REVERENDEUN COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



AND ALL THE APOSTLES WERE NO LONGER IN ONE ACCORD

REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT GCI, INC.



JESUS' MOM GOES SHOPPING



God and the cloud work in misterious ways.

REVERENDEUN COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



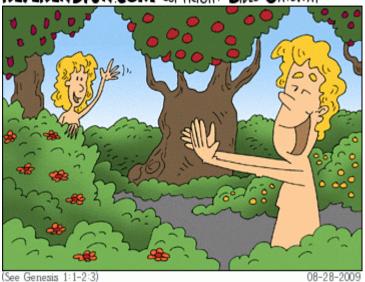
SHE CLAIMS IT'S BECAUSE OF LAST WEEK'S "CHEERFUL GIVER" SERMON, BUT I THINK SHE JUST MISSES HIGH SCHOOL

REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



FOR A BRIEF, FRENZIED PERIOD ZACCHAEUS WAS A WII LITTLE MAN

REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



OH BRAVO ... BRAVO!

St. Paul United Church of Christ

119 North Franklin Street
New Bremen, Ohio 45869
Phone (419-629-2502), Fax (419-629-3207)
Email stpaulnb@nktelco.net or stpaulnb@gmail.com
Visit our website at https://stpaulnb.org
Rev. Becky Senior Pastor
Pastor Dee Associate Pastor
Jeff Quellhorst-Council President

April 19, 2020 Second Sunday of Easter Holy Humor Sunday

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES (please light a candle(s) at home in preparation of worship)

WELCOME

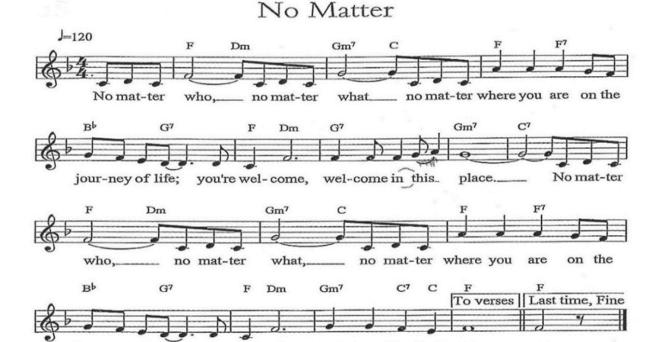
This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

WELCOME SONG

jour-ney of life:

ac - cept-ed,

No Matter



wel-comed by God's grace.

grace.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are gathered in the presence of the risen Christ, who remains with us forever.

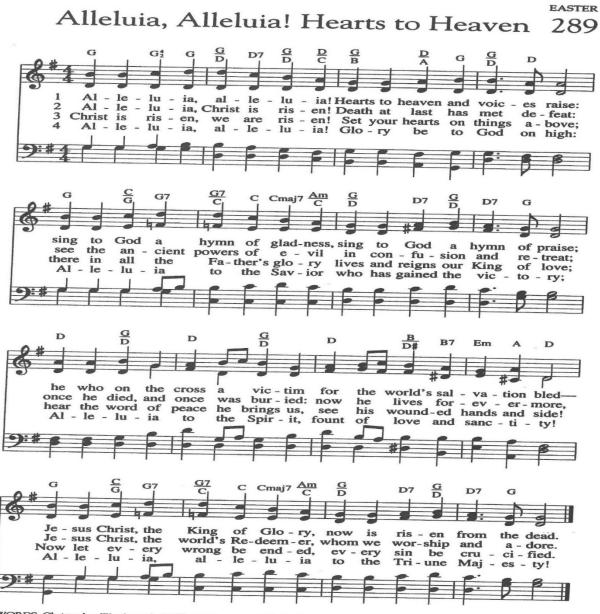
People: When we abide in the love of Christ, love, joy, and peace grow.

Leader: We are rooted in Christ's love that we may bear these fruits together with all God's people.

People: With the faithful of every race, tribe, people and nation we sing: Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor and might be to God for ever and ever.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven



CONFESSION AND CREED FOR HOLY HUMOR WEEKEND (from http://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/04/worship-resources-for-laughter-holy.html)

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

People: We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like him.

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

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

Leader: We believe in the Holy Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

People: Our counselor, our guide, our motivator—our joy!

