

EASTER & THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW



Have you ever needed someone to recognize you? Have you ever needed someone to show up at just the right time and say just the right thing?

Mary arrived back at the tomb, broken and sobbing. She stooped to peer inside, and through her tears she saw two angels in dazzling white robes, sitting where Jesus' body had been laid—one at the head and one at the feet! "Dear woman, why are you crying?" they asked. Mary answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've laid him." Then she turned around to leave, and there was Jesus standing in front of her, but she didn't realize that it was him! He said to her, "Dear woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Mary answered, thinking he was only the gardener, "Sir, if you have taken his body somewhere else, tell me, and I will go and . . ." "Mary,"

Jesus interrupted her. Turning to face him, she said, "Rabboni!" (Aramaic for "My teacher!") John 20:11-16

Grieving and heartbroken, she thought He was gone forever. He was the man, the Son of God, who she worshiped and loved, but her adoration had been replaced with mourning. What was Mary to do, but to grieve and visit Jesus' tomb? So, early in the morning, actually before the sun had met the darkness of night, Mary set out for Jesus' grave.

But to her surprise, she found the stone over the tomb had been removed and rolled away. Shaken and startled, she ran to find Peter and John to tell them someone had tampered with Jesus' grave and that His body was missing. Upon hearing the news, the disciples ran as fast as they could to witness for themselves an empty grave. Peter and John were puzzled when they found the burial linens, but not Jesus' body. They didn't know what to do or think, so they went back home. But no, not Mary – this was not right. Her Lord and Savior was missing and she wouldn't rest until His body was returned to its proper resting place.

Mary arrived back at the grave after the disciples had visited and left. She was distraught, but Mary found something that Peter and John didn't encounter before. She found two angels sitting where Jesus' burial linens were. Barely able to see them through the blur of her tears, she exclaimed, "They have taken away my Lord and I don't know where He is."

In a state of desperation, she turned back to go outside and ran into a gardener. She again cried out, "My Lord is missing, I have no idea where He is!" The gardener looked at her... and simply said, "Mary." Mary immediately exclaimed, "Rabboni" which was Aramaic for "Teacher."

I can't even express how much my heart lovingly aches when I read this interaction between Jesus and Mary, because this is the Lord, I know so well. My heart is beyond joyful at this sentiment. I can hear Jesus saying it! I feel His tenderness and His resurrective power in it.

What would hearing Jesus say your name aloud in one of your darkest moments do for you? Like Mary, we don't realize He's there – we think He's the gardener instead. But we need to open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds to the power of the Resurrection that is always with us. This is all made possible because of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is why Jesus gave up His life and defeated death. He wants to speak your name, every single day.

Just like the joyful crowd on the first Palm Sunday, we had an amazing Easter worship service. The atmosphere was wonderful, the music was beautiful, and the message was meaningful. It was a great occasion and a great blessing to our wee church.

The same thing was happening all over the world. People gathered together to worship and praise Jesus as their Savior and Lord. To realize that almost 2 billion people across the planet were celebrating Christ's glorious resurrection is

staggering when you think about it. If only we could fulfill that potential every week in church and every day in the world! The Earth could be healed of its brokenness and perhaps we could all live-in peace. After all, Easter is a celebration of God healing sin and death with the actual resurrection of His Only Son. If we could only apply that in our relationships with other people, as well as our relations with other nations, what a dear and blessed planet this would be.

Let's try to apply Christ's message by becoming Easter people to a Good Friday world. Let's continue this blessing He has given us yesterday and take it to the people we encounter, the situations we experience, and the challenges we face this week. If we do this, then I believe we will begin to see the world around us change for the better with the goodness of God.

Point to ponder: How did Easter affect me? How can I extend its blessings this week; this year; for all our life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we praise You for being our Savior and Lord. Just like the crowd of the first Palm Sunday, we are joyful for Your presence among us and for the hope which Easter brings. Help us to positively share these blessings with all whom we encounter this week. In Your Holy Name, we gratefully pray. Amen.

Easter worship resounds with Alleluias!

TELLING THE EASTER STORY USING COLORED PAPER

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and her friends got up while it was still **BLACK** as night to go to the place where Jesus was buried. It was so quiet, hardly a bird was singing yet. They all felt sad because their friend had died.

They walked down the dusty **BROWN** path, telling each other stories about Jesus. They remembered the times they followed him around the countryside. They remembered the time he sat on a **GREEN, GREEN** hillside and taught the people. They remembered the time there was not enough food to eat, only five loaves and two fishes, but when Jesus blessed the food, there was enough for everyone.

Soon they reached the garden where Jesus' body had been put in a tomb with a big, stone to cover the entrance. They found the **GREY** stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body.

While they were trying to figure out what had happened, suddenly two men in dazzling **WHITE** clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men in the dazzling clothes said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen! Remember how he told you, while you were all still together, that he would be killed but on the third day he would rise again."

Then they remembered what Jesus had told them, and they left the tomb to tell all of Jesus' friends and disciples what they had seen. As they left the garden, the **YELLOW** sun was shining in the clear **BLUE** sky, and they noticed beautiful flowers, **PINK** and **PURPLE** and **RED**!

And all these years later we remember how they went to the tomb, and found it empty. We celebrate on Easter Sunday with flowers of all colors. We give thanks for Jesus, who rose that day. We give thanks to God, and we say "Alleluia!!"

