

## Home Church Package for Sunday April 12, 2020

### Happy Easter!

#### Gather

Welcome, God be with you  
This morning, we gather to celebrate the Risen Christ  
We have traveled through Lent  
A time of turning towards God

#### Opening Words

Before new life springs from the ground  
there is a seed...  
Before the sun shines on the new day,  
there is the setting of the moon...  
Before we know the joy of community,  
there is aloneness...  
Before Easter Alleluias are shouted,  
there is time to remember...

#### Scripture John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." <sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon

Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." <sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

### **Reflection** by Julie Lebrun

Pray, Loving God, May the word of my month and the meditation of all our hearts and minds be touched by your healing Spirit. Amen.

We hear this Ancient story this morning...the resurrection of Jesus.

Familiar to many, confusing to some, in our secular world... irrelevant to others.

Our first reaction can be... what? This makes no sense!

Dead bodies don't get up and walk around and talk to us...say our well trained scientific minds.

-and yet this is the "proof story" that Jesus is the son of God

If we know a bit more about the Gospel writers...

-We know, all 4 of them, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John include a resurrection story in their Gospel...each a little different.

-we know they all write to their specific communities of faith

-to demonstrate that Jesus is different, special...the son of God.

If we know a bit more about the Gospel writers...

-we know they use the language of their day, of their time...son of God...Messiah...anointed one...to make their point.

If we know a little a bit about first century Jews, the first hearer of the Gospels

-we know they had "no concept of a separation between body and soul or body and spirit...so had to try and explain an 'experienced phenomenon' in terms that were common concepts to their listeners...a physical resurrection." <sup>1</sup> The disciples experienced Jesus with them after he died.

If it sounds like I'm downplaying our Christian resurrection story...just wait...

I want to offer something more challenging and more life giving than approaching this story with the same ears and world view as people in the first century. And what I offer, I hope, brings us closer to Jesus teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Progressive Christianity .org "what are you looking for"

Jesus does offer an understanding of resurrection.

Jesus tells his seekers where to find him.

He tell us if we want to meet him, to go and do likewise.

“When you see a stranger and welcome him, I will be there. When you see someone naked and you clothe them, I will be there. And when you see someone hungry and you give him or her food, or when you see someone thirsty and you give him or her drink, I will be there. When you visit the sick or the imprisoned I will be there.”

“Whenever there is an expression of compassionate love, Christ (Logos-God incarnate) is there. Christ is the creative transformation, which is at work in us as human love.” (John Cobb theologian, Process Theology.)

So this idea of resurrection as proof of Jesus as son of God...is replaced with something much more incarnate, much more alive in our world today...alive in us and lived out in our actions in places where there is suffering or need.

We are called to live this out as individuals in whatever ways we can; with family, neighbours, co-workers etc. We are called to live this out as community of faith in bigger projects that we cannot do alone. Currently our church is building a new church that includes affordable housing and space for other non-profit organizations. This comes from working together in our faith community and beyond.

I must admit it doesn't really feel like Easter this year. We are several weeks into physical distancing due to the COVID 19 virus. It turns out this Lent the whole world is giving up more that we could have imagined. The basics like going to work, going to church, visiting with

family and friends, going to school, shopping and travelling as we choose have all become activities that are limited.

It feels like the world will never be quite the same. In the future we will talk about life before and after COVID 19. A bit like, how we talk about before and after 9-11. But this is bigger. The whole world is involved and we are all on the same team. How can we stay healthy and prevent the virus from taking over is the common goal. All of humanity experiences the same vulnerability. Being elected to political office, money, fame, education, even good health does not protect us from the COVID 19 virus.

We have come to an end time of how we have understood the world up until this point. And yet, there is new life beginning. As I have felt down this week, not able to celebrate Easter in person with people, 2 people reminded me to see the blossoming cherry trees. We can't stop new life and cycles of rebirth.

But there is also loss. This is a time of grieving...not seeing family, people are dying, businesses lost. As we make attempts to clean out drawers and cook good food with extra time at home, to catch up on phone calls and emails, it's ok, in fact healthy for us to acknowledge loss.

In our reading from Gospel of John, Mary weeps outside the tomb when she realized Jesus body is gone. Her grieving becomes a turning point. She then experiences Jesus in a new form.

Grieving is a turning point for us too. By acknowledging loss and grieving the losses we experience, we help ourselves to live in the moment and not be swept away with anxiety or get stuck on the losses. This also allows to be compassionate with ourselves and with others. This enables us to respond to hurts and needs of others.

This allows us to live out the call to care for others (and ourselves too!) To live into the place of caring for others...the place Jesus taught us about...“When you see a stranger and welcome him, I will be there. When you see someone naked and you clothe them, I will be there. And when you see someone hungry and you give him or her food, or when you see someone thirsty and you give him or her drink, I will be there. When you visit the sick or the imprisoned I will be there.”

In whatever way we are able to extend compassion, patience and care towards others is the place the risen Jesus meets us. This is the place of transformation...new life rising.

When we look at the world wide scope of COVID 19, we are on the potential of huge grief and more importantly, huge transformation for new caring of all the individual people that make up humanity. We are starting to see it now. Scientist and politicians working together (trying too!) Manufacturers and government working in new ways to create supplies needed. Our humanity is now connected in ways we cannot deny.

I also see amazing caring and connecting between people from their homes. Phone calls, shopping and looking after basic needs. Maybe we just don't need as much as we thought...maybe we don't need to travel as much as we hoped...maybe we really will experience God is with us as we help a neighbour and /or as we receive help or a simple call from another. Then we can shout like Mary and announce to all the world... “I have seen the Lord” and live as if it is so.

May it be so, Amen.

This week a poem by William Blake came to mind. I share it with you as a closing prayer.

Joy and woe are woven fine,  
A clothing for the soul divine,  
Under every grief and pine,  
Runs a joy with silken twine.  
It is right it should be so,  
We were made for joy and woe,  
And when this we rightly know,  
Through the world we safely go.

~ *by William Blake*

Happy Easter!  
Christ is risen!