Leader: Forgive us, Lord, 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.

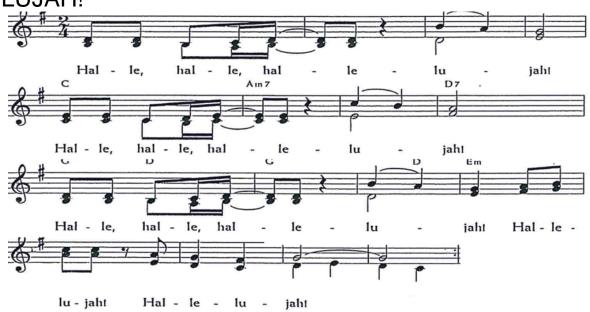
People: Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader: Take heart: God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life. Our sins are forgiven. Let us forgive one another and give ourselves to one another in the joyful community of the risen Christ.

People: Thanks be to God! Amen!

*HALLELUJAH!



CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Canoe! (Canoe Who?) Canoe come out and play with me today?

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Who! (Who Who?) That's what an owl says!

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Wooden Shoe (Wooden Shoe Who?) Wooden shoe like to hear another joke?

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Atch (Atch Who?) Bless You! Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Boo (Boo Who?) Don't cry; it's just me!

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Banana (Banana Who?) Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Banana (Banana Who?) Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Banana (Banana Who?) Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Orange (Orange Who?) Orange you glad I didn't say banana?

Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Lettuce (Lettuce Who?) Lettuce Pray. Dear God, we thank you for the gifts of joy and laughter. We thank you for Jesus who rose from the dead that we might know life everlasting. We thank you for the laughter of this day. Amen.



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com ©Ed Sullivan Reprinted with permission



BRING FRIENDS TO CHURCH DAY IS SUPER EASY FOR ME ... ALL I NEED IS MY LAPTOP

EASTER

That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright 29



WORDS: Latin hymn, 5th c.; tr. John M. Neale (1818-1866), alt. MUSIC: Trier manuscript, 15th c.; adapt. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621); harm. George R. Woodward (1848-1934)

PUER NOBIS L.M.

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joy: Joy in the resurrection of Jesus and the new life he gives to each of us.

PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER. (Prayer Adapted from Rabbi Joseph R. Black. *Prayer in a Time of Coronavirus*)

Our God, and God of all people:

God of the rich and God of the poor;

God of the healthy and God of the afflicted;

God of those with healthcare and God of the uninsured;

God of the hoarder and God of the helper;

God of those who have no God.

We are acutely aware of the gnawing unease that has been inspired by this global pandemic. Everywhere we look, we see apprehension and uncertainty, fear and unease. The impact of this illness is very real. Its presence is felt every time we wash our hands, clear our throats or flinch in response to someone coughing near us. Be with us in our fear and uncertainty, O God. Grace us with your abiding presence as we face into the unknown future: for we know that the future is yours.

Holy One, this virus has stripped us bare of our shells, our masks, our outer layers. This virus has brought out the worst in some of us and has brought out the best in some of us. We confess today that, in our fear, we hoard food and toiletries. In our fear, we pass along rumors rather than checking for facts. In our fear, we demonize the other: people of Asian descent, immigrants, the homeless. Calm us, Holy Spirit. Forgive our fearful ways. Remind us that we belong to you and we will always belong to you, no matter what the future holds.

And dear God, we celebrate that this pandemic has brought out the best in many of us. People are sewing masks by the hundreds. Neighbors are checking on neighbors. Small businesses and churches are finding new and creative ways to serve our communities. Love abounds and we are both awed and grateful.

Today we pray for healthcare workers, custodians, aides, all who work in hospitals and care facilities, risking their own health to save the

lives of others. We pray today for everyone in the food chain: farmers, truck drivers, warehouse employees, grocery store workers—who are working long and difficult hours to keep food on store shelves.

We pray today for all who are sick: those with the virus and those who are sick, injured or recuperating from other illness or injuries. We ask your healing power and presence be upon all who are sick, all who are isolated and quarantined, all who are recuperating from surgery or illness. Pour your Spirit upon them. Remind them that you are with them and they are not alone.

