



## JAMESTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

411 Liberty Street, Jamestown, PA 16134

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***“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.” 1 Peter 1:3-4***

April 9, 2020

Dear JPC family and friends,

I pray this letter finds you safe and managing reasonably well. In this season when we are being asked to stay at home, I've been greatly encouraged by the way folks in the congregation are finding ways to “be the Church outside the church.” Almost daily I hear stories of people reaching out to help others through phone calls, grocery pickup, making face masks, doing yard work, and many other thoughtful acts of service. Thank you!

I'm pleased to share some other news:

- This week, to go along with the written worship materials, we have recorded an Easter worship service featuring Cindy Loveridge on the organ and a message by Pastor Sue. This worship service can be viewed at our website <https://jamestownpres.org/> (under the worship service tab) and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/jamestownECOpresby/>
- At the April 5 Saturday Supper we served a record number of 99 meals (all by take-out), with total donations of \$527 for the Jamestown Food Pantry and the Wings to Fly healthy snack program (“backpack program”).
- On April 18 will be another Saturday Supper with chicken-and-biscuits, by take-out with pickup times starting at 4:30. Limited delivery may be arranged for the homebound. Orders must be called in advance to the church office (724-932-2101).
- The Properties Committee is taking advantage of this quiet time to do some painting and other work, including some renovations to the fellowship hall.

May the Lord bless you and all those near to you ... may the Lord strengthen you, encourage you, and fill you with great joy and hope as we give thanks for his faithful love and the promise of the Resurrection.

Yours in the love of Christ,

*Pastor Sue*

P.S. In order to reduce postage costs, please notify the church office if you are able to receive these materials by EMail, or if for any reason you no longer wish to receive the weekly mailing.



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**“Worshiping Together ... Even While Apart”**

A Resource for Worship at Home

*Easter Sunday April 12, 2020*

**Prelude:** *“The Power of the Cross”*

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord! Although current circumstances prevent God’s people from gathering in one place to worship, we can come together as one in heart, one in Spirit, part of the Church universal in celebrating Christ’s victory over sin and death. If you have internet access we encourage you to watch this morning’s service on our website.

To prepare our hearts and minds for worship, let us observe a moment of silent prayer. We then begin by remembering how Jesus was laid in the tomb.

**The Burial of Jesus** Luke 23: 50-56

**Hymn:** “Were You There?” #287  
(verses 1-3)

**The Tomb is Empty!** Luke 24: 1-12

**Acclamation of Praise** (in unison):

Glory and honor and blessing to you, Lord, our God!

On this day You won victory over death, raising Jesus from the grave and giving us life everlasting.

Glory and honor and blessing to you, O Christ!

For us and our salvation you bore our sin on the cross, then, rising from the dead, opened for us the way to eternal life.

Glory and honor and blessing to you, Holy Spirit!

You make us aware of our need of a Savior and lead us to believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Glory and honor and blessing to you for your mighty power and unfailing kindness – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – one God, now and forevermore. Amen.

**Hymn:** *“Christ the Lord is Risen Today”* #289

**Message: From Death and Despair to a Living Hope**

**Prayers of the People, ending with the Lord’s Prayer**

Include your prayers of thanksgiving and intercession.

*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

**Hymn:** *“He Lives (I Serve a Risen Savior)”* #299

**Benediction:**

Dear friends, in this time when we are asked to keep our distance from each other, know that the Lord is not distant, but nearer to us than our very breath. He has promised never to leave you or forsake you. Now may the God of hope – the same God who raised Jesus from the dead -- encourage your heart and fill you with all joy and peace as you continue to look to him – today, tomorrow and even forevermore. Amen.

**Closing Refrain:**

*He is Lord, he is Lord; he is risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A special thanks to all who helped with last week's Saturday Supper. Considering all precautions that had to be taken to keep everyone safe and healthy, we served 99 meals and received \$527 for the Jamestown Food Pantry and Backpack Program!

