



Pioneer Pastoral Charge
11 a.m. Online Service
Easter Sunday April 12, 2020
Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

Welcome

Easter Message: Moderator Richard Bott

Mary In the Morning

<http://carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship/easter/>

♦
We were weighed down, walking to the tomb.
We knew the way, for we had walked it two days before.
We had followed Joseph of Arimathea, and his servant,
down the hill from Golgotha,
their arms straining with the dead weight of Jesus' body.
We saw where they laid him, how they wrapped him in linen.
We saw their shoulders pushing that stone in place,
the sound of it grinding shut.
And though our eyes streamed tears
we marked the place,
for we knew we would come back.
And on the first day of the week,
we came, arms full of aromatic oil and spices;
cinnamon, cassia, myrrh.
All our resources pooled in a fragrant offering,
one last service for Jesus.

♦
We walked the dark path, the sky just beginning to lighten.
What we saw in the semi-darkness
was not the closed tomb we had expected,
but a gaping hole!
Alarmed, we looked inside,
seeing that Jesus' body was gone.
Someone had been there before us.
How could this be? Grave robbers?
Some final act of blasphemy against our Saviour?
Had Pilate changed his mind, and was Jesus' body now
hanging somewhere for all to see?

I dropped all I was carrying and ran to find the disciples.
Peter and John came racing back, entering the tomb:
Jesus was not there.

I stood with them, our hands on the giant stone,
confusion written on our faces.



They left, but I remained, gathering up all those spices,
my tears dropping on the ground,
would this suffering never end?

I turned and looked again in the tomb,
but this time, there was not darkness, but light!
Two angels sitting where Jesus' body should be;
and they asked me why I was weeping!
Why was I weeping?



And then another man, the gardener,
suddenly there behind me, also asking about my tears.
All I wanted was Jesus' body, so I could do what I came here
for, mourn properly, anoint him with these spices in my arms.
"Where is Jesus, tell me if you know!" I cried.

And then he said my name, and I suddenly recognized him.
Jesus! Not dead, not cold, not lifeless, not gone forever!
Jesus, alive, before me, talking, looking in my eyes!
My heart about stopped as I reached out to hold him,
to see if he was real, touchable, Jesus in the flesh.



He talked of My God and Your God,
and suddenly it was real to me.
It was not God far away, not God not listening,
but God present, God doing impossible things,
God making morning miracles out of death's darkness.
Jesus asked me to go and tell the others.

I threw the spices on the ground,
(no need of them now!) and I started running,
my feet moving faster than they've ever moved.
beautiful with good news,
I have seen the Lord!
I have seen the Lord!

♫ Hymn: ♪ VU# 179 Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks

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**Chorus: Hallelujah, hallelujah.
 Give thanks to the risen Christ;
 hallelujah, hallelujah!
 Give praise to God's name.**

**Verse 1. Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
 firstborn of all creation.**

**Verse 2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth:
 Jesus has died and is risen.**

**Verse 3. We have been crucified with Christ,
 Now we shall live for ever.**

**Verse 4. Come let us praise the living God,
 joyfully sing to our Saviour.**

Prayer of Approach

***God of abundant hope and promise,
you envision a world for us filled with beauty.
Blooming plants, a rainbow of foods to eat.
God, we open our hands, placing them before you
and ask for what we need
to appreciate the beauty in the world.
God, we hold our hearts, placing our hands to heart,
asking for what we need to appreciate
the beauty in ourselves.
God, we reach hands out to our neighbour,
asking for what we need to appreciate
the beauty in one another.
God of radical hope, open our eyes, hearts and hands.
Amen.***

Message:

Moderator Richard Bott reminds us that Easter comes without us knowing. That Easter isn't always recognized for the miracle it is until after it has arrived.

The date for the celebration of Easter in the church moves every year. It is rarely on the same date. Yet, even when we shift our schedule Easter finds us.

This year we find ourselves, much like Richard, wishing that we could do our usual thing... gathering with family or friends... it just isn't wise. But, with patience, once again we can move the date of our celebrations of faith, of love, with family and friends and God will be with us when we do. Like the women who went to the tomb to do their regular rituals, we are finding ourselves standing at a gaping hole and wondering what happened, what do we do next.

Look around us. Standing right in front of us is God... we may not be looking hard enough to recognize the Holy in the world's current chaos.

The Easter story is a reminder that God is with us. It is a reminder that, out of days of challenge, and worry and fear there is a light. There is a light that will teach us that we can get through this, that we can move forward in new ways, that a new normal is possible, that we will, once again return to our villages, to our clan and know that we have survived and grown through experiences.

The women came to find something empty and unexpected. But it was only a beginning for something new and wonderful that would impact their lives forever and increase their faith.

The light of that new dawn, so long ago, showed the people what had already happened: that God had begun moving through the world in mysterious and wonderful ways they couldn't understand.

Every day does that. Each morning that dawns gives us another day to recognize the mystery of God. Each day gives us an opportunity to try, again, to follow the courage and the faith of Jesus as we engage with God's world. In the gift of each new morning, we know that, no matter what happens in our day, God has our back and is standing there waiting for us to recognize God with us.

The Easter story teaches us to embrace and be grateful for each day that we are given, to share the love of God as it is shared with us... with abundance, without boundaries, to rejoice when we recognize the presence of the divine in the people and places that God shares with us.

To love God's people as fiercely as Jesus loved us.
May we be God's Easter people every day. Amen.

