

Knox Service Outline - Easter Sunday

04/05/26

Interim Moderator: The Rev. Daniel Martinez

Pastor: Rev. Cathy Victor

Music: Connie Dunwoody

Elder: Lorraine Whiting

Reader: Connie Dunwoody

Prelude

Welcome/Announcements/Land Acknowledgement (Unison)

Elder

Knox Church recognizes that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation. We also acknowledge the Coast Salish Peoples on whose territories we meet, worship, and engage in ministry. We recognize that this is the unceded territory of the Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ people. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting historic and current injustices. We are grateful to be here, and we honour the Nations who have cared for these lands, waters and air and continue to do so today. We ask that God lead us along the path of reconciliation, bringing accountability and healing.

Celebrations, Joys & Concerns

Elder

Sung Response: God's Blessing on You

Gathering Song: And on This Path

Call to Worship Prayer (Responsive)

Pastor

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

This is the day the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Prayer of Approach & Confession

Pastor

Jesus Christ, we greet you! Your hands still have holes in them. Your feet are wet with dew. And with the memory of our names, undimmed by three days of death, you meet us here - risen from the grave. Yours is the glory, O God, for raising Jesus from the darkness of death. Yours is the glory, O Christ for being prepared, through your love and sacrifice to conquer death and give us the gift of eternal life. Risen Lord, we worship and adore you. Our spirits dance within us for joy! Loving God, we confess that at times we do not fully share in the joy of the resurrection, but are caught up in the worries, fears and anxieties of our days. Forgive us for falling into the comfort of worry and forget to live in resurrection hope and peace. Holy Spirit, may your power and presence so conform us to your image, that we radiate your glory and your love. Yours is the glory, O God, for showing us the human face of your love in Jesus Christ, your Son and our Saviour. Yours is the glory, Jesus, for the victory you have won by your grace is endless. Your love endures forever, Alleluia! Amen

Words of Assurance

Pastor

Christ is Risen! The stone has been rolled away! The tomb is empty! Along with all of God's people throughout the ages, we have this assurance: That neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ. We are forgiven people! We are Easter People! Thanks be to God, Amen.

First Hymn: Jesus Christ is risen today #243

Prayer for Understanding (Unison)

Reader

Come light of our hearts, come generous Spirit, By the glory of your risen presence, By the comfort of your forgiveness, Open our eyes, our hearts, our minds To hear what you would say to us today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

1st Reading: Acts 10: 34-43

Reader

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

2nd Reading: Colossians 3: 1-4

Reader

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

3rd Reading: John 20: 1-18

Reader

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came,

following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Scripture Response

Reader

Let us proclaim the Gospel from the rooftops!

With our words and with our lives!

Sermon: Defecting in Place

Pastor

The resurrection story is based on the experienced presence of the risen Christ among Jesus' friends and followers. It is about what was absent: an empty tomb. Yes. But it is also about what was present. Based on testimonies of those to whom he appeared, Jesus continued to appear for 40 days. The resurrection is also about Jesus' continued risen presence among followers and friends – right now. We believe that the resurrection was a pivotal, informing and cosmically defining event. We believe it is a defiant affirmation of God's total redemption – not just disembodied souls. God is recreating the entire cosmos.

This morning I want to take you on a bit of a visual journey of how that first Easter morning came to be, but first I want to tell you a story. It may not sound like it has much to do with today's celebration but stick with me and you will see where I am going. It was the year 1990. I was working as a special education aide in an elementary school in North Vancouver. The school was brand new and I had helped with feedback on accessibility for some of the students with special needs; in particular the student that I cared for and worked with. I may have told you about him before. His name was Max. He was blind, had some other physical disabilities as well needing to heal from trauma. He had been born in a prison in Nepal. But that is another story.

One of the jobs I had was to learn and try to teach him to read Braille. So I had a very clunky brailier which was larger than a typewriter, and lots of special paper to use with it. Plus numerous items to teach in a tactile manner. He was a delight to work with.

So it was the first week of September and we were getting settled in our brand new class room. There was a problem though. I didn't have a desk which was kind of necessary. So I spoke to the class room teacher and explained that I really needed one. He simply said no. There weren't any desks that I could have. That didn't work for me so I went to have a chat with the principal and explain my problem. Oh - there aren't any desks available. Well this was a predicament. So I went home and slept on it.

The next morning I woke up with an idea. When I got to school I set up my ironing board and put a vase with a flower on it. My brailier sat nicely at a level that I could even adjust. All day long, staff members would wander by the class room to take a peek and see what that special ed aide had done. There were some good laughs, and some discussions. By the end of the day every staff person had come by to look. By the end of the week, I had a desk. All I had done was quietly work at my ironing board, doing my job.

Now at the time I had no idea that there was a name for what I had done. But there is. It's called 'defecting in place.' You may not have heard of this term but it is a psychological term based on an aspect of what is called the Family Systems theory. It unpacks how our actions impact others. It can be difficult to do.