God, we also pray for ourselves in these turbulent days. When our future seems uncertain, we testify and celebrate that YOU are our future and we belong to you. Calm our anxious spirits. Steady our breathing. Call us your own.

And we begin now. Quiet our busy minds that we might hear your word for us today. SILENCE

Holy God: we thank you! We thank you and praise you and celebrate that you come to us in the risen Christ. Remind us that we find our joy, our laughter, our love within your Light. All of this we pray in the name of the Risen Christ who taught us to pray:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM Love Lifted Me by Kenny Rogers (YouTube.com; search Kenny Rogers Muppets Love Lifted Me)

Love lifted me! Love lifted me!

When nothing else would do, Love lifted me.

I write myself a simple song, The whole world to sing along. Call it a love song for you. Who knows I'm libel to take a song from the Bible,

Than when I'm blue, I'll just sing

Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else would do, Love lifted me. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else would do, Love lifted me.

Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else would do, Love lifted me. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else would do, Love lifted me.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Psalm 145:13-21

(from New Revised Standard Version)

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The Lord is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds.

- 14 The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.
- You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.
- ¹⁷ The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.
- ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
- ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.
- ²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM READING:

- 1. What words or phrases caught your attention in this text?
- 2. What might God be saying to you from this passage?
- 3. What is the good news of this psalm?

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Acts 1:1-14 (from Eugene Peterson's <u>The Message</u>)

Dear Theophilus, in the first volume of this book I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he said good-bye to the apostles, the ones he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days. In face-to-face meetings, he talked to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. As they met and ate meals together, he told them that they were on no account to leave Jerusalem but "must wait for what the Father promised: the promise you heard from me. John baptized in water; you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And soon."

⁶ When they were together for the last time they asked, "Master, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now? Is this the time?"

⁷⁻⁸ He told them, "You don't get to know the time. Timing is the Father's business. What you'll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world."

⁹⁻¹¹ These were his last words. As they watched, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. They stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, "You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left."

So they left the mountain called Olives and returned to Jerusalem. It was a little over half a mile. They went to the upper room they had been using as a meeting place:

Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew,

James, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas, son of James.

¹⁴ They agreed they were in this for good, completely together in prayer, the women included. Also Jesus' mother, Mary, and his brothers.

RESPONSE:

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

People: God is still speaking. Thanks be to God!

QUESTIONS FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:

1. What words or phrases caught your attention in this text?

2. What might God be saying to you in this passage?

3. What is the good news of this story?

SERMON

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Catholic and Protestant congregations are celebrating this first Sunday after Easter as Holy Humor Sunday. In some of these congregations, the pastor dresses as a clown or jester and tells jokes and invites the congregation to share jokes. Pastor Dee and I are playing with Facebook Live's filters today—so we might look funnier than usual to you! The Holy Humor custom is rooted in the musings of early church theologians such as Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. It was called The Easter Laugh.

Easter is a joyful holiday—yet we hardly take time to laugh at the absurdity of the resurrection: of life from death. On this weekend, we celebrate that God has had the last laugh over death.

Poet ee cummings has this to say about laughter: The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.

In his poem Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front, Wendell Berry writes: Expect the end of the world. Laugh. Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful though you have considered all the facts.

And those facts are well worth considering. Even amidst our laughter and knock, knock jokes, this past month hasn't held much laughter. Since late winter, the world became a scary place for people in our nation and throughout the world. Many of us are losing sleep at night, filled with worry. Others of us are adjusting to the loss of jobs, livelihoods and

purpose. Most of us are afraid of the worse: our loved ones testing positive for this virus that takes no prisoners. Indeed, even today, Holy Humor Sunday, our laughter might be a bit more forced than it has been other years.

So how are Christians called to respond to this strange new reality that is upon us? For here is the truth: it is easy to let anxiety, fear and anger win the day. But Easter is nothing if not a call to love DESPITE the fears that keep us up at night. God's resurrection promises fulfilled in Jesus stand as a powerful reminder that, ultimately, love wins. Always and forever.

Because of Easter, we absolutely cannot let this coronavirus win the day. Because of Easter, we absolutely must not get pulled under by anxiety and fear. Because of Easter, we are challenged to approach life—including the harsh and difficult edges of life—with love.