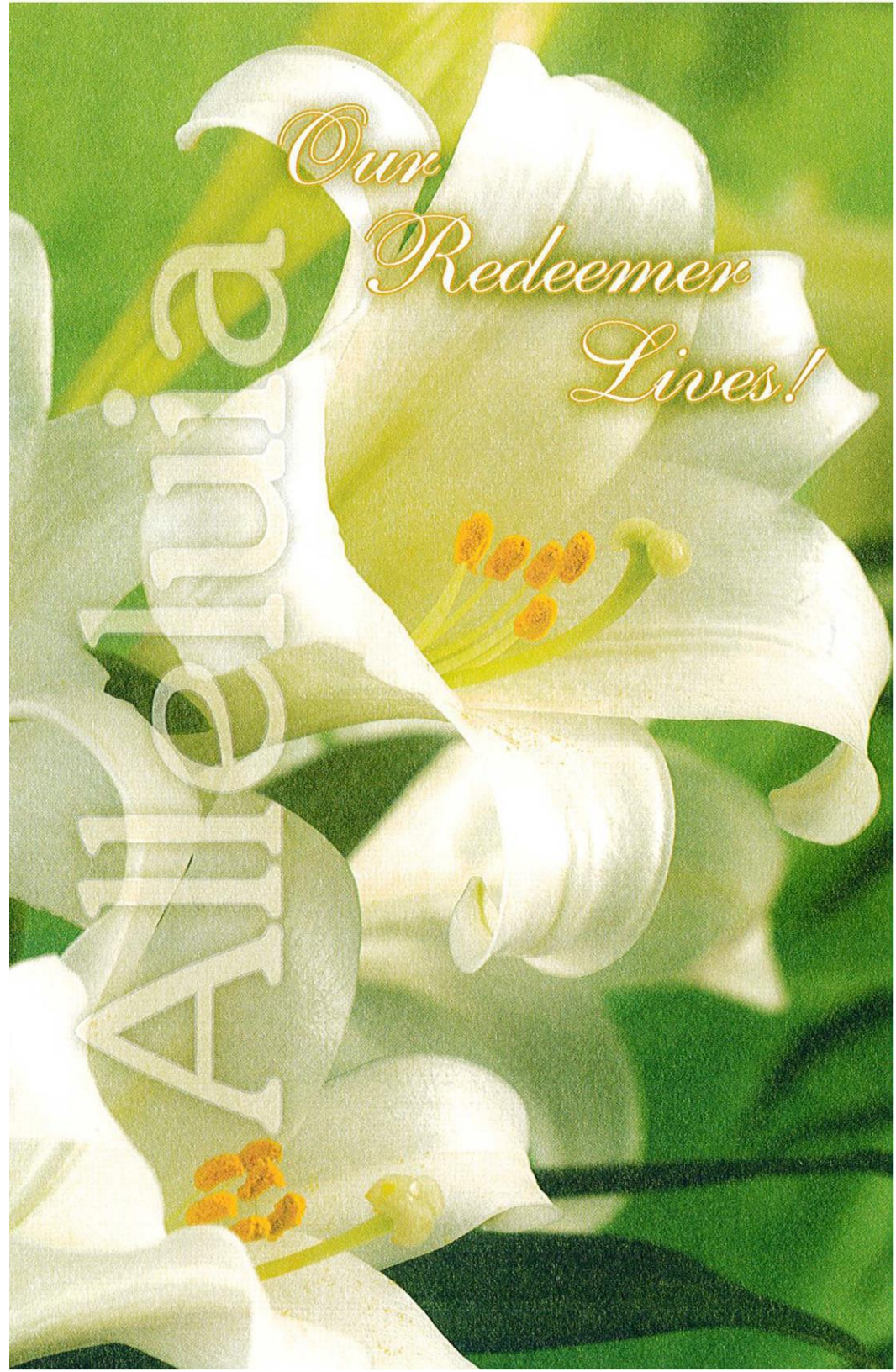
Please note with the observation of the governor's stay at home order, churches are considered "essential" and can remain open. Our secretary, Linda Pinney, will be changing in-office hours a bit to comply with the stay at home order. We will be adding call forwarding to the church phone number so that Linda can answer the phone when working from home, and all email and phone messages can be answered promptly.

We also ask that you continue to give as generously as you can to the church's general fund so that we can continue to cover necessary expenses and seek new ways to serve, even though we are not currently able to meet together. Gifts can be mailed to the church, or you can give online via the church website.

NOTE: As we are unable to worship together today, all orders that were received for Easter flowers will be returned to you. It is our hope that when we are back together to worship we can celebrate with fresh flowers then!!

# Happy Birthday!

04/26 Amanda College  
04/27 Phyllis Smith  
04/27 Nancy White  
04/28 Cindy Loveridge  
04/30 Michael Costa



## “From Death & Despair to a Living Hope”

*Luke 23: 50-56, 24: 1-12*

Very early on the first day of the week – that is, the morning after the Jewish Sabbath – a small group of women made their way out of Jerusalem toward a garden just beyond the city walls. They knew each other well and usually kept up a steady stream of conversation but today no one felt like talking.

