



ames UCC
United Church of Christ

Just Peace, Open & Affirming

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**No Matter Who You Are Or Where You Are
On Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!**

THE CHURCH AT LAUGHTER

April 27, 2014

Ames UCC Youth—Holy Humor Sunday!

Welcome to "Holy Humor" Sunday! Please enjoy the lighthearted, back to front twist on worship and the ways we express our faith today. No offense or disrespect is intended and our sincere faith underlies our worship today, as it does every Sunday! Today's Holy Humor Sunday has its roots in history. For centuries, in Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant countries, Easter Monday and "Bright Sunday (the Sunday after Easter) were observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. 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 custom of Easter Monday and Bright Sunday celebrations were rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. Easter was God's supreme joke played on death. "Risus paschalis - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it. Let the joy begin!

We Go Forth To Love And Serve God

GITTIN' UP AND GOIN' MUSIC – POSTLUDE

SUNG RESPONSE

Tune: Amazing Grace

Now shall my inward joys arise and burst into a song, Almighty love inspires my heart and pleasure tunes my tongue.

☺ **WE WISH YOU WELL! – BLESSING AND BENEDICTION**

One: If anyone thought that the resurrection was a dream, a fantasy or a joke, rest assured: Christ is risen!

ALL: Christ is risen indeed!

One: Whether coming or going, love and serve God with peace and joy.

ALL: Christ is with us. Alleluia - and Amen!

*We Respond to God's Presence***LET'S PRAY IN THANKSGIVING FOR OUR OFFERINGS!**

One: You smiled and the sun burst through the shadows of chaos

ALL: you chuckled, and the platypus splashed in creation's fountain;

One: You laughed, and all that is good and beautiful was given shape by you,
Imaginative God.

ALL: Snickering at the feeble attempts of the evil one,

One: you showed us how to resist temptation;

ALL: giggling at sin's desperate desire to hold on to us,

One: you released us by your love;

ALL: howling with laughter at death's foolish belief that the tomb could hold you,

One: you burst forth into the kingdom as the stars pealed with joy,
Laughing Jesus.

ALL: As you fill us with new life, may we delight in sharing it with others;

One: as you tell us the good news which can never be taken from us,

ALL: may we rejoice in offering it to the broken, the sad, the lonely;

One: as you tickle us with grace,

**ALL: may we give it away with laughter on our lips and joy in our hearts,
Spirit of Easter.**

One: God in Community, Holy in One, our hearts overflow with wonder
as we lift the prayer Jesus has taught us,

**ALL: Our Father in Heaven, let your holy name be known, let your kingdom come,
and your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today the bread that we
need, and forgive us our wrongs, and OK, we'll forgive those who have done
wrong to us too. Do not lead us into trial, but save us from evil. For we want
for you alone to rule in our hearts; you have power to transform, and in the
light of your smile is your glory. Amen.**

--Thom M. Shuman, adapted

☺ **THANKS FOR THE GIFTS! -- OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

Ho-ho-ho-hosanna, ha-ha-ha-lleluia, he-he-he-he saves me. I've got the joy of the Lord!

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WE NEED MONEY – OFFERTORY☺ **LET'S SING IT AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME PRAYER RESPONSE!**

*This is the day (this is the day) that our God has made (that our God has made)! We will rejoice (we
will rejoice) and be glad in it (and be glad in it)! This is the day that our God has made! We will
rejoice and be glad in it! This is the day (this is the day) that our God has made!*

TALKING TO GOD

One: God of Fools, Lord of Clowns and Smiling Saints, we rejoice in this playful prayer that you are a God of laughter and of tears.

ALL: Blessed are you, for you have rooted within us the gifts of humor, lightheartedness, and mirth, with jokes and comedy; you cause our hearts to sing as laughter is made to flow out of us.

One: We are grateful that your Son, Jesus, who was this world's master of wit, and who daily invites us to be fools for your sake, as we embrace the madness of your prophets, holy people, and saints.

All: We delight in holy madness which becomes the very medicine to heal the chaos of the cosmos since it calls each of us out of the hum-drumness of daily life into joy, adventure, and, most of all, into freedom.

One: We, who are so easily tempted to barter our freedom for tiny speckles of honor and power, are filled with gratitude that your Son's very life has reminded us to value only love, the communion with other persons and with you, and to balance honor with humor.

All: With circus bands and organ grinders, with fools, clowns, court-jesters, and comics, with high-spirited angels and saints, we too join the fun and foolishness of life, so that your holy laughter may ring out to the edges of the universe.

One: Blessed are you, Lord our God, who invites us to be holy fools.

All: Amen.

God is Revealed To Us In Our Worship

EASTER AFFIRMATION

"Lord of the Dance"

Insert

SERMON

"But, Seriously Folks"

CONGREGATIONAL SHARING OF JOKES, RIDDLES

AND NOW FOR A FEW WORDS FROM OUR SPONSOR -- SCRIPTURE READINGS

Proverbs 17: 22

Genesis 17:7; 18:12, 21:1-6

Psalms 126: 2-3

Luke 6:21

One: This is the Good News!

ALL: Praise be to you, O Christ!

COME ON UP, KIDS!

Knock-knock jokes!!!

We Enter Into the Worship of God

☺ **PASSING OF THE BALLOONS**

You are now invited to share the balloons that you received as you entered the sanctuary. Pass them to people you don't know, introduce yourselves, trade them for a color you like better, enjoy them together. Be sure to laugh!!

☺ **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

One: People of God, did you hear the one about the crooked painter who watered down his paint on a church steeple?

ALL: No! What happened?

One: With the first rain – all the paint ran off.

ALL: No!

One: The preacher found out what happened;

ALL: And what did he say?

One: He said REPAINT, AND THIN NO MORE!

ALL: (Groan . . .)

ALL: This is the day that the Lord has made! We will rejoice - and laugh - in it!

☺ **GATHERING HYMN**

“This Is the Day!”

NCH #84

☺ **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Christ is risen!

ALL: Christ is risen indeed!

One: Come to worship

ALL: We've already been here.

One: Then let's review—God loves you, so love one another and love yourself. Whether coming or going, may you be filled with the joy of Christ's resurrection!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

MISSION MOMENT

SHARING OUR LIFE AND MINISTRY – ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME . . .SERIOUSLY!

“Lord, as I stumble through this life, help me to create more laughter than tears, dispense more happiness than gloom, spread more cheer than despair. Never let me become so indifferent that I will fail to see the wonder in the eyes of a child or the twinkle in the eyes of the aged. Never let me forget that my total effort is to cheer people, make them happy, and forget, at least for the moment, all the unpleasant things in their lives. And, Lord in my final moment, may I hear you whisper: “When you made My people smile, you made Me smile.” Amen.

SITTIN' DOWN MUSIC -- PRELUDE AND LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

☺ *Those who are able, please stand.*