



A man named Paul, facing execution, once wrote from a jail cell: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil 4:4). A man named Jesus, on the night before he died, ate his last meal with friends, talked up a storm and no doubt startled the company by proclaiming, "I am saying these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11). Wondrous things afoot: an inexpressible but ever-present love, a joy so profound that even death cannot diminish it.

Happy Easter!

- Kathleen Norris

Pillar Journal Vol. 6 No. 3

Eastertide 2024

A seasonal journal produced by Pillar Church in Holland, MI to guide us through the Christian year.

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Eastertide 2024

Christ has arisen and death is no more!

This Eastertide we are celebrating the resurrection in the Pillar Journal through a collection of old hymn texts that have been recently set to new music by friends in the Pillar community.

Each hymn is paired with a short reflection on the text by the songwriter. Hopefully these words give us a renewed vocabulary and imagination for celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

The journal also features a piece that was collaboratively created by many kids in the Pillar community, as well as some art from Blake Johnson that has its own unique story of its creation which Blake has written about alongside the art.

And we hope you will listen along as you read the journal. You can access recordings of the songs and audio of the reflections by scanning the QR code on the opposite page.

Christ is Risen!

Jonathan Gabhart

Use this QR code to access digital/audio versions of the contents of the journal on our website



Retuned Hymns: A Brief Description

Bruce Benedict

The song of the church has always had an expansive relationship between text and tune. With each generation negotiating the fixed or fluid relationship between prose and praise. In the last twenty years or so a particular movement of sacred song referred to as the “retuned hymn” movement has sprung up from the vineyard of the church.

In this iteration of worship, songwriters have enlisted the help of hymn-writers from ages past to plum the depths of scripture and devotion when the work of poets more readily sought the whole counsel of God.

This vast trove of hymnic text offers a wide horizon of topics to curate - from hymns of lament, to the psalms, to the narrative turns of the church year. Our recent project, and a sister compilation from our friends Cardiphonia explores texts collected in the hymnal “Resurgit” that gather hundreds of years of texts extolling the Resurrection.

Resurgit has its roots in Latin and calls out with intensity: Resuscitate! Reappear! Ressurect!

We hope that these hymns both nurture and expand your love and wonder at the glory of Christ’s risen life!



Christ Is Your Spring

Andy Bast

This original hymn text was written by EA Washburn in the late 1800s. It was first published as a part of a collection of Easter hymns, compiled by Jane Eliza Chapman in 1876. Jane's uncle, J. I. T. Coolidge was an Episcopalian pastor in the Boston area and no doubt helped promote her collection of Easter hymns.

Here is Coolidge's introduction to *Easter Hymns* which rings true today as it did nearly 150 years ago:

“Among the encouraging hopes in these days of doubt and unbelief, the increasing observance of the great festivals of the Church by all within the circle of her influence is certainly one of the strongest. Each year, as the seasons come round, they make a stronger appeal, and meet a heartier response. Most especially is this true of Easter, that “day of days.” Its sun shines with fuller radiance each year upon the world, whose night of darkness it broke on the Resurrection Morning. The anthems which greet its rising are caught and repeated by increasing millions of grateful hearts of every tongue, kindred, and people, until the wide earth is filled with their sounding praise. How sacred a privilege to have part in this mighty and triumphant symphony, how sad to be out of harmony with its sublime strains!

As a humble offering of grateful love to the risen Lord, this collection of hymns, full of the spirit of the Easter joy, is sent forth. It makes no pretension to any thoroughness of research; but as one going through the field plucks here and there, until a small but rich sheaf fills his hand, so have these hymns been gathered and bound together. That the precious seed they carry may spring up and bear immortal fruit where they may chance to fall, is the reward she asks by whose hand they have been collected.” - J. I. T. Coolidge

The hymn text is fairly straightforward- it is the celebration of Christ’s resurrection with reminders that every Spring points to the new life we have in Christ.

In the first verse, there is an interesting allusion to “white robes.” Here we immediately imagine the robed one in the tomb who speaks to Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, saying, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who is crucified. He has risen. He is not here, see the place where they laid him, but go tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.” (Mark 16:6-7).

