

# The Congregational Church of Salisbury

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



## HYMN SING

## WELCOME

⌘ HYMN #246

“Christ Is Alive”  
verses 1, 3, 4

TRURO

(⌘ *The congregation may rise, in body or in spirit.*)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS | JOYS AND CONCERNS | SILENT PRAYER

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Now, our mourning becomes dancing,

**our sobs become belly laughs,**

**and new songs are written from our sighs.**

The punchline sat in the grave’s shadows,

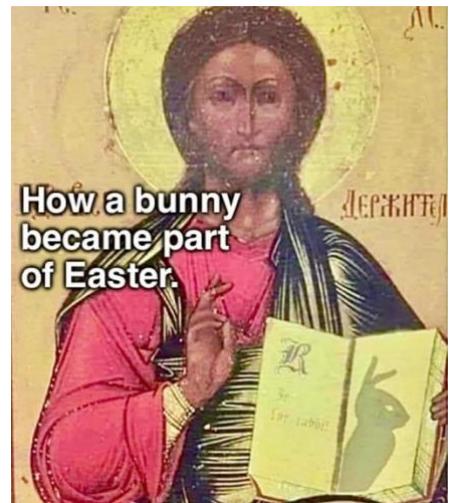
**until God played the best joke ever on life.**

So, break out loud guffaws, fill the room with giggles,

**May our joy sound like April Fool’s  
noisemakers!**

Come, stoic old folks and snickering kids,  
come, all you curmudgeons and worriers.

**We join the God who laughs with us,  
Who raised Jesus with a wink and a grin,  
Welcoming everyone to joy everlasting!**



## RESPONSE IN SONG

“Christ Is Alive!”

TRURO

**Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love, and praise!**

## CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Before we can truly laugh, we must first let go of what weighs us down. Before joy can rise in us, grace must clear some space. So let's be honest — not because God doesn't know, but because we forget that mercy is already leaning in, smiling, waiting for us to 'fess up and fall into arms wide with forgiveness.

## UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

**Gracious and amused God, we confess that sometimes we take ourselves too seriously. We walk through life stiff with worry, grim with guilt, and frowning with fear. We forget that you created laughter, and that joy is a fruit of your Spirit.**

**Forgive us for putting a lid on your joy,  
for muting your music,  
and for walking around like the resurrection never happened.  
Remind us that Easter is the world's biggest surprise party,  
and we're all invited.**

**Tickle our hearts with your grace, nudge us with your mercy,  
and teach us to live with eyes wide open for holy hilarity.  
In the name of the Risen One who laughed in the face of death: Amen.**

*(We pray in silence)*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Here's the good news: God doesn't hold a grudge—God holds us. Christ didn't come to scold us—he came to save us, to shake us out of our sorrow, and to set loose joy in our hearts like confetti in the wind. So laugh, dance, rejoice—

**for in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!  
Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!**

**RESPONSIVE PSALTER: Psalm 133**

ONE: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

**ALL: It is like precious oil joyfully poured on the head in greeting,**  
Pouring down the face,  
over the chin of the anointed,

**Running down over the collar of the anointed one's robes.**  
It is like the rich dew of the northern realm,

**Which falls in the south on the mountains of Zion.**  
For there the Holy One ordained blessing:  
**Life forevermore!**

**A THOUGHT FOR YOUNG MINDS**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (*debts/debtors*)

*Hymnal, p. 35*

⊗ **HYMN**

**"The Whole Bright World Rejoices Now!"**

ST. DROSTANE

*All attending Sunday School may leave as we sing the hymn.*

1. The whole bright world re - joi - ces now,  
 2. Then shout be - neath the ra - cing skies, Hi - la - ri - ter! Hi - la - ri - ter!  
 3. And all you liv - ing things make praise,  
 4. Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Ho - ly Ghost—

The birds do sing on ev - ery bough,  
 To Him who rose that we might rise, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Christ gui - deth you on all your ways,  
 Our gra - cious God, our joy and boast,

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line and a bass line. The second system also includes a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are placed between the vocal lines.

