

**Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond
United Church of Christ
Our Church at Worship on the Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 25, 10:00 A.M.**

Our Mission: To be an inviting, caring faith community connecting with Christ.

Tune into Facebook at 10:00 on Sunday to share this time of worship. If you can't join promptly at 10:00, the video will be available later as well.

You can access that video even if you don't have a Facebook account – just type in <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityChurchOfRichmond/>

This morning's worship features the Alleluia Sound High School Choir and the Good Vibrations Handbell Choir from First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake. For nearly 50 years, those choirs have made a regional tour in the spring to showcase their talents. With the pandemic, that tour has had to become virtual and they've offered their gifts for churches around the country to enjoy.

The Alleluia Sound Choir is directed by Ann Tucker, Director of Music at FCCCL. The Good Vibrations Handbell Choir is directed by Toni Gambini, Bellmaster. Accompanist is Danielle Caioli and Matt Potts plays percussion. The volunteer high school choir, Alleluia Sound, is made up of students age 14-18 from Cary-Grove High School, Crystal Lake Central High School, Crystal Lake South High School, Huntley High School, and Prairie Ridge High School.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE "Christ has Arisen" Good Vibrations Handbell Choir

WORDS OF WELCOME Rev. Hope Molozaizy

GATHERING SONG "Here in this Place"

**Holy One, may Your presence here open our minds.
May Your Spirit among us help us to find
You are rising up now like a fountain of grace
from the holy ground
here in this place.
Here in this place.**

Repeat from beginning

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CALL TO WORSHIP & OPENING PRAYER

One: Hold your head high, Christ has risen.
Rejoice and shout, Christ has come calling us home.

**All: Home to the heart of God,
Home to God's living presence,
Home to God's banquet feast.**

One: Hold your head high, Christ has risen.
Death has been conquered,
Christ has come calling us home.

**All: All that was broken has been made whole,
All that was dislocated has been set right,
All that was oppressed has been set free.**

One: Hold your head high, Christ has risen.
Bringing God's healing,
Christ has come calling us home.
Redemption is complete;
God's eternal world has begun;
Love reigns over all.

**All: Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Christ has risen calling us home.**

One: Let us pray:
Holy Risen One, we gather this day and we come as we are:
witnesses to your promises, proclaiming God's love.
Accept all we bring to worship today.
Accept our worship, we pray. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

presented by the Alleluia Sound High School Choir

Verse 1: **Joyful, Joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the storms of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.**

Verse 2: **All your works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Tell us to rejoice in Thee.**

Verse 3: **Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blessed,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ, our brother,
All who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.**

Lyrics, Henry van Dyke, 1907; Tune: Hymn to Joy, Ludwig Van Beethoven 1824; public domain

WORD FOR ALL AGES

The Blessing of Youth Choirs

from Ann Tucker, Director of Alleluia Sound High School Choir and Good Vibrations Handbell Choir
from First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake

SCRIPTURE READING

The Gospel according to Luke 24:33-48 (New Revised Standard Version)

That same hour the two who had walked to Emmaus got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. Those were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then the two told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

MESSAGE

We are Witnesses

HYMN

“Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven”

#243

Verse 1:

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
Jesus on the cross as savior for the world’s salvation bled;
But the crucified redeemer now is risen from the dead!**

Verse 2:

**Now the iron bars are broken, Christ from death to life is born;
Glorious life, and life immortal on this holy Easter morn;
Christ has triumphed, and we conquer by God’s liberating deed;
Now the Christ with us abiding to eternal life shall lead.**

Verse 3:

**Christ is risen, we are risen; shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain and dew, and gleams of glory from the brightness of your face;
That we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel hands be gathered, and be yours eternally.**

Verse 4:

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to the God of joy;
Alleluia to the Savior who came death’s bonds to destroy;
Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia! Alleluia! To the triune Majesty.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

The 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SONG RESPONSE "This Little Light of Mine" performed by the Alleluia Sound Choir

OFFERING Invitation to Give – We are so thankful for the continued financial support that we have continued to receive during this time! Though we rarely see each other in person these days, our church is still: providing worship; providing Sunday school for our church kids; connecting members with each other; supporting neighbors in need, locally and further away. We believe those things are parts of God's calling for us in this place and we can do them because of steady financial support.

You may always send your check directly to the church at PO Box 246, Richmond IL, 60071.

Prayer of Dedication – You might pray as you write your check and address your envelope to the church... **Accept our lives, O God, as well as our gifts. Let the spirit in which we give them be your Spirit. Let the use that is made of them be your use. Amen.**

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song "Something Beautiful for God"

Chorus:

**Today let us do something beautiful for God!
Do something small, but do it with great love.
Do what we can, where we are, with what we got.
Today, let us do something beautiful for God!**

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POSTLUDE

Call to Worship, by Christine Sine, and posted on <http://godspace-msa.com/>; Opening Prayer, Spill the Beans, Issue 22, p. 89; Prayer of Dedication, Chalice Worship, Chalice Press, 1997, #526; Music copyright, CCLI 1908882.

NEW NEWS

WORSHIP TOGETHER? Pastor Hope wants very much to offer outdoor worship for us together as soon as late May. However, one of the conditions to make such a gathering possible is that the COVID positivity rate in McHenry County stay under 10%. So do your part – Keep wearing your mask. Keep your safe distance from people. Get your vaccine as you can. If you have health concerns about the vaccine, talk with your doctor for their advice.

