



At Home Worship for Faith and Hope

Easter Sunday

April 4, 2021

*"Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, 'I have seen the Lord!'
Then she gave them his message."*

John 20:18 (NLT)

*Call to Worship

~ written by Ann Siddall

The stone has been rolled away.

The grave clothes are lying in a heap.

The body is gone.

Mary's weeping is halted by the man's questions:

Why are you crying?

Who is it you are looking for?

Let us proclaim with Mary:

We have seen the risen Lord!

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Hallelujah! Amen.

*Easter Praise

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

Either Sing/Read the Song Below or Listen to a Worship Song

UMH 302

Opening Prayer

*Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!" We repeat our Easter shouts of surprise and joy again and again, for news of your victory over powers of death and evil is news so startling, so amazing, and so different from the news that bombards us day by day. Beyond our comprehension, You startle us again and again with resurrection Life, bringing grace and hope and joy. In your risen power, You are shaping all our days, and so we praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen***

No Children's Moments This Week

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

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.

Easter Prayer

God of Awesome Joy, be with us this day as we celebrate the resurrection of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Let the light of your love flood into our lives and through us to all those who have been captured by darkness, that the light may give them healing, freedom and hope. As we witness the surprise of the women at the tomb, the appearance of the Savior to Mary, and her good news brought to the disciples, let us remember that this good news exists for us today. Darkness does not win. Death is not victorious. Christ is Risen, for us, for you and for me. We are raised with Christ to a new life of hope and service. Let the joy of this good news swirl around in our hearts. Let excitement for service and ministry burst forth from us. Let us truly be the "Easter People" that you have called us to be. For we ask these things in the name of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

John 20:1-18 (NLT)

(see below)

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"The Triumphant Word"

Pastor Clark

...see below or go to website to listen online

The Lord's Supper at Home

*Take some bread and grape juice and use the communion liturgy below **"The Great Thanksgiving for Easter"** for your at home Lord's Supper celebration. Prayers have been offered for you this day as you partake.*

*Triumphant Praise

"Thine Be the Glory"

UMH 308

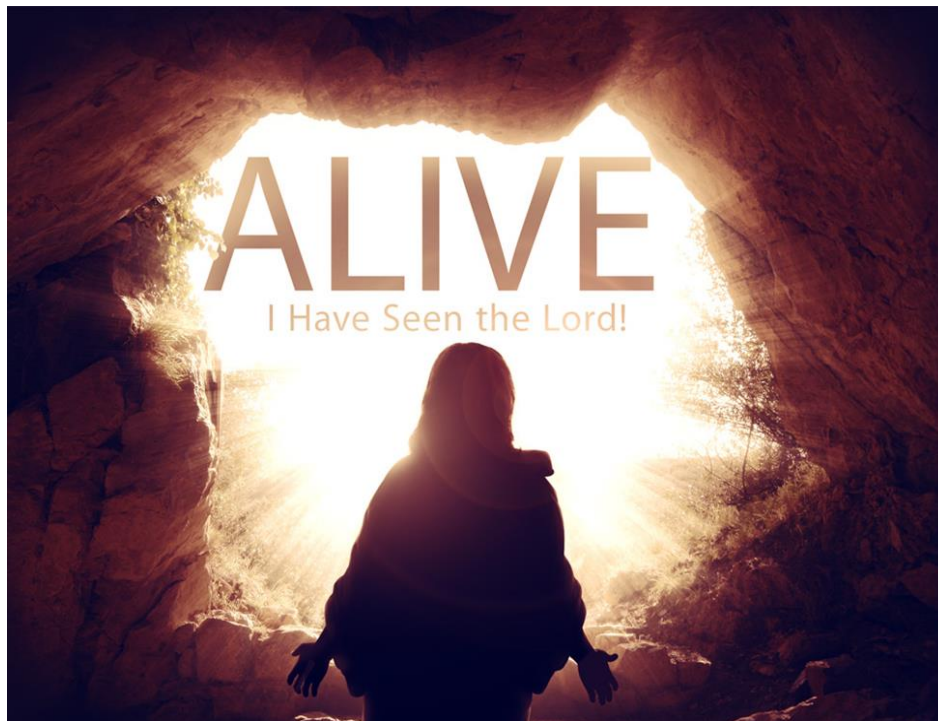
Blessing

We have come from darkness and despair to hope and joy.

