



April 16, 2023
Holy Humor/Red Nose/Easter Joy Sunday

GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community here at Union UCC. To learn more about us please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs.

Please complete the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it in with your offering or give it to a pastor. This is a good way to let us know you're here.

Our church is a diverse family of believers, spiritually united in Christ, rooted in a rich heritage and growing with vitality into the future. We proclaim God's word, nurturing and inspiring dedicated Christian discipleship through worship, education, pastoral care, fellowship, and outreach within our community and the world.

One of our core values as a church is extravagant welcome and hospitality. We believe in God's inclusive love. No matter who you are or where you on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Lay Readers: 8:00 Suzanne Schneider, 10:30 Doug Kuntz
Ushers: 8:00 Debbie Romig, Connie Gioielli, Dixie Gross
10:30 Donna Christman, Brian Horwith, Deb Wenner, Dan Haftl, Maryann Puia,
Eric Minnich, Gloria Toner, Carol Stout
Greeters: Karen Misera, George & Val Borman
Sound: Pat Sorg

***Please stand in body or spirit.**

Prelude

Behold the Lamb Dottie Rambo
Blake Hoppes

Welcome

What is Holy Humor Sunday? It has a long history in many congregations around the world. Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the Sunday after Easter as Risus Paschalis (God's Joke, or the Easter Laugh). Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to get their congregations to laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Jesus – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead. The observance of Risus Paschalis was officially outlawed by Pope Clement X in the 17th century. Perhaps people were having too much fun! In 1988 the Fellowship of Merry Christians began encouraging churches to resurrect some of these Christian traditions – to celebrate the grace and mercy of God through the gifts of laughter and joy.

<https://www.lakesunapeeumc.org/sunday-services/holy-humor-sunday>

Peace and Joy

Leader: The love and joy of Christ be with you!
People: **And also with you!**

Leader: I invite you to pass the love and joy of Christ to one another by creating your own unique greeting, smile, hand gesture, or dance.

Remember to send some of that love and peace to those worshiping remotely.

Please stand in body or spirit.

***Hymn** Hallelu, Hallelu Let's sing it one time through and then wait for directions from Pastor Kris.

**Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah;
Praise ye the Lord!
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah;
Praise ye the Lord!**

**Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah;
Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah;
Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah;
Praise ye the Lord.**

Please be seated.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Sing a new song!

ALL: A joyful melody of springtime glory and rebirth.

One: Sing praise to our Still-Laughing Easter God,

ALL: who has rolled away the bindings of yesterday.

One: Immerse your anxiety and despair in the fountain of new birth.

ALL: Sing a new song!

***Prayer**

One: You smiled and the sun burst through the shadows of chaos; you chuckled and the platypus splashed in creation's fountain; you laughed and all that is good and beautiful was given shape by you, Imaginative God. Snickering at the feeble attempts of the evil one, you showed us how to resist temptation; giggling at sin's desperate desire to hold on to us, you released us by your love; howling with laughter at death's foolish belief that the tomb could hold you, you burst forth into the kingdom as the stars pealed with joy, laughing Jesus. As you fill us with new life, may we delight in sharing it with others; as you tell us the good news which can never be taken from us, may we rejoice in offering it to the broken, the sad, the lonely; as you tickle us with grace, may we give it away with laughter on our lips and joy in our hearts, Spirit of Easter. God in Community, Holy in One, our hearts overflow with wonder. Amen. *(Written by Thom M. Shuman)*

Sung Response

**ALL: 1. Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!**

10:30 Worship

**TODAY: Pastors invite children forward to leave with
Ms. Tiffany for a time designed just for them!**

Children will be in the basement and will return before worship is over. If worship ends early, parents are welcome to meet their children downstairs.

Song: Go, Make a Diff'rence Angrisano, Tomaszek #199
Sing! Prayer and Praise

Asus A Dm Bb C

Go make a diff - 'rence. We can make a diff-

Dm F Asus A

--- 'rence. Go make a diff - 'rence in the world,---

Dm Bb C Dm

Go make a diff - 'rence. We can make a diff - 'rence.

Bbmaj7 Asus A Dm Am Am

Go make a diff - 'rence in the world.---

Last time, Fine 1. 2.3.

Education Hour for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am

Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for ages 3-grade 5.

Ms. Tiffany would like to invite children to join her and her volunteers for Sunday School at 9:15 and Children's Church during 10:30am service.

8am Music Offering

I know that My Redeemer Lives Howard Hughes
Heritage Choir

Scripture Reading John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among

them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Message The Easter Laugh Pastor Kris

Open mic time!

Do you have a joke or story to tell that is funny, brings you joy, or that helps you keep the faith?

Let Pastor Kris know so you can share it today!

Prayers of the People

Christ Came Juggling

Christ came juggling from the tomb,
flipping and bouncing death's stone pages,
tossing those narrow letters high
against the roots of dawn spread in cloud.

This Jesus, clown, came dancing
in the dust of Judea, each slapping step
a new blossom spiked with joy.