But our attention is also drawn towards the a vision when the Lamb of God will return to finally put everything right to restore and renew all things...to make all things new! We can see this vision of the white-robed one in the tomb, proclaiming the good news to the first gospel preachers has also a precursor to the final day when we read in John's Revelation:

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”
(Revelation 7:9-10)

Although the text is almost 150 years old, we chose to set it to modern and celebratory sounds. There's a Spring-like dance quality to the music and the pairing of modern sounds with the female voice is intentional. It mirrors the collaboration between Jane Eliza Chapman and J.I.T. Coolidge in the original publication of this hymn.

Scan for song audio!



CHRIST IS YOUR SPRING

E.A. Washburn

Christ has arisen: Death is no more!

Lo! the white-robed ones sitting by the door.

Dawn, golden morning! Scatter the night!

Haste, your disciples glad, First with the light!

Break forth in singing, O the world new-born!

Chant the great Eastertide, Christ's holy morn!

Sing Him, young sunbeams, Dancing in mirth!

Sing, all you winds of God, coursing the earth!

Sing Him, ye laughing flowers Fresh from the sod!

Sing Him, wild, leaping streams, Praising your God!

Break from your winter, Sad heart, and sing!

Bud with your blossoms fair; Christ is your spring.

Our Paschal Joy At Last is Here

Liv Lowe

“Our paschal joy at last is here!” Each of us have experienced the brutal nature of desperation and weariness. Perhaps you have felt the mundane essence of hopelessness, or perhaps you have forgotten what your faith is for. And it’s not just you - we have all arrived at such a place living in this broken, unfulfilled world in which we wonder “will my Jesus ever come?”

Have we paid close attention to our weariness? Not only that, but have we paid attention to what we are doing with it? Or rather, *whom* we are taking it to? Let’s examine Job; a devoted believer in God who was met, time and time again, with horrible tragedy. Heaps of devastation piled atop of Job; the loss of his property, his beloved family, every ounce of joy. But one thing he held onto indefinitely, amidst and despite discouragement and mockery from his three xa friends, was his belief in the Lord’s deliverance.

Job waited tirelessly on the Lord; submerged in the darkest shadow, drenched by the heaviest of rains, and in total weariness. But Job waited. And His Lord, *our* Lord, delivered Job; blessing him with far more than he had ever hoped for or imagined.

This hymn is a proclamation to the coming of Jesus; the deliverance by our faithful and blameless savior in which we are instructed to wait on with intention. “O risen Lord! Grant us to rise, as Thou hast done, in joyful wise.”

He knows the weariness you carry. What does it mean to cast our burdens on Jesus? Peter says it plainly and best; “cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you,” (1 Peter 5:7).

He cares for you. Jesus, who surrendered His life on the cross and for the life of the fragmented world, cares for you. We wait on the Lord not with weariness, but with intention, with hope and with a joy that comes solely from our strength in the Lord.

And we do so by feeding on God’s heavenly bread; “I believe the present suffering is nothing compared to the coming of glory that is going to be revealed to us,” (Romans 8:18). He cares for you, friend. Your circumstances will not outlive the faithfulness of God. Brothers and sisters, casting our burdens always on our heavenly Father, let us wait expectantly on Him.

Scan for song audio!



OUR PASCHAL JOY AT LAST IS HERE

Richard Littledale

*Our Paschal joy at last is here!
We praise Thee, Christ, Redeemer dear:
From death Thy servants Thou dost save,*

*Thyself arising from the grave.
We praise Thee, Jesus; for Thy hand
Hath freed us from corruption's band:
Our weary thraldom now is o'er;
We bow beneath the Law no more.
True Paschal Lamb, for sinners slain,
Christ, free from blemish, pure from stain,
Be Thou our Strength, our Food, our Life,
In all our need, in all our strife.*

*Thou Who hast conquered hell in fight,
We can do all things through Thy might,
Set free the slaves to give Thee laud,
And bring them to the land of God.*

*The Tree of Life its Fruit hath borne,
The Tree where Thou wast hung in scorn,
Whereon Thy rosy Blood was shed,
And now we feed on Heavenly Bread.
on Heavenly, on Heavenly
on Heavenly, on Heavenly heavenly Bread.*

*O risen Lord! grant us to rise,
As Thou hast done, in joyful wise,
First for Thy work, from error's gloom;
Then, on the last day, from the tomb.*

*We praise Thee, who from Death's fierce hold
The carnal, under evil sold,
Hast freed, and pointed out the way
Hast freed, and pointed out the way
Where we must tread to live for aye.*

Dear Savior of a Dying World

Olivia Abdou

When I began the process of choosing a hymn to re-tune for Cardiphonia's Resurrect project, I didn't have a specific one in mind. But as soon as I saw the title of this hymn by Anna Laetitia Waring, I was intrigued. I had to do a double take.