This is the good news: Because of Christ's resurrection, I will never be the same/you will never be the same. Because of Holy Week: the journey with Christ to the cross and beyond, we have reason to laugh—even when we have considered all the facts. Remember this: the death, pain and fear the cross symbolizes are not the final answer. Love prevails. Life wins. Always.

Typically the New Testament Lessons in the weeks following Easter are stories of Jesus appearing to the women, to the disciples, to the people on the road to Emmaus. Not so this year. Our narrative lectionary skips completely over these Jesus sightings and takes us all the way to the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles and Jesus' ascension into heaven. At first, when I looked at today's scripture, I was a little flummoxed as to how that would preach. But in this particular Easter Season, in this season of Covid19, death, anxiety and fear, there is something comforting about Jesus' ascension. Jesus conquered death. He rose from the grave and walked amongst the people. Then he went home: to be at the right hand of God for all eternity.

In the midst of so much suffering across the globe, I'm kind of glad that Jesus has gone home—peering down upon us from heaven, keeping a close eye on our sorrow, our losses, holding humanity close to his heart in these days and weeks of uncertainty.

But hear me well. Our Christian faith is incarnational. As Christians we believe in the depth of our souls that God comes to us most intimately in the person of Jesus. And just as we believe Jesus ascended back into heaven after his resurrection, we also believe that we are caring for Jesus when we care for the hungry, the hurting, the sick and the lost. As Christians, it is our calling to see Jesus in the lives of those around us: our family, our friends, neighbors, strangers and yes: even our enemies. Especially our enemies. Jesus is BOTH back in heaven working with the Father AND is down here on earth—where we greatly need his healing and loving presence.

Now, more than ever, we need Jesus to be in both places. We need Jesus to be the Lord. Our Savior. Our Healer and our Friend. We need Jesus.

Pastor Dee and I have worked hard these past few weeks to shift gears completely: figuring out ways to minister to you, our beloved congregation, when we are confined to our homes. The learning curve has been STEEP. I went to seminary long before online worship and social media. And Dee is just beginning her career in ministry. You need to know this: WE ARE TOTALLY MAKING THIS UP AS WE GO!

So this is what Dee and I are proposing to you on Holy Humor Sunday. Do you remember reading the story of Flat Stanley to your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews? Flat Stanley was an ordinary boy until, one night, the corkboard over his bed fell on him, making him flatter than a pancake. Suddenly Stanley (now known as Flat Stanley) could have all sorts new adventures. He could slide into grates on the street to retrieve his mom's lost ring. He could be folded into an envelope along with a tuna sandwich to visit friends miles away.

So this is what Pastor Dee and I are proposing on Holy Humor Sunday. In your worship packets you received in the mail this week, you should have gotten a paper with a picture of Jesus—needing to be colored and cut out. If you haven't done so yet, we encourage you to color and decorate Flat Jesus this afternoon. Then, every day, during the daily meditation at 11:30, we will give you a new adventure for you and Flat

Jesus to go on. We encourage you to take pictures of Flat Jesus interacting with your family, uploading them to Facebook.

This Easter season, because we cannot visit one another in our homes or even at church, I challenge you to invite Jesus into your home instead. Make him a daily part of your life—include him in your meals, your game nights, your prayers. And if having Flat Jesus nearby helps with that—all the better.

So let's share some laughter:

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Ricky was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

Little Susie and her family were having Sunday dinner at her Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Susie received her plate, she started eating right away. "Susie! Please wait until we say our prayer." Said her mother. "I don't need to," the girl replied. "Of course, you do" her mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house." "That's at our house." Susie explained. "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook.

The preacher's 5-year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why. "Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon." "How come He doesn't answer you?" she asked.

A driver was struggling to find a parking space. After 45 frustrating minutes, he began to pray: "Lord, I can't take this any longer. If you open a space up for me, I swear I'll give up gambling and go to church every Sunday." Suddenly, the clouds parted and the sun shone on an empty parking spot. Without hesitation, the man looked up to the heavens and said, "Never mind. I found one!"

We laugh and laughter is immeasurable—despite fear, anxiety, illness and death. Even today: in the midst of this global crisis, we can still find reasons to laugh, tapping into the joy that is ours from the Risen Christ.