TURNING POINT INC. invites you to help Turn the Night Purple! They write: “As we end an incredibly challenging year of providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all looking forward to the fresh hope of a new year. Unfortunately, many women, men, and children are still living in unsafe, potentially deadly situations. The isolation that came with stay-at-home orders and social distancing meant people living with domestic violence have felt more trapped and alone than ever. As our communities open back up, we want these individuals and families to know that Turning Point is here for them, just like we have been every single day for the past 40 years.” Join Turning Point for a virtual tribute to hope and healing in honor of those affected by domestic violence – **April 30, 6 PM** on Facebook Live at McHenryCountyTurningPoint. For more information, and to donate now, visit <https://www.turnpt.org/paintthenight>

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

Penny Kraft regularly places orders of gift cards on our behalf, and the church gets a percentage of the cost of those cards. As you might be starting to get out into the world more often again, remember that there is a HUGE variety of gift cards available, from specialty stores to gas stations and grocery stores. Jewel, Walmart, Meijer, Marathon Gas, SO MANY RESTAURANTS, department stores, etc. Though the percentages might seem small, small bits can add up to a meaningful contribution to the church, and are especially great with places that you’re going to shop at anyway. (Remember, you get the full value of the gift card; the church gets our donation when you purchase the card, whether you lose, spend, or whatever.) Find the full list of participating retailers at <https://www.shopwithscrip.com/shopwithscrip-retailers>. Contact Penny with your order any time by calling/texting her at 815-236-6172 or emailing her at mriapk@gmail.com.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Hey! How did those people get to go to the sanctuary for worship?! They contacted Kelli Brossart at kellibrossart@gmail.com. We remain cautious and follow all CDC and State of Illinois guidelines, including wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing, and sitting with members of your household in the assigned pew(s). We also ask everyone to bring a copy of the bulletin. We are taking ‘reservations’ now for upcoming Sundays. If you would like to sign up, email Kelli. You’ll be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. You’ll receive an email reminder before the Sunday you are scheduled to attend. We know this is not a replacement for “regular” church, but we hope it provides a chance to reconnect with our beautiful worship space.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Thanks, all you “snow sponsors and “snowmen” and “snow-women” for supporting our snow clearing costs from this past winter. Even with our efforts to reduce the needed services, we’ve still had to pay over \$2000 in 2021 for snow removal. (Yes, that did go up; we often get the bills for the clearing a while after the actual snow.)

Through special gifts from eleven households, we’ve received \$1100 toward those costs! – Thank you!

If others of you still want to contribute, your special gift of \$50 will make you a “snow sponsor”! If you’re able to give \$100, we’ll consider you a “snowman” (or woman) and maybe even arrange for a token of our appreciation. Thanks for any way you can help!

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY continues Tuesday at 2PM open to everyone to read and discuss the Bible passage for the coming Sunday. Tell Pastor Hope if you want the Zoom link.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BUT ON A SATURDAY continues at 10:30 on Saturday mornings. Contact Pastor Hope or the church office for the Zoom information.

The Hungry Christ, by Vicki Kemper, Pastor of First Congregational, UCC, of Amherst, MA
While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, Jesus said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” - Luke 24:41 (NRSV)

If we take the story literally, it has been four days since Jesus has eaten. Not since Thursday, when he washed his disciples’ feet and shared with them a sad supper, has he taken nourishment. On Friday, his executioners would not give the Thirsty One as much as a drink of water. On Saturday, the dead body of the Crucified Christ went unseen, untouched, unfed.

Now it is Sunday night after a busy day, and the Risen Christ is hungry. Sounding less like a walking miracle and more like a ravenous teenage boy, Jesus appears out of nowhere and asks his dumbstruck disciples for something to eat.

And maybe that’s the point, that just as the Word became flesh and lived as one of us, the Risen Christ lives among us still, much as you or me: wounded by the ways of the world, bearing the scars of injustice and fear, and with an appetite that wants satisfying.

Rather than a disembodied, spiritualized version of “love wins,” maybe the Risen Christ is just as inconvenient, and even more down to earth, than that troublemaker Jesus of Nazareth.

He is the single mother waiting in line at the soup kitchen, the innocent man wasting away behind bars, the bullied trans kid desperate for acceptance. The Risen Christ is the refugee family swimming against the tide, the exhausted parent trying to do it all, the addict struggling to get clean, the unhoused person begging for spare change.

The Risen Christ is your least favorite, most annoying, always-hungry acquaintance. Do you have anything to eat?

Prayer

When I fail to recognize you, O Christ, share with me your need.

Subscribe to the United Church of Christ StillSpeaking Daily Devotionals at <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>

PRAYERS FOR APRIL 25, 2021

If you have prayer updates or announcements to share, please send them to BOTH Pastor Hope (pastorhope@richmonducc.org) AND our office manager, Brandi Pletcher (office@richmonducc.org). THANKS! *We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer.*

JOYS: Birthdays: Kathy Speaker (April 28), Grace Haskins (April 30)

OUR SYMPATHIES surround Julie Leighninger at the sudden death of her husband, Eric, this week. Eric and Julie moved to Spring Grove at the start of 2020 and started attending our church just a few weeks before the lockdown. Eric had just recently become a part of the Worship & Spiritual Growth Ministry; you have seen him comment on our online worship nearly every Sunday since then.

CONCERNS

Dawn Conley's mother, Diane

Deann Workmon

Debbie Franzone's brother-in-law, George

Pastor Hope's aunt, Liz Boehne

All who are worried about the health of loved ones and family members

Leaders trying to make wise decisions

Ongoing Prayers:

School teachers, staff, administrators; school children and their parents, including college students

Those whose household relationships are strained

Healthcare workers, especially Cheryl Kazimier's niece and Rob Rummel's daughter-in-law

Marti Swanson's brother, John Baldwin

Ella Watts, Melissa Jones's mother

Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik

Members and Friends who are Homebound or in Nursing Facilities:

Mercedes Ahlgrim (New Mexico), Sharon Mensing (Sterling), June Whitney (at home)