Dear Savior of a Dying World - a dying world. Our world is dying? How painfully honest. Yet comforting? Even back in 1873 when Anna wrote this, she too saw that the world was not how it should be. Ever since the fall of humanity our world has been slowly and steadily dying.

You all feel this too, right? Every day, we are faced with obstacles that are a result of sin entering the world. And even when we don't feel any internal weight, we are constantly confronted with the echoes of catastrophe infiltrating the entire Earth: wars, terminal illness, racial injustice, natural disasters.

You get the point.

As you can see, what first caught my attention was the "Dying World" half of the title. My eyes completely glossed over 'Dear Savior,' which I believe is the most crucial part of the title, the poem, and this life.

Before the dying world, there is, was, and always has been a Savior. I think most of us can sadly relate to this feeling. We're so consumed by the things of this world that we fail to fix our eyes on Jesus, our Savior.

The refrain of the re-tuned hymn declares, 'Oh, The fullness of Thy joy be ours, As all our griefs were Thine.' Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the fullness of God is available to us everyday through the Holy Spirit. He took all of our pain and brokenness, and died with it on the cross, giving us complete access to His joy, peace, and love forever, in this life and the next. So even though we live in a dying world, we don't have to wait for another world to experience His goodness. We can call upon Him and He will meet us in the good and the bad.

So, our world is dying. There's no doubt that living in it is hard, scary, and overwhelming, but as Christians, we live this life with hope for the next, where Jesus will make all things new. Until then, we can live our lives knowing that He is in control and works everything out for good, even when it doesn't feel like it.

'I long to see the sacred Earth, In new creation rise. To find the germs of Eden, hid, Where fallen beauty lies.' This is one of my favorite lines of the hymn because I see an image coming to life in my mind.

I can visualize the fallen beauty of Eden being restored by Jesus Himself. Everything that we thought was lost in the fall has been restored.

John Mark Comer describes the future world in his book *Garden City*, "The writer John is saying that the future is the return to the past. It's the return to Eden. But notice, something has changed. It's not a garden anymore; it's a Garden-like city."

As we go throughout our days, especially in this Eastertide season, my prayer for all of us is that our reflections on the resurrection compel us to live and love well, as we hold tight to the promise that He is coming back to mend the Garden—giving us a new, vibrant, and living world.

Scan for song audio!



DEAR SAVIOR OF A DYING WORLD

Anna Letitia Waring

*Dear Savior of a dying world, Where grief and change must be,
In the new grave where Thou wast laid My heart lies down with Thee.*

*O, not in cold despair of joy, Or weariness of pain,
But from a hope that shall not die, To rise and live again.*

*Oh! Not in cold despair of joy, Or weariness of pain,
But from a hope that shall not die, To rise and live again.
I would arise in all my strength, My place on earth to fill,
To work out all my time of war With love's unflinching will;
Firm against every doubt of you, For all my future way
To walk in Heaven's eternal light Throughout the changing day;*

*Shine, then, Thou Resurrection Light O Shine, Upon our sorrows shine!
Oh, The fullness of Thy joy be ours, As all our griefs were Thine.
Now, in this changing, dying life of mine, Our faded hopes comes back to life,
Where all is made new and We taste of death no more.*

*I long to see the sacred Earth In new creation rise
To find the germs of Edem, hid Where fallen beauty lies
To feel the spring-tide of a soul By one deep love set free,
Made meet to lay aside her dust, And be at home with Thee*



Artist Statement

Blake Johnson

Like “Christ Is Our Spring”, I discovered this piece (originally “The Resurrection”, a 16th century German molten glass sculpture) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s open source archives. I was searching for historical art pieces I could digitally reinterpret for an album of songs attempting to do a similar thing - using newer musical technologies to reimagine older hymn texts. The tombstone shape of the sculpture and the way it acts as the boundary for the resurrection scene on the warm grey wall, signaled again, a sort of juxtaposition I was drawn to. Though originally composed of colorful, painted glass, I recreated the scene as though it had been cast in gold. In addition, I utilized generative artificial intelligence to create a bouquet of easter lilies that sit behind the sculpture - the flowers of which I also manipulated to appear cast in gold.