"The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him." Now I have told you.'" Matthew 28:5-7 (NIV)

I don't think Easter is quite done with me yet. I know what glorious things this Holy Day says to the world at large. But what does Jesus want me to know, to think about, to wrestle through at this time of year? This season of new beginnings. So, I'm lingering here a bit longer. I feel like the girl who wears the same outfit to school two days in a row. Easter is

done now. Time to put it back in the closet. Only for me it isn't. I want to wear it again today, tomorrow and many more tomorrows. Amen!

Study Questions for John 20:11-18

- How can Fifth Ave. UMC show people Jesus?
- Jesus wasn't where Mary expected Him to be. His resurrection didn't fit into her current reality. How can our emotions sometimes overwhelm our faith?
- Believers need an eternal perspective to calm current fears. Why is the resurrection of Jesus the cornerstone of the Christian faith?
- How would Mary's attitude have been different had she gone to the tomb expecting Jesus to be risen?
- How can you be an encouragement to someone who is overwhelmed by fear and anxiety?
- A.W. Tozer once said: "A scared world needs a fearless church." How can we as the church, "the people" go into the world and share the Good News – Christ is Risen! How can we share the Gospel with those who don't know Jesus?

Talking to Our Heavenly Father - If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.

You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You

PRAYER & CONCERNS

- Merciful God, as we mourn the loss of your faithful servant; husband, father, grandfather great-grandfather, and friend, **Mr. Richard "Dick" Simmons**, we ask you to cover his devoted family and friends with your wings of love and compassion. We know God that you love them so much and that you will take care of all their needs. Lord, fill the gap that has been left in their hearts and give them the courage to face each day without Mr. Dick. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Cards and messages of love and support can be mailed to Mrs. Shirley Simmons & Family, 2908 Valley Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Bro. Bob Krell**, is rooted in our hearts as we shower him and the Family with our love, care and support. He is grateful and humbled for your prayers and cards of restoration, strength and miraculous healing. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.
- **Mr. Len McGinnis, Jr.**, continues to quietly face medical challenges with valor, hope and courage. Comfort his pain, calm his fears, and surround Mr. Len with Your peace. Your cards and notes of healing prayers and support for Mr. Len and Mrs. Shelia McGinnis can be mailed to: 1230 Vogt Drive, West Bend, WI 53095.
- Our condolences to the family of **Ms. Barbara Jean Lovensheimer** who passed away March 11, 2023. Cards and notes of support and comfort can be mailed to Ms. Barb's significant friend, Mr. Jerry Loebe, Dickson Hollow, W156N4881 Pilgrim Road, #350, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051.
- We remain in prayer and support to **Ms. Ann Cording** after her recent surgery. Ms. Ann will undergo further medical treatment. Visit Ms. Ann, dear Lord and grant her strength to bear this sickness with which she is afflicted, with patience, submission to Your will and trust in Your loving care. We humbly pray that You will bless the means used for Ms. Ann's recovery and those persons who will administer them. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- **Mr. Brett Barnett** is recovering from hip surgery. We give God thanks and praise and pray that God will bless our brother with God's loving care, renew his strength, and heal what ails him in Jesus loving name. Cards and notes can be mailed to: Mr. Brett and Ms. Mary Barnett, 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **We still need YOU! We need leaders and volunteers to serve in various positions on committees and boards. You may not think you have the gift, talent, and/or time to serve, but all are called to work in the kingdom. We need you!**
- Our **church family members and friends** are experiencing all forms of challenges and concerns. "Lord, give me the courage to face the challenges and ills that come. Help me to persevere and not give up. Give me the strength to face these storms. Pour out your peace over me and keep me in your perfect peace. Amen.

- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** having been diagnosed with Epilepsy, is still working with her medical team to find the correct medications and doses to control the seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers and support. Special prayers for Mr. Pat as he cares for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** is still admitted at The Pavilion at Glacier Valley. She requests your prayers and support as she continues to journey with health concerns. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.

Prayer of Intercession for Easter

Let us pray that the results of Christ's resurrection may be seen throughout the world.

Lord God, our loving heavenly Father, we thank and praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Your Son, our Passover Lamb, has taken away the sin of the world. Forgive us and all people.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son said, 'Peace be with you'. Bring your peace to the world and to our own country.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son appeared to Mary Magdalene when she was weeping. Comfort those who are sad, lonely, or grieving.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son met the women and asked them to tell the disciples about his resurrection. Guide Christians everywhere to witness to the resurrection in their lives.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son proclaimed himself to the two disciples from the Scriptures and made himself known to them in the breaking of the bread. Reveal him to us and all people through the teaching of your word and the celebration of your holy meal.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son strengthened the faith of Thomas by telling him to touch his hands and side. Reassure those who are troubled by doubts, and strengthen their faith in your goodness.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Your Son conquered death by his death and won the victory by his resurrection. Be with those who are dying, and lead them to life with you forever.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, grant that all who now celebrate these joyful holy days here on earth may finally praise you forever, with all the angels and saints in heaven. We ask this through your risen Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** Adapted from the Lutheran Church of Australia

**With passionate hope, love and the promise of your Resurrection,
your humble Pastor-servant leaders,
Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin**