

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

May 4, 2025

Acts 9: 1-6, (7-20)

The Way Forward

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus taught that "the only constant thing in life is change." Who can argue with that? Afterall, who hasn't had their world suddenly turned upside down?

As unsettling — and unwelcomed — as these life-changing events are, they are often the pivotal moments that move us forward in directions we never would have imagined going.

So it was for Saul of Tarsus. The noted persecutor of Christians, who searched them out relentlessly and punished them mercilessly, was on one such trip when he suddenly heard a voice from the heaven. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" The voice was that of Jesus. Saul was then blinded where, for three days, he sat in darkness, fasting and praying.

During this time, Ananias of Damascus, a follower of Jesus, received a vision to heal Saul. Given Saul's reputation, it's understandably that Ananias was not keen on doing that. But he did as he was told. Saul regained his sight, but even more importantly he was healed from his spiritual blindness.

And in true biblically tradition, once someone's life is changed forever by the grace of God (remember Abram became Abraham, Sarai become Sara), Saul became Paul. He would then go on and become one of the most influential spokespersons of the Jesus way.

It's always good for us to revisit Paul's backstory because his conversion gives us an amazing hope that change is possible. His story reveals the boundless mercy of God who isn't turned off by our shadow selves. Paul shows us that with God no one is beyond the Divine One's loving reach. There's always a way forward.

Many times, though, we get stuck in the muck of a past that we believe defines our present. We let the heavy chains of grievous mistakes and hurts hold us captive from a future full of hope. But if someone like Saul can be redeemed, so can we all.

Yes, one day we are going about our business and the next we find ourselves startled by just how Jesus Christ enters our hearts, changing everything we ever knew and setting us on a new way forward. May it be so.

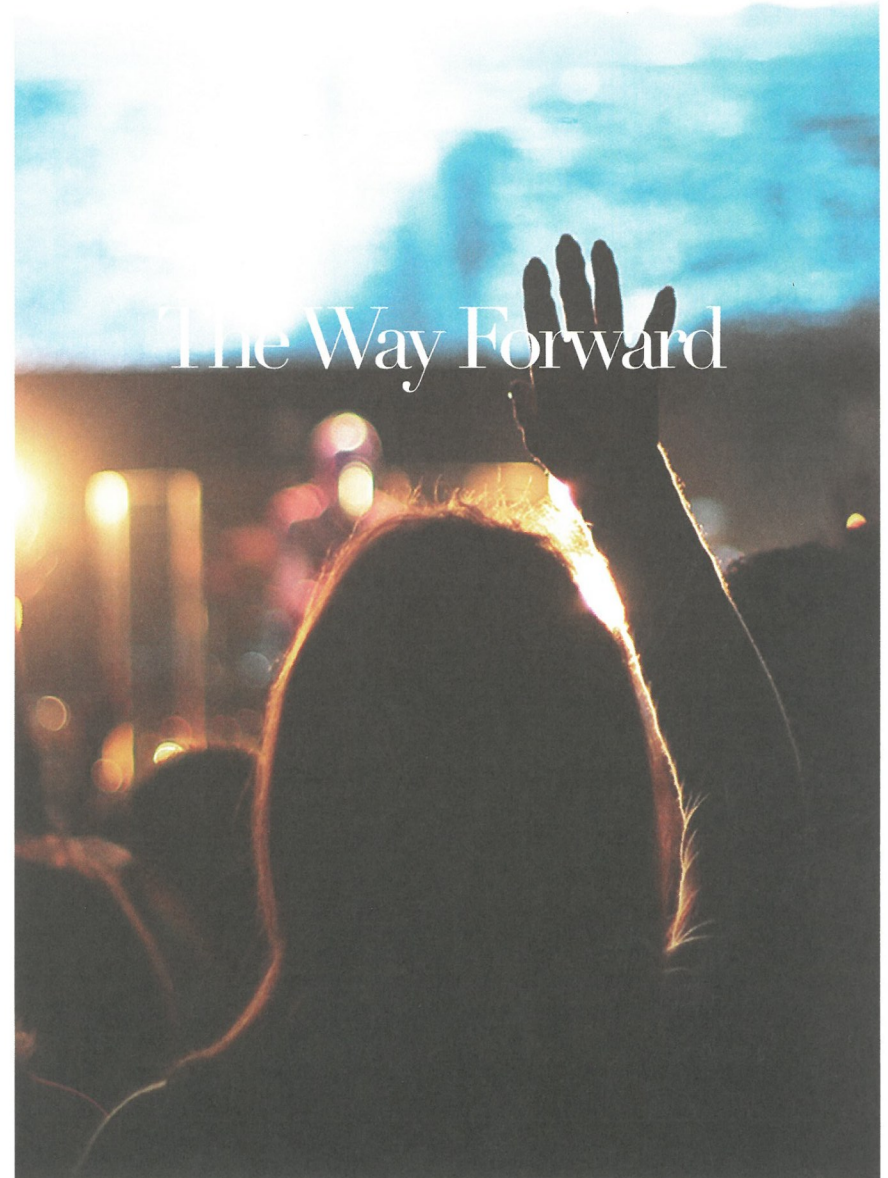
God of grace and mercy, enter our hearts this day, forgive our mistakes, remove our guilt and set us free to move forward on paths that shine with Your divine light. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