Scan this to see the original



Awake Thou Wintry Earth

Emily Hanrahan

Here in the lyrics of *Awake Thou Wintry Earth*, we see the personified earth flinging off her sadness. She invites light, flowers, growth, and warmth in the wake of the eternal Spring. The verses present here were first printed in an 1850 edition of a book entitled “*Poems for the Sick and Suffering*,” written by Thomas Blackburne, with an additional chorus.

This addition is in hopes of further connecting the idea of the newness of our world in Spring to the realities of the new life given to those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Flinging off the sting of death in light of Christ’s victory over the grave is joyful and is a reality that those who believe in Christ enjoy daily, but let’s not miss the significance in the text of being awakened to the reality of Christ being risen.

Have you ever been abruptly awoken from a deep sleep? Maybe a child woke you up in the middle of the night, or a sibling shook you awake and told you it was time to be ready and out the door 10 minutes ago!

Or maybe a Sunday nap went a little longer than expected and you’ve woken up wondering what day it is all together.

This type of awakening, half asleep and half awake, is the type of state I imagine Awake Thou Wintry Earth finding each of us in. The text urges us like our child or sibling to get up and look around! Christ is making everything new!

The earth cannot help but to break forth with beauty and praise in the light of the resurrection. Realize it, join in it, and celebrate it!

The reality of new life in Christ is just that – a reality. But we experience this reality in a groggy state of being awoken from our deep sleep to the thought that Christ truly is making all things new.

We are experiencing it as people living in a world that springs forth with beauty, but that is also ravaged with the impacts of sin and death. Can Christ really be making all things new? Could he possibly make new the loss I feel? Will he ever make beautiful the circumstance that has torn my family apart? How could Christ ever love me if he truly knows who I am?

These questions are worthy of being brought before the risen God, who fully knows what it feels like to experience the sting of death, grief, and shame in his human life and death on the cross. But there are also questions of wonder and beauty to bring before God.

How marvelous is the God who created Lake Michigan and all its beauty? Could God's goodness really be as near to me as it feels when I hear my child laugh uncontrollably? How could I possibly feel more loved than I do by the support system of people around me?

These realities live in tension with each other, and both can be true. Both are true and both are claimed by Christ in his rising again. If you've been awoken from a deep sleep then you know that while the grogginess can last, it does not last forever. Soon you'll be off to the realities of your day, wide awake and seeing things more vibrantly than before.

May our prayer be that God continues to awaken us to the realities available to us in the neverending Spring of Jesus Christ. Newness of life and beauty have come to reign forever and ever among us, and we have only just been jolted awake.

Scan for song audio!



AWAKE, THOU WINTRY EARTH!

Thomas Blackburne

*Awake, thou wintry earth!
Fling off thy sadness!
Fair vernal flowers, laugh forth
Your ancient gladness:
Christ is risen!*

*Wave, woods, your blossoms all!
Grim death is dead;
Ye weeping, funeral trees,
Lift up your head:
Christ is risen!*

*Christ is risen
The warmth of spring
Is rising over cold winter's sting
Christ is risen
Lift up your eyes
The son of light gives us life*

*All is fresh and new,
Full of spring and light:
Wintry heart, why wears the hue
Of sleep and night?
Christ is risen!*

*Leave thy cares beneath,
Leave thy worldly love:
Begin the better life
With God above*



Be Not So Tearful

Jonathan Gabhart

From an early age Phoebe Cary (1824-1871) was familiar with the deep pain of life. Her mother died when she was a young girl. They lived a peasant life in rural Ohio. Phoebe and her sister Alice found comfort amidst their struggle by writing.

They wrote poetry and verse and eventually found a small corner of a market to get their work published. They established a thriving, yet not entirely lucrative social and literary circle in New York City until the death of Alice in 1870 and Phoebe shortly after in 1871. This hymn is notable in that it is the last one that Alice wrote before her death.

