

Large Print First Church Birmingham

A Reconciling United Methodist Congregation

April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

In the Direction of Hope

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden;
I will be there soon.

I'm not the fastest runner,
Lord knows that,
but these legs are moving.

I suppose I could blame my weary spirit for the slow speed.
I could blame the grief I've shoved into my pockets and
laid around my neck.
I could blame my own hesitation to hope,
a hesitation that clings like mud.

But I don't know that Jesus cares about my speed.
So tell God when you see them—
I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden.
I will be there soon.

— *by Rev. Sarah A. Speed*

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome

First Church Welcome Guides

Children are invited to come forward to the altar rail during the Prelude to help redistribute alleluias.

Prelude—Fantasy on EASTER HYMN

William H. Harris

Introit—Alleluia

Norah Duncan

As we celebrate this day of Resurrection, our youngest friends help us reclaim our alleluias, which we put away on Ash Wednesday.

Alleluia

Elaine Hagenberg

Alleluia.

All shall be Amen and Alleluia.

We shall rest and we shall see.

We shall see and we shall know.

We shall know and we shall love.

Behold our end which is no end.

— *Saint Augustine (354-430)*

Announcements

Ashley Hess

Call to Worship

Ashley Hess

My dear friends,

we have known grief.

We have known loss.

We have known the long road, tired and winding.

We have whispered prayers on bended knees.

We have stared at the sky, empty of stars.

But today—

today we know hope.

Today we know life.

Today we know the sound of Alleluias.

Today we know that death does not have the last word.

Today we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

It is Easter.

May hope find you.

And may you know, deep in your bones,
that today is a new day.

Alleluia! Amen.

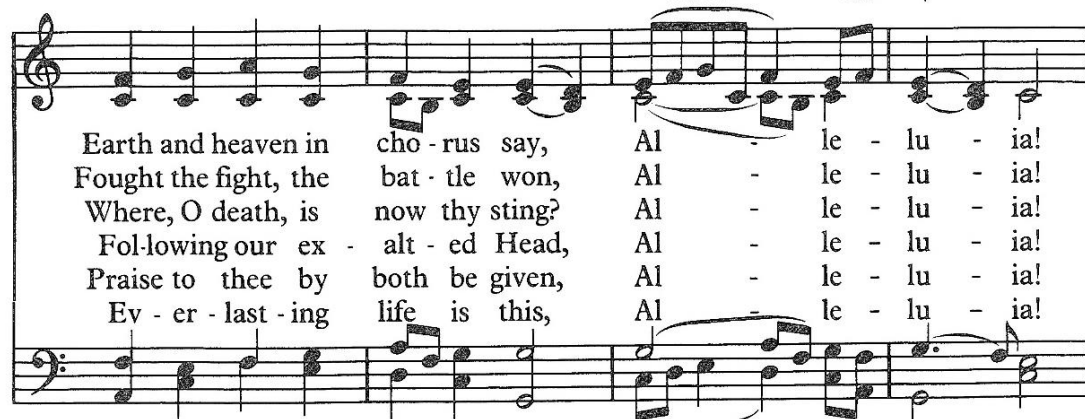
The Opening Hymn is on the next page.

* Opening Hymn—Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Vs. 1-4



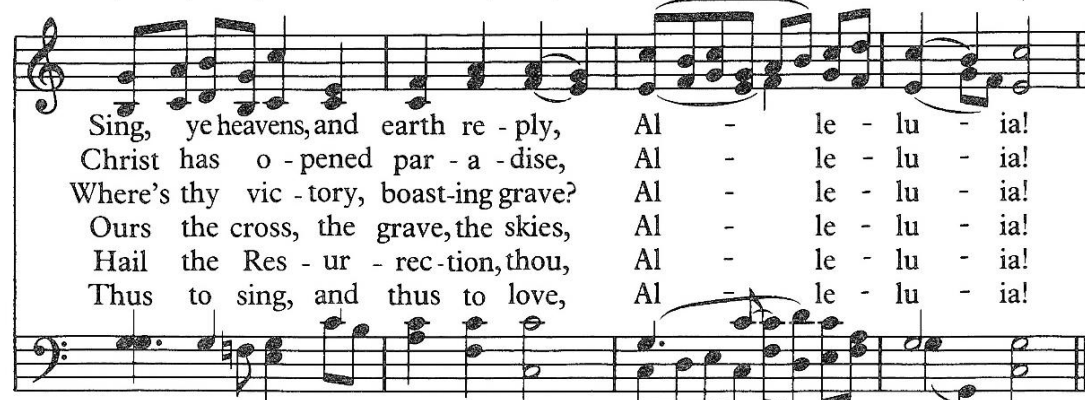
1. Christ the Lord is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
 2. Love's re-deem-ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3. Lives a - gain our glo-rious King, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Al - le - lu - ia!
 * 5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Al - le - lu - ia!
 * 6. King of glo - ry, soul of bliss, Al - le - lu - ia!



