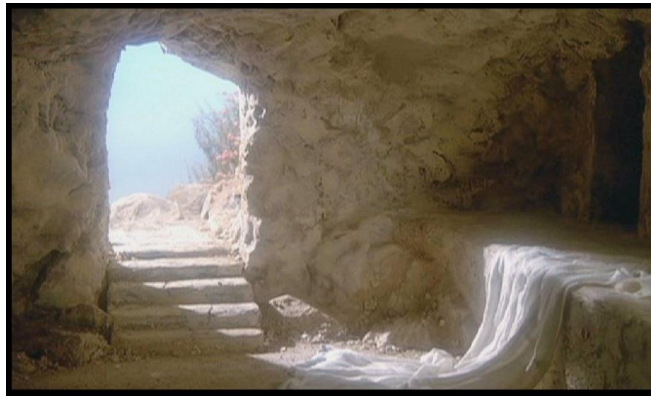


Worship at Home
April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday



<http://www.franthony.com/blog/the-power-of-an-empty-tomb>

God calls us to worship

The Lord is risen!

Hallelujah! He is risen indeed!

Hymn #243 “Jesus Christ is risen today”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkWaoJZGvsA>

We bring our praise and confession

God of life and love,

Maker of all things visible and invisible;

on the first day of creation, you spoke,

and out of chaos came life;

out of darkness came light.

On the first day of the week, you raised Christ from the tomb,
and out of death came new life.

On the first day of this week, you call us to gather in Christ’s name,
to rejoice in the power of resurrection
and claim your gift of new life in the Spirit.

Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto you, O God,
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,
this day and always.

Almighty God,

you raised Jesus from the grave,

and shattered the power of sin and death.

But we confess that we remain captive to fear,

and bound to habits that hold us back from enjoying new life in Christ.

Indifference deadens our hearts,

and we seek comfort rather than justice.

We cling to hurt, resentment, and disappointment

and refuse the freedom that comes with forgiveness.

Forgive us, O God,
and restore us to the joy and new possibility
promised to us in Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

God assures us of his forgiveness

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn us? Only Christ—and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's generous grace.

We offer our lives and resources

Baptism of Emma Shirley Pretty

If you are a member or adherent of either of the Moore Presbyterian congregations, please remember to submit your offering to the appropriate treasurer. For contact information, speak with Rev. Ian.

God speaks to us through his Word

READ MARK 16:1-8.

The Sabbath began on Friday evening and lasted until Saturday evening. After Jesus was crucified on Friday morning, and died in the late afternoon, Joseph of Arimathea hurriedly buried his body in his own tomb. But didn't take the time to administer the proper burial rites. So, when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out to find a shop keeper and bought the necessary spices to properly anoint his body. On the next day (what we call Sunday), early in the morning, they walked over to the tomb to carry out their ministry and to say "Good bye" to Jesus.

We can only imagine their confusion upon arriving at the tomb, finding the stone rolled away, and being told that Jesus was no longer there! He has been raised.

That word is the English translation of a Greek word which means to awaken. As in waking from sleep:

You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has awoken; he is not here.

I'm not the first to notice that we don't tend to talk about death in ways that are consistent with the hope we've been given in Jesus Christ. We use phrases like "passed away" or "gone on to a better place" or "being reunited with loved ones." The ancient Israelites spoke of death in a way much more in line with the gospel hope. They spoke

of it as sleeping. When the angel spoke with the women that Sunday morning, he told them that Jesus, who had been sleeping, has awoken.

From other New Testament writings, we learn that in awakening Jesus donned his glorified physicality. That is, he was no ghost, nor figment of overactive imaginations, nor was he metaphor; he was a bodily man just as we are when we rise in the morning. Yet, his was a physicality that transcends our comprehension. In the stories of his appearances to the disciples, they didn't recognize him! He was the same man, yet changed; physical (Thomas could touch him, he ate fish with the disciples), yet glorified.

Jesus has been raised! He has awoken!

What everyone had thought was the end of the story, turns out to be merely the end of a chapter. The end of an age. The end of a day. By his sacrifice, the day marked by sin and death's control over our minds and emotions has ended. At his rising, a new day has dawned. A day marked by the forgiveness of sin and freedom from the hopelessness, fear, and loneliness that are death's companions.

Having thus awoken, Jesus didn't wait around the tomb to entertain guests! He has headed off to Galilee to encourage and equip his followers to get to work on the next chapter!

Despite the angel's assurance that there was no need to be alarmed, the women were seized with terror and amazement and fear. When confronted with this news that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead, they fled the tomb in fear.

Dare we believe that the Resurrection is true?

If the Resurrection is true, then there is a Living God who transcends the limits of human understanding and imagination. If the Resurrection is true, then all evil powers which destroy and deform life, that even death, the last enemy, are powerless over our hearts and minds. If the Resurrection is true, then even though the destructive powers are still present, their end is not in doubt. They're like a sky scraper whose foundation has been undermined. They will crumble. If the Resurrection is true, then all things are possible for God.

Before Jesus began his public ministry, his presence was heralded by John the Baptist who “proclaimed a baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sins.” (Mark 1:4)

That state of sin-forgiveness is here by the birth, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. On Easter Sunday, we are given a glimpse of what will be for all God’s children. A glimpse of that new day. that new chapter. Jesus is raised from the dead, the first fruit of the new creation.

When we celebrate a baptism, we are not only welcoming a child of God into the community that bears the name of Christ, we are bearing witness to the gospel that this child now lives in that new day; has been claimed by the Father who already declares them forgiven. Righteous. Holy. Because Jesus, who was crucified, has been raised.

Let’s not sit around scratching our heads, there’s another chapter to write. So, go, believe, and testify to the truth that the tomb is empty, Jesus has been raised!

Hallelujah!

We respond with faith and service

God of new beginnings,
Where congregations have drifted apart through months of distancing,
re-energize the connections and commitment needed for ministry.
Where divisions and disagreements hinder mission and service,
reconcile people and personalities with a sense of common purpose.
Where gathering resources or finding new leaders present challenges,
renew trust in your faithfulness and hope that remembers the empty tomb.
Resurrect, renew and revive your people, O God.

Hear our prayer.

God of new possibilities,
Where relationships are vibrant and life-giving, nurture and sustain them.
Where they are marked by memories of hurt or current misunderstanding,
refresh them with forgiveness and reconciliation.
Where they are neglected or taken for granted,
open eyes to the great gift we offer each other.
Resurrect, renew and revive your people, O God.

Hear our prayer.

God of new opportunity,
Stir the minds and hearts of leaders

to work for justice, understanding and the equitable sharing of resources.
Where laws are unjust, or those who enforce them corrupt,
call those in power to account and lift up the voices of protest.
Where the pandemic presents new problems and complicated decisions,
bring wisdom, compassion and cooperation to all in authority.
Resurrect, renew and revive your people, O God.

Hear our prayer.

God of new life,
Where there is sickness of body, mind, or spirit,
bring healing and hope.
Where people mourn the loss of relationships or dreams,
bring comfort and courage to go on.
Where those who serve and care and maintain our common life are exhausted,
bring rest and renewal.
Resurrect, renew and revive your people, O God.

Hear our prayer.

God of Easter Day,
Give us gratitude, the impulse to share,
and a spirit of grace and understanding.
Resurrect, renew and revive our spirits.

Hear our