Dr. Meg Hess, a pastoral psychotherapist, explains it this way:

"It is the opposite of bowing to everyone's wishes around you. It's about being clear about who you are, your goals, your purpose. It's about staying on course no matter the resistance or sabotage that comes your way. It isn't about being passive aggressive but know this - it can stir people up."

And what I see in the gospel stories leading up to Easter morning is Jesus defecting in place, but clearly to a greater degree than carrying an ironing board around.

Palestine was under Roman occupation. Jesus takes a stand in a highly charged situation. He could have decided to quit Jerusalem and not bother going. But he defines who the messiah is, who he is in his own terms. In a culture defined by force and might, Jesus is defiant. He is the messiah who comes in peace.

'He chooses humility, silence, and self-giving love. He rejects imperial power and confronts injustice through truth, peace and sacrifice.' (Rev. Wes Denyer)

And so with Brad's help I want to share with you some paintings that I hope will help us reflect on Jesus' journey to this place.

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Painting 1. Christ in the Wilderness by Ivan Kramskoi.

First is a close up of a painting by the Russian painter Ivan Kramskoi. It is called Christ in the Wilderness. This painting depicts Jesus 40 days in the wilderness, standing up to the temptations that the devil puts before him. You know you're hungry Jesus. You could turn all these hard stones into bread. You could rule the entire world! How does this rendering of Jesus struggle affect you? Can you imagine being in a desert like that? Come on Jesus, you know you want it. It would be so much better than this miserable desert, right? Jesus isn't just being stubborn. He stands in truth - knowing who he is; knowing who he is called to be as the Messiah. He defects in place.

Painting 2. Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper

Da Vinci painted this on a wall in a monastic refectory in Milan. You all know this painting, I'm sure. It's probably the image that comes to your mind when you think of Jesus' last supper with his friends. We see the reactions of the disciples when Jesus says to them: One of you will betray me. You may not be able to see the details from where you are, but Judas is on Jesus' right, holding a sack of coins and a container of spilled salt is in front of him. The spilled salt is significant symbolism meaning a broken friendship or betrayal. Their faces show all kinds of reactions. Shock, upset, confused. Jesus' face is depicted as peaceful. He knows who he is. He knows what is before him. He knows who will betrays him. But he doesn't back down. What would you be feeling as you share the bread and the wine with him and the others and then head to the garden?

Painting 3. The Crucifixion by Matthias Grunewald and Nikolaus Hagauer.

It is the centre of an altar piece that was painted for a monastery in the early 1500's. The monastery specialized in hospital care for people with the plague and other skin diseases. This is not pretty. And it isn't the most common of crucifixion depictions. There are no halos of gold, or visible angels hovering. Jesus has plague type sores on his body and is writhing in pain. His mother Mary is on the left collapsing into John's arms in anguish. Mary Magdalene is on her knees praying. Even though John the Baptist had already been beheaded, he is symbolically on the right as a nod to his cousin Jesus "He must increase, but I must decrease.' If you were sick, in pain and terrified of what lay before you, how would this impact you? Jesus identifies with us in our pain and suffering.

Jesus could have possibly managed to avoid this, all of this. We want to say Stop! No! But Jesus is not stopped by death and pain. Jesus' defecting in place isn't about being stubborn. It is Jesus' unimaginable love for the world, for you, for us that drives him. Nothing can stop him. He is adamant. He holds to the truth of who he is - the Messiah. And new life; resurrection comes. Nothing can stop God's resurrecting transforming power. So while Good Friday is about the injustice of people. Easter is about the justice of God. This is good news. Easter is God's yes to Jesus and a no to the powers that executed him.

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Painting 4: the women at the tomb.

I don't know who made this art work. It's possible it is AI, but nevertheless I think it is evocative. Can you imagine yourself in this scene at the open tomb? It's not specific who is being portrayed in this art. I like that because all four gospels differ on how they tell the story of Easter morning. It's like getting the observations from all the people present at a car accident. Everyone saw it from a different angle, maybe picks up on a different detail. Some gospel endings mention one angel, or maybe it was two, and who were the women? How many? Mark doesn't even have an appearance story. But the thing is- the details don't really matter. What matters is the meaning of it all. The meaning of the resurrection is what Easter is all about. We are resurrection people.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth at least a decade before the gospels were written and he said with unwavering firmness:

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15)

Paul tells of the resurrection and all whom Jesus appeared to. Imagine the emotions that everyone of Jesus' friends had that morning. How would you have felt? How does it make you feel now?

Painting 5: Peter and John running to the empty tomb - by Eugène Burnand - a Swiss artist 1850-1921

I love the emotions on their faces. Are we seeing fear? Worry? Are they out of breath? How does this affect you? I think of Mary weeping near the tomb. She wept because she loved. When she recognized Jesus, the words that fell from her lips were, My Lord and my God! And Jesus says to her - Peace be with you. The underlying crucial truth is that Jesus lives! And he can still be experienced. He can enter locked rooms and locked hearts. He can walk beside us without us recognizing him just like the disciples walking to Emmaus. They didn't recognize him until they shared bread and wine together. Jesus is not among the dead, but the living. He is present with you, now - in this place. He is present with you in the desert places you may find yourselves in. He is present in places of suffering. He has been there, and is there. He knows. He is present at the table, in our daily conversations at our tables, and at this table. He is present when we keep asking why? And when we wonder what we should do.