Truth be told, they were in shock from the events of the past few days. A week ago, *the whole city* knew great and wonderful things were happening. Ancient prophecies were being fulfilled; ancient wrongs were about to put right. The most exciting thing was, Jesus was at the center of it all! And then ... everything came crashing to a halt.

Now Jesus’ disciples were all in hiding, afraid the soldiers would come for them next. But despite the possibility of danger, these women ventured out of the city, determined to accomplish one final task: an act of devotion; a labor of love.

So the little group walked silently through the dawn, carrying their bundles of precious burial spice. But when they drew near the place where Jesus’ body had been laid to rest, they were astonished to see that entrance stone had been rolled back. Fearful of what they would find, they went in ... only to discover that the tomb was EMPTY.

We are so used to this story that we cannot feel the full force of this terrifying discovery: *The body of the Lord Jesus WAS NOT THERE !!* So the women just stood there, staring. The English text says they were “wondering about this” but the Greek puts it much more strongly. They weren’t just “wondering” -- they were perplexed ... bewildered ... *dumbfounded*. Whatever could have happened?!?!

Suddenly two men in dazzling white robes appeared. These were God’s messengers – angels – bringing what we might call the first Easter sermon. And it was a very SHORT sermon, just four sentences long.

*“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” they asked. “He is not here; he has risen.”* [then they asked, *“Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee? The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful people, and be crucified; and on the third day, rise again.”*

This was good news ... great news .... WONDERFUL news! But it was also MUCH too much for their already-frayed nerves to take. Trembling with both joy and fear, the women burst out of the tomb and ran to tell the others.

I wonder just how far they ran before they had to stop to catch their breath. And I wonder how long it took for the angels’ message to begin to sink in. Walking out of the city gates early that morning, they surely thought that this morning’s work would be the end of the road, the final steps of their journey with Jesus. But as the angels made very clear, the cross and the grave were NOT the end. NOT the end of Jesus’ life – and NOT the end of our hope and joy.

None of the disciples would understand this; not at first anyway. In fact, when they heard what had happened, *nobody believed what the women said*. And who can blame them? Many of the disciples had heard Jesus say, “It is finished.” They watched him breathe his final breath. Some of them saw a

Roman soldier drive his spear deep into Jesus' side. Others looked on from a distance as Joseph of Arimathea took the lifeless body down from the cross, gently wrapped it in linen and laid it in a tomb.

The gospel records make it very clear that *every single person who witnessed the crucifixion was absolutely certain Jesus was DEAD*. Even the Roman centurion told Pilate that Jesus was dead, and you can be sure that Roman centurions knew their business.

Yet, as the day went on, it became exceedingly obvious that Jesus was no longer dead, but ALIVE! He appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden. He appeared to Peter. He appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus – not only appeared to them but walked with them a long way. And finally, near the end of that long and mind-boggling day, Jesus appeared to many of the disciples who had gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem, coming to them even though the doors had been locked.

Yes – Jesus was alive! Jesus *\*IS\** alive! It would take a while for that new reality to set in ... time for the disciples, well, maybe not so much to understand the resurrection, but at least, to accept it and believe it. Over time, the Holy Spirit showed them how what had happened fit into God's plan. They began to understand what the prophets had said about the Messiah ... they remembered that Jesus said he must die but would be raised again on the third day ... and they remembered Jesus saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though they die, will live; and whoever lives believing in me will never die." They remembered, too, that Jesus told them: "In the world you will have many troubles, but have courage, for I have overcome the world."

Yes, in this world we will have many troubles. The evil one would like us to be confused, bewildered, frightened. The evil one would like us to focus on the pain and sorrows of life – to be paralyzed by fear of death, dragged down by despair.

But the Resurrection is proof that death does not have the last word. The Resurrection is proof that even the worst storms of life are not a cause for despair. The Resurrection is proof that even when all human hope is gone ... when we have no idea what to do to "fix" things, or even where we should begin ... we can be sure that the Lord has all our trials firmly in his good and faithful hand.

So whatever each day brings, remember – Remember the Risen Lord! And let us rejoice at the marvelous power of and love of our faithful God, who through Jesus Christ has rescued us from death and despair and brought us into a living hope – whole, new, eternal, abundant life. Praise God, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed