

First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
East Derry, New Hampshire 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

April 8, 2018 Sunday of Holy Humor



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ALL ARE WELCOME

*"Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God.
Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks upon your lips,
and offer God today your love and your service."*

(Adapted from a 12th Century Church in Hampshire, England)

April 8, 2018 Sunday of Holy Humor

WE GATHER OURSELVES TO JOY

LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

Acolyte: Charlotte Dugan

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS; SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

* CALL TO WORSHIP (Please stand in body or Spirit.)

One: Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth!
Sing of God's glorious name with your praise!

**All: Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice!
Say to all the nations, "The Lord is risen!"**

One: Sing a new song!
A joyful melody of springtime glory and rebirth!

**All: Sing praise to our Still-Laughing Easter God
Who has rolled away the bindings of yesterday**

One: The sea and everything in it shouts God's praise!
Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!

**All: Immerse your anxiety and despair in the fountain of new birth.
Let the whole world bless our God and sing God's praise.
Thanks be to God!**

*HYMN: #4 - Joyful, Joyful, we Adore You

*INVOCATION (unison)

Most Loving God, For all those times when we move in the shadow, unaware or unwilling to be aware of how our actions affect others, we come together, in the light, to find our joy in You. For all those times when we deceive ourselves – not revealing to ourselves or others the true nature of our vulnerabilities and fears, we come together in Your truth, to find forgiveness in fellowship. And for all those times when life has been revealed and we have ignored or denied it, we come together to touch grace in the presence of the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE #759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One; As it is in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

CHIME CHOIR

"Jesus Shall Reign"

arranged by Bill Ingram

WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES

HOLY HUMOR

At this time, all children are invited to come forward for the children's offering, and children's time. An offering is not required for participation. All are welcome, especially first time visitors.

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

"Jesus Loves Me"

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In our hearts these gifts we bring; for you give us everything. Teach us how to follow you; in all we say and all we do. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Dave McGrath

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

WE LAUGH AND DANCE WITH GOD

HOLY HUMOR

*HYMN: #478 - I've Got Peace Like a River

OLD TESTAMENT: Psalm 97

NEW TESTAMENT: Philippians 4:4-9 & Romans 12:11-13

GOSPEL: John 16:19-21

SERMON: God's Gift of Joy

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Lord of the Dance"

arr. Rutter

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

HOLY HUMOR

PONDERING ONE PERSON'S PRAYER

Here I am, God, nibbled, frazzled, puzzled, awed, and in need of a chuckle, a revolution begun with a belly laugh, a Bronx cheer in the face of the onslaughts of disaster and death itself. I wonder. Are you really as humorless, as grimly serious as I have made you out to be? Or do aardvarks and monkeys, puppies and porpoises, and people, perhaps, reveal the comic side of your grace, the playful side of your love?

Tickle me into giggling down the wailing walls of my endless grievances, trip up my waddling pomposities. Lord of laughter, as of tears, teach me to laugh at myself, until my laughter lures me deep beneath the questions without answers, the pain without relief; lures me deep to the love in me unused, the strength unspent, the courage untapped, the dream unriskened, the beauty unexpressed; all the way down to the inescapable bottom, to the awareness that I must get on with being who I am as fully as I can, as unflinchingly as I can, as gracefully, as powerfully, as faithfully as you have created me to be. Yes, yes, yes! Amen

—adapted from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder

PASTORAL PRAYER followed by CHORAL PRAYER

WE PASS THE HAT IN CHRISTIAN LOVE AND EXPECTATION

HOLY HUMOR

INVITATION Our most Holy God has taken what we call an absurdity and turned it into possibility and has coaxed us to sing springtime alleluias where once there was a gray dawn. Our Redeeming God has called us out of the tombs we inhabit and into an undreamed vision of tomorrow. So let us give with glad hearts in the joy of newness and hope on this Eastertide day.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY #780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God above, you heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God of grace, God of love and laughter, we thank you that we are so wondrously
created and that we are made for relationship with you and with one another.**

**We thank you for laughter with friends and loved ones. We thank you for the
laughter of children, and the song it creates in our hearts.**

**By your great unending love, you inspire in us a spirit of imagination and
creativity and generosity. Help us to use that spirit to play more, to give more,
and to create beauty in every way possible. Remind us to laugh out loud, for
doing so will heal some of the wounds within us. Not all, but some.**

We pray in your holy name. Amen.

WE GO OUT TO LAUGH AND LOVE AND SERVE A SMILING GOD

HOLY HUMOR

*HYMN: #2 - Glory, Glory Hallelujah

BENEDICTION: May the God of Isaac, which means "laughter,"
the Christ, who for the joy set before him endured the cross
and the Spirit of Joy be with you both now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated during the Postlude)

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

Members of the Congregation

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

Joanne Worthen and Cindy Pingree

LAYREADER:

Julie Turner

USHERS

Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell, Sue Hunt and Michael Bryan

GREETER(s)

Diane Dunn

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Susan Handy

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Christine Lehoullier

ACCOMPANIST/ORGANIST

Chris Ferrin

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Hannah Collier

From the church bulletin blooper file:

- 1) The Church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment and gracious hostility.
- 2) Potluck supper at 5:00 p.m. - Prayer and Medication to follow.
- 3) Prayer and Fasting Conference: The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.