This is Percy Dearmer's free translation of a 17<sup>th</sup> c. German Easter hymn, Die ganze Welt, Herr Jesu Christ, written by Friedrich von Spee. "Hilariter" means "joyfully," and the images of nature and creatures expressing the Creator's "hilarity" are typical of von Spee's writing.

## OFFERTORY

### THE LIGHT OF SERVICE

Offerings not specifically designated for the Church (including any checks with "Light of Service" or "LOS" in the memo line) will be given to an organization doing compassionate work that complements our church's mission. This week, we share our gifts with the **Salisbury Housing Trust** and **Salisbury Housing Committee**.

ONE: God has poured gifts into our lives; we now return our tithes and offerings.

**ALL: Let us gather our gifts with grateful praise,  
and offer them to God's purposes.**

### RECEIVING OUR OFFERINGS

*Our church welcomes every size gift, and thanks you for your generosity.*

### ANTHEM

*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*

J. Schop; J.S. Bach

Jesu, joy of man's desiring,  
Holy wisdom, love most bright;  
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring  
Soar to uncreated light.  
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,  
With the fire of life impassioned,  
Striving still to truth unknown,  
Soaring, dying round Thy throne.

Through the way where hope is guiding,  
Hark, what peaceful music rings;  
Where the flock, in Thee confiding,  
Drink of joy from deathless springs.  
Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure;  
Theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.  
Thou dost ever lead Thine own  
In the love of joys unknown.

### ✠ DOXOLOGY

OLD 100<sup>TH</sup>

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise Christ, all people here below;  
praise Holy Spirit ever more;  
One God of grace, whom we adore! Amen.**

### ✠ UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God, you are powerful beyond measure.  
You whisk stones off of tombs,  
you defy death, you cause life to sing out,  
you raise even our hearts when they have grown heavy and tired.**

**So we bless these gifts in your life-giving name.  
By your grace, may they provide food, healing,  
and even laughter to a hurting, hungry world.  
We pray you will use us to do the same! Amen.**

## **A COMMUNION OF SAINTS AFFIRMATION OF HUMOR**

*Compiled by Chris Anderson with help from the Joyful Noiseletter*

ONE: We believe with scripture that “there is a time to weep and a time to laugh.”

**ALL: We believe with Chesterton that**

**“A good joke is the closest thing we have to divine revelation.”**

We believe with Bonhoeffer that “Ultimate seriousness is not without a dose of humor.”

**ALL: We believe with Luther that**

**“You have as much laughter as you have faith.”**

We believe with John Chrysostom that “laughter has been implanted in our souls.”

**We believe with Francis De Sales that**

**“humor is a foundation for reconciliation.”**

We believe with Dostoevski that “If a person laughs well they are a good person.”

**We believe with Flannery O’Conner that**

**“Christianity is a strangely cheery religion.”**

We believe with Krister Stendhal that “humor, along with irony, forms a safeguard against idolatry.”

**We believe with Charles Schultz that “Humor is proof that everything is going to be alright with God nevertheless.”**

We believe with Elton Trueblood, “Never trust a theologian with no sense of humor.”

**We believe that we are made for your gift of joy — and we thank you, God, for renewing that joy in the rising of Christ Jesus. Alleluia! Amen.**

## **ANCIENT TESTIMONY**

John 20:19-31

*New Testament, p. 141*

## **SERMON**

“One for the Ages”

Pastor John A. Nelson

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

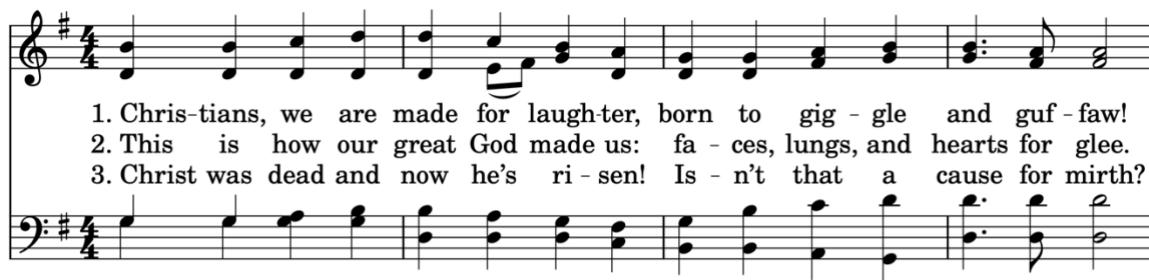
✠ **HYMN** (*insert, p. 6*) “Christians, We Are Made for Laughter”

