



Order of Worship for Easter Service adapted from *Leader*¹

March 31, 2020

Prepared by Melissa Atchison and Joyce Peachey Lind

Essentials for planning and leading this Easter service at a distance:

- Keep it simple!!
- Send out information ahead of time so that participants can prepare.
- Highlight any elements to bring to the service that will help participants engage.
- As you plan the service, include senses and body movement when possible.
- Visuals are important.
- Include repeated phrases in prayers or responsive readings when worshipers are speaking together.
- Having close-up images of leaders' faces is important.
- Allow time for silence and prayer together in this "3rd space"
- Keep in mind ways to engage children throughout worship.
- There will be surprises. Be prepared and welcome the limits of gathering at a distance. Anticipate and expect there will likely be some glitches.
- Bring a sense of calmness in body and voice, recognizing the importance of facial expressions and the tone conveyed. You will be seen! Your tone will be conveyed and felt.

Teach participants a new set of social skills, including:

- **Mute microphones unless worshipers are directed to turn them on.**
- Ask worshipers to avoid moving or walking around with their computers or devices, which creates visual distractions.

Tell your congregants what to bring to worship, for example for this Easter service:

- Candle wreath
- Children: Bring the poster made ahead of time or paper and markers
- Communion: bread, juice or water

¹ MennoMedia, "Easter/Resurrection Sunday: Show Us Your Resurrection Power and Love," *Leader: Worship Resources*, Winter, 2019-2020.

Considerations for Each Element of Worship

GREETING

Zoom

- Designate someone to serve as a greeter as worshipers enter the Zoom space
- When it is time to start, have the greeter give instructions about logistics
 - Ask everyone to mute their microphones
 - Encourage people to position camera so they can be seen, and keep their camera still for the benefit of others (or turn off camera if they need to move around)
 - Let people know where to find the link to the document that includes the order of worship
 - Invite people to participate in spoken and sung responses
 - Remind participants what they have available to engage in worship (for example, candle, bread, cup)

Livestream

- Invite those watching to gather what is needed to engage in worship
 - (this could also be done by the worship leader)
- Let people know where to find the link for the document that includes the order of worship

CANDLELIGHTING

- Invite participants to light candles in the Good Friday wreath (see Good Friday document) or have each household light a single candle simultaneously.

CALL TO WORSHIP

- *Suggested Call to Worship:*

Leader: The Lord is risen!

People: The Lord is risen indeed!

Leader: Let all the people of (insert the name of your congregation) declare:

People: The Lord is risen indeed!

Leader: Let all the earth declare:

People: The Lord is risen indeed!

Leader: Hallelujah!

All: Hallelujah!



Zoom

- Use a simple responsive reading with a repeated phrase for the People
- Worship Leader can use a gesture to indicate when it's the People's turn to speak/repeat the phrase
- Include body movement
- Invite a family group in one location to read Worship Leader and People parts, inviting Zoom participants to join the response

Livestream

- Invite participants to say the words out loud where they are
- Include body movement

MUSIC

Song Suggestions:

HWB 263 The Strife Is O'er
HWB 267 Christ Has Arisen
HWB 269 Thine Is the Glory
HWB 275 Lift Your Glad Voices
HWB 283 Christ Who Left His Home in Glory
HWB 285 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
STJ 13 My Soul Is Filled with Joy
STJ 17 Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!
STJ 19 I Will Call upon the Lord
STS 109 Blessing and Honor
STS 110 Alleluia! Gracious Jesus

Zoom

- Include hymn numbers in the Order of Worship sent out ahead of time. Be aware of copyright restrictions. If you do not have a CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International) or One Church license, choose hymns that are well known or that are in the public domain.
- Because there is a delay, it is difficult to sing together with microphones on; **remind congregation to mute microphones.**
- Have someone (or perhaps a family or small group) to play piano or other instrument; invite participants to join in singing at home.
- Invite participants to reflect and pray during instrumental music.

