

# What's next?

An Easter Sunrise Meditation  
John 20: 11-18  
1 Corinthians 15: 1-11  
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Resurrection Day, 4 April 2021



There you are. Please, sit quietly and take a few breaths before you go on.

As I write I wait for you to come and sit with me in our sanctuary. Right now, it is just me waiting for you to join me here. It is quiet, not silent.

Sitting here alone, waiting for you, praying for you, our sanctuary is not as quiet as I thought it might be. Our seats for worship are surrounded by the sounds of sacred memory. Memory itself becomes our sacred place. How long before you come and sit here in reality?

Sitting and waiting for you, I hear the memory of my pastor friend, Carolyn, at our last meeting, “It is not wasted on me that once again I am proclaiming the empty tomb in an empty room.”

Memory takes us to Mary of Magdala standing at the empty the tomb. She cries. We wonder what she would do after her sobs faded. Could it be that she would turn and walk away from Jesus’ grave? Would she go to her sacred place? Was she like so many of us who have come here to sit and pray in the hard year now past? Did she have such a sacred place in Jerusalem? Or would she walk all the way back to Magdala?

We have no idea what might have been because we know well what happened next. Christ heard Mary crying and spoke to her. We know she could not recognize him

until she heard his voice. “Mary.” Suddenly the garden with his tomb became her sacred space, the place where Mary met the risen Christ.

Mary may have been first to speak with Christ, but she was not the last. Paul also met Christ outside of his sacred place. According to his letter to the Corinthians, Christ spoke with over 500 people in those first days after he left his tomb. Then Paul wrote, “Last of all, . . . he appeared to me. I am the least because of what I did, but by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace for me was not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15, paraphrased by DJR) But Paul was wrong about one thing. By the grace of God, Paul was not last of all to hear Christ speak.

Since that first morning when the tomb was found as empty as a sanctuary on most mornings in our COVID times, Christ has been speaking to us. Sometimes Christ speaks where we sit to meet him daily. Sometimes Christ waits there for us to speak first. But death did not have the final word. Christ still speaks to us.

This is our second Easter as a church who must celebrate Christ’s resurrection out of our sanctuary. Last year when we were all safer at home, Christ came to us in our fear just like he came to Mary. This year we will gather in our church yard—the Brits would say garden—gather to sing, gather to share Christ’s communion, gather to give public witness to the sacred ways Christ has come to us. But that is later, closer to lunch, and the Gospels are so clear that the risen Christ most often showed up in time for lunch.

Certainly, Christ will meet us outside of the sanctuary, the same way he met Mary and Paul and so many others. I hope today will be like the first time he met Mary. That day Christ was in the garden, outside the tomb, waiting for Mary and the others to arrive. Can you see him waiting to greet us this morning? Waiting for you?

Now what? In a few hours, our Lenten fast is over, and our Easter feast song of victory begins. But what now? What will you do in this your space between the fast and the feast? Listen. Christ calling you.

Amen.