

## **Easter: Our Journey**

“Our Journey”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael –April 4, 2021

Easter Sunday

**Readings:** Acts 10:34-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

**Reflection:** Psalm 16:5-11

**Greeting:** Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

**Prayer:** O Lord, your wondrous birth means nothing unless we are born again, your death and sacrifice mean nothing unless we die to sin, your resurrection means nothing if you be risen alone. Raise and exalt us, O Savior, both now to the estate of grace and hereafter to the state of glory; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, God for ever and ever. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 16

*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:5-11 NRSV\*)*

We read the words of Psalm 16 and we hear of gladness. That God grants us life and joy. God is all that we need. The Lord strengthens us and lifts us up. How do we reflect on God’s love and care on this blessed Easter morning? How do we show God’s presence in our lives?

**Prayer:** O God, our light, our beauty, our rest: In the resurrection of your Son you have brought us into your new creation. Form us into your people, and order our lives in you; hear our prayers and have mercy, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Alleluia.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

**Sermon:**

Our scripture readings for today come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our reading begins with Acts chapter 10, verses 34 through 43.

*Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:34-43 NRSV\*)*

We continue our reading with 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 1 through 11.

*Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe. (1 Corinthians 15:1-11 NRSV\*)*

Our last reading is from Mark chapter 16 verses 1 through 8.

*When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is*

*not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:1-8 NRSV\*)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

On this Easter we look at our journey. Throughout Lent we took our journey to the cross, and last Sunday we stood looking at the cross, looking at the sacrifice made. Today, we see something brand new. We see that the stone that had been in front of the tomb marking, the end of the journey, has been rolled back. And that a new journey has begun. Our journey. This marks the beginning and the end at the same time. That we see the end of the journey to the cross in seeing Christ crucified and laid in a tomb, but we see the beginning of our journey as disciples of the risen Savior. Because when we open the tomb we look and see that he's not there. He's been raised. We see open to us life everlasting. Life that may be truly lived. In Christ that we see the good news that Christ conquers all. That in following him we may conquer all. The promise that death has no sway over us because of Jesus.

This marks the beginning of our journey as Easter people. People who live in the risen Christ. People who know that God's love transcends all. What a joy that is. That it is for us. That it is for all. This day marks the day that we remember that we are called to go out and spread the good news. That we have been commanded to preach to the people and testify about our risen Savior, whose death shows his great love for us, whose resurrection shows the great gift for us. And that now that we know it's our turn to share that good news. That we remember that we are witnesses to Christ's ministry. That we are witnesses to Christ's death. That we are witnesses to Christ's resurrection. And that we speak it truly and we speak it as those who believe. Just like Paul, we remember God's grace is there for us. Grace that is not in vain, but that gives us the strength that we need proclaim that Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again.

In Mark's account of the resurrection, that when we end where we do today, it leaves the story open in a way. And I think that's interesting. Because after they roll the stone back, they find the young man in a white robe telling them not to be alarmed. The Christ who was crucified has been raised. He's not here. That we can see the place that he was set down. The place where they laid him. But he's not there. They are given the command to go and tell that he's going ahead, just as he said he would. Then we get something that might be troubling. They went out and fled from the tomb because both terror and amazement took hold of them, and they said nothing to anyone because of fear. We know that they had to eventually have told someone or we wouldn't have their account. I can only imagine they were overwhelmed by this knowledge that they had to process it because of the great shock that it brought. I might bring us a bit of shock to read that this is the end of the story. That in Mark's original ending, this is where we stop. There are many explanations for this. Some might say the original ending

was lost and somebody tacked on a new ending. I don't know that it was lost. Because when we end here, this becomes our journey. Christ is going ahead of you. Go and let others know Christ is risen. Spread the news. You may be bewildered. You may be confused. You may be amazed. But this is where our story, where our journey begins.

Because after the despair of the crucifixion and the stinging defeat of death, our message has been transformed, just as our lives have been transformed. That we are not the disciples of a dead savior, but of one who lives. One who lives that we may live. One that lives that we may know God's grace is there for us. One that lives that we may know God's love is there for us. One that lives to let us know that we may live. And that through God all things are possible. Christ has chosen to show us that the end is not the end but the beginning. The good news is that God's love, grace, and mercy are there for us, giving us a new life.

So, let us live it joyfully and abundantly. Let us live it as we proclaim that Christ is risen. It rises up in us and gives us new strength and gives us new hope. Death has no victory over us. We are a people of life and light. That our journey is just beginning. That we have good news to share with all people. Our Savior lives, and that the story is ours. That the journey is ours to share. So, let us share it with all that we know. Let us share it and all that we do. Let us proclaim it in everything that we are. That we serve a risen Savior that he lives in our hearts, to give us the strength that we need. That God's grace pushes us forward when we think we cannot go on. That we may proclaim the good news, so that others may come to believe and share in this wonderful hope, so that all may truly live. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession and Pardon:** We are reluctant, O Author of Love, to set aside our hurt, our anger, our disappointment. Heal us with your tender touch, that we might be cleansed of all unclean thoughts, all schemes of revenge, all hope of vindictive retribution. Open our eyes to the power of love, shown to us in the unselfish sacrifice of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Our Current Series**

Information will be available soon about our after Easter series!

### **Prayer List**

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Angie Veach	Eric Veach	Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris
Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Laura Eubank Allison
Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells	Tricia Adkins
Ronnie & Elaine Carlen	Don Stewart	Bill Gilbert	Michael & Makenzie Reynolds
Ronnie Winstead	Annie McMorris	Dwight Parsons	Trinity Powers
Lauren Stewart	Charlie Henderson	Family of Tom Shamhart	Family of John Millsap
Rosalee Chancellor	Phyllis Gable	Family of John Robey	Family of Wendell Kemper
Sage Martin	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family
Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Mary White	Leo Smith
Bonnie Hite	Donna Graham	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Kim Hennes
Family of Irma Cressap	Family of Jerry Holsapple	Dalton McFarland	

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