

Birdsong

Every morning the sun rises,
majestic and steady.
She is greeted
in all her strength
with the joyous cacophony of birdsong.
I like to believe
this holy chorus
is the birds telling each other—
I'm here.
We made it through the night.
You're not alone.
What good, good news.
I think the resurrection is a bit like that.
God is here.
We made it through the night.
We are not alone.
What good, good news.

Poem by
Rev. Sarah Speed

Read Matthew 28:1-10

Commentary | Rev. Lizzie McManus-Dail

How Can We Trust Resurrection?

I wonder why Jesus told them not to be afraid.

He's here, he's *here!* He is alive and death is vanquished—except, of course, the ones who killed him are. . . also here.

Jesus saunters out of that tomb, revealing anew and again and for the first time all at once what it means for God to defeat death. He tells his beloved friends, Mary, and “Mary the Tower” (Mary of Magdala),³² to go to Galilee. To tell his brothers he's coming, to go back to where it all started, where the sea is salty and blue and the fish are fresh, and the waters can wash away these terrible, haunting dreams of whips and cock crows.

And yet, Jesus says: “Do not be afraid,”—just as God has said more than any other phrase in the whole Bible. Maybe Jesus says this because he knows his friends are afraid of God, of all God can do—they were, after all, fleeing the tomb with excitement and fear. Maybe Mary and the women know now more fully *their* Jesus really is. . . Emmanuel. Really *is* God—whose feet they have washed and dinners they have cooked, a friend they have teased.

But perhaps, too, they are afraid because the people who scorned Jesus and told him to save himself are still here, too. The soldiers who mocked him with vinegar, taunting to call down Elijah are here, too. Pontius Pilate still reigns.

How can we trust resurrection when death is on the world's throne?

Because Jesus knows what we will always need to be reminded of: the good news is greater than any tyrant. **The good news of God is more alive than anything that tries to kill God, more alive than anything that tries to kill the *imago dei* in all of us.** Kings come and kings go, and we may tremble still—but God? God shakes the earth with power and might so tender and so fresh it can make a tomb bloom with new life.

Amen, alleluia.

Reflect

Where is the good news of God alive in the world?

³² American Biblical scholar Elizabeth Schrader uses the name “Mary the Tower” for Mary Magdalene. You can learn more about her research in this sermon by Diana Butler Bass: dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/mary-the-tower

Easter Sunday
the good news is... alive in the world

Read Matthew 28:1-10

Artist Statement | Hannah Garrity

The good news is alive in the world. Do not be afraid. Go back to Galilee. Go back to Galilee where it all started. Go back to Galilee and celebrate like we did at the beginning when we were not afraid, when these words of liberation had not yet drawn the trappings of imperial execution.

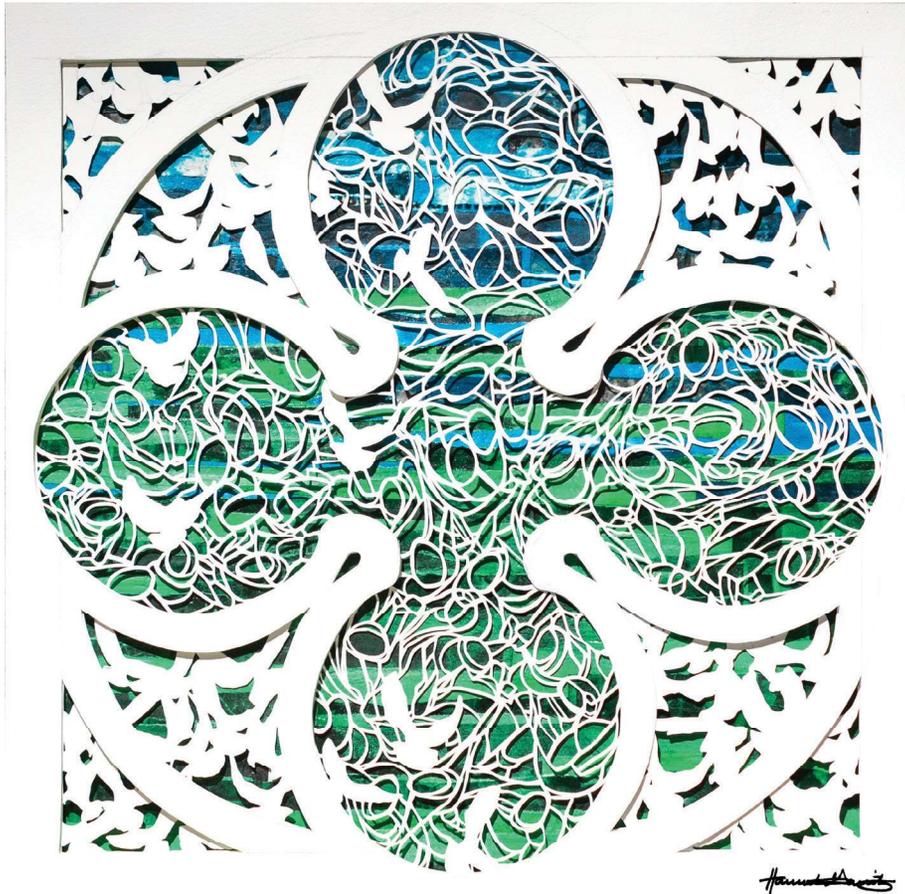
Here in this artwork, the crowd is celebrating. Figures are dancing and dancing and dancing. Doves fly among the dancers, breaking borders, Holy Spirit. This throng is in the vacant space of the empty cross. The cross here is mirroring the traditional, four-petaled, stained-glass window design element, which has long represented the cross in European architecture.

The crowd dancing within the cross celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, fearlessly awaiting his arrival in Galilee. The Roman weapon of oppression, the cross, inflicts but a pause in the steadfast and abiding ministry of revolutionary love offered by Jesus in his public ministry. It is fitting then that we should go back to the place it began, when fear was not such a lethal factor. God has overcome death. Hallelujah!

Around the dancing figures in Galilee, patterns of doves disperse outward. The good news, the *euaggelion*, is alive in the world. Do you remember? The cross is empty, yet full. Overcome. Go and you will find Jesus, free in the world in the faces of strangers and neighbors.

Look

Study the figures in the crowd. What postures and expressions do you see? What emotions do you feel?



Meet Me in Galilee | Hannah Garrity
18x18" Hand-dyed and collaged newspaper with paper lace overlay