Earth and heaven in cho - rus say, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Where, O death, is now thy sting? Al - le - lu - ia!
 Fol-lowing our ex - alt - ed Head, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Praise to thee by both be given, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Ev - er - last - ing life is this, Al - le - lu - ia!



Raise your joys and tri - umphs high, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Death in vain for - bids him rise, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Once he died our souls to save, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Made like him, like him we rise, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Thee we greet tri - um - phant now, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Thee to know, thy power to prove, Al - le - lu - ia!



Sing, ye heavens, and earth re - ply, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Christ has o - pened par - a - dise, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Where's thy vic - tory, boast-ing grave? Al - le - lu - ia!
 Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Hail the Res - ur - rec - tion, thou, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Thus to sing, and thus to love, Al - le - lu - ia!

*** Prayer of Confession**

Ashley Hess

The Gospel of Luke says: "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told the apostles [of the resurrection]. But these words seemed to the disciples an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb."

**Forgive us, God,
when good news lands in our lap and we refuse to believe it.**

**Forgive us, God,
when grief and fear crowd out any room in our hearts
for hope.**

**Forgive us, God,
when we dismiss the stories of others and minimize the voices
of our neighbors.**

In a world that teeters between grief and hope, show us how to be like Peter.

Show us how to hold onto hope.

Show us how to run toward you. Amen.

*** Words of Assurance**

Ashley Hess

Family of Faith,

At first, the disciples didn't believe that Jesus had risen. They stayed locked in an upper room, shaking and afraid. Peter was the only exception. Fortunately, Jesus loves us on our best days and our worst days.

**God's grace exists for us when we are hopeful and when
we're grieving,**

**when we're shouting and when we're silent,
when we're full of faith and when we're full of fear.**

**God's grace exists for us on the best days, the worst days,
and every day in between.**

Thanks be to God for this good news!

Alleluia! Amen.

*** The Passing of the Peace**

Ashley Hess

The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Anthem—Easter Anthem

William Billings

Now Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!
Now is Christ risen from the dead,
And become the first fruit of them that slept.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.
And did he rise? And did he rise? Did he rise?
Hear it, ye nations! hear it O ye dead!
He rose, he rose, he rose, he rose,
He burst the bars of death,
And triumphed o'er the grave.
Then, then, then I rose!
Then first humanity triumphant
Past the crystal ports of light,
And seized eternal youth.
We, all immortal hail, hail, heaven,
All lavish of strange gifts to us,
Thine's all the glory, man's the boundless bliss.

Pastoral Prayer and Our Lord's Prayer Rev. Clauzell Williams

**Our Father-Mother 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,
for ever. Amen.**

Call for Offering

Ashley Hess

Offertory—Rise to Sing! The Light is Breaking

Eric Nelson

Rise to sing! The light is breaking, gleaming gift of day begun.
Hope now springs, life blossoms waking op'ning to the
rising sun.

Those who sow in pain and sorrow with the dawn in joy
shall reap.

God who governs each tomorrow wipes all tears from those
who weep.

Lovely shine the courts of heaven; morning stars now
brightly burn,

Christ arises like the leaven festal bread for hearts that yearn.

Death is swallowed up in vict'ry. Where is now your sting,
O grave?

Earth, awake to radiant myst'ry: Christ shall come again to save!

Hail the dawn of new creation! Gone are suff'ring, grief,
and sighs.

Glorious now the consummation. Music soars to fill the skies.

Organs piping, church bells ringing, on this day all earth
shall ring.

In the grace of God's good timing, with the saints, we rise
to sing!

Rise to sing! The light is breaking, arise, arise, arise to sing!

— Mary Louise Bringle

*** The Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise God, all creatures here below:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Scripture Reading—Luke 24:1-12 (NIV)

Rev. Clauzell Williams

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Sermon—Everything in Between: Grief and Hope

Rev. Clauzell Williams

*** Affirmation of Faith**

Ashley Hess

In the dark before dawn,
we believe that God is alive.
In the midst of our grief,
we believe the Spirit is at work.
In the chaos of our broken world,
we believe that love is on the loose.
For no stone could keep God at bay,
and no violence could keep God's love from us.
So today we sing,
Alleluia!
For somewhere in between our belief and doubt,
hope lives.
Christ has died,
and Christ has also risen.
Thanks be to God! Amen.

