



Southeastern
Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



April 9, 2023

The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen." Luke 24:5

Sitting in church the morning of Palm Sunday, I heard for the first time a certain desperation in the cries of *Hosanna!* as the gospel text was read. The crowd of people gathered around Jesus as they threw their cloaks and palms before him, crying, "Save us! Save us!"

I have been paying attention to that sense of desperation as I think about all things from which we might ask to be saved. As we approach Easter morning, I think of the women at the tomb. They must have been desperate in their grief.

They approached the tomb looking for a body to bathe and properly prepare for burial, a body to be centered in the rituals of death. What they found was an empty tomb flanked by men in dazzling clothes asking them, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?"

I wonder, what are we looking for, and where do we expect to find it?

It strikes me the women were not looking for the living. They went to the tomb looking for the body of one who had died. What the women found in the empty tomb was not what they sought but what they needed so that they could be saved.

Part of the Good News of Easter is that in Christ, we are given what we need before we even know we need it. We find within the depths of death the beginnings of new life. We find within the hollow space of the empty tomb that which we have been seeking all along. We have been saved!

I pray as you celebrate this Easter season, which is indeed forty days, you find what you are looking for. I trust that whatever you seek, even those things you long for but cannot yet name, will all be found in the presence of the living Christ.

In Christ,

Bishop Regina Hassanally
Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA