

Third Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE

Holly Pisors

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

As you walk with us, as we journey together,
Lord, your word fills our hearts!

As you speak with us, as your love is revealed,
Lord, your fire burns in our hearts!

As we proclaim what we have seen and heard,
may all people be drawn to you, the risen Lord!

OPENING PRAYER

Living God, you are the fire that burns within us. You open our hearts to your presence, revealed in word and song, in hospitality and friendship, in sacrament and presence. Open our minds again so that we may recognize you when you meet us in unexpected moments. Let us encounter you in every phase and movement of worship that we might know you and love you more than before we gathered. And, may that love burn brightly like the sun cutting through the gloom of the storm to inspire us to go on with renewed hope and spirit. Amen.

HYMN *"The Day of Resurrection"*

#245 NCH John Mason Neale

1 The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
the Passover of gladness, the Passover of God.
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
our Christ has brought us over, with hymns of victory.

2 Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright
the Christ who reigns eternal In resurrection light;

**We listen for the teachings once heard so calm and plain,
for we, too, want to follow and raise the victor strain.**

3 Now let the heavens be joyful! Let earth the song begin!
Let the whole world keep high triumph, and all that is therein!

Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ again has risen, our joy that has no end.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Sometimes our hearts ache within us, O Lord. Like those travelers on the Emmaus road, we feel the deep sadness about losing Jesus. Our sadness finds its roots in many things and we feel as though we cannot escape it. It becomes part and parcel of our conversations. Deep within, our spirits long for release and we silently cry. Forgive us when we close our eyes to your presence. Heal our brokenness. Bind up our wounds. Place us on the path of healing and help us to be people who will bring compassionate caring to others, for we ask these things In Jesus' name. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**

HYMN RESPONSE: *"Halle, Halle, Halle"*

#236 NCH Caribbean melody
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT Acts 2:14a, 36-41 (CEB)

¹⁴ Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words!

³⁶ “Therefore, let all Israel know beyond question that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ When the crowd heard this, they were deeply troubled. They said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away—as many as the Lord our God invites.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he testified to them and encouraged them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day.

NEW TESTAMENT Luke 24:13-35

¹³ On that same day [the first day of the week], two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. ¹⁶ They were prevented from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” They stopped, their faces downcast.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas replied, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?”

¹⁹ He said to them, “What things?”

They said to him, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was

recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. ²⁰ But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. ²² But there’s more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ and didn’t find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn’t see him.”

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

²⁸ When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, “Stay with us. It’s nearly evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?”

³³ They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying to each other, “The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread.

SERMON “Hearts on Fire” Pastor Julie

HYMN "Set Our Hearts Aflame"

Tune: Noël Nouvelet ("Now the green blade rises")

Text: Dominic Grant

1 Sing of Resurrection, vict'ry o'er the grave!
Death has been defeated, Christ has come to save.
He sets us free from every sin and shame;
walk with us, Lord Jesus, set our hearts aflame.

2 See the friends of Jesus, walking on their way,
struggling to make sense of all they'd heard that day.
Christ shares their journey, helps them to re-frame;
walk with us, Lord Jesus, set our hearts aflame.

3 "Stay a little longer, night is drawing near."
Then as bread is shared, at last they see him clear.
Now they're inspired, Christ's presence to proclaim;
walk with us, Lord Jesus, set our hearts aflame.

4 When we feel confused, not knowing what to do,
meet us in our mire and show us all that's true.
So shall our journey never be the same;
walk with us, Lord Jesus, set our hearts aflame.

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Offertory

Doxology *Tune: Old 100th ("Praise God from
Whom All Blessings Flow")*

Let trumpets sound and voices sing!
Let all on earth their praises bring!
For Christ has conquered sin and death
And given life eternal breath. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, we pray that these gifts will bring
glory to your name and bless your creation through
good stewardship, Spirit-led discernment, and
generous love. Amen.

HYMN "Lord of the Dance" #118 W&R

1 I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the
earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Refrain:

"Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance," said he.
"I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
I will lead you all in the Dance," said he.

