

**First United Church, Mount Pearl Pastoral Charge
Sunday, April 20th, 2025
Easter Sunday 8 am Service**

Welcome

Introit: Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross **VU 142**

Call to Worship:

Easter began in darkness.

**Darkness of despair and unfilled hopes,
the loss of a beloved leader.**

But each Easter begins in darkness for us as well.

**Darkness of our despair and sorrow, of
death and tragedy, of guilt and injustice.**

Out of darkness comes the rebirth of hope - new freedom to be fully alive.

**Hope breaks the bonds of the past,
creates time filled with new possibilities.**

In the risen Christ we see the possibilities of our own rising.

**Christ is the symbol and the promise
of all that can be for us.**

Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross **VU 149 vs 1,3**

Opening Prayer: (unison)

**God of passionate and vulnerable love, whose body, broken
on the cross rebukes us still: save us, hold us, and forgive
us, that you as victor and victim might lead us from death to
life; through Jesus, the Crucified. Amen.**

Meditation: 'Hands, Nails, Sunrise and Hope' (Part 1)

First Litany:

His hands touched us.

His hands touched us.

We are nurtured from the godly power of his hands.

We are his hands.

We are fulfilled doing the work of his hands.

**We are his hands; we become the hands of healing,
the hands of soothing, the hands of action,
the hands of grace, the hands of peace.**

We must be the hands that give life.

We have not always been the hands that give life; we have taken life.

We have taken life from others for ourselves.

We have crushed life, isolated life, scheduled life.

We have nailed life to a tree.

The thirsty cry out for water; we give out vinegar.

The hungry beg for food; we shoot the lottery dice.

The lonely ask for friendship; we choose Barabbas.

The sick weep for care; we, like Pilate, wash our hands.

The tortured seek amnesty; we force them to bear their crosses alone.

**Those who love want to offer us hope and freedom,
we twist their care for our own purposes, leaving them to
despair.**

The world groans in darkness. We nail life to a tree.

Do we hold the nails of power?

In our fear, we are paralysed, trying to run.

In our fear, we are immobilized, stuck to the spot.

We avoid hellos and fear goodbyes.

In our fears we are scattered, running helter-skelter.

In our fears we are fragmented, trying to be together.

Fabricating meaning, we compulsively scurry around. In our fear, our hands reach out to grab more nails.

Lord, help us to let go of these destructive nails.

Let our grasp not hold quick, painful nails.

Let our thoughts not bear slow darts of death.

Let us be his hands, healing, soothing, restoring.

Let us be the hands that give life.

Let us be the hands that offer hope.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 28:1-10

Meditation: 'Hands, Nails, Sunrise and Hope' (Part 2)

Second Litany:

Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed!

We are free.

We are hopeful. We are an Easter people, vital and victorious.

We have the hope of a modern saint, Mother Theresa, rising from the death of Calcutta.

We have the vitality of our children at play, uncrushed by the worry of life.

We have personal new freedoms and chances to grow, rising from crosses of grief and uncertainty.

With the hope, vitality and freedom of Easter, we celebrate our living.

As builders of the kingdom, we are able to create new Easters for the bereaved, new freedoms for the uncertain, a new world order.

We are committed to building new Easters.

It is our hands that build the kingdom.

It is our love and concern that reach the needy.

It is our gift and talent that give new life.

Let us be a revolution - follow this life-giving prophet!

Hail our beloved Jesus. We can see his vision.

Peace is the angel's words to a warring world. Shelters are the broken seals for the abused. Amnesty is a stone rolled away for the tortured. Social Service is a step to freedom for the needy.

We can see the risen Lord. The sun has risen.

It is just begun.

Hope is out of control, expanding into the silent corners with communication; pulsing into the empty nether regions with meaning; bursting the bonds of restriction with liberty; exploding the myths of cover-up with reality.

Risen Lord, resurrect our vision of your kingdom.

Lord of Easter, create the possibility for change.

God of the empty tomb, renew our faith.

Our God is alive.

Our God is alive!

Stretch out, disciples, become God's hands. Mend and heal the wounded, seek out and sooth the lonely, feed and sustain the hungry, strengthen and support the angry.

O Lord, in our humanity bring your hands to life.

With our discipleship let Easter break in and your kingdom come.

Hymn: Because He Lives

Offertory Hymn: Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
VU 541

Offertory Prayer: (unison)

Loving God, we respond to your gift of Jesus, risen and alive. With joy and thanksgiving, we are willing to serve wherever the need is greatest. Bless these offerings that make our service within this church compassionate and effective. Bless too, the portion that enables our love to be felt across this nation and in many parts of the world. We pray in the name of your Blessed One. Amen.

Communion Hymn: All Who Hunger **VU 460**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Announcements

Hymn: Thine Is the Glory **VU 173**

Benediction

