

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
Louis Allison, Tech Director
Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

April 19, 2026

9:45 AM

3rd Sunday of Easter
On the Way: Wandering Hearts and Shared Valleys
Holy Humor Sunday
In the Heart: A Joyful Detour

Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are a guest, we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.

We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy in the side narthex! Additionally, after the children's message, children from 3 years old—6th grade are invited to participate in Sunday school in our classroom downstairs. They can choose to attend Sunday school or return to their seats to sit with their parents. Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!

POEM¹

The Gospel of Laughter

Anon.

WORDS OF WELCOME & INTRODUCTION TO HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

Coffee, Coffee, Coffee

(Words by Christopher Gist Raible, a former minister at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto)

CALL TO WORSHIP²

L: Joy is loose,

C: In the wiggles of the children,

L: The whispers of the youth,

C: The smiles of the adults.

L: We praise God for this glorious day,

C: Let the praise break forth in the most unlikely places and in silly ways.

L: Joy and praise fill our hearts and our songs

C: Let the laughter be deep, for we are God's people.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

INVITATION FOR JOKES

PRAYER OF THE DAY³

L: O Great Laughing God,

C: ...we come into your presence with joy and longing to be surprised. We thank you that you have given to us the gift of laughter and delight. These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth. May we find that in giving up to laughter there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit to renew our worship and our living. Amen.

OPENING HYMN (see below)

Laughter Lends Itself to Praise

Laughter Lends Itself to Praise

Daniel Charles Damon

Medieval French Melody

Piano

$\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time with a tempo of 80. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has five staves of lyrics, and the second system has three staves of lyrics. The melody is a simple, rhythmic line, and the accompaniment consists of chords. The lyrics are as follows:

1. Laugh-ter lends it - self to praise bring-ing heal-ing from with - in;
2. Laugh-ter bends where laws may break; rig - id fact can - not con - tain
3. Laugh-ter leaps in to the void find-ing on - ly Spir - it there;
4. Laugh-ter comes in spite of pain dan-cing ev - en as we mourn;
5. Laugh-ter lends it - self to praise; all the love and all the fear,

hope will sure - ly rise a - gain as laugh-ter lends it - self to praise.
half the wis-dom of God's reign, so laugh-ter bends where laws may break.
shame and fear would nev - er dare so laugh-ter leaps in to the void.
something dies but something's born for laugh-ter comes in spite of pain.
all the signs that God is near say laugh-ter lends it - self to praise.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS²

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

P: We believe in God, who made us in His image.

C: We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like Him.

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

C: He had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead.

P: We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

C: Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – He is our joy!

P: Forgive us, Lord,

C: when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don't claim the happiness that is rightfully ours as your children, when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world. Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

ACT OF PRAISE (see below)

Sing a Happy Alleluia

Sing a Happy Alleluia

Shirley Erena Murray

Marty Haugen, 1986

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. Sing a hap - py al - le - lu - ia, sing it out with
2. We're the proof of God's good hu - mor, we're the twin - kle
3. Sar - ah laughed at God's good tim - ing, Mar - y sang and
4. Ev - ery day sing al - le - lu - ia! We are loved, though

4

heart - and style. We're the ech - o of God's laugh - ter,
in God's eye. Made to shine, re - flect the glo - ry,
Da - vid danced, Je - sus smiled and hugged the chil - dren,
so ab - surd, hu - man, foo - lish cho - sen peo - ple,

7

we're the im - age of God's smile. Al - le - lu - ia, all cre - a - tion, al - le - lu - ia,
gi - ven light and space to fly.
so is life for us en - hanced.
God still takes us at our word.