We have been transformed by new life.

*Go forth to witness and to testify to the message of hope
we have received this day.*

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.



John 20:1-18

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ² She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹ for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw **two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.** ¹³ “Dear woman, **why are you crying?**” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. ¹⁵ “**Dear woman, why are you crying?**” Jesus asked her. “**Who are you looking for?**”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

¹⁶ “**Mary!**” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “**Rabboni!**” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

¹⁷ “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. **But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’**”

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “**I have seen the Lord!**” Then she gave them his message.

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

*1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!*

*2. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!*

*3. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!*

*4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!*

Thine Be the Glory

*1 Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes
where thy body lay.*

[Refrain:]

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.*

*2 Lo! Jesus meets thee,
risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets thee,
scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for our Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting. (Refrain)*

*3 No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without thee;
aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors,
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above. (Refrain)*

The Great Thanksgiving for Easter

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 the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey,
and set before us the way of life.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
By your great mercy we have been born anew
to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead
and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
Once we were no people, but now we are your people,
declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ,
who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.
When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
*"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."*

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
*"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

On the day you raised him from the dead
he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread,
and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued
in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen.

The Triumphant Word

John 20:1-18 (NLT)

Introduction

Just to get our juices flowing this morning, I want us to rack our brains...What are the best movies with surprising endings? Here are a few you might remember: ***Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*** (1980), any of the ***Mission Impossible*** movies, ***The Prestige*** (2006), ***The Thomas Crown Affair*** (1999), ***The Shawshank Redemption*** (1994), ***Contact*** (1997), ***The Sixth Sense*** (1999), ***The Great Escape*** (1963)... What comes to your mind as the best movies with a surprise ending?

God is into surprises! We see this throughout the Scriptures...

- ***Creation*** itself from the spoken into existence by the Word of God
- The ***Exodus*** from Egypt!
- ***Jesus' miraculous birth*** through the virgin Mary!
- ***Jesus walking on water*** to his disciples in the storm-tossed sea!
- ***Jesus raised from the dead!***

What are a few of the surprises you have encountered in your life? Our 25th anniversary...Where did the unexpected happen in your life journey? Some surprises are joy-inspiring; some are downright scary. Some surprises stir our faith; some shake us to the core.

There is a story of a ***father and his little daughter who were shopping for an Easter dress*** for her. Walking through the mall, the daughter declared, ***"I can't wait for Easter!"*** Wanting to be sure she knew that Easter was more than a spring fashion show, her father asked, ***"Do you know what Easter means?"*** The little girl threw her arms up in the air and shouted, ***"Surprise!"*** Easter was just that...a surprise!

Only thing is, no one expected a surprise! No one expected a resurrection! They should have. Jesus alluded to it over and over again to his followers. But they had filtered that message out and were for all practical purposes unaware of this promise. Perhaps they were so consumed by their grief upon his unexpected arrest, trial, and crucifixion, that they could not process what Jesus had spoken of earlier

We've had a fascinating journey through Lent looking through the lens of the ***Words Spoken TO the Cross***. It has provided some unique perspectives with which to see what was really happening beneath the surface. We extend that series this morning from the words to the cross to words spoken at the tomb where we find another telling word spoken to or about Jesus. It is a ***Triumphant Word*** spoken by Mary Magdalene: ***"I have seen the Lord."*** ***What a surprise! Mary didn't expect to see Jesus.*** For that matter, neither did the disciples didn't expect to see Jesus. To grasp the power of these words you have to hear them in the context of the person who shared them. Here's a brief description of Mary Magdalene.

She was one of the band of women that followed Jesus. Mary Magdalene was most likely a **single woman** (she was described not in connection to her husband or her children, but by her hometown of Magdala). Mary also has had a troubled past. Luke tells us she had **seven demons** which could range from **oppression from a spiritual being** to an unexplained **physical illness** to a **psychiatric disorder** to an **addiction**. What we do know is that whatever this was, it dominated her life. Then, most importantly, we also know that it was **Jesus who set her free** from this terrible oppression.

