



WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

Albany, New York
April 16, 2023
Service of Worship 10:00 a.m.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
The Second Sunday of Easter



WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

(Let the notes of our Opening Prelude be the musical curtain through which we pass as we gather to worship together. Let the preparation we make together be prayerful.)

Prelude

“O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing”

Jean Francois Dandrieu (1682-1738)



Opening Sentences

Fatmata Hilton

The Lord is risen! Alleluia!

Luke 24:34

Alleluia! The Lord is risen indeed!



Opening Hymn #247

“Now the Green Blade Rises”

Call to Confession

Fatmata Hilton

The Lord says: Come.

Revelation 22:17

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

Prayer of Confession

Fatmata Hilton

**Almighty God,
in raising Jesus from the grave,
you shattered the power of sin and death.
We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear,
bound by the ways that lead to death.
We overlook the poor and the hungry,
and pass by those who mourn;
we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed,
and indifferent to calls for peace;
we despise the weak,
and abuse the earth you made.**

**Forgive us, God of mercy.
Help us to trust your power
to change our lives and make us new,
that we may know the joy of life abundant
given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

Acts 2:17, 21

Hear the good news of God's promise:
I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.
Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Thanks be to God.

Passing The Peace

Fatmata Hilton

Words of Welcome

Rev. Paul Rees-Rohrbacher

WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Choral Anthem

"He Comes to Us"

Text: Albert Schweitzer
Music: Jane M. Marshall

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, without a name,
as of old, by the lakeside He came, He came to those men who knew Him not.

He speaks to us, He speaks the same word: "Follow! Follow! Follow thou me!"
and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time.

He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple,
He will reveal Himself, reveals Himself in the toils, the conflicts,
the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery,
they shall learn, shall learn, shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

O Morning Star, how fair and bright
Thou beamest forth in truth and light!
O Sovereign meek and lowly.
Thou Root of Jesse, David's Son, My Lord and Master,
Thou hast won My heart to serve Thee solely!
Thou art holy, Fair and glorious, all victorious,
Rich in blessing, Rule and might o'er all possessing.



Prayer for Illumination

Living God, with joy we celebrate
the presence of your risen Word.
Enliven our hearts by your Holy Spirit
so that we may proclaim the good news
of eternal and abundant life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Scripture

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon

Brave Thomas

Rev. Paul Rees-Rohrbacher

Hymn #256

"These Things Did Thomas Count as Real"

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers from State Street

Ned Trudeau

Prayers of the People

Fatmata Hilton

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;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.



Offering

Fatmata Hilton

WE ARE SENT IN GOD'S NAME



Closing Hymn # 817

"We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight"

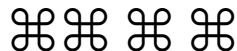
Charge and Benediction

Rev. Paul Rees-Rohrbacher

Postlude

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today, Alleluia"

Hermann Schroeder (1904-1984)



We welcome Margaret Randall as this week's accompanist. Thank you Margaret!

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247 Now the Green Blade Rises

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain;

love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Although there were some traditional Easter carols, this hybrid one has been created by grafting a 20th-century English text onto a late 15th-century French tune. The allegory of the dying and rising grain as a parallel for Christ's Resurrection is probably based on John 12:24.

256 These Things Did Thomas Count as Real

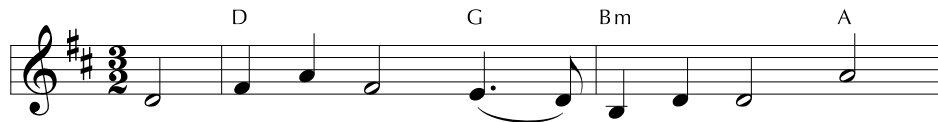
1 These things did Thom - as count as real: the warmth of
 2 The vi - sion of his skep - tic mind was keen e -
 3 His rea - soned cer - tain - ties de - nied that one could
 4 May we, O God, by grace be - lieve and thus the

blood, the chill of steel, the grain of wood, the heft of
 nough to make him blind to an - y un - ex - pect - ed
 live when one had died, un - til his fin - gers read like
 ris - en Christ re - ceive, whose raw im - print - ed hands reached

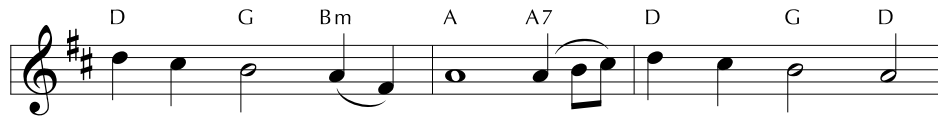
stone, the last frail twitch of blood and bone.
 act too large for his small world of fact.
 Braille the mark - ings of the spear and nail.
 out and beck - oned Thom - as from his doubt.

This 20th-century text provides a helpful corrective to a long history of negative attitudes toward Thomas for failing to believe the other disciples' report that Christ had risen. His fact-seeking "skeptical mind" sounds remarkably modern and makes him a more sympathetic figure.

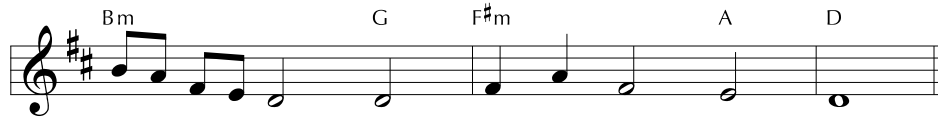
817 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight



1 We walk by faith and not by sight; with
 2 We may not touch your hands and side, nor
 3 Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; and
 4 And when our life of faith is done, in



gra - cious words draw near, O Christ, who spoke as
 fol - low where you trod; but in your prom - ise
 may our faith a - bound to call on you when
 realms of clear - er light may we be - hold you



none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."
 we re - jice and cry, "My Lord and God!"
 you are near and seek where you are found.
 as you are, with full and end - less sight.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

The opening line here is essentially a quotation of 2 Corinthians 5:7, but that affirmation is fleshed out by references to the appearance of the risen Christ to Thomas (John 20:19–29). The shape note tune, named for a stream in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, adds resolution to the words.