Livestream

- If possible to have a small group in the sanctuary, have singers stand apart using personal microphones to lead music



- Invite congregants to sing at home with piano or organ
- Invite reflection and prayer as music is played
- Focus camera on candles or other worship displays

SCRIPTURE

Scripture suggestions

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10

Zoom

- Use multiple voices, in one location or different locations
- “The Voice” version of the Bible found at biblegateway.com works well for dialogue texts
- Have a backup plan in case a reader is disconnected
- Invite a family group to read and/or act out the story

Livestream

- Play a video of a pre-recorded scripture reading acted out and read by a family
- Invite someone who is already in the space (songleaders, musicians) to read scripture.

CHILDREN’S TIME

Suggested Children’s Time:

Adapted from Brown, Carolyn. “Worshipping With Children.” Accessed March 29, 2020.

<https://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2020/03/worshipping-at-home-on-march-29-2020.html>

Zoom or Livestream:

Send out instructions ahead of time, or invite children to create posters during children’s time. On one side of the poster, use a marker to write the words “OH NO” and invite children to write or draw things that are difficult about living with COVID-19 (*not going to school, no sports events, not hugging our friends, being stuck at home, etc.*). Invite each child to hold up their OH NO poster. (Optional: invite each child to unmute and name one thing, then mute the microphone.)

Next have children turn their poster over and write the word HOPE in a bright color. Invite children to write or draw things they are looking forward to when the virus is over. Invite each child to hold up their HOPE poster. (Optional: invite each child to unmute and name one thing on their poster, then mute the microphone. Instead of naming these now, children could be invited to share these during prayer.) Conclude with prayer.

(This prayer is written with repetition in mind. As you pause at each comma and the end of each sentence, the children can repeat the phrase you have just spoken. To introduce this style of prayer, instruct them to repeat what you say when you stop.)

Prayer:

Thank you Jesus, you understand OH NO's!

Thank you Jesus, for giving us new life!

Thank you Jesus, for giving us HOPE! Amen.

Zoom

- Include something visual and/or something children can do
- Depending on size of congregation, take time for children to show something, or to speak one or two words.
- Help children participate in ways beyond listening and watching
- Invite all ages to participate in the children's time

Livestream

- Invite children to do something with their bodies, or to create something as they listen
- Demonstrate an activity that children can do at home

MESSAGE

Show us Your Resurrection Power and Love

Show us how you can help us turn our present circumstances, world situations, and our hearts into the miracles of new life.

Sermon seeds

Jesus' entire public ministry was dedicated to showing his followers the new ways of thinking and acting and believing, but even so, it seems nothing prepared them for his turning death into this new thing called resurrection! We've been asking all the way through Lent, show us, Lord, your hiding place, your faithful love and presence, your living water, your definition of blindness, how to balance celebration and grief. And wow, did God ever show us! No one expected Jesus to do it this way! They thought his plan to bring in a new kingdom had been a horrible failure.

What has come to life in our personal, community, physical, or larger world context that we hadn't known to look for or for which we had given up hope? Might the power of resurrection begin with our own awareness of the miracles all around us—in the natural world of spring bursting from the dead-looking branches and fallow ground, to what living a holy Lent has incubated in our souls? Miracles are often those amazing things that surprise us in the midst of so much bad news. Name the joys we are discovering: comforts of home, time with family, rediscovering the difference between needs and wants, etc.



In many ways, we will continue to experience Lenten dryness, sorrow, and the difficulties of this pandemic. Our emotional life doesn't always move on with the church year calendar, even though the church is celebrating with praise and joy. Mentioning that it's okay to stay in the Lenten frame of mind today will validate feeling both sorrow and joy during this season of resurrection.

Zoom and Livestream

- Keep the message short, 7-10 minutes
- Include visuals if possible
- Idea: Two leaders have a conversation about the day's text

COMMUNION (See the Communion Ritual for Zoom or Livestreamed Worship)

Zoom and Livestream

- Send worshipers information about what they should have for the service one or two days in advance: bread, cup of juice or water, candles, etc. Name what is needed again for those who did not gather elements ahead of time.
- Use brief Words of Institution.
- Take time to set the table as a visual feast: spread a tablecloth, light a candle, place the bread and cup intentionally
- Partake of the bread and cup at the same time

BENEDICTION

Go in the joy of Jesus' resurrection, to spread the good news that death is not the end, that God's love is the power we can lean into, and that the cross has been forever transformed into the assurance of eternity with our Lord.