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ev - ery - one. Al - le - lu - ia, all cre - a - tion, Al - le - lu - ia, ev - ery - one.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Passport Question for Kids: *What makes me laugh or smile a lot? What is something silly or wonderful about me that God might enjoy?*

Passport Question for Adults: *What has surprised me with joy along the way? What about me might make God smile or laugh with delight?*

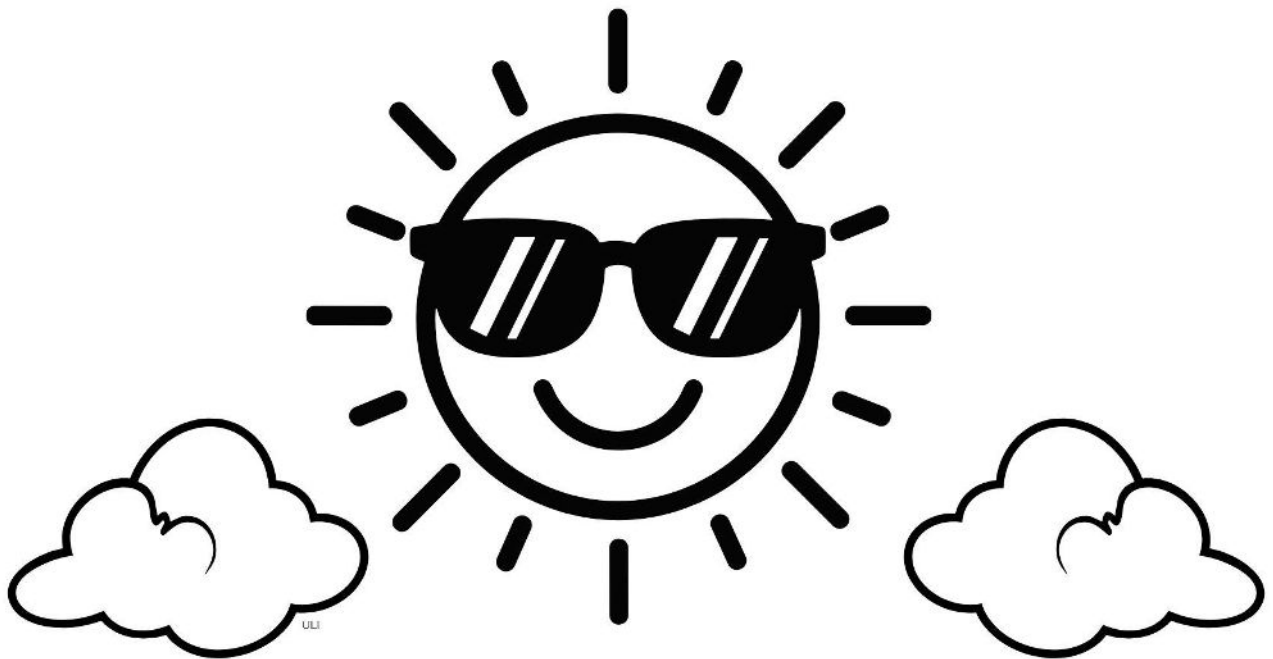
SCRIPTURE

John 20:19-31 (The Message)

HOLY HUMOR NEWSCAST

***HYMN** (see next page)

Keep on the Sunny Side of Life



*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

The Sunny Side of Life

J. Howard Entwisle, 1899

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. There's a dark and a troub-led side of life; There's a
2. Tho' the storm in its fu - ry break to - day, Crush - ing
3. Let us greet with a song of hope each day, Tho' the

4

bright and a sun - ny side too; Tho' we meet with the dark-ness and strife, The
hopes that we cherished so dear; Storm and cloud will in time pass a way, The
mo-ments be cloud - y or fair; Let us trust in our Sav - ior al way, Who

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sun - ny side we al - so may view. Keep on the sun-ny side, Al-ways on the sun-ny side,
sun ill shine a-gain bright and clear. care. care.
keep-eth ev - ry one in His care.

Keep on the sun-ny side of life; It will help us ev'-ry day, It will brigh-ten all the way, If we

keep on the sun-ny side of life.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

INVITATION FOR JOKES

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY²

P: Together let us proclaim our faith, in the words of this Holy Humor Creed,

C: We believe in God, who made us in His image. We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like Him.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior. He had the last laugh on the devil when He rose from the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son. Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – He is our joy!