8 1/2" x 11" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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BUC0310



WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY CHURCH
A United Church of Christ
(708) 865-1282

Third Sunday of Easter

“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!!

May 4, 2025 **10:00 a.m.**

Welcome on behalf of our pastoral staff

Rev. Joseph E. Mills, III, Pastor 708/562-0759

Lawrence Underwood, Music Director

Joyce Kelstrom, Bell Choir Director

Pastor Vinod Wesley, Chicago Tamil Church Pastor
& Associate Pastor

Altar Flowers: In Memory of Pam Renaker Sister of Barb Boyd

Liturgist: Steve Scheffel

Ushers: Dorothy Randle, Minnie Rice, Bill and Ann McCarthy

Greeter: Sandy Tavernier

Zoom: Barb Mills

Westchester Community Church, United Church of Christ

1840 Westchester Boulevard

Westchester, IL 60154

708/865-1282

www.westchesterucc.org

Email: westcomchurch@hotmail.com

**(If you have a prayer request you'd like to share with us,
go to CHAT on your Zoom page and type it in
so we can share it with others)**

****ALSO REMEMBER TO MUTE YOUR ZOOM
SCREEN SO WE CAN HEAR THE PASTOR
UNLESS IT'S A TIME TO SHARE**

Please remember to sign the Red Booklet at the end of every pew. If you have any prayer request please put them into the offertory plates so Pastor Joe can receive them.

There are In Touch cards in the pews if you want to fill them out.

Please put them in the offertory plates.

Thank You, Your Parish Fellowship Board

Upcoming Church and Community Events

Ladies Weekend at Tower Hill.....

The dates have been set for June 6-7-8th. This weekend is open to **ALL** ladies of the church.

Any questions contact Lou Bender or Barb Mills

If you are looking for a fun group.....please join Sassy Stitchers!

We invite knitters and crocheters. All materials for service projects are provided. Everyone Welcome! Please contact Barb Boyd for more info at 708.267.227

Westchester Food Pantry 2025 Yard Sale Extravaganza will be held on May 29th, 30th and 31st. Donation Last Drop-Off Day is Saturday, May 3rd from 9—11am at our church.

All you can eat **Spaghetti Dinner** Sunday, June 1st from 1pm to 6pm
at St Michael's Lutheran Church 500 E 31st St in Lagrange Park.
Adults—\$10 Children—\$5 Under 5 are Free Sponsored by St.
Michael's Lutheran Church and The Village Church, UCC

The Cook County Sheriff's Office and Westchester Police Dept. will hold a **Senior Citizen Safety Series** Thursdays May 8, 15, and June 12, all at 4:30 p.m.. At the Police Dept. 10300 Roosevelt Rd. in Westchester. Topics include: Sweetheart Scams, Identity Theft, and Personal Safety. For more information call 708/865-7341

The Kirkwood Players Present...**"Buried Child"** by Sam Shepard May 2-4 and 9-11 Friday and Saturday 7p and Sunday 4pm Oakbrook Terrace Heritage center in Villa Park Tickets \$25 thekirkwood-players.com

Village Theatre Guild in Glen Ellyn presents **“The Crowd You’re in With”** by Rebecca Gilman, on stage with evening and matinee performances from May 23 through June 14. Lisa Dolnics serves as stage manage and Dave Dolnics heads the set construction crew. VTG has been bringing theatre to the area since the 1960s. For information and ticket reservations, call 630.469.8230 or visit villagetheatreguild.org

Opportunities to Support the Church

Please support our **In-Reach Fund**. This money helps our own members in medical emergencies, or rent, or just to make it possible to breathe. Please make out a check or on-line gift, and mark it "**In-Reach**".

