

Easter “Sunrise” 2026

Greeting / Welcome

Jesus is risen ... Jesus is risen indeed! Love is risen ... Love is risen indeed!

Friends, the good news of Easter is that love is risen, and is rising even now—even, even, even in the midst of, and in the face, of fear. Even in the midst of, and in the face of, Empire. Even in the midst of, and in the face of, oppression and injustice and violence and death itself.

Love is risen ... Love is risen indeed!

And so we rise this morning with that good news, and with joy that is itself an act of resistance.

Song: “We Rise”

We rise

Humbly hearted **Rise**

Won't be divided **Rise**

With spirit to guide us **Rise**

In hope / In prayer / We find ourselves here

In hope / In prayer / We're right here (repeat)

We rise

All of the children **Rise**

Elders with wisdom **Rise**

Ancestors surround us **Rise**

REFRAIN

We rise

Up from the wreckage **Rise**

With tears and with courage **Rise**

Fighting for life **We rise**

REFRAIN

Repeat 1st verse

Opening Prayer (Walter Brueggemann)

Through this day, O God, we name your name in gladness, we ponder the world you have called “good,” we relish your gift and your task, and we marvel in amazement, ... at the wonder of this Easter Jesus, who has died and is alive among us.

Soon we will be homeward; and when we arrive there, it will be as it is this morning, still with anxiety and demand and conflict and inconvenience. Except that all things will be—yet again—made new.

Make new by your Spirit; make new the church where we live; make new the public reality of justice among us; make new the practice of compassion in our neighborhood; make new the surge of peace in our violent world; make new the policies of our government and the workings of the church.

Make new in and through us, and we will be in Easter joy, unafraid and unwearied, your glad people, carrying among us the marks of the death and the new life of Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26

O give thanks to the HOLY ONE, for God is good,
for her steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of gods, for their steadfast love endures forever;

INTRO RESPONSE

who alone does great wonders, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**
who by understanding made the heavens,

for God's steadfast love endures forever;

who spread out the earth on the waters, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**

who made the great lights, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**

the sun to rule over the day, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**

the moon and stars to rule over the night, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**

It is God who remembered us in our low estate,

for God's steadfast love endures forever;

and rescued us from our foes, **for God's steadfast love endures forever;**

who gives food to all flesh, **for God's steadfast love endures forever.**

O give thanks to the God of heaven, **for God's steadfast love endures forever.**

Choral Alleluia (early release of Alleluias!)

Scripture Lesson: John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken him out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the

tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Jesus, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to God. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Risen Christ," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Choral Alleluia

Reflection

Poem (Roddy Hamilton)

God,
empty tombs and risen lords
stones that have rolled
and resurrection,
for some it is easy to believe
for others it is just daft
but for most
we wonder
we wonder what might be possible
and God
if love is the greatest power in the universe
we wonder
what might be possible

if love chooses to carry on loving
even those who try and kill it
what might be possible

and if love decides to give of itself
for the sake of others
what might be possible

so in our wonder
and our longing for such a love as this
that changes things
may we dare to believe
in what seems impossible
and dare to live
impossible lives
that hope beyond death
but believe in life before death

may we live this kind of love
that dares to work for justice
and the fullness of life for everyone
dare to work for peace
and the fullness of peace for everyone
because we believe in love
which has become
the most powerful thing in the universe
because it gives of itself

God

may we make time
this season of renewal and life
to wonder
and wonder
what love might make possible
in us. Amen.

We celebrate this morning, again, the good news of what love might make possible. We celebrate the good news that new life starts in and emerges from and through even the deepest darkness. Even from and through death itself. We celebrate the good news that faith emerges from and through doubt, hope from and through despair, love from and through fear.

The cross of Good Friday, of crucifixion, created by the Roman state precisely as a symbol of both fear and death, meant to scare occupied people into submission to the evil thumb of Empire, is transformed with Easter newness

into a symbol of impossible love and life. Transformed from the horrific cruelty of Good Friday, to the anxious in-between of Holy Saturday, to the freeing good news of the Easter empty tomb.

The empty tomb of Easter reminds us what love might make possible. Beyond all attempts to suppress and oppress, God's steadfast love endures forever.

The empty tomb of Easter reminds us to keep WONDERING, to keep LONGING, to keep DARING TO BELIEVE that love is the most powerful thing in the universe, to keep DARING TO BELIEVE in what seems impossible. To keep daring to live impossible lives. And propelled by that kind of daring, to keep rising not only toward our own lives made new and new again, but to the whole world made new and new again. Abundant and just. The world as God intends. On earth as it is in heaven.

Friends, may it be so. And may we, as Easter people, help make it so.

Song: "Rising"

Life is a test of the heart and the soul **Rising, we're rising**

But something keeps moving us on to the goal **Rising, we're rising**

Rising on the wings of faith, over life's storm-troubled seas

Carried along by a spirit of grace, rising, we're rising

You moved on the waters, you called to the deep **Rising, we're rising**

You coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep **Rising, we're rising**

And over the eons you called to each thing **Rising, we're rising**

Wake from your slumbers and rise on your wings **Rising, we're rising** (refrain)

You swept through the desert, you stung with the sand ...

And you goaded your people with a law and a land ...

And when they were blinded by their idols and lies ...

You spoke through your prophets to open their eyes ...

You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill ...

You whispered in silence when the whole world was still ...

And down in the city you called once again ...

You blew through your people on the rush of the wind ...

Closing Blessing (Jan Richardson)

You had not imagined

that something so empty

could fill you

to overflowing

and now you carry

the knowledge

like an awful treasure,
or like a child
that roots itself
beneath your heart:
how the emptiness
will bear forth
a new world
that you cannot fathom
but on whose edge
you stand.
So why do you linger?
You have seen
and so you are
already blessed.
You have been seen
and so you are
the blessing.
There is no other word
you need.
There is simply
to go
and tell.
There is simply
to begin.

Sending Forth & Passing the Peace

Friends, with the divine assurance that fear and death do not, and will never, have the last word, go out into this broken yet beautiful world we share—and go out as Easter people prepared to test, always, what love might make possible.

Go in peace, and may God's peace be yours.

You're invited to offer each other signs of God's peace.