

First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown

The Second Sunday of Easter
Bright Sunday

April 7, 2024

11:00 a.m.

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Bolded words indicate unison responses from the congregation.

REFLECTION FOR WORSHIP

The following scriptures from the Revised Common Lectionary and reflection are provided for meditation as we prepare for worship.

Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1-2:2, and John 20:19-31

What is Bright or Holy Humor Sunday? In the early church, the Sunday after Easter was observed by the faithful as a day of joy and laughter with parties and shenanigans to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. The custom of Bright Sunday, as it was called, came from the idea of some early church theologians that God played a joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead.

Easter was God's supreme joke played on death, hence the risus paschalis – "the Easter laugh."

So on the Sunday after Easter, parishioners and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, sang, and danced. It was a time for clergy and people to tell jokes and to have fun. The idea of setting aside one Sunday each year to celebrate God's gift of laughter and joy may be new to me, but it's got a long and rich history in many congregations around the world. Laughter Sunday (also known as Holy Humor Sunday, Hilarity Sunday, God's Laughter Sunday, Bright Sunday or Holy Fools Sunday) has its roots in a number of different Christian traditions.

Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the Sunday after Easter as Risus Paschalis ('God's Joke,' or 'the Easter laugh').

Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead.

much fun.

In the Orthodox tradition, people would gather on Easter Monday to tell jokes and funny stories, and to dance and eat together.

This information has been gathered from several sources, including *Lectionary Liturgies* and *The Joyful Newsletter*

Bulletin, noun; 1. Something to read during the sermon; 2. A fan used in churches without air conditioning; 3. Your receipt for attending church.

WE GATHER

Organ Prelude:

Doxology

Kent Engelhardt

Welcome and Announcements

Sally Walker

WE PRAISE

***Call to Worship:**

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

We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like God.

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

He had the last laugh when He rose from the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

Our counselor, our guide, our motivator –She is our joy!

***Hymn #157**

I Danced in the Morning

LORD OF THE DANCE

WE CONFESS

Call to Confession

When we keep our faults and failures locked away, we feel as if we have no need to confess. But with joy God comes into our hearts when we least expect, so we can be filled with forgiveness, with hope, with peace. Please join me as we pray together, saying,

Prayer of Confession

**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.
Fill us with Easter's laughter; fill us with your healing joy;
fill us with the love poured into us through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

Silence is kept for personal confession.

Assurance of Pardon

The Gospels tell us again and again of the joy which comes to us through Christ. When Jesus was around, lives were changed, the sick were healed, the sorrowful began to laugh with joy. The good news is that this joy is now given to us.

Through the Holy Spirit, we are gifted with joy. We are sent forth to bring good news to the oppressed, to bring healing to the broken, to anoint everyone with the oil of gladness. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

*Gloria #581

Glory Be to the Father

GREATOREX

**"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen."**

*Sharing the Paschal (or Easter) Greeting:

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!

WE LISTEN

Prayer of Illumination

God, as we listen to your Word proclaimed to us today, let us be overwhelmed with joy for our salvation and life with and through you. Help us to live fully into our lives that were made new in you when we responded to your call through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Acts of the Apostles:

Acts 4:32-35

Pg. 888

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalter:

Psalm 133

Pam Root, Cantor



The Lord a-noints and bless-es, gives life for-ev-er - more. ♫

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Epistle Lesson:

1 John 1:1-2:2

Pg. 989

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon:

Rev. Payne Warner

Sermon, noun; 1. A boring speech given for an extended period of time by a so-called expert in their field for the sole purpose of determining who slept well last night.

***A Communion of Saints: Affirmation of Humor (Read down the columns)**

We believe with the Bible that -
"there is a time to weep and a time to laugh."

We believe with Chrysostom that -
"laughter has been implanted in our souls."

We believe with Aquinas that there is a time for
"playful deeds and jokes."

We believe with Luther that -
"You have as much laughter as you have faith."

We believe with Calvin that -
"we are nowhere forbidden to laugh."

We believe with Francis De Sales that -
"humor is a foundation for reconciliation."

We believe with Wesley that -
"A sour religion is the devil's religion."

We believe with Kierkegaard that -
"Humor is intrinsic to Christianity."

We believe with Dostoevsky that -
"If a person laughs well they are a good person."

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."

We believe with Fulton Sheen that -
"The only time laughter is wicked is when it is turned against he who gave it."

We believe with Flannery O'Conner that -
"Christianity is a strangely cheery religion."

We believe with Elton Trueblood to -
"Never trust a theologian without a sense of humor."

We believe with Charles Schultz that -
"Humor is proof that everything is going to be alright with God nevertheless."

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

We believe with Eric Gritsch that -
"Humor is thus anchored in a self-knowledge that indicates one's limitations."

WE DEDICATE

Call for the Offering

Our relationship with God is one of joy and celebration, laughter and love. Through the events we celebrated last weekend we have been brought into full relationship with our creator, who is celebrating with us, every day. May we give back to God with joy for all that has been done for us.

Offertory Anthem:

Child of the Manger, Child of the Cross
The Motet Choir

Craig Courtney

***Response of Thanksgiving**

Doxology

*THE FIRST NOWELL

*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:**

Lord of laughter, open our eyes to see through the
absurdities of this brazen century and to confront
them with good humor rather than faithless despair.
When ignorance poses as dogmatic, scientific wisdom,
enable us to laugh heartily with the faith and daring
that is born of your Easter victory.

**Lord of laughter, when we take ourselves too seriously,
laugh at us until we come to our senses.
Remind us that all the gifts we share with the church
are an expression of our love for you,
for your love's sake; Amen!**

Communion (See Insert)

***Hymn #266, vss. 1-2 only**

Joy to the World * vs. 1 – RICHMOND; *vs. 2 - ANTIOCH

Recessional Hymn, *noun*; 1. The final hymn of a Church service; this hymn is usually the quietest of all hymns because so many parishioners have already left before it is sung.

***Benediction**

Piano Postlude:

When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder

James Black, arr. by Fred Bock

**WE SCATTER TO CONTINUE OUR WORSHIP
IN SERVING OTHERS**

A warm welcome is extended to all who worship today.
May the gift of worship we offer honor God and serve as a blessing to you.



WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Payne Warner
Sally Walker

THE MUSIC TODAY

Prof. Larry Harris, Director of Music/Organist
The Motet Choir

ALSO SERVING TODAY

Ushers: John Einfalt, Wilma Miller
Communion Preparers: Sandy Benson, Karen Cooper
Communion Servers: Karen Cooper, Miranda D'Amico, Patti Keenan, and Marilyn Shakely
Facilities Staff: David Phibbs

WORSHIP NOTES