

Go in peace to
LOVE & SERVE
the Lord

Chester Bethel UMC

April 12, 2026

9:30 AM

Sharing in Worship Leadership this morning:

Organist: Carmella Lynch
Bell Choir Director: Pam Manocchio
Preacher: Rev. Megan Shitama Weston
Special Music: Paul Wilson
Greeter: Barbara Coulbourn
Usher: Laura White
Worship Leader: Rich Kuc

*Flowers are dedicated to the
memory of our father, grandfather, &
great-grandfather, Carl Jahren
by Sylvia and family*

Prayer Joys and Concerns:

H=Health; L=Loss; LT=Long Term; O=Other

John King (L); Jean Andrews's Family (L); Ed West (H); Nicole; Betsey Taylor (L); Lorraine MacMillan (H); David D. (H); Dom D.(H); Millie Burke (H); Janet Canavan (H); Keith Saulsbury (H); Steve Schellberg (H); Donna (H); Joseph Glasgow (H); Bill Hazel (H); Linda Lyons (H); Andrew R.(O); Bill and Doreen Jones (H); Mary Ann Box (H); Ramona Harlow (LT); Holly Dorner (H); Donna McCormick (H); DeBrock Family (O); Kim Nally; Gail Kracyla (H); Dominic King (LT); Jill Brownback (LT); Nancy Walker (LT); MaryAnn Rumford (LT); Rick Browne (LT); all peoples impacted by war (LT)

Please add prayer requests and updates to the list in the Narthex



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302-475-3549 <http://www.chesterbethel.org>
Service Live-Streamed on Facebook

Office Admin, Beth Burnam: Tues, Thurs, Fri, 9 AM – 1 PM;
secretarychesterbethel@gmail.com

Reverend Kelly Conner
revkellyconner@gmail.com / Cell: 302-249-6157

Dates To Remember

April 17 – Jean Andrews’ Funeral at Chester Bethel

April 25 – One Board information session at 1 pm

May 3 – Missions Meeting after church

May 5 – SPRC meeting at 3:30 pm

May 12-14 – Annual Conference; Pastor away

May 15-19 – Office closed for Admin. Vacation

May 17 – Church Vote on One Board Governance

May 20 – Admin Council Meeting at 6 pm

May 23 – Phyllis King’s Funeral at Chester Bethel

May 25 – June 1 – Pastor vacation

*DOXOLOGY

UMH #94

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise Him all creatures here below! Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise Him, the source of all our gifts; praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*CLOSING HYMN – “The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done”
UMH # 306

*RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION¹

Leader: The Laughing One called us together

People: **so we could share in the laughter of life.**

Leader: The Laughing One sends us out,

People: **to carry the joy of life and love to the world.**

Leader: Go out to laugh, to live to love. And when you hear a good joke...

People: **remember that Jesus had the last laugh!**

POSTLUDE

**Standing in body or in spirit*

Music licensing CCLI #1642131, Streaming license CCLI #20705544

April 12, 2026

9:30 AM

Holy Humor/ Bright Sunday
2nd Sunday of Easter

The idea of setting aside one Sunday each year to celebrate God’s gift of laughter and joy may be new to me, but it’s got a long and rich history in many congregations around the world.

Laughter Sunday (also known as Holy Humor Sunday, Hilarity Sunday, Bright Sunday, or Holy Fools’ Sunday) has its roots in a number of different Christian traditions.

Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the Sunday after Easter as Risus Paschalis (“God’s Joke,” or “the Easter laugh”). Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead.²

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP³

Leader: Joy is loose,

People: **In the wiggles of the children,**

Leader: The whispers of the youth,

People: **The smiles of the adults.**

Leader: We praise God for this glorious day,

People: **Let the praise break forth in the unlikeliest of places and in the silliest of ways!**

Leader: Joy and praise fill our hearts and our songs!

All: **Let the laughter be deep, for we have the joy of being God’s people!**

¹ Adapted from original by Rev Gord Waldie on his “Worship Offerings” site. Accessed via re-worship.blogspot.com.

² <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/03/laughter-sunday.html>.

³ Adapted from original on Trinity United Parish website.

*OPENING HYMN – “Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise”
UMH #312

OPENING PRAYER⁴

O Great Laughing God, we come into your presence with joy and longing to be surprised. We thank you that you have given to us the gift of laughter and delight. These things give hints as to the nature of your purpose for us and for all the earth. May we find that in giving up to laughter, there is healing and hope and abundance and blessing. Tickle our souls with the brush of your Spirit, in order to renew our worship and our living. Amen.

RESPONSIVE CONFESSION OF FAITH – Holy Humor Sun.⁵

Leader: We believe in God, who made us in His image.

People: **We live, we love, and we laugh because we are God’s people!**

Leader: We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

People: **He had the last laugh on sin and death when He rose from the dead!**

Leader: We believe in the Holy Spirit, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

People: **Our counselor, our guide, our motivator – the Spirit is our joy!**

Leader: Forgive us, Lord, when we take ourselves too seriously, and when we forget that you will have the last laugh in this world.

All: **Restore to us the joy of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of life, through Jesus Christ you have bestowed upon the world the light of life. Sanctify this new fire and grant that our

hearts and minds may also be kindled with holy desire to shine with the brightness of the Risen Christ. Amen.⁶

OLD TESTAMENT READING Psalm 119:1-8

GOSPEL READING Luke 5:1-11

EPISTLE READING 2 Ephesians 4:11-16

SERMON Rev. Megan Shitama Weston

Rev. Megan both celebrates Holy Humor Sunday and introduces a 6-week sermon series that Rev. Kelly will be continuing, recommended by our Bishop and based on the new United Methodist Vision Statement: “Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously.”

SPECIAL MUSIC

*HYMN OF RESPONSE – “Christ Is Risen” UMH #307

THANKSGIVINGS AND INTERCESSIONS

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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. Amen.

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

You may place your cash or check offering into the plates we pass around at this time or mail your tithes and offerings to the church office. Thank you for working as Christ’s hands and feet in the world!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

OFFERTORY

⁴ Adapted from original on United Church of Canada’s Bay of Quinte Conference website.

⁵ Adapted from original on Charlton UMC website.

⁶ From Duke University Chapel worship bulletin, April 4, 2010.