
So this time is the essence of what we do here together.
If you have a prayer that you wish to lift to God,
and have supported by the energy of those gathered here, type it in Nearby Chat at
this time.
As people share their prayers in text
please read them prayerfully
and hold this space as sacred and safe
to open our hearts to God.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Lord hear our prayers.
Those voiced here today.
Those spoken only in the depths of our hearts.
Those for which we have no words.
We lift them all to you, O Lord,
with faith in your boundless love and grace.
And we pray all this in the name of the one
who taught us to pray together, saying:
"Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
They kin-dom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.
Given 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 kin-dom, and the power,
and the glory forever.
Amen.

BLESSING FOR THE JOURNEY

Our worship is over,
our ministry to the world is just beginning.
The world is waiting
for us to dream, with our eyes wide open.
Go in peace,
come again in hope.
Amen.

“Come Alive” the Great Showman
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYrc-kWEccg>

GO IN PEACE!