

Easter Morning

“Rise and Share”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – April 17, 2022

Easter Sunday

Readings: Luke 23:50-24:12

Reflection: Psalm 16

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

Prayer: Almighty God, through Jesus Christ you overcame death and opened to us the door of eternal life. Renew and refresh us in your Holy Spirit as we celebrate the miracle of the empty tomb. Let the light of our Lord’s resurrection lift our hearts on this day. May we be freed from slavery to sin and death and arise into a life of righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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, lifts us up, and shows us the path of life. 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? How do we share the joy of the resurrection?

Prayer: Lord, we come before you in prayer. Through the resurrection of your Son, you have given us new life. We turn to your light and your love at this time. We come before you with the troubles of our hearts and with the joys of our lives. We look to you in all things that your steadfast love may guide and lead us. Help us in our doubts and worries and strengthen us in faith, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Grant us the peace of our Risen Savior as we celebrate this blessed morn. Amen.

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 reading for today comes from the New International Version Bible. Hear from the Gospel according to Luke of the account of the resurrection of our Lord.

Then Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

(Luke 23:50-24:12 NIV[^])

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

You may have noticed that we picked up right where we left off last Sunday. Today we have the miracle of the empty tomb. Jesus was laid to rest, wrapped in a linen cloth. The women who had witnessed the crucifixion saw the tomb, saw how his body was laid to rest. They begin to prepare, and they get everything ready and then they rest. And at dawn they come to the tomb to finish what they've started. And there they find a surprise. The tomb is empty. Then they're told by two men in dazzling clothes "He is not here; he has risen!" They're reminded of the words that Jesus told them back in Galilee. And they remembered those words. The women who go to the tomb remember this and they hurry right back. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, the women who were there who have witnessed this wonderful thing hurry back to tell the others. And what response do they get?

It's nonsense. An idle tale. Now, there's something really wonderful about this because of the one thing that does happen here. They have witnessed the resurrection. They have witnessed the empty tomb. And when they go and they preach it, they're told it is nonsense. Except Peter. Peter hears. Peter hears and he gets up and he runs. And he leaves the tomb after seeing the linen cloth, wondering to himself what has happened. But he heard and went to go see and was left wondering.

Now you might be wondering why I love this part of the story so much in Luke's gospel narrative. And the reason is this. The women go and they receive this wonderful news. They have witnessed it and they share their witness with others. And what happens? They are scoffed at. Told it is nonsense. Except for one. Now at this point, you're probably wondering "So, one listened. Why does that matter?" And I say that's everything. It's everything because it didn't matter that all the others thought it was nothing. They shared the good news and even if it reached one person that one person's life was changed. That one person heard, and even if just an inkling of belief was there, even if it was just wanting to believe, went out to know more. And there's something beautiful about that. Not that the others scoffed and laughed and brushed aside the first proclaiming of the resurrection, but the beauty of knowing that even if just one person heard the good news and responded that it was worth telling.

Because I think there's something marvelous for us to take in when we hear that. Because speaking the good news doesn't always get the results we would expect. Christ the Lord has risen. If one person hears and it changes one person, then by golly that's an awful lot. Because it means one person has been given that gift and can share that gift, can share in that hope. Knowing the story isn't over but there is something more for all of us. That there is something more to be had. That there is something more about this life. And even if it's just that they want to know more, even if they aren't sure, then it was worth telling. To me it makes the women who witnessed the empty tomb so relatable. They were going to go do what needed to be done and they were surprised by God. So, they share the good news. And in Luke's telling, that makes this so moving. Because how often do we get discouraged when we share the good news? How often do we get discouraged and don't speak it anymore? That we feel that the people around us have already heard and already know it all. But here's the thing. The women weren't just talking about something they had heard. They weren't just giving facts. They were relating an experience. They were relating something they were witness to. They are relating something that matters to them. And it reaches Peter. Peter says to himself, "I've got to know. I've got to know what they experienced. I need to know why they came back in such a rush, why they wanted us to know."

And there's an important lesson for us to learn in this. It's not a miracle that we keep to ourselves. It's not something just for our innermost thoughts. It's not something simply for our solitary reflection. God's message of hope and love born in Christ, his death on a cross so that we would understand and know that salvation. That we could die with Christ and rise with Christ. That life has something more in store is a message that we should always be willing to

share. Because even if it only reaches one person and everyone else says it's nonsense, that one person matters. That one person's hope, that one person's faith, that one person's desire to know more matters. And so let that be our lesson today from the empty tomb. That we bear witness to the resurrection of our Lord and Savior. But it doesn't mean just seeing and knowing. It means sharing, regardless of what other people think. Because it just might be that you reach out and you make the difference and give hope to just one person. And who knows what they'll go on to do with that hope? Who knows what they'll go on to do with that love? So today I share the good news with you. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Hallelujah. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. 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.

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney
Nancy Hoke	Don Wells	Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart
Ronnie Winstead	Dwight Parsons	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gable
Sage Martin	Dalton McFarland	Ruth Ann Finley	Jodie Bunch
Tom Finley	Laura Carlen	Judy McCellan	Rosie Chancelor
Susie Callahan	Kenny Holmes	Ted Marrs	Family of James Myers
Family of Roger VanScyoc	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Wayne Carrell
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite	Sue & Bob Smyser
Larry Thompson	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer	Martha Roberts
Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Darrell Quick	Mammaser Family

Rev Camron D St.Michael

<https://stmichael.pw>

cdstmichael@outlook.com

(316)530-3182 (call or text)

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

* Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

+ Scripture quotations are from the Common English Bible, Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible.

^ Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.comThe “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™