In response, Mary Magdalene lived with a **courageous devotion to Jesus**. She was present at the Cross when most others had abandoned Jesus or shrunk away in fear, she accompanied his body to the grave, and was the first to arrive at his tomb on Easter morning. She arrives at the garden tomb while it was still dark on Sunday morning—weeping, her faith in tatters, her heart broken. She was overcome with sorrow with grief coming in waves and with tears that would not stop. Something happened in that garden that lifted her out of her broken-hearted despair...she encountered resurrection.

What difference did this surprise make for Mary and the disciples? And for us?

Easter Brings Light in Our Darkness

“Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.”

She arrives at the garden tomb while it was still dark on Sunday morning—weeping, her faith in tatters, her heart broken. She was overcome with sorrow with grief coming in waves and with tears that would not stop. The darkness of the early morning was a telling metaphor of the darkness shrouding her whole life.

Darkness. Confusion. Waves of Grief. Tears. But there in this unexpected place, the light broke in. The unexpected place was the tomb. But in that Resurrection Garden Tomb, light floods in to Mary's darkness.

It's hard living in the dark! It's humbling to trying to make our way through the dark. Haven't we walked through the darkness during this past pandemic year! We too have experienced the confusion. Grief over lost loved ones, or lost opportunities. We likely have shed some tears as well...if not physical tears, then inner tears that are just as real. Don't we long for some ray of light to penetrate that darkness?

Easter brings the best kind of Light for our darkness. The Risen Christ shines a light that clarifies our muddled minds, that illumines our uncertain path, that reveals what had once been hidden. As a result, we are able to see new possibilities.

And, in this sense, we become a little like the character, **Jack**, in the award-winning film, **Room**. I have only read about it, but maybe you've seen it?

Room tells the story of an evil man who abducts a teenager named Joy and imprisons her for his perverted use in a storage shed behind his home. Two years into the horror, Joy gives birth to Jack.

Desperate to keep her child from being destroyed by the evil around him, Joy makes life as bright and normal as she can for Jack, so Jack grows up believing that this closet is the world. This is what Evil keeps trying to impress on all of us. Evil wants us to get so used to living in the darkness, in a world defined by quiet despair, guilt, cynicism, and grief that we can't imagine a life beyond it.

It's not until the door is one day unlocked and opened for good that Jack comes to see that the universe he calls "**Room**," isn't even close to ultimate reality. Five-year-old Jack embarks on the wondrous adventure of re-discovering life as it was truly meant to be.

What a wonderful surprise it is to discover the true Light in our darkness! A whole new dimension to reality we didn't know was there!

Easter Heals and Restores

"She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." ¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said."

Mary's life before meeting Jesus had been one of oppression by spiritual darkness, confusion, brokenness, despair. When she met Jesus, her whole life changed. But then, just when she was growing deep in her faith, the events turn ugly, and Jesus is crucified. Her despair has returned with greater magnitude. Her grief as deep as she ever experienced. Her brokenness now seemingly unfixable.

She goes early that Sunday morning to anoint Jesus' body and no doubt to find consolation in her grief. Mary is approached by an angel. *"She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her."*

Mary's response: *"they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."*

She turns to leave but Someone is there. ***Jesus came seeking Mary*** out to infuse her broken heart with healing grace...Did you know Jesus is seeking you too? Coming your way to infuse healing grace into your brokenness....

Jesus penetrates her confusion with one word. Earlier in this Gospel, Jesus said that he was the Good Shepherd who calls his sheep by name, and that his sheep follow him because they know his voice. That is what he does here, simply saying, ***"Mary."*** Just speaking her name washes her with healing grace. Real faith is always genuinely personal. Can you hear Jesus call your name?

Magnify this exponentially, that's what the Resurrection does...it restores and heals all that sin has broken...not only personally but globally, cosmically. Jesus fulfilled His mission to put all the broken

creation back together again. As the risen Christ, Jesus stands not just with us in our present time, but he waits at the end of history to heal and renew everything. That is his promise.