PRAYERS OF JOY & THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Now having professed our faith in God, let us turn our hearts to God in prayer- O Lord, giver of joy and laughter, we thank you for giving us these gifts.

(A brief silence is held)

P: For the moments of laughter and unbridled joy you give to us: for opportunities to laugh at ourselves, for the belly laughs of children, for friends and family who love us because of our quirks, and not just in spite of them,

Lord of Laughter,

C: We give you thanks.

P: For artists who give us the opportunity to see the world through the surreal, for the courage to smile even when difficulties arise, for those who have hope even when others think there is no hope, for saints in the Lord who overflow with laughter and spread your joy to all of us. Lord of Laughter,

C: We give you thanks.

P: For the words of Jesus that defy our logical minds; for teaching us that we can rise again, for the woman who finds a lost coin and calls her friends and neighbors to celebrate, Lord of Laughter,

C: We give you thanks.

P: For the absurdity of a camel trying to fit through the eye of a needle, for the father of the Prodigal Son who is willing to look like a fool as he runs to greet his son, for the generosity of the landowner who will pay workers a whole day's wage when they only worked one hour, for tiny bits of faith that can move entire mountains, for the reality that nothing can live unless it first dies. Lord of Laughter,

C: We give you thanks.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

P: For the great reversal of the Gospel; that the last shall be made first, that the rejected stone became the cornerstone, that those who wish to become great must serve, that the lost will be found, that the small will become great, that though you are Wisdom, you choose to forget our sins, that when we are weak, your strength shines through us.
Lord of Laughter,

C: We give you thanks.

P: O Lord, giver of joy and laughter, we thank you for giving us these gifts. Thank you for the gift you give us that allows us to enjoy these things to the fullest. We can laugh because of the most amazing thing of all – that you conquered death, that the tomb is empty, that light shone so bright that it overcame the darkness.

C: Thank you, thank you, thank you! Amen!

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

TIME FOR SHARING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

My Jesus I Love Thee

by Featherston

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Generous and joy-filled God,

C: we thank you for the gift of laughter, for the lightness it brings, and for the ways it reminds us that your joy is always near. We offer these gifts with grateful hearts, trusting that you can use them to bring hope, care, and joy into the world. Bless what we give, and bless us as we give—that we may be part of your love at work in the world. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** (see next page)

Go Tell It on the Mountain (Easter verses)

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Go Tell It on the Mountain (Easter)

Paul Lintern

African American Spiritual

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

Go tell it on the moun - tain, over the hills and ev - ery where.

5

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Jesus is a - live. 1. While
2. The
3.

9

soldiers watched the gravesite, that qui - et Sun - day dawn there
wom - en found no bo - dy their spic - es to a - noint; in -
Go from where He is - n't to where He said he'd be. An

13

came a big com - mo - tion and then the storm was gone.
- stead they found an an - gel, God's mes - sage to a - point.
Eas - ter - time re - un - ion: the hills of Gal - i - lee.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

FINAL INVITATION FOR JOKES

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Days of Elijah

by Paris

¹The poem The Gospel of Laughter was shared for use anonymously.

²The Call to Worship, the Confession and Forgiveness, and Affirmation of Faith was posted and shared on Trinity United Parish. <http://www.trinityunitedparish.org/lukewordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/April-10.pdf> and accessed on 4/23/2022 via Re:Worship Blogspot.

³The Prayer of the Day was posted and shared by the United Church of Canada's Bay of Quinte Conference website. <http://www.bayofquinteconference.ca/> on April 23, 2022 via Re:Worship Blog.

Thank you to the worship choir for enhancing the service with their talents this morning!

Welcome Team Members— Nancy Sleeper, Jesse & Nancy Smith

Liturgists— Elaine Bevivino & Deb Herlocker

Tech Team— George DeMers, Jack Herlocker, John Kollasch

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.



JAMES AND JOHN, I'VE GOT A GREAT IDEA HERE. LET'S START CALLING OUR FISHING BOAT THE "DISCIPLE-SHIP."

WOW, PETER, I THINK YOU JUST INVENTED THE DAD JOKE.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.