There is a simple sweetness to the poetry that also contains the fullness of what they must have experienced in life. The opening lines “drooping spirit rise, be cheerful!....why are you fearful?” could come across as a cheap denial of the reality of life. But that interpretation would be a mistake. There is a hopeful resignation in the promise of the resurrection. When we resign ourselves to the power of Jesus’ rising from the dead. There is true joy and ultimate satisfaction.

So we can say with honesty and integrity, “the struggle is real,” and also there is “weakness and madness in a heart that holds sadness.” The power of death is ended. Christ is risen. Alleluia!

BE NOT SO TEARFUL

Phoebe Cary

*O mine eyes, be not so tearful! Drooping spirit, rise, be cheerful;
Heavy soul, why are you fearful?*

*Nature's grave is breaking, And the earth, her gloom forsaking,
Into life and light is waking.*

*Oh the weakness and the madness Of a heart that holds such sadness
When all else is light and gladness!*

*Though your treasure death has taken, They that sleep are not forsaken :
They shall hear the trumpet sound, and waken.*

*Shall not He, who life suppling To the dead seed where its lying
Quicken also us who are dying*

*Yea, the power of death was ended When He, who to hell descended,
Rose, and up to heaven ascended.*

*Rise, my soul, then, from dejection: See in nature the reflection
Of the dear Lord's resurrection.*

*Let this promise leave thee never: "If the might of death I sever,
You shall also live forever!"*



Rise Heart

Ivan Akansiima

George Herbert a Priest, music composer, orator, poet and theologian who lived at the same time as King James of England, gave up his worldly ambitions of becoming an elite master of rhetoric and public oration and embraced a delightful burden of extending the message of the cross which is to lift Jesus high so that He may draw all people to Himself. Herbert did so by shepherding a rural parish and caring for the sick, hungry and poor.

As I composed music to his poem “Rise Heart” I could hear the call of love rising afresh in my heart, to remind us that the grace of God and power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ is readily and daily available to lift all our burdens, limits, distractions, satanic deceptions and set us free from all form of captivity by the power of the precious Holy Spirit by faith. Let us continue to believe that the cross of Jesus Christ was the altar where the perfect lamb of God took upon himself the chastisement of our sinful nature and gave us atonement in return.

And as the cross of Jesus Christ stood rising high, we’re reminded that a testimony of selfless love abides forever through repentance, instead of the selfish accusations of a sinful darkness. We are reminded that God’s hands are wide and open reaching down and forth for us to hold onto and be lifted as Jesus was lifted from death into eternal life. His resurrection destroyed numb and cold beliefs and gave us a baptism of the Spirit with fire. Therefore, let us rise in spirit, heart, soul and body with thanksgiving and proclaim Jesus is the Lord in our hearts and over all creation. Amen.

RISE HEART

George Herbert

Rise heart, rise heart

Thy Lord is risen sing his praise

without delays, reach out and take him by his hand

Rise heart, rise heart

thy Lord is risen sing his praise

that thou likewise with Jesus Christ shall thee arise

The cross taught me

how to surrender to his will

and stretched my faith to live a resurrected life



Artist Reflection

Blake Johnson

I discovered this piece, (originally “A Study of Two White Lilies” by french artist Antione Berjon (1754-1843)) while sifting through the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection of public domain drawings. The technicolor grid, placed posthumously beside the image - likely to help “white balance” the archival photograph - caught my eye as an interesting juxtaposition: the gentleness of the artist’s rendering next to the harsh vibrancy of the geometric blocks. Nature next to technology, old next to new, seen next to unseen. Though the color grid has nothing to do with the actual artwork, I’ve found it, surprisingly, adding to my experience of the piece. In that spirit, I’ve taken the original image and modified it slightly, enlarging the grid and balancing out the composition, so that the disparate parts might exist more harmoniously.

Scan this to see the original piece



*You cleared away the darkness of sin
by Your magnificent and radiant Resurrection.*

*You broke the bonds of death
and rose from the grave as a Conqueror.*

*You reconciled Heaven and earth.
Our life had no hope of Eternal Happiness
before You redeemed us.*

*Your Resurrection has washed away our sins,
restored our innocence and brought us joy.*

How inestimable is the tenderness of Your Love!

— from the Easter Prayer of St. Gregory

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