

Easter 1998: The Tree of Life

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**Seekers Church:
A Christian Community**

In the Tradition of the Church of the Saviour

The Tree of Life

SILENT REFLECTION

There is an actual tree – the cross of crucifixion, connecting us with God and God with us, once and for all, in the figure of Christ – Christ the axis of history.

Esther De Waal, *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, pg 149.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader:

Christ is risen!

People:

Christ is risen indeed!

Unison:

O God, you came among us as the human Jesus,
and stretched out your arms of love
on the hard wood of the cross,
so that everyone might come
within the reach of your saving embrace.

Bind us together in your Spirit
as we worship in your presence this day,
for we would be your people.

INVOCATION

HYMN

WORD FOR THE CHILDREN

SILENCE

LITANY OF THE TREE OF LIFE

Leader:

The empty cross has sprouted fresh green leaves;

People:

Our Saviour lives, and calls us to new life.

Leader:

Rise, heart, your Christ is risen,

People:

Sing God's praise, without delay.

Leader:

The Cross taught all wood to resound God's name;

Unison:

Stretched sinews taught all strings

which melody to play

to celebrate this most high and holy day.

SILENCE

CHANT

Unison:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Alleluia! Sing praise.

PRAYERS

COMMON CONFESSION OF FAITH

Unison:

Mother-Father God, Heart of our hearts,
Holy is your silent Word.
Let us receive this day your daily Grace;
forgive us our imperfections and our errors;
as you forgive others theirs.
Let us constantly be transparent to you,
and free us from our illusions.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE

Leader:

"My harmony will come;
"My healing be done.
"for mine is the love and the power and the glory eternal."

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

HYMN

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

SILENCE

GOSPEL LESSON

SERMON

SILENT REFLECTION

The first Sunday of each month we switch to a Communion Liturgy here.

OFFERING

SHARED REFLECTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

BENEDICTION

Leader:

Go forth with strength to build the city
that has stayed too long a dream,
whose laws are love,
whose ways are God's ways.
Go forth, for the sun that blazes
is God's grace for all our days.

Amen.

[Seekers] [Write us] [[Seekers Liturgies](#)] [Communion Liturgy]

LITURGY RESOURCES

Litany:

After a poem by George Herbert in *Imagining the Word*,
Volume I

Chant:

Jesse Palidofsky

Confession:

by David Belsky, inspired by the Lord's Prayer.

Assurance:

ibid.

The Tree of Life

...the tree plays an important part in the living tradition of the cross, and in this, once again, Christianity is found taking up into itself something that was very important in pre-Christian religion, something deep and universal, and again probably something that retains great significance for numbers of people today even if they hardly acknowledge it consciously. For our ancestors, trees were not merely natural objects, they were majestic signs of the connectedness of the heaven and the earth. They saw the pattern of the immense root system that bound the tree to the earth, and then above it that immense system of arms and handlike leaves stretching out into the sky above, and the trunk itself standing there so strongly, the axis that bound the underworld with the upperworld, the human with the divine, the earthly with the spiritual, the world itself with God, So when Christ was lifted up from the earth and displayed spreadeagled on a dead tree set up on a hill, the ancient archetype of the tree of life suddenly blazed out in living historical actuality, fulfilled once and for all, and the primeval myth of the sacred tree-ladder connecting God with the world, the divine with the earth, suddenly found real and historical expression – for there is an actual tree, the cross of the crucifixion, connecting us with God and God with us once and for all, in the figure of Christ – Christ the axis of history.

Esther DeWaal, *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, pp 148-149.