

Here is a simple outline for a sunrise service with guidance for expansion and suggested hymns. It can be used in a variety of ways and setting, both for home use and on-line.

Easter Sunrise

Many United Methodists and other Christians in the United States look forward to gathering at sunrise on Easter morning to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. In some communities, United Methodists gather with other Churches to hold a service. Often such services take place outside, weather permitting. Getting up in the dark of early Easter morning is a challenge for some, but that challenge is part of what makes Easter Sunrise compelling.

It is not possible for us to hold large or even small gatherings this year during social distancing. However, Easter morning will still arrive, and most people in any place or situation may rise early to greet the Risen Christ. What follows is a brief order and followed by a set of suggestions for a sunrise service that fits a wide variety of needs.

Core of the service:

1. Sing or recite a resurrection hymn and end with a prayer.
2. Read scripture, including an account of the open tomb:
 - Matthew 28:1-10 or John 20:1-18.
3. Silent or spoken reflection on the scripture reading.
4. Brief Prayer, extemporaneous or using a form below.
5. Closing hymn, sung or spoken out loud.
6. Benediction.

Except where noted, these acts should be spoken or sung out loud.

Depending upon the local situation, these acts may be expanded in several ways:

1. Go outside if possible.
 - Light a fire in a portable fire pit and/or light a lantern or a candle.
 - Declare in call and response:

The Light of Christ.
All: **Thanks be to God!**
 - Sing (with or without accompaniment) a resurrection hymn (see suggestions below):

- *End with Prayer:*

Almighty God, Jesus conquered death
and offered to us your salvation.
Grant that we who greet our risen Lord
may follow him from the empty tomb into eternal life,
for he lives and reigns with you forever. **Amen.**

2. *In addition to the Gospel, you may first read one or more appropriate lessons from the Old Testament, such as:*

- Genesis 1:1-2:4a
 - Genesis 22:1-18
 - Exodus 14:10-31
 - Ezekiel 37:1-14
- *You may also read or sing Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24.*
 - *Before and after the Gospel reading (Matthew 28:1-10 or John 20:1-18) declare three times:*

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

3. *If there is no one able to reflect on the passage, you may consider playing a recorded sermon from your congregation for Easter, if available. However, a period of silent reflection is always fitting after a scripture reading.*

4. *You may use the following responsive prayer. Persons worshipping by themselves may want to use singular pronouns. However, it is also appropriate to keep them in the plural as we pray in solidarity with Christians around the world, as we do with the Lord's Prayer.*

Let us pray:

For Christians throughout the world who celebrate the resurrection of Jesus this Easter morning, that we may know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For leaders of the nations and cities of the world, that they may be wise in their administration of government during this pandemic, and selflessly serve the common good, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all bishops, pastors, and leaders of our congregations, that they may faithfully tend the family of God during this season of social distancing, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers who tend the sick and dying, that they fulfill their vocation without undue fear of personal danger, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are sick and those alone in quarantine, that they may find comfort and care in their time of need, we pray to the Lord,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the earth you have given to our care, and for all creatures who share it with us, that you may be glorified in all your works, we pray to the Lord,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For other concerns, [expressed here], we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we your children never pray alone, but only with all your saints in all the world. Therefore, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father... [*Here pray the Lord's Prayer*]

5. Sing a final Easter hymn or song from the United Methodist Hymnal or other songbook. Or play a recorded Easter hymn or song and sing whatever words you may know from memory.

- *Or you may sing a chorus, such as "Alleluia, alleluia."*
- *Or you may sing the first stanza of "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (See below).*

6. End with a blessing, such as:

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit is with us!

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Risen Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Shout three times:

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!



Selected Easter hymns:

Were You There

Traditional

Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?

Up From the Grave He Arose

Robert Lowry, 1974

1. Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Savior,
waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!

Refrain:

Up from the grave he arose;
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

3. Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus my Savior;
he tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord! [Refrain]

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Charles Wesley, 1739

1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

2. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Other suggestions:

He Lives	<i>The United Methodist Hymnal (UMH) 310</i>
Now the Green Blade Riseth	<i>UMH 311</i>
Cristo Vive	<i>UMH 313</i>
In the Garden	<i>UMH 314</i>