Our Kitchen certification will expire in June. We need someone willing to take the test and recertify the kitchen in their name. We need to keep our kitchen certified so we can host dinners and such if we have a fish fry again or spaghetti dinner. We otherwise cannot sell to the public. Questions please see Noreen Love.

WISH LIST for Women's Society Closet—Paper Towels, Zip Lock Bags (quart and gallon), 8 inch and 10 inch Heavy Duty Paper Plates and Distilled Water. Please if you can donate any of these items bring them to the church office.

Manna news!!! Graduations, Mothers Day and Fathers Day are fast approaching so, consider buying a gift cards from Manna!

Manna is a program where people order gift cards through the church, we order them through a company that gives us a discount on the cards and we keep the discount. So, you pay the value of the card, you GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR, and WE earn money. It's a win, win. With each order the church pays the tax and shipping fees.

Manna forms are available in the narthex and on the table outside the office. Manna orders & payment is due the last Sunday of the month, and are distributed by the 2nd Sunday of the month. Manna is great for gifts, donating for In-reach, and for places you shop. Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please see Charlene Dolnics or Sue Becerra.

FOR THOSE ON ZOOM AND ANYTIME YOU WANT TO MAKE A SPECIAL GIFT

We truly encourage you to use our online giving tool, Which you can access through our website. When you are at home on Zoom, or away on trips,

Our bills here at church don't go away. We need your help!! Remember to give, and if it is a special gift, There is a way to make a note on the Vanco page. Make clear what the donation s for!!! Thank you!!



WORSHIP SERVICE

"Father, open my eyes today to see with love the same value Jesus saw in others." - Lynn Cowell

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Steve Scheffel
OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS Pastor Mills
*WE CELEBRATE HIS RESURRECTION #295
"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"

*CALL TO WORSHIP Steve Scheffel
Leader: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."

People: Let us love our neighbor with the same love we give to the Lord.

Leader: Let us care of ourselves with a deep and abiding respect for what God has made in us, loving ourselves with the same love God has for us.

ALL: IN GOD'S SPIRIT, THROUGH GOD'S SPIRIT, MAY WE BE FILLED WITH THE VERY LOVE OF GOD, AND THEN LIVE WITH A JOYFUL, GIVING LOVE. COME, LET US WORSHIP AND SERVE THE LORD!

A Reading from God's Holy Word Steve Scheffel
From the Gospel: John 21:1-19 p. 88, NT, Pew Bible
p. 141, NT, Large Print

*A GLORIA PATRI #734
"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, And to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen. Amen."

WCC BELL CHOIR
"Lift High the Cross"
"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

WE PRAY TO THE LORD #502
"Be Thou My Vision," vv. 1 & 2

PASTORAL PRAYER Pastor Mills
THE LORDS PRAYER (Please Use Debts/Debtors)

THE MORNING OFFERING Steve Scheffel
AN OFFERTORY
(THOSE AT HOME, PLEASE SEND IN GIFTS BY CHECK OR USE OUR ON-LINE GIVING)

*THE DOXOLOGY

#34

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

***"Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."***

*A PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison) Steve Scheffel

We lift high these gifts, not as much as they would reach heaven, but that Heaven's joyful response would work through them in what we do in our church everyday. Through prayer, mission, service, and community, we dedicate these gifts to You, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

A BELL SOLO

Joyce Kelstrom

"The Circle of Life"

THE MEDITATION - "To Love More than These"

Pastor Mills

*WE CELEBRATE HIS LOVE FOR US

#356

"I Will Sing of My Redeemer"

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION Pastor Mills

Words of Remembrance

The Invitation to Communion

The Sharing of the Elements

(If you wish to be served Gluten Free bread, raise your hand when that tray is offered near you.

