



APRIL 12, 2020

Reading the Word Matthew 28:1-10

Call to Worship

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Let us celebrate with joy!

Introduction and Welcome

Message: Rev. Deb Hanson

Prayer

What a day, O God Almighty! This is the day for which we wait all year long because it is the very center of who we are as the church of Jesus Christ. It is in his death and resurrection that we are given our own lives and turn to help others on their faith journeys. It because of your love in Christ for us that we worship, that we renew our commitment to being Jesus' disciples every week so that we can go into the world to BE your Church! Thanks and praise to you, giving and loving God! We celebrate this Easter Day! Amen!

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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.

Hymn: "He Is Lord"

UMH #177

He is Lord, he is Lord! He is risen from the dead and he is Lord! Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Blessing



SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

April 12, 2020

“... the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples ...’” (Matthew 28:5-7a)

I wonder. I wonder what it would have been like to be there with the two Mary’s standing at the tomb. When the earth began to quake and an angel came down to talk with them, I suspect I would have been hiding behind something or on the ground quaking in fear. Apparently, that is what they did. Even the guards who had been charged with guarding the tomb were terrified and froze in place.

But the angel’s words brought good news - news too wonderful and fantastic to really absorb. As the women listened to the angel’s instructions, they must have been filled with confusion, amazement, and disbelief. Yet, they were told to go quickly, to tell the disciples that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and to let them know they were to meet him in Galilee.

They began to run to share the news, and suddenly encountered Jesus himself! Falling at his feet, they worshiped him, and he, too sent them to tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee. The women became the first evangelists, sharing the good news of Jesus’ resurrection! They had a personal encounter with him and eventually, the other disciples did, too.

It would have been a challenge to understand all that happened, and Jesus’ followers, who were in despair and grief one moment, would have experienced a huge shift to wildly joyful and awed. It is easy to focus on the negative, isn’t it?

As I have thought about what is happening in our world with the COVID-19 virus and how it has touched all our lives either through keeping us away from each other and being very cautious, it seems like it would be so easy to dwell on those negative things, the restrictions, losses, fears, and wondering, “now what”? I’m sure that is what the disciples of Jesus went through after his death.

The message they missed or forgot was that Jesus regularly told them he would be put to death and then raised again after three days. They lost the hope, the belief in God’s promise, and the confidence that things would not just die with him. Somehow, they missed the longer picture. Jesus had been training them all along to carry on his work, to take on his mission and ministry of bringing the love of God to the world. When he ascended into heaven, he commissioned them to do just that!

That is our commissioning, too as his followers! We are called not only to **have** hope, but **bring** hope into the world. Our task is to carry the Light of Christ into the world through our own actions. We can believe in God's promise and have confidence in the power of the Spirit who guides us and leads us and **even pushes** us to offer acts of compassion, kindness, caring, and help.

Jesus emerged from the tomb to a world that was the same one in which he died, but from the moment he encountered the women, the future looked brighter, filled with assurance of God's presence and the belief that we, as Jesus' followers, can make this a better place. That continues every day of our lives when we are committed to being the Church.

COVID-19 may be a horrific challenge in our life time, but if we think of the hundreds and thousands of challenges that have faced our world, we also can see that somehow on the other end of things, humanity learned something and was able to emerge stronger, with the confidence that we can make it through whatever faces us. As followers of Christ, we know that because Jesus is alive, we have life in him, not only in the future, but right now, today, in this time and place and as we move forward.

One of my mom's favorite hymns was "Living for Jesus," which is how she lived throughout her lifetime.

**Living for Jesus a life that is true, striving to please him in all that I do,
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free, this is the pathway of blessing for me.**

**O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to thee, for thou, in thy atonement,
Didst give thyself for me; I own no other master, my heart shall be thy throne,
My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone.**

(The Faith We Sing #2149, verse 1, T.O. Chisolm and C. Harold Lowden)

Jesus gave his all for us, and we are asked to share his story, live our lives in his example the best we can, and share the gift of love and care for others because of his love for us. May we be like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as we go forth to tell the story and be an Easter people. Amen.