

The  
253rd Easter Sunrise Service  
of  
The Moravian Church

April 20, 2025 - 6:00 a.m.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina



The Reverend Reed Lawson, *Officiating*

Mr. Jeff Whitsett, *Band Director*

The Reverend Dr. Nola Reed Knouse, *Associate Band Director*

*Sponsored by the Churches  
of Salem Congregation*

Ardmore, Calvary, Christ, Come and Worship,  
Fairview, Fries Memorial, Home, Immanuel New Eden,  
Konnoak Hills, Messiah, Pine Chapel, St. Philips, Trinity

# The Easter Sunrise Service of The Moravian Church

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The Lord is risen!

**The Lord is risen indeed!**

(All hymns of the service shall be sung by the congregation.)

T. *Covenant* (185 A)

Hail, all hail, victorious Lord and Savior,  
you have burst the bonds of death,  
grant us, as to Mary, the great favor  
to embrace your feet in faith:  
you have in our stead the curse endur-ed,  
and for us eternal life procur-ed;  
joyful, we with one accord  
hail you as our risen Lord.

We believe in the one only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who created all things by Jesus Christ, and was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. We believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world; who has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son; who has blessed us in Christ with all spiritual blessings; who has made us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints, having destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of God's will, to the praise of his glorious grace.

**This we truly believe.**

We thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and self-assured, and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. Father, glorify your name.

**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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

We believe in the only Son of God, by whom all things in heaven and on earth were created. We believe that he became flesh and lived among us, taking the form of a servant. Since we are flesh and blood, he himself became a human being. By the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, he was conceived of the Virgin Mary. He was born of a woman; and, being found in human form, was in every respect tempted as we are, yet without sin. For he is the Lord, the messenger of the covenant, in whom we delight. The Spirit of the Lord sent Jesus to proclaim the time of the Lord's favor. He spoke of what he knew and testified to what he had seen. To all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gives power to become children of God. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in the same way as he was seen going into heaven.

The Spirit and the church  
“O come” are now entreating;  
let all who hear their voice  
“O come!” be loud repeating:  
Amen! Lord Jesus, come;  
we still wait faithfully;  
soon, we implore you, come,  
your glory let us see.

The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of God’s trumpet. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**This we truly believe. This is my Lord, who redeemed me, a lost and condemned human creature, from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and dying. Christ has done this so that I may be his own, live in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and happiness, since he, being risen from the dead, lives and reigns forever and ever.**

Lord Jesus Christ, who came at the first in great humility as our Redeemer, grant, we pray, that when you come again in glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may be regarded worthy to stand before you.

**Hear us, gracious Lord and God.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who comes from the Father, and whom our Lord Jesus Christ sent, after he went away, to be with us forever; to comfort us as a mother comforts her children; to help us in our weakness and intercede for us with sighs too deep for words; to bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God and teach us to cry, “Abba, Father”; to pour God’s love into our hearts and make our bodies God’s holy temple; and to work in us the will of God, allotting gifts to each one individually, just as the Spirit chooses.

We believe that by our own reason and strength we cannot believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, or come to him; but that the Holy Spirit calls us through the gospel, enlightens us with gifts of grace, dedicates us to God, and preserves us in the true faith, just as the Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and dedicates to God the whole church on earth, which he keeps with Jesus Christ in the only true faith. In this Christian church God daily and completely forgives us and every believer all our sin.

**This we truly believe.**

Spirit of truth, direct our hearts to the love of God and to patient waiting for Christ. Establish us in the true faith, that we may abound in thanksgiving; and keep us as God’s own until the day of redemption.

**To you be glory, with the Father, and with the Son. Amen.**

We believe that by holy baptism we are made members of the church of Christ, which he has loved, and for which he gave himself, in order to make it holy, cleansing it by water and the word.

In this communion of saints, we believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who died for us, and shed his blood on the cross for the forgiveness of sins, and who has given us his body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, as a pledge of grace. As the Scripture says, Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper our Lord Jesus Christ took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

**This we truly believe.**

T. Goudimel (205 A)

Lord, your body ne'er forsake,  
ne'er your congregation leave;  
we in you our refuge take,  
of your fullness we receive:  
ev'ry other help be gone,  
you are our support alone;  
for on your supreme commands  
all the universe depends.

*(At this point, the service at the church has been concluded. The congregation will proceed to the graveyard as the band plays chorales. The liturgy will be resumed when the congregation is assembled on the graveyard.)*

Creation Hymn

The heavens are telling the Lord's endless glory,  
through all the earth his praise is found.  
The seas re-echo the marvelous story:  
let all repeat that glorious sound!  
The starry hosts he doth order and number,  
he fills the morning's golden springs,  
he wakes the sun from his night-curtained slumber;  
let all adore the King of Kings!

T. Bedford (14 C)

The graves of all his saints Christ blessed, and softened ev'ry bed; where should the dying members rest, but with the dying Head?	Thence he arose, no more to die, and showed our feet the way to follow him, enthroned on high, at the great rising day.
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Then let the last loud trumpet sound  
and bid our kindred rise.  
Awake, you nations under ground;  
and saints, ascend the skies.

We shall never taste eternal death, but shall attain the resurrection of the dead; for this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. Thus our bodies rest in hope. And the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, will also give life to our mortal bodies if the Spirit of God has dwelt in us.

**We poor sinners pray: hear us, gracious Lord and God.**

Keep us in everlasting fellowship with those of our brothers and sisters who, since last Easter Day, have entered into the joy of their Lord, and with the whole Church Triumphant in heaven, and let us rest together in your presence from our labors.