*** Response—Alleluia**

Zimbabwe

*You are welcome to come pray at the altar rail
during the Closing Hymn.*

*Those who would like to join the choir for the Hallelujah Chorus,
please come to the choir loft during the Closing Hymn.*

The Closing Hymn is on the next page.

*** Closing Hymn—Because You Live, O Christ**

Text: Shirley Erena Murray

Tune: VREUCHTEN

Be - cause You live, O Christ, The gar - den of the world has come to_
Be - cause You live, O Christ, The spir - it bird of hope is freed for_
Be - cause You live, O Christ, The rain - bow of Your peace will span cre
flow - er; The dark - ness of the tomb Is flood - ed with Your res - ur - rec - tion
fly - ing; Our ca - ges of de - spair No long - er keep us closed and life de -
a - tion, The col - ors of Your love Will draw all hu - man - kind to ad - o -
pow - er. The stone has rolled a - way And death can - not im - pris - on! O
ny - ing.
ra - tion.
sing this Eas - ter day, For Je - sus Christ has ris - en, has
ris - en, has ris - en, has ris - - - - en!

*** Choral Response—Hallelujah (from *Messiah*)**

G. F. Handel

*** Benediction**

Rev. Clauzell Williams

You are invited to be seated for the Postlude. If you are seated near the aisle, please allow others to exit the pew if they wish to do so.

Postlude—Symphony No. 5: *Toccata*

Charles-Marie Widor

*** Please rise in body or spirit.**

*The beautiful hydrangeas on the chancel are
presented to the Glory of God*

In Honor Of:

Becca Binford
Finnley Millwood
Lynne & Bob Clifton,
 Gayle & Herky Hardison
Beth Curry
Emma and Austin, John Ryan,
 Daniel, Hannah
Andi Dozier
Linda Malone

By:

Sandra & Butch Binford
Aunt Amanda
Sara, Rob, Frances
 & Birdie Hardison
Linda Malone
Mom and Dad

Nana and G
Beth Curry

In Memory of:

William Joseph Smith
Carmon Paul Coker Jr.
Harvey Harmon

Jeffrey Hawkins

Janice Jones Roy

Larry Vines
Jane Dickerson
James B. Boone, Jr.
Christopher Clayton
Marty Hollingsworth

My parents, Fran and Jack Colpitts
Virginia Slade

By:

Nancy Smith Coker
Nancy Smith Coker
Renee, Elena,
 and Christina
Sara, Rob, Frances
 & Birdie Hardison
Katie Martin &
 Jami Livingston
Susan Gainey Vines
Jay Jessee & Chris Minnix
The Prince Family
The Prince Family
Tammy &
 Dennis Hollingsworth
Kelly Ross-Davis
Lisa Beck

Lou Blurton
Shirley Williamson
Brynleigh Caudle
Muriel Thompson

Lois & Howell Thomas

Mildred Powell

Bettye Anne Wallace

Nancy Fleming

Lisa Beck
Judith Rodwell
Mia MacCallum
Matt, Sarah, and
Michael Jensen
Steven, Valerie, Meghan,
and Morgan
Valerie, Steven, Meghan,
and Morgan
Andy Wallace &
Martin Kircus
Martin Kircus &
Andy Wallace

In Memory and in Honor of: By:

Paul Meloun & Jessica
Emily Keith & Andy Keith
Will Byram & Anita MacCallum

Matt Meloun
Rebecca and Jim
Mia MacCallum



First Church Ministry Team

Interim Pastor: Clauzell Williams

Pastor: Jonathan Goss

Executive Pastor: Katie Gilbert

Minister of Community Engagement: Katherine Mullen

Minister to Families and Youth: Ashley Hess

Nursery Coordinator: Natalie Bogart-Pierre

Organist: Richard Byrd

Minister of Music: Patrick Evans

Design: Blake Hobbs

Office Administrator: Peg Thompson

Business Administrator: Steve Pitts

Maintenance Supervisor: Coty Smith

Wedding Director: Betsy Pate

Executive Director of Birmingham Early Learning Center:

Cassandra Copeland

CityKids in Worship - Your kids are invited to participate in worship for the full service — wiggles are welcome! You'll find resources to help with creative minds and energetic bodies by the entrance. Nursery for friends ages 3 months-1st grade is available in our Education Building.

**Please scan here to let us know you
are in worship today.**



Scan to give.



Text to give at 205-596-5455.