Holy Humor Sunday is a living, laughing reminder that we place our trust in a God who brings life from death, faith from doubt, and laughter from tears. We place our trust in Jesus who is both in heaven and walking amongst us. We lean upon the Holy Spirit who knocks upon the doors of our hearts, reminding us to serve Jesus by serving the world with immeasurable joy.

My friends: be well. Wash your hands and find a reason to laugh each day. Amen

Laugh. Laughter is immeasurable.

Be joyful though you have considered all the facts. --Wendell Berry

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION: Knock, Knock (Who's There?) Philip (Philip Who) Philip the offering plate by donating online or sending in your gifts and tithes to the ongoing ministries of St. Paul Church.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

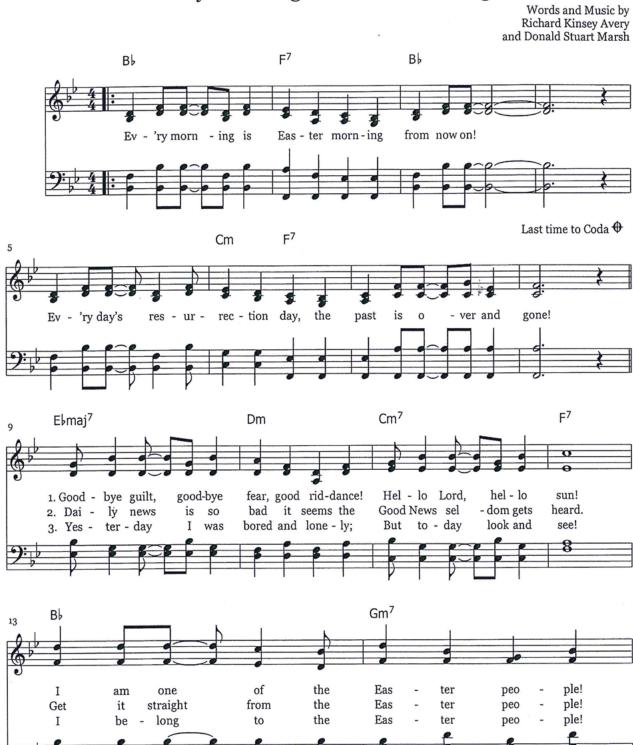
PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

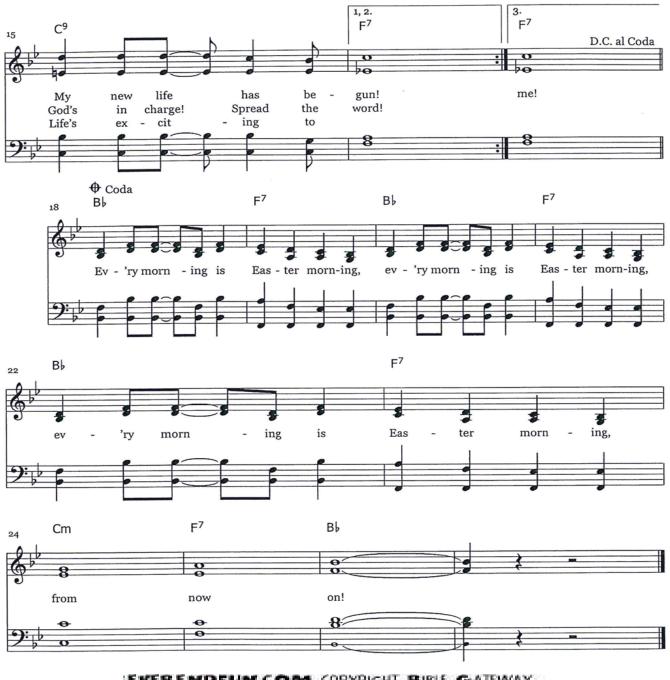
Receive these gifts, O God, offered in gratitude for all the gifts of life and for your love, and use them to serve the cause of your mission in this world. May these offerings point to Jesus' way of lovingly serving all in need. Bless us as we give, and bless

your world with a renewed awareness that you hold us all in your loving hands. Amen.