Those at home, use what you have at home to participate with us in this Sacrament)

A Prayer of Thanksgiving (In Unison)

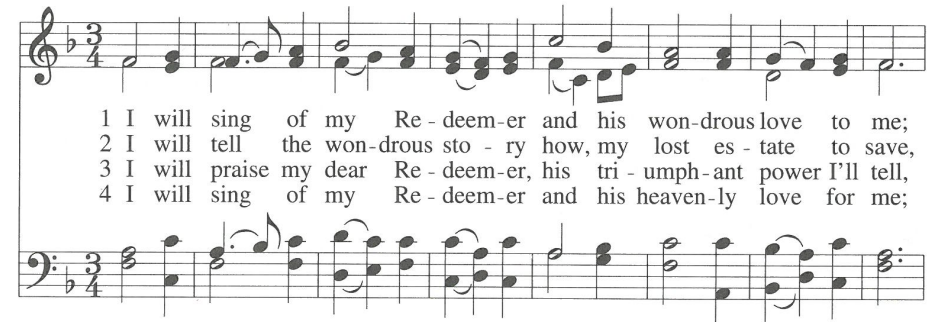
May we leave this table renewed in His Spirit that we might serve through His Spirit and raise up our neighbor through a more faithful and loving service. That others would come to live abundantly as we desire to be Christ's Community together, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

THE COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

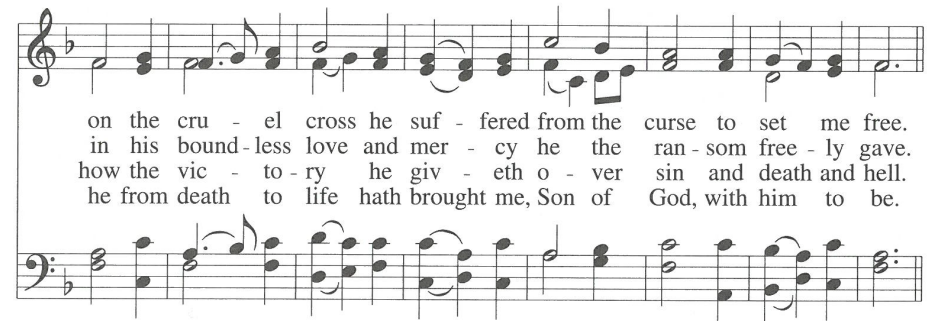
Pastor Mills

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I Will Sing of My Redeemer 356

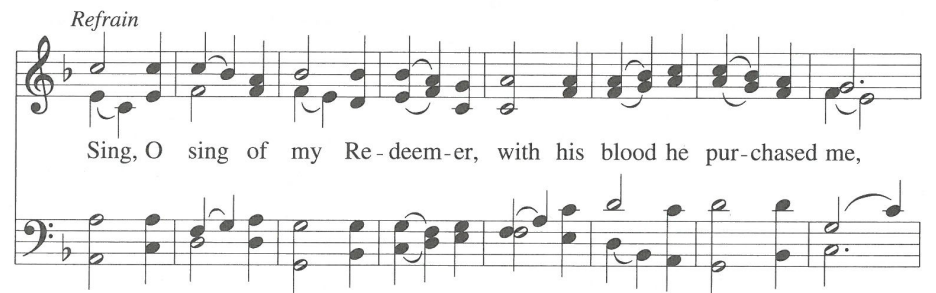


1 I will sing of my Re-deem-er and his won-drous love to me;
2 I will tell the won-drous sto-ry how, my lost es-tate to save,
3 I will praise my dear Re-deem-er, his tri-umph-ant power I'll tell,
4 I will sing of my Re-deem-er and his heaven-ly love for me;

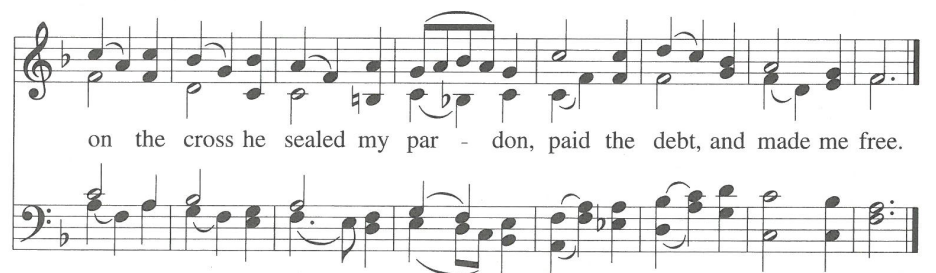


on the cru-el cross he suf-fered from the curse to set me free.
in his bound-less love and mer-cy he the ran-som free-ly gave.
how the vic-to-ry he giv-eth o-ver sin and death and hell.
he from death to life hath brought me, Son of God, with him to be.

