



EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 4, 2021



iMessage

The grave is empty...
HE IS RISEN!!!



Prelude

Dialogue

Hymn: “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” vv. 1,2, (UMH #302)

Message: “Christ is Risen!”

Mark 16: 1-8

Christ is Risen! We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus every Easter, and, actually, every Sunday that we gather together for worship. Of course, Easter eggs, baskets, and family gatherings have become a big part of those celebrations. There are times when maybe we take things for granted or forget the real meaning of Easter. I would like to share a story that some of you may have heard, but it’s worth hearing again and again to remind us of “getting it” especially on Easter Sunday! This is based on a true story.

What Was in Jeremy’s Egg? by Ida Mae Kempel

Jeremy was born with a twisted body, a slow mind and a chronic, terminal illness that had been slowly killing him all his young life. Still, his parents had tried to give him a normal a life as possible and had sent him to St. Theresa’s Elementary School.

At the age of 12, Jeremy was only in second grade, seemingly unable to learn. His teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool and make grunting noises. At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly, as if a spot of light had penetrated the darkness of his brain. Most of the time, however, Jeremy irritated his teacher.

One day, she called his parents and asked them to come to St. Teresa’s for a consultation. As the Forresters sat quietly in the empty classroom, Doris said to them, “Jeremy really belongs in a special school. It isn’t fair to him to be with younger children who don’t have learning problems. Why, there is a five-year gap between his age and that of the other students!”

Mrs. Forrester cried softly into a tissue while her husband spoke. “Miss Miller,” he said, “there is no school of that kind nearby. It would be a terrible shock for Jeremy if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here.”

Doris sat for a long time after they left, staring at the snow outside the window. Its coldness seemed to seep into her soul. She wanted to sympathize with the Forresters. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had 18 other youngsters to teach and Jeremy was a distraction. Furthermore, he would never learn to read or write. Why waste any more time trying?

As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her. "Oh God," she said aloud, "here I am complaining when my problems are nothing compared with that poor family! Please help me to be more patient with Jeremy."

From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Jeremy's noises and his blank stares. Then one day he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed, loudly enough for the whole class to hear. The other children snickered, and Doris' face turned red. She stammered, "Wh-Why, that's very nice, Jeremy. Now please take your seat."

Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Doris told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?" "Yes, Miss Miller!" the children responded enthusiastically - all except for Jeremy. He just listened intently, his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment? Perhaps she should call his parents and explain the project to them.

That evening, Doris' kitchen sink stopped up. She called the landlord and waited an hour for him to come by and unclog it. After that, she still had to shop for groceries, iron a blouse and prepare a vocabulary test for the next day. She completely forgot about phoning Jeremy's parents.

The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. After they completed their Math lesson, it was time to open the eggs.

In the first egg, Doris found a flower. “Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life,” she said. “When plants peek through the ground we know that spring is here.” A small girl in the first row waved her arms. “That’s my egg, Miss Miller,” she called out.

The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Doris held it up. “We all know that a caterpillar changes and grows into a beautiful butterfly. Yes that is new life, too” Little Judy smiled proudly and said, “Miss Miller, that one is mine.

Next Doris found a rock with moss on it. She explained that the moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom. “My Daddy helped me!” he beamed.

Then Doris opened the fourth egg. She gasped. The egg was empty! Surely it must be Jeremy’s, she thought, and, of course, he did not understand her instructions. If only she had not forgotten to phone his parents. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another. Suddenly Jeremy spoke up. “Miss Miller, aren’t you going to talk about my egg?” Flustered, Doris replied, “but Jeremy – your egg is empty!” He looked into her eyes and said softly, “Yes, but Jesus’ tomb was empty too!”

Time stopped. When she could speak again. Doris asked him, “Do you know why the tomb was empty?” “Oh yes!” Jeremy exclaimed. “Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!”

The recess bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the school yard, Doris cried. The cold inside her melted completely away.

Three months later Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the mortuary were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket, all of them empty.

Reflection:

Jeremy got it. The teacher and the children “got it.” The tomb was empty! Christ is risen! Because Jesus lives, we have been given life now and forever. Jesus is no longer on the cross, and the tomb is empty! Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

Prayer: (from FaithandWorship.com)

Loving God, we thank you that Easter is not about a people, but all people, that your love and your Salvation are for all who confess with voices, hearts and lives that the tomb is empty because Jesus is risen, that we might know forgiveness, that lives might be reborn and your name glorified now and for eternity. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

Holy Communion

Hymn: "Thine Be the Glory," led by the UMC 100 voice virtual choir

Sending Forth - digital montage of congregation getting the text messages and saying He Is Risen!



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

Juliann	Harry Junkins
Joan Allen	Marilyn & Gil
Jenn	Michael Harrist
Naomi	Sophia
Erin Frane	Barbara Glidden
Madeline	Bobbie Noble
Charles Gilman	Dan Strange
Barbara Clement	Danny Westbrook

The Family of Jen Patria
Christine & her parents
Jen - Stebbins daughter-in-law
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Front line workers
Our Denomination
Our Country
Our Church family
Those who have lost loved ones to COVID



WHO WE ARE

FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



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