Prayer for New Days:

God of new days

All of our days are given to us by you,

we will rejoice and be glad!

Jesus asked for your compassion and love for us

and every dawn reminds us

that you remove the shadow of death,

every dawn brings newness to the world,

every dawn brings opportunity and possibility to the world,

every dawn brings new life.

Give us faith and courage

to honour the teachings of Jesus

help us be strong to defeat hate, hurt and sadness

for the power of the risen Christ is the power of love

and the power of love is the power of new life.

Amen

Offering Invitation:

The story of Easter speaks to us
of giving all that we have so that others may live.
It speaks of doing the best we can
to honour what God gives us.
So as we share this story of faith, let us remember
to honour our God with gifts and love for God's world.

Offertory: ♪ MV#58 We Sing Of Your Glory

*Words and music: Traditional song, Latin America. English Translation Cathie Talbot
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**We sing of your glory, our honor we bring.
For you are eternal amen, amen.**

**To you be the power, our tribute we bring.
For you are eternal, amen, amen.**

**To you, we surrender, our devotion we bring.
Your love is eternal, amen, amen.**

**Glory in the highest and also on earth.
Glory, alleluia, amen, amen.**

Communion...

*Today we celebrate our Communion separated in body but
together in spirit. We will all take the elements at the same time.*

*Jesus gave us a way to remember him as a community, to
remember his love, to remember his life and the new life he brings
to all. God's table is as wide as the world, and wherever we are
God invites us to join together in love.*

Call to Give Thanks

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to our God!
It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Thanksgiving

In this moment of giving thanks
for your presence with us in all things,

we remember that your story
did not begin with that first Easter morning,
but began when you came
to move over the waters of creation.

We remember the tragedies that
came to your people
and we know that you were not silent.

You gave your people a promise.
You gave your people a rainbow.
You gave your people a song.
You gave your people peace.

At a table, in the garden, at the foot of the cross,
at the empty tomb,
serving you in the world, in all places, we pray to you:
for the sick in body and mind, for those in sorrow,
for the poor and lonely, for the oppressed and abused,
for the health of creation, for the health of our own spirits
and the courage and strength
to love one another as Jesus loves us.

Song of Creation: MV #203 (Tune: Kingsfold)

O Holy, Holy, Holy God, O God of time and space.

All earth and sea and sky above

bear witness to your grace.

Hosanna in the highest heav'n,

creation sings your praise.

And blessed is the One who comes

and bears your name always!

Remembering Jesus at Table:

Gathered here with us now, Great Spirit,
speak to us through our scattered
table settings.

Fill these symbols with your peace
so that we might find your peace within ourselves.

Jesus taught that bread was meant to be shared,
and that all are welcome at God's table.
Jesus asked to be remembered in the sharing of the bread.
**In this sharing, in this welcoming,
in this remembering, we celebrate the gift of life.**

Jesus taught that all of life is woven together
and that love is why we're here.
Jesus asked to be remembered in the sharing of the cup.
**In this weaving together, in this loving,
in this remembering, we celebrate the gift of life.**

Prayer of Self-Giving

Eternal God,
As you invite us to this banquet of love,
we remember that the church has a purpose:
To nurture faith and comfort hearts
To share gifts for the good of all
To resist forces that exploit and marginalize
To be fierce love in the face of violence
To defend all human dignity.
Loving the world as you do, as Jesus taught us,
may our actions
be the instrument of creation's mending
Amen.

Blessing:

Holy God,

We know that there are no walls that can keep you from us.

As we gather our hearts,

Separated in body,

But together in love,

We ask that you pour your spirit

upon the bread and cup that we each have before us.

As we share this moment with you,

May we taste the bread of life

And know the cup of the new covenant

Blessed by your love.

Amen.

Remembering God's promise and gift

MV 204 (Tune Kingsfold)

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,

Christ will come again!

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,

Christ will come again!

The Prayer of Jesus

Let us join our voices together in prayer, as we gather all people of the world to our hearts, as we sing together (VU959)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

**Your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil**

For the kingdom, the power

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen

Sharing the Bread and Wine

Bread for the journey The Cup of Blessing

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Bread for the Journey.

The Cup of Blessing.

Prayer after Communion

**For the food we have eaten,
for the love we have shared,
for the life we have received,
we thank you, God.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

You are with us, we are not alone.

Thanks be to God!

✠Blessing

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Because the tomb is empty, our life can be full.

Let us go into every place and every day as people
empowered with the love of God.

**May God bless us and may we all be
graceful in Spirit, hopeful in word, faithful in deed.**

**May we live for the risen Christ,
as the risen Christ lives in us.**

Amen.

Changing the Christ Candle:

The light of Christ, Shining into all the corners of the earth,
showing us where we are and where we are meant to be.

The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with
us wherever we go.

♫ Sending Song: ♪ VU#187 The Spring Has Come

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**The Spring has come, let all the church be part of it!
The world has changed, and God is at the heart of it!
New Light, new day, new colour after winter grey.
New light, new day, the spring has come,
let all the church be part of it!**

**The sun is warm, let all God's children play in it!
The world expands, let's spread the Gospel way in it!
New leaf, new thrust,
new greening for the love of Christ.
New leaf, new thrust, the sun is warm,
let all God's children play in it!**

**The spring has come, new people are the flowers of it.
Through wind and rain, new life is in the showers of it.
New bud, new shoot,
new hope will bear the Spirit's fruit.
New bud, new shoot, the spring has come,
new people are the flowers of it.**

Postlude

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