

Home Church Package for Easter Sunday: Apr 4, 2021

Materials curated/prepared by Rev. Jenn Swanson
Including some materials from the Worship Design Studio

Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed!**
The stone has been rolled away. The tomb is empty!
Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Call to Worship

We seek life's meaning in the wonder of morning, in the freshness of springtime, and in each other's hearts and minds...

yet still we hope for something more - a time when we can once again gather together in a group in this beautiful place, the ability to hug our loved ones again and see smiles, an infusion of the unexpected, an explosion of glory, a miracle - revealing more than we hope to understand.

Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities...and the hope of what might come. We give thanks this Easter morning for the Spirit of Life visible in Jesus, visible in us, visible in people in all walks of life.

Opening Prayer

(Thom Schuman modified by Jenn 2015)

Very early on that first day
you caught chaos unawares,
Astounding God:
planting grace in a garden,
setting love loose on creation,
flinging joy into the air.

Very early on that first day
Jesus, Son of Justice:
you staggered sin,
throwing its weight off the world;
you confounded death,
leaving it alone in the grave;
you opened the gates of the kingdom,
so all could follow you into life.

Very early on this first day of the week,
while we were washing sleep from our eyes
and trying to make sense of our lives,
you sang glad songs to us,
Sacred Spirit:
rolling away fears from our hearts
so we can see the Risen Lord.

God in Community, Holy in One,
very early on this first day of the week,
as we do on every day of our lives,
we lift our prayers to you in wonder, in amazement, in gratitude.
Amen.

Scripture: John 20:1-9 – The Resurrection of Jesus (NRSV)

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. 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.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Reflection Prompt:

We hear the first encounters at the empty tomb! The disciples see and believe and as yet do not fully understand. We ponder this...

Scripture: John 20:10-18 – Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (NRSV)

Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 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. 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.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' 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.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). 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." 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 Prompt:

Mary is alone, weeping. More is revealed. She recognizes Jesus and she goes and tells the others. We ponder this...

Thoughts

We listen, we watch, we wait...

In the cycle of seasons we come again to Easter. Out of our hearts we feel the urge to new being – to worship at the shrine of our hopes, to gain perspective on our lives, to reorder the chaos of our years, to reflect on the way our hearts should go, to reaffirm our deepest aspirations. It is a new day.

In the holy quiet we come:

we hope of peace and that quiet serenity born of insight, we hope for beauty, connection, the inner sanctuary of sounds and sights and air, we hope for courage and wellbeing and the inner fortitude to live our own lives.

May we strive to be worthy of this great life, that out of the old brings forth the new. May we look into that empty tomb and know that death is not the final word, that Love lives...and that Love endures.

Blessing

(by John O'Donohue, adapted by Jenn)

We have come out of the Dark Wood and into the light of this new day.

Christ has risen. We have risen.

Go out into the world knowing of life beyond death

Of New Beginnings rising out of endings.

Go...compassionate of heart,

Clear in word,

Gracious in awareness,

Courageous in thought,

Generous in love.

Christ is Risen. Hallelujah! Amen!