HYMN TO JOY

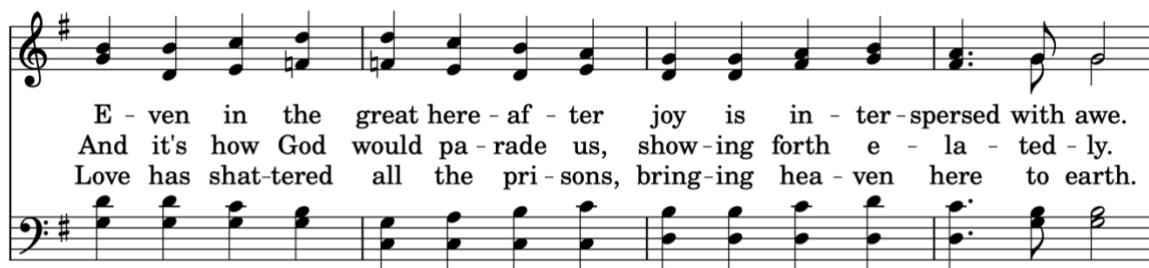
## BENEDICTION and SUNG AMEN

POSTLUDE “Andante” from *Symphony No. 94* (“*Surprise*”) in G major

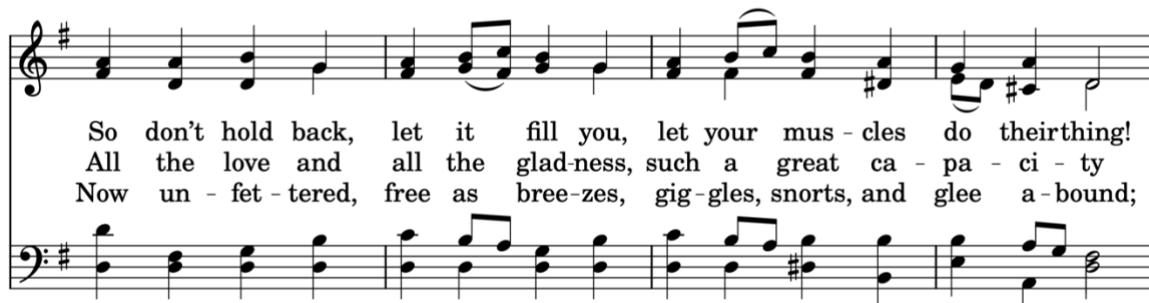
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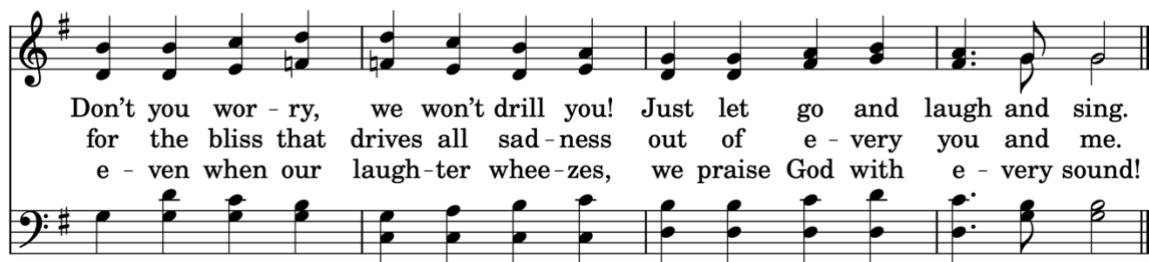
1. Chris-tians, we are made for laugh-ter, born to gig - gle and guf - faw!  
2. This is how our great God made us: fa - ces, lungs, and hearts for glee.  
3. Christ was dead and now he's ri - sen! Is - n't that a cause for mirth?