HYMN OF SENDING Every Morning Is Easter Morning

Every Morning Is Easter Morning







ARRON ME SIR ... WE ARE JUST A FEW NINUTES OUT FROM THE BENEDICTION AND NEED YOU TO RETURN YOUR PEW TO ITS OLL, UPRIGHT POSITION

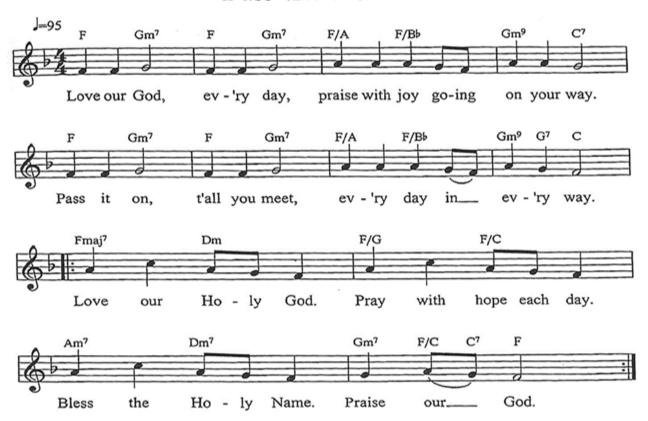
BENEDICTION

Friends, Go forth in to the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good and render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted. Honor all people. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Pass the Love

Pass the Love



PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: In Christ, we are a new creation. Let us pass the peace of Christ with each other.

"No Matter" Words and music by Roger P. Miller ©2007 All rights reserved.

"Halle Halle Halle" Words and music by Hal H. Hobson ©1998 Hope Publishing Company

"Pass the Love" Words and Music by Doris Ketner Copyright ©2000. All rights reserved.

This arrangement by Rodney Milton, Copyright ©2000. All rights reserved. Used by Permission. CCLI License #3095528

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This week's Altar Flowers were to be given-In loving memory of Rodney R. Miller by Bev & Ralph Plattner, Pam & Jacob Miller and Cara & Daryl Mabry.

Blessing Pantry-is open 10am-noon and 1pm-3pm Monday-Friday and 5:30pm-7:30pm Tuesday's. All Donations Welcome-Thank you!

Building Entrance-St. Paul is accessible by the East Educational Building door, Monday-Friday 10:00am-Noon and 1:00pm-3:00pm. Please ring the doorbell, wait outside the doors so staff may assist you. We are currently taking everyone's temperature asking you to sanitize hands and remove shoes. Thank you!

Daily Devotions-Please join Rev Becky or Pastor Dee Monday-Friday at 11:30am, online via Facebook Live. These will be airing on our Facebook page St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH.

May/June Upper Rooms-have arrived! Please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

E-Giving @ St. Paul 3 Different Ways to Give

Online - Make a donation on our website: stpaulnb.org

Give+ App – Search "Give Plus Church" in your App store and find St. Paul to Get Started!

Text – Make a donation to our Number: 833-308-0048 St. Paul New "Text to Give" #(# changed as of 10/9/19) How To Give by Text (Example - my amount for the example is \$25 (minimum amount is \$5.00))

- > For general fund giving: Send 25 space gl (hit send)
- > For building & property fund giving: Send 25 space bp (hit send)
 - For project of the year giving: Send 25 space poy (hit send)

Once a text amount is sent:

Registration Link- Sent via text the first time a donation is made.

Thank you! Please visit (link) to register.

Donation Confirm- Sent via text each time a donation is made.

➤ Thank you for donating \$ (amount)! Text repeat to make this recurring or refund to cancel this donation.

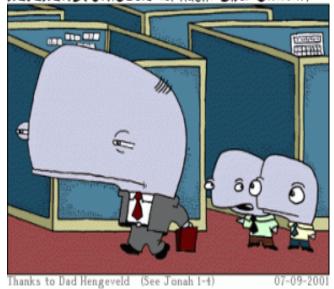
REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



HISTORICALLY, WHEN MY CUP RUNNETHED OVER IT'S BEEN A GOOD THING



REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



HE WAS THE ONLY WHALE WHO TURNED A PROPHET LAST YEAR

REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT GCI, INC.



I SHOULD PROBABLY START PREACHING TO THE CHOIR AGAIN

REVERENDEUN COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



TEXTING WHILE DRIVING IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, SIR, AND IS AGAINST THE LAW

REVERENDEUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



HEY JESUS, I HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY ... I'M BRINGIN' LOTS OF WATER