**Hear us, gracious Lord and God.**

T. *Goudimel* (205 A)

Who are these in bright array,  
thousand times ten thousand strong,  
round the altar night and day,  
singing one triumphant song:  
“Worthy is the Lamb once slain,  
blessing, honor, glory, pow’r,  
wisdom, riches, to obtain,  
new dominion ev’ry hour”?

These through fiery trials trod,  
these from great affliction came;  
now, before the throne of God,  
sealed with his almighty name,  
clad in raiment shining bright,  
victor-palms in ev’ry hand,  
through their dear Redeemer’s might,  
more than conquerors they stand.

Glory be to Christ Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life. He was dead, and behold he is alive forever and ever. Those who believe in him, even though they die, yet shall they live. Glory be to Christ Jesus, in the church which waits for him on earth, and in the church which is around him in heaven, from everlasting to everlasting.

**Amen.**

T. *St. Theodulph* (151 G)

I give you thanks unfeign-ed,  
O Jesus, friend in need,  
for what your soul sustain-ed  
when you for me did bleed.

Grant me to lean unshaken  
upon your faithfulness,  
till I from earth am taken  
to see you face to face.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.

**Amen.**

T. *Bechler* (159 D)

Sing hallelujah, praise the Lord!  
Sing with a cheerful voice;  
exalt our God with one accord,  
and in his name rejoice.  
Ne’er cease to sing, O ransomed host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
until in realms of endless light  
your praises shall unite.

There we to all eternity  
shall join th’angelic lays  
and sing in perfect harmony  
to God our Savior’s praise;  
he has redeemed us by his blood,  
and made us kings and priests to God;  
for us, for us, the Lamb was slain!  
Praise ye the Lord! Amen.

Postlude – *We in One Covenant Are Joined* .....T. *Worship* (159 A)

## THE EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

The Sunrise Service of the Moravians in Winston-Salem is an old service, rich in deep spiritual significance. It originated in Herrnhut, Saxony, a village which had been established in 1722 on the estate of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf by a band of religious refugees, descendants of the Ancient Unitas Fratrum. On Easter Sunday in 1732, before dawn, a group of earnest young men met by special appointment on “God’s Acre” to sing appropriate hymns and to meditate upon the great fact of Christ’s death and resurrection. To these young men, as they stood among the simply marked graves, singing their songs of hope and faith, watching the rising sun drive darkness from the hills and valleys, there came a deeper appreciation of the resurrection truth than they had ever before experienced. With this simple beginning, the holding of a sunrise service on Easter morning became an annual feature in the worship services of the Moravian Church wherever it has established itself.

In Winston-Salem, this service, with little variation from the traditional and liturgical form, has been held since 1772 under the auspices of the Salem Congregation Churches. It is in no sense one of spectacular appeal or pageantry, but is held as a service of true worship, centering attention on the great underlying fact of the Christian Faith, THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, through which God placed a seal of approval on Jesus’ atoning sacrifice and established the truth of the claims of our religion. The service offers each one who attends an opportunity to renew a faith in the Risen Christ, in “the communion of saints,” in “the forgiveness of sins,” and in “the life everlasting.”

## THE GRAVEYARD – GOD’S ACRE

The site for the graveyard was selected April 21, 1766; the avenue bordering the graveyard was laid out in the year 1770; and the first body, that of John Birkhead, one of the eight men who first came to the settlement, was interred June 7, 1771.

The Moravians still call their graveyard by that significant and ancient name used by their ancestors – “God’s Acre.” It is a “field” in which the bodies of loved ones are sown in faith as “physical bodies,” in due time to be raised as “spiritual bodies.”

A feature of God’s Acre is the recumbent stones, symbolizing the Moravian belief in the democracy of death and making it impossible to distinguish between the graves of rich and poor. The burial of members according to “choirs,” or station in life (married men, married women, single men, single women, etc.) rather than by families, is another distinguishing feature, carrying out the departmental system which was introduced into the Moravian Church over two hundred years ago by Count Zinzendorf.

## THE CHURCH BAND

Music was from the beginning assigned a prominent place in the Moravian Church, both for its cultural value and as an aid in the expression and development of the religious life. Congregational singing is made a feature of its services, and the Band is used to helpful advantage in the outdoor services, on festival occasions, and in the Moravian funeral service. Particular emphasis has been placed on the development of the Band, which had a small beginning with six members over two hundred years ago. It has grown from that small beginning to more than five hundred members. About two o’clock on Easter morning, all the Moravian musicians who play in the Band assemble in groups to go throughout the city playing chorales, partly to remind all listeners of the Resurrection, and partly to awaken people for the Sunrise Service. The first chorale played by each group is “Sleepers, Wake!”

## BROADCAST

Since 1930 the Easter Sunrise Service has been broadcast annually by WSJS radio. In addition to that broadcast, this year the service is also live streamed on [moraviansunrise.org](http://moraviansunrise.org) and available on WXII channel 12. The Moravian Church expresses appreciation to WSJS and WXII for making possible an extensive witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Any comments about the service should be directed to Salem Congregation at [office@salemcongregation.org](mailto:office@salemcongregation.org).

## SEEKING OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

While grateful for an honorable past, the Moravian Church is conscious of its present obligation and opportunity, and desires earnestly to fulfill its further mission. Accordingly, the church calls upon every person to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved,” to unite with a church of choice, and to enter into definite Christian witness and service for the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom. In the Risen Christ is the hope of the world!