2 I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow
me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and for John;
They came with me and the dance went on. [Refrain]

3 I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame,
The holy people, they said it was a shame;
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me
high,
And they left me there on a cross to die. [Refrain]

4 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
But I am the dance and I still go on. [Refrain]

5 They cut me down and I leapt up high,
I am the life that'll never, never die,
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
"I am the Lord of the Dance," said he. [Refrain]

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

As we are gathered together as children of God, we are called to share our blessings and joys and our concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and needs so that we may bear one another up and support each other in prayer and Christian love.

HYMN "Lord of the Dance" Refrain #118 W&R

Refrain:

"Dance, then, wherever you may be;

I am the Lord of the Dance," said he.

"I'll lead you all wherever you may be,

I will lead you all in the Dance," said he.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Holly Pisors

RADIO BROADCAST

**11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM**

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored
anonymously with the message
"May HIS words be heard by ALL"

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, April 19, 2026

https://youtube.com/live/2hnPec1f_ho

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, April 19th

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon – Byrl Buddenhagen

Greeters – Kathy & Larry Marshall

Ushers – Mickey Marty, Joel Raine

Power Point – Janice Miller

AV –Crispin Hediger

FYI - (for those who are scheduled for PowerPoint/AV it is suggested that you arrive 30 minutes prior to the church service to get the laptop turned on, allow for any updates, get screen down and start running the announcements).

Following Sunday, April 26th

Deacon – Barb Shoemaker

Greeters – Nancy & Kirk Rodman

Ushers – Jerry Quicker, Don Quicker

Power Point – Barb Petkovsek

AV – Lydia Schumacher

Tuesday, April 21st

-1:00 PM – Bible Study

4:00 PM – Future Connections Meeting

5:30 PM - Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, April 22nd

-6:00 PM – Council hosting dinner

for Confirmands, Parents & Mentors

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Apr 19 – Marla & Joel Raine

Apr 26 – Deb Perkl (*confirmation Sunday*)

May 3 –

May 10 -

May 17 -

We need people to sign up

Volunteers Needed for Sunday Worship

April – May 2026

We are looking for volunteers to assist with Sunday worship by **reading the scriptures and/or leading the children's message**. Pastor Julie will choose the scripture readings, and volunteers will prepare and lead the children's message. Pastor Julie has online resources available and is happy to discuss ideas or offer guidance.

If you feel called to help, please add your name to the schedule below. For more specifics of questions please contact Sally Sadowska or Janice Miller.

Thank you for serving!

Sunday	Scripture	Children's message
April 19	Marla Raine	
April 26	Susie Karl	
May 3	Nancy Rodman	
May 10	Barb Shoemaker	Barb Shoemaker
May 17		
May 24		
May 31		



New Member Meeting

We will be holding an introductory "class" on Sunday, April 19 following worship for anyone who is interested in becoming a new member or just wants to know more. For those who choose to take the next step, we would like to offer a formal welcoming ceremony during worship on Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2026. Please contact Pastor Julie at 608-558-2397 or email NUCCpastor@gmail.com

As always, whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



We would like to honor those graduating this year, high school or college. Please let the office know of any students graduating this year.

Special UCC Congregational Meeting Sunday April 19th

On Sunday, April 19, 2026, immediately following the regular church service, Neillsville UCC will hold a special congregational meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss—and possibly vote on—a proposal to replace the kitchen countertops.

Additional details, including cost estimates and funding options, will be presented at that time.

BAKED GOOD AUCTION

- Mark your calendar for Sunday, May 3, 2026 right after church in the fellowship hall. Remember, it's just not pies, we will auction off bars, muffins, casserole, hot dishes, or any other type of baked goods.

Proceeds for this auction will go into the fundraising account line for future needs.

So now for the first step of this fundraiser, we need the help of our trusty bakers/cooks of the church. Please use the signup sheet in the narthex, if you are interested in making any items to be auctioned off. If you cannot make it to church to sign up for a baked good item, please call the church office and Janice will sign you up!

To keep the auction going smoothly, we are asking for no small quantities, therefore:

- bars to be from a 9 x 13 or larger pan
- cookies to be in a package of two (2) dozens
- muffins/cupcakes to be in packages of a dozen

Bidders, if you have a favorite pie or baked goods, talk to the bakers/cooks so you get the one you want and a good donation to the church; what a deal!

Thanks for your continued support and get ready to bid!
Emile Miller & Carla Marty