

Resurrected

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Salame, bought spices so that they could go and anoint Jesus' dead body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they came to the tomb. They were saying to each other, “Who's going to roll the stone away from the entrance for us?” When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, (And it was a very large stone!) Going into the tomb, they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right side, and they were startled. But he said to them, “Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has been raised. He isn't here. Look, here's the place where they laid him. Go tell his disciples, especially Peter, that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there just as he told you, overcome with terror and dread. They fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.”

(Mark 16:1-8 CEB)

In the quiet. Just before the dawn of Easter morning, United Methodists of Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Granger, Iowa, members of our church and community would gather at the foot of the cross on a hilltop just outside of town. It must have been around six 30 in the morning. We would huddle together to keep warm, waiting for the sun to rise in the warmth of our faith. We had been drawn by the promise of resurrection, and as light broke into the darkness, a voice from the crowd would proclaim, “Christ is risen!” And we would turn to one another proclaiming, “He is risen indeed!” And we would sing the songs of resurrection hope.

In the heart of every united Methodist, Easter is not merely a commemoration, but it's a celebration of the transformative power of God's love. Death had been defeated. Light and life were not overcome. Jesus lives love has prevailed.

As we reflect on our recent journey of Lent, marked by remembrance, repentance, and a reordering of our life, our faith, and our priorities, we were reminded of the depth of our human frailty and the boundless mercy of our creator.

We revisited that mercy in the solemn observances of Holy Week– the breaking and sharing of bread, the lifting, blessing, and sharing of cup.

Do you remember?

The washing of feet when Jesus asks, do you understand what I have done for you?

Do you remember?

We then walked with Jesus to the garden, witnessing his deepest prayers and then his arrest.

Do You remember?

And then we approach the cross on Friday, having walked the path of Jesus suffering, contemplating the weight of human suffering and the sacrifice of love, a sacrifice that knows no bounds.

Do you remember?

And on Saturday, we waited. It was on the hillside that Easter morning that our hearts were lifted, our spirits renewed, and our faith reaffirmed for on this day, on Easter day, the stone is rolled away and the tomb stands empty, echoing with the promise of new life, "Christ is risen!"

Indeed, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of our faith, the beacon of hope that illuminates our darkest moments and guides us through the shadows of doubt and despair. In the resurrection of Jesus, we find the assurance that death does not have final word, that suffering is not the end of the story, and that love triumphs over all. It is a proclamation of victory over sin and death, a testament to the enduring power of God's grace to transform hearts and lives.

As United Methodists, we are called to embody the Easter message in our lives, to be agents of justice and reconciliation, and instruments of peace. In a world marred by division and strife, we are called to bear witness to resurrection, hope that shines brightly in the face of adversity, offering healing to the brokenhearted, comfort to the grieving, and compassion to the marginalized.

May this Easter be a time of renewal and revival as we embrace the joy of resurrection and the promise of abundant life. Let us live each day with the certainty that Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Happy Easter, Friends!

Every morning is Easter morning from now on. This we proclaim in the name of the resurrected Christ.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia, and Amen.

Bishop Lanette Plambeck
Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area
March, 2024