Hey! Listen - that chuckle in the dark,
that clean blast of laughter behind -
Christ comes juggling our tombs,
tossing them high and higher yet,
until they hit the sun and break open
and we fall out, dancing and juggling
our griefs like sizzling balls of light.

— "Christographia 31" by Eugene Warren in *A Widening Light*, Luci Shaw, editor,
posted on [Holy Ordinary: Musings and Photography from a Quaker Perspective](#).

A Clown's Prayer

As I stumble through this life,
help me to create more laughter than tears,
dispense more cheer than gloom,
spread more cheer than despair.
Never let me become so indifferent,
that I will fail to see the wonders in the eyes of a child,
or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged.
Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people,
make them happy, and forget momentarily,
all the unpleasantness in their lives.
And in my final moment,

may I hear You whisper:
“When you made My people smile,
you made Me smile.”

— Anonymous

Dour-faced in the presence of stunning sunsets; stricken with chronic severity while surrounded by gurgling babies; frozen-souled when touched by the warmth of grace; if we are made in your image, it's no wonder people think of you as a grouchy old geezer, God of Joy. So, breathe on us ...fill our souls with: laughter which chases away the long faces; chuckles which wipe frowns off our brows; great guffaws which shatter hardened hearts. Fill us, Breath of sidesplitting shrieks, so we can celebrate the last laugh on death. *(Written by Thom M. Shuman)*

The Prayer of Jesus

**ALL: 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.**

NURTURING LOVE:

**NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF GOD'S
CHURCH
OFFERING**

OFFERING PRAYER

Thank you for the many ways in which you support God's work and God's people.

Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC

OFFERING ENVELOPES. If you can't attend worship, you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church address is on one side, just add a stamp.

ELECTRONIC GIVING. Choose to give a repetitive contribution on a regular basis (i.e weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly), or make single contributions whenever you desire in an amount of your choice. Electronic contributions are initiated from Union UCC's website (UnionUCC.org). Click on 'giving', then on 'Ways to Give' and follow the prompts. Feel free to contact John Harting 610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-398-2654) to answer your questions or demonstrate the process.

VENMO Union UCC now has Venmo! You can now make donations, pay for events, and support the church through this platform. Please be sure to include in the "What it's for" line what your Venmo is supporting. You can either search for @unionuccneffs

MOBILE GIVING. If you would like to give on the go, Vanco, the company that processes our e-giving transactions, has a mobile app that allows you to do so. Open your app search screen, search under "Vanco Mobile Faith \Engagement" and follow the prompts.

Easter Mission Offering

This year the **Easter Mission Offerings** will be divided between the **Habitat for Humanity** and the **Jubilee Breakfast Ministry**.

Please support these two mission organizations by using the Easter Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or

make a note on your check or blank envelope for Easter Mission. Give online at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/campaign/C-12H6T>

The mission of Habitat for Humanity of the Lehigh Valley is to provide hardworking families with simple, decent, affordable housing. Since 1989, Habitat has built 131 homes for families in the Lehigh Valley.

The Jubilee Breakfast Ministry at Zion's Reformed Church in Allentown serves about 65 breakfasts to those who need a meal each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday during the coldest months of the year, November through April.

Musical Offering

Estudios Sencillos, Movements 6, 2 & 1 Leo Brouwer
Mike Baer, guitar

Please stand in body or spirit.

*** Offering Response**

**ALL: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God, above, the heavenly host.
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

***Benediction**

*One: May the God of surprises bring smiles and joy to the everyday and ordinary. May the God of love be seen in all we do and say. Go forth rejoicing, as fools for Christ and lovers of God's people! **Amen.***

***Hymn An Easter Hymn: Joy to the World**

ALL:

***Joy to the World, the Lord's alive,
Awake, rejoice and sing!
It's just as He had said,
He's risen from the dead.
Salvation now He brings,
Salvation now He brings,
Salvation, salvation now He brings.***

***Joy to the World, the empty tomb,
Proclaims a victory.
Of light compelling,
A great dispelling
Of darkness in the world,
Of darkness in the world,
Of darkness, of darkness in the world.***

***Joy to the World,
Our Savior reigns,
Let Heaven and earth proclaim
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.***

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Postlude Music

Jesus Shall Reign Tune: Duke Street, John Hatton
Blake Hoppes

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week		
Last Week	\$15,272.00		In person	Online
Calendar Year 2023 (Jan-Feb)	\$37,004.00	8:00 am	123	
Calendar Year 2022 (Jan-Feb)	\$29,651.00	10:30 am	306	
Change from Last Year	+24.8%	Education Hour		
Budget FY 2022 (<i>July 2022-Feb. 23</i>)	\$261,970.00	2022 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:		
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (<i>July 2022-Feb 23</i>)	\$248,782.00	Last Week:	Lbs, \$50	
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-5.0%	Total YTD:	1830lbs, \$275	
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		Easter Mission	\$1,686.78	

Presentations to the Glory of God

**In loving memory of Brother, Peter Morehouse.
Barbara & Rich Carinci**

Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or \$8 for Children's Bulletin.

Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.

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