

# EASTER SUNRISE

April 12, 2020

*led by Rev Jordan Cantwell & Rev Laura Fohse*

## **GREETING**

This morning, this joyous morning, we journey to the tomb with Mary Magdalene and discover the stone is rolled away.

**An empty grave.**

With joy, we discover that Christ Jesus has risen.

**Let us offer praise and thanks to God for fulfilling the resurrection promise.**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Christ has risen!

**Christ has risen indeed.**

Faith, hope, and joy are alive.

**A new age is dawning, and death cannot harm us.**

God of all creation, we praise you.

**God of resurrection and eternal life, we have gathered here to worship you and celebrate the power of your love.**

## **GATHERING PRAYER**

Loving God, we gather in the early morning of your Resurrection. We have been mourning and weeping believing that you have been taken from us. Instead, you meet us here... at the cross of new life. Here, in this sacred place, we discover that you are alive, that sin and death cannot defeat you. Now our tears of sorrow turn to tears of joy as we experience your presence among us. Today, we begin to understand that joy comes from grief. You call us to go into the world to share this good news, knowing that we are not alone.

## **SCRIPTURE and DRAMATIC READING**

**It was extraordinary. I couldn't believe it! Nobody could believe it! He was dead. Jesus had been crucified. I saw him! But when I went to the tomb that morning before dawn, it was so dark out! That darkness had engulfed our faith, our leader, our very souls. The darkness that overwhelmed us couldn't be lifted. Or could it?...**

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to

Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, breathlessly panting, “They took the Master from the tomb. We don’t know where they’ve put him.

**I told the disciples. They were the leaders; they could do something! “It was the most incredible thing!” I said. Jesus *was* dead. We had laid him in the tomb. But, when I found the tomb empty, Peter and the other disciple returned with me to find only the linen wrappings there—Jesus’ body was gone! When they saw this, they shook their heads and went home.**

Peter and the other disciple left immediately for the tomb. They ran, neck and neck. The other disciple got to the tomb first, outrunning Peter. Stooping to look in, he saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but he didn’t go in. Simon Peter arrived after him, entered the tomb, observed the linen cloths lying there, and the kerchief used to cover his head not lying with the linen cloths but separate, neatly folded by itself. Then the other disciple, the one who had gotten there first, went into the tomb, took one look at the evidence, and believed. No one yet knew from the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. The disciples then went back home.

**I didn’t leave. It was as though staying near the tomb somehow kept me near to Jesus. He wouldn’t leave me! He couldn’t. So what if I’m weeping, wouldn’t you?**

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus’ body had been laid. They said to her, “Woman, why do you weep?” “They took my Master,” she said, “and I don’t know where they put him.” After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn’t recognize him.

**I sat on a rock and covered my face with my hands. Then for some reason I looked up and I saw them: two angels, shining in the light of the rising sun. Then I saw the gardener. I asked him where Jesus’ body had been taken.**

Jesus spoke to her, “Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?” She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, “Mister, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him.” Jesus said, “Mary.”

**Astonishingly, he called me by name: “Mary.” It was him! Not dead; but alive! Really, truly, alive.**

Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” meaning “Teacher!”

Jesus said, “Don’t cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my disciples and tell them, ‘I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene went, telling the news to the disciples: “I saw the Master!” And she told them everything he said to her.

**I ran to tell the disciples: “Jesus is alive! I have seen the Lord!” And do you know what they did? Nothing! They stared at me as though I was a crazy woman, and they did absolutely nothing. They just retreated into a locked house. (Shakes head and sighs.) What were they afraid of? The greatest news... so full of hope and possibility... and they don’t have the courage to face it. But you do; don’t you? You believe me; right?. It really is true. Jesus is alive. Hallelujah!**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

O God, we have so much to be thankful for this Easter morning. In the chill of the morning air, we do feel the warm blessing of your Spirit. We can rejoice this day because our tendency toward disbelief is overcome by our capacity for faith. We are truly amazed that a cross of crucifixion has been transformed into a symbol of new life, a symbol of eternal life.

We are thankful that you come to greet us at this empty cross... a symbol of hope, trust, and faith. We thank you that a dark and empty tomb has emerged into a place of light and living. In all our days, we shall live for Christ, the resurrected and risen One. Amen.

### **BENEDICTION**

The tomb is empty,

**Christ has risen.**

As you journey in faith,

**may your life be full,**

your love be abundant,

**and your hope be eternal.**

Live this day and always for Christ Jesus

**because the Risen Christ lives in you.**

**ALLELUIA! CHRIST HAS RISEN**