E - ven in the great here - af - ter joy is in - ter - spered with awe.  
And it's how God would pa - rade us, show - ing forth e - la - ted - ly.  
Love has shat - tered all the pri - sons, bring - ing hea - ven here to earth.



So don't hold back, let it fill you, let your mus - cles do theirthing!  
All the love and all the glad - ness, such a great ca - pa - ci - ty  
Now un - fet - tered, free as bree - zes, gig - gles, snorts, and glee a - bound;



Don't you wor - ry, we won't drill you! Just let go and laugh and sing.  
for the bliss that drives all sad - ness out of e - very you and me.  
e - ven when our laugh - ter whee - zes, we praise God with e - very sound!



## Welcome to Church!

Gathered in 1744, the Congregational Church of Salisbury is an Open and Affirming member of the United Church of Christ, in a “net zero” building powered by clean energy. Our church is also a welcoming home to people from a great variety of church backgrounds and life experiences. Your presence is a gift to us! We hope you will feel God’s Spirit here today through our worship and fellowship.

*We seek to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and love our neighbors as ourselves. This Church is **Open** to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment regardless of race, ancestry, class, gender identity, physical and mental ability or sexual orientation. We **Affirm** each individual as a child of God, celebrating the total identity of each person.*

*As an **Open and Affirming** Congregation, we commit to work toward ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination against any person.*

*Whoever you are, wherever you are on life’s journey,  
you are welcome here!*

If you are visiting us, Welcome! Please sign our guest book and introduce yourself to our Pastor or to one of the Deacons. Fill out a welcome card in the pew to join our email list. Assistive Listening Devices are available; please ask an usher for assistance.

**Kindly set phones to silent (unless you’re expecting a call from Jesus).**

## Today’s Worship Leaders

*Ushers: Janet Kaufman & Anne Williams •  
Reader: Peggy Hayes • Deacon: Don Mayland*

Thanks to Rosanne Lamson for the Easter blooms brightening the Meetinghouse.

Today’s liturgy is adapted and reprinted from *Lectionary Liturgies* by the Rev. Thom Shuman © 2025 (lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com); used by permission.

Psalm adapted from *The Psalms in Worship*, Mary Susan Gast, © 2002; used by permission.

## Our Ministry Team

**Ministers:** All Participants in the Life of the Congregation

### Worship & Music

**Music Director:** David Baranowski  
**Bell Choir Director:** Mary Davidson  
**Cantor:** Jennifer Oberto

### Faith Formation

**Sunday School Coordinator:** Holly Tierney  
**Sunday School Assistant:** Stephanie Tierney  
**Youth Group Leader:** Sarah Lesch  
**Youth Group Assistant:** Dan Baker

### Holding the Parts Together

**Church Administrator:** Jennifer Oberto  
**Sexton:** Richard Tietjen

**Church Officers:** Charlie Noyes, *moderator*;  
Janet Offensend, *treasurer*; Liz Wing, *clerk*

**Pastor and Teacher:** The Rev. Dr. John A. Nelson

## This Week at Salisbury UCC

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### SUNDAY, 27 APRIL

10AM Worship and Sunday School  
*followed by fellowship & refreshments  
in the Parish Hall*  
11:30AM ANNUAL MEETING  
2:30PM Youth Group  
5PM Sunday Supper

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### MONDAY, 28 APRIL

11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club

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### TUESDAY, 29 APRIL

5:15PM Handbell Choir rehearsal

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### WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL

9:15AM Centering Prayer (via Zoom)  
12:15PM Staff Meeting  
4PM Women's Bible Study

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### THURSDAY, 1 MAY

11:30AM Duplicate Bridge Club  
5:30PM Choir Rehearsal

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### FRIDAY, 2 MAY

8:45AM Men's Bible Study  
12noon First Friday Music in the Meeting House

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### SUNDAY, 4 MAY

10AM Worship and Sunday School  
11:30AM Church Council meeting



*The Congregational Church of Salisbury*

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Meeting in Grace • Transformed by Love • Serving with Joy*

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Office Hours: 8:30am – 1:30pm, Monday-Friday