Refrain



Sing, O sing of my Re-deem-er, with his blood he pur-chased me,




on the cross he sealed my par-don, paid the debt, and made me free.

WORDS: Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876)
MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard (1811-1887)

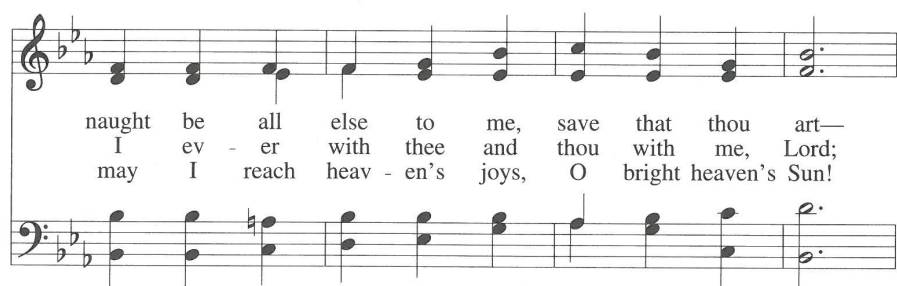
HYFRYDOL
8.7.8.7.D.

Be Thou My Vision

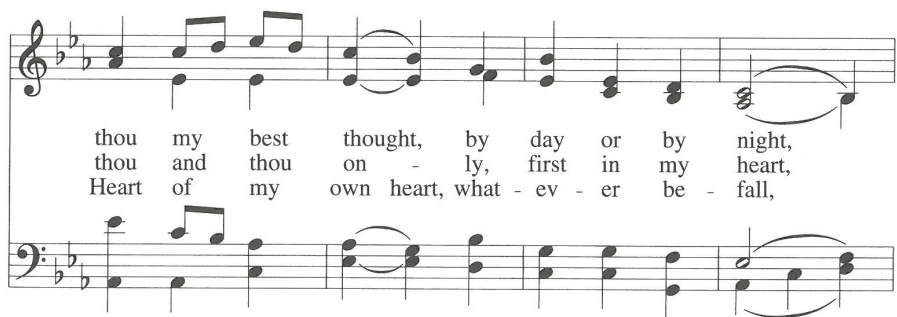
502



1 Be thou my Vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my Wis - dom, and thou my true Word,
 3 High King of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!



thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 high King of heav - en, my Treas - ure thou art.
 still be my Vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

WORDS: Irish hymn, 8th c.; tr. Mary E. Byrne (1880-1931); versed Eleanor H. Hull (1860-1935)
 MUSIC: Irish melody; arr. Jack Schrader (1942-)

Music Arr. © 1989 Hope Publishing Company

SLANE
 10.10.10.10.

We have **Faith Conversations** after church in the Rose Room (office area). This is a frank and open discussion about important issues of faith and society!!! Come and join us!!

CALENDAR

TODAY

Worship 10 am
 Chicago Tamil UCC Worship, 12:30 pm
Faith Conversations—Rose Room
 Music Board—Lounge

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

Pastor Parish Relations —7 p.m. Office
 Zoom Bible Study, 9:30 am **THIS WEEK**
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/961336622>

SATURDAY

NEXT SUNDAY

Cook County Fallen Police Officers
 Memorial Service—Lyons, 11 a.m.
 10:00 a.m. Worship
 Noon - Chicago Tamil Worship

THINKING AHEAD...

Sassy Stitchers—3rd Tuesday of the month from 9am to 11:30am

Women's Book Club— Our next Book Club will be Wednesday, April 30th, 4:30pm in the first floor classroom. Bring your own Dinner! Call Barb Mills to join us.

Scrapbooking and Diamond Art Dates: May 1—3. Please come join us! Contact Barb Mills if you can attend.