That's true for you too! Where have you been wounded by life? Where have you experienced a brokenness that cannot be restored with any amount of wine, whiskey, therapy or drugs? Broken by an unexpected betrayal? By a debilitating illness? By incomprehensible grief of losing a loved one? By profound disappointment when a dream falls apart?

Folks, only Easter can provide that kind of healing, that kind of soul mending. Only Jesus, the Great Physician, the Great Healer, who knows how we were made, knows how we got broken, knows how to put us back together again. Only then can we thrive as never before!

Easter Resurrects Hope

"I have seen the Lord!"

For Mary, Jesus' death on the Cross was the dead end of her life, her hope. A wall that she could not penetrate. A mountain she could not climb. A chasm she could not cross. A tomb she could not reverse.

Easter is the Great Reversal! When there seemed to be no possible source of hope, Jesus is alive...resurrected...

Theologian **Jurgen Moltmann** captures this powerfully. *"We exist in a state of contradiction between the Cross and the Resurrection. Surrounded by decay, we nonetheless hope for restoration, a hope illuminated by the 'foreglow' of the resurrection. Jesus gives us a foretaste of a future time when the planet will be restored to God's original design. Easter is the beginning of the 'laughter of the redeemed.' God weeps with us, so that we may one day laugh with him."*

Resurrection is a sign of hope that God will one day put the world right. There is a new reality and a new power at work now that will make all the difference. Listen to N.T. Wright:

*"As Jesus goes to the cross and then three days later experiences resurrection, heaven and earth, God's space and our space, are drawn together in a new way. This is a new world where heaven and earth have come rushing together in a fresh way, a fresh celebration, a world full of new possibilities, and new power which leaves the powers of the world lying helplessly on the ground. Don't be afraid! **God's new world has begun, and you are invited to be apart of it.** That's what Easter is all about!"*

Easter Energizes Us with a New Purpose

But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Mary had an assignment. Go tell the disciples. Go, tell my brothers, Jesus commands.

Don't we have the same assignment? Find ways to tell others about the Risen Christ. Find creative and winsome ways to share the living Christ with others.

But we don't much, do we. We have lost clarity, lost perspective, lost courage, lost something, because that seems like an assignment we don't really think about these days. Maybe in our culturally charged atmosphere it just too risky? Maybe we fear what others will think about us or say about us.

It wasn't any different for those first disciples. Yet they found great joy and motivation to share about the One who infused their lives with living hope. We can too!

At Faith and Hope, we are seeking to take that seriously. We are going to have an opportunity to learn how to share our faith story, our God story, in a brief, authentic, inviting, and contagious way. With a couple of hours devoted and some prayer and practice, you can gain the assurance and confidence you need to follow Mary on this path of sharing what this living hope means to you.

Interested? See the announcement in the bulletin and respond accordingly.

Conclusion

James Harnish mentions an oil painting titled ***The Chess Players*** by Friedrich August Mortiz Retzsch in which the artist offers his interpretation of the legend of Faust, who gambled his soul with the devil and lost. Faust stares at the chess board in abject despair. The devil leers in eager anticipation of victory. An angel in the background looks down with pity on Faust's position.

That was everyone's understanding of the painting until 1889 when chess master ***Paul Morphy*** studied the painting and said, *"I think I can take the young man's game and win."* According to the Columbia Chess Chronicle, published in the next fall, *"to the surprise of everyone, victory was snatched from the devil and the young man was saved!"*

Harnish reminds us that is the earthshaking surprise of Easter! Just as everyone thought the devil had won the ultimate victory, when it looked as if evil and injustice and sin and death prevailed, surprise! ***God had another move. Resurrection! Never count God out!*** No wonder Mary was surprised! What she expected to be the end of the story is just the beginning of the story...the story that never ends! What a turnaround. ***What a triumphant word! What a surprise! "I have seen the Lord!"***

Have you seen the Lord? Are you open to a surprise? God always has the last move!