He didn't just appear to the women that morning and to his friends hiding out of fear in a closed locked room. He saw what Thomas needed - that close presence. He did not judge Thomas but met him where he was at. We may not all see him, but he IS with us. His presence can be unwaveringly intense or mysteriously quiet. Jesus does not operate within the limits of what we only can see. And there is plenty that we cannot see. Electricity. Communication signals. Ultraviolet light. Air. And I'm sure much much

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more. As people we have our limitations. Jesus doesn't. The one true fact remains. Jesus is alive. Jesus loves you and will never leave you. He will never back down or change that in any way. You are never alone. Easter shows us God's essence and that with Jesus touch we are transformed. Jesus is alive. He is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia! And Amen.

Photo of empty tomb by Ferrell Jenkins.

Second Hymn: Thine be the glory #258

Invitation to the Offering

Pastor

With joy and thanksgiving let us respond to God's life changing love for us as we bring our gifts to God.

Offering Song: 306 - Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

Pastor

Blessed be God forever. Yours Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty. For everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you. Amen

The Apostles' Creed 539

Pastor

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Third Hymn: I danced in the morning #250

Invitation to the Table

Pastor

When it is time to share in Holy Communion, you are invited to please come forward. Please hold your hand out to receive the bread. And remember that all are welcome at this table. If you are unable to come to the front, please signal an elder who will come and serve you. The bread is gluten and dairy-free. Both juice and wine are available.

When we gather at this table, we remember how this meal began, how it has promised hope and new life to Jesus' friends from one generation to the next. And so, when we gather, we remember bread and wine shared around a table that solemn, holy night. Today we remember another day too, the first Easter day, when Jesus appeared to friends along a road. But they were too sad and tired to recognize him. So he came to the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. *Then* their

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eyes were opened; *then* they recognized him. As we break this bread and share this cup in the name of our Risen Lord, may our eyes be opened to recognize Jesus' presence with us—here and now. And as Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth, let us also bless God for what we are about to receive.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Responsive)

Pastor

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

With hearts lifted high, O God, we offer our gifts to you on this joyful Easter Day, for we have seen your grace and power, rolling away the stone of sorrow and despair, bursting from the tomb in the gift of new life. And so we join our voices with all creatures high and low, with all the saints who have gone before us, and with those who sit beside us and all around us, to raise the song of your unending goodness and greatness:

O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space.

All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace.

Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.

And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!

O Christ, our Risen Lord, receive our praise and joy this day. Your resurrection promises that there are new possibilities for us and our weary world. Even when we falter in discouragement at the daily news, even if we hesitate at the good news that your great love has come back to embrace us, you do not abandon us. You call us by name to assure us of your love and invite us to join you now as your friends. You have spread this table for us with gifts of bread and wine so that we may taste your love and grace, meant to bless and heal us. And so we proclaim our faith and our hope as we say:

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Spirit of Life, rising in us and around us this Easter Day, breathe upon us now and upon this bread and wine. So may they become for us Christ's body and life blood, to nourish us with the gift of new life in Christ. As this bread and wine become a part of us, may we become a part of you, Lord Jesus, and your work of healing this hurting world. Help us trust that all things will work together for good through the power of love that raised you from the dead, the power of the great love we share in your name. And so we sing together:

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!

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Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!

Words of Institution

Pastor

On the night that Jesus was betrayed and arrested, he took bread. And after giving thanks to God, He broke it and said, 'This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup after supper and said, 'This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' The One who was sealed in the tomb has been raised from death for our sake and is present with us in the Bread of Life. (Bread) The Christ whose wounded hands bear the marks of our sorrow and pain now reaches out to us in the Cup of Joy. (Wine) Come! For the table is ready! The gifts of God, for the people of God!

Sharing the Cup & Bread

Pastor

(When it is time to share in Holy Communion, you are invited to please come forward. Please hold your hand out to receive the bread. And remember that all are welcome at this table. If you are unable to come to the front, please signal an elder who will come and serve you. The bread is gluten and dairy-free. Both juice and wine are available.)

Prayer After Communion

Lord Jesus Christ, you have nourished us with bread broken and wine poured out to strengthen us for our journey. And you have put your Spirit into our hands to take your peace with us wherever we go. You rise in us in spite of all that challenges us within our own lives and in the world you love. You rise in us to mend our broken hearts and put us back together again so that we can befriend the world, and make peace for all God's people in your name. Send us out as your witnesses to share your peace and your grace with hope and humility. Hear us now as we sing what Jesus taught his friends to pray.

The Lord's Prayer (Sung) : 469 - Our Father in Heaven

Fourth Hymn: Let us talents and tongues employ #563

Blessing

Pastor

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Go in peace. Go in joy! And now may the guarding of the God of life be on you, The guarding of the loving Christ be on you, the guarding of the Holy Spirit, be on you, to aid you and enfold you each day and each night of your life. Amen.

Dispersal Song: Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord #260 (Verse 2)

Postlude