

**Visions United Spirit Gathering
April 12th, 2020 - Easter Sunday**

Hope Filled Conversation: *When Will We Celebrate Easter?*

Our Community Gathers

Prelude Elegy *by Nobuyuki Tsujii* - *Peter Lightfoot*

Welcome *God's Doors Are Open to All!*
Open Doors · Open Minds · Open Hands · Open Hearts
 Visions United seeks to be a safe place for people of all
 races, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds,
 sexual orientations and gender identities to worship.

Peace

One: Peace be with you.
 All: **And also with you.**

A Story to Begin - a Musical Story of Good Friday to Easter

Peter Lightfoot sent along this story to accompany the Prelude he shared:

"Nobuyuki Tsujii is a young, internationally-known blind Japanese concert pianist who composed this work in 2011 with the title "Elegy for the Victims of the Tsunami" with estimated 225,000 deaths, which occurred 9 years ago last month. We read the story a couple weeks ago of Jesus curing the blind - Nobuyuki in writing such a beautiful piece is an example of how all of us, being "disabled" in one way or other, can with grace rise to the exalted.

As an "elegy" is a lament for victims, I thought it was appropriate for now with the pandemic, but especially so for Easter with the first stanzas in the minor key (contemplative sadness of Good Friday), and the last part in the major key symbolizing the triumph of Easter Sunday. I added the ending three bells to remind that new life resumed after the 3rd day (as it will for us when we are out of our individual "tombs", however we interpret that word, whether pandemic-related or more generally)."

Easter Invitation & Lighting of the Christ Candle

(Light a candle as we do whenever we gather together at Visions United)

Gathering Prayer (unison)

We are bold to proclaim
 Christ is risen!
 Risen again
 in the midst of it all - that in some amazing way,
 we too, may be a people of hope
 who walk in the light,
 imbued with the Spirit.
 May it be so! Alleluia!

Song VU#166 Joy Comes with the Dawn

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We Listen for Wisdom

Scripture Matthew 28: 1-10 *Readers: Jane Aikman & John Foster*

Reflection When Will We Celebrate Easter?

We Respond with Gratitude and Prayer

Gathering at the Table

Celebration of Easter and the Blessing of Community in Song

Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah! *Soloist: Bill Peters*

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A Blessing Ritual for Our Easter Table

*We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing.
Though we are many throughout the earth
and our church community is scattered, we are one in the Risen Christ.
In our many kitchens and living rooms,
we gather and pray this blessing together:*

Spirit of Christ, there is no lockdown on your blessing
and no quarantine on grace.
May your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing
be upon every table where we gather this day.
May bread broken be shared in Love.
May every cup lifted celebrate your promise,
and renew hope, even in the midst of this pandemic.
Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you.
Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.
May we be your compassion and a living prayer of your presence,
today and every day. Alleluia and Amen.

*Prayer inspired by words by Maren C. Tirabassi, Gifts in Open Hands
<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/03/26/communion-for-palm-sunday-april-5-2020/>*

The Community at Prayer

A Visual Prayer Praise Song for the Pandemic

Written and read by Christine Valters Paintner from Abbey of the Arts.

Music by Giants and Pilgrims; Created by The Work of the People

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/praise-song-for-the-pandemic>

We Go Forth to Be a Blessing

Changing of the Light and Blessing

<i>How many ways can we share 'alleluia!'?</i>	
When the table is set:	Alleluia!
Where bread is shared:	Alleluia!
When the hungry are fed:	Alleluia!
Where peace is celebrated:	Alleluia!
When we 'stay apart' so we can be together again:	Alleluia!
Where the church is open, even when the buildings are closed:	Alleluia!
When neighbours love each other and communities thrive:	Alleluia
Where the earth is greening:	Alleluia!
Then... Christ <i>is</i> Risen,	Alleluia
Christ is risen, indeed!	Alleluia and Amen

Song

VU#586 We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection

Words: June Boyce-Tillman

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***Thank You for Joining Us!
May Each of Us Carry the Spirit into the world with us.***