Ladies Weekend Retreat—Tower Hill June 6-8th

Card Making—Friday, April 25th at 10am in the south basement
Fall Craft Sale— will be held on November 15. Setup is November 12, 13 and 14th Please mark these dates in your calendar!

BIRTHDAYS THRU 5/11/25

5/6 Dawn Slanker, Kristin Coleman
 5/7 Nicollette Vergara
 5/8 Charlotte Schwass
 5/10 Malar Raj Kanaka
 5/11 Rev Dr Bill Ressler, Allison Powers

ANNIVERSARIES THRU 5/11/25

5/7 Nicollette and Luis Vergara 14 years
 5/9 Robert and Shirley Wachowski 16 years

**PRAYER REQUESTS:
PEOPLE AT THEIR HOMES:**

John Mika, Shirley Patton, Doris Blomberg,
Linda Belice, Minnie Rice, Frank Fleming,
Marge Nelson, Lorraine Feehan, Chris
Stout, Marilyn Sinde, Dave Else, Allen
Meskan, Lou Bender, Virginia Hodina,
Jeannie Rowe, Caroline Long, Char
Schwass, Jimmy Marczuk, Paul Barnes,
Bettyann Richeson, Betty Koenig, Isabella
Brumwell, Wayne Scharlach, Allan Boyd,
Ed Monahan, Karen Hart, Bill & Maggie Smith, George Long,
Mary Kay Baca, Chuck Yeiser, Dave Vrablic, Emil Poprawski,
Benny Locigno, Ellie Merritt, Barb Sweazey, James Hixon, Judy
Frandsen, Don Smith, Mark Henning, Serena Ivers & Chris,
Elayne Dalheim, Patricia Ladner, Michael Kelstrom, Patrick
McCarthy



FRIENDS IN PRAYERS: Joyce Barbee, Marie Brewster, Andee
Brown-Roth, Bob Chappell, Bill and Kimble Compton, Bob and
Jean, Kathy D'Autino, Dominick DiBrizzii, Sr., Drake Dennis/
Family, Father Neil Fackler, Charlie Feehan, Ashley Feeney,
Nancy Fiala-Zinn, Ann Franz, Herman Goodloe, Brandon Gumel,
Kyle Hall, Karen and Bob; Karen Hekr, Helen Hicks, Ken &
Herta, Janice Lombardi, Julie McGee, Julie McLean, Frieda
McKinnon, Jane McNamee, Don and Sue Meyer, Joseph Mills
Jr., Amy Morlier, Betty Moticka, Eric Odelson, Pat (cousin to
Linda Belice), Connie Petrik, Carol Popple (sister to Charlene
Dolnics), Diana & Larry Ridener, Scott Rouse, Sammy (niece to
Sue Becerra/Sally France), Gary Schultz, Roy Swanson, Marsha
Swetin, Jackie Tomany, Patricia Traylor, Ron Tulke, Gwendolyn
and Bob Westlund, Monica Wojdziak, Charles Woodman

OUR MILITARY: Samantha Brown (overseas), Tyler Kimbler is
deployed; Jay Mills (Ft. Bliss, Texas), Bri Mills (deployed; Malik
Taylor—Norfolk, VA, Anthony Taylor—Ft. Hood, TX; Nick Weeks
—Peace Corp. South Africa

HOSPITALIZED/Long-Term: Jim Craver (our Jim's father)—
Nursing Facility, Lil Klippel - Radcliffe; Steve Tomporowski -
Wisconsin; Rosemarie Kosik (Terra Vista, OakBrook Terrace)

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today 295

1 Je - sus Christ is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
3 But the pains which he en - dured, Al - le - lu - ia!
4 Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - le - lu - ia!

our tri - um - phant ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!
un - to Christ, our heaven - ly King, Al - le - lu - ia!
our sal - va - tion have pro - cured: Al - le - lu - ia!
praise e - ter - nal as his love: Al - le - lu - ia!

who did once, up - on the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!
who en - dured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!
now a - bove the sky he's King, Al - le - lu - ia!
praise him, all ye heaven - ly host, Al - le - lu - ia!

suf - fer to re - deem our loss, Al - le - lu - ia!
sin - ners to re - deem and save, Al - le - lu - ia!
where the an - gels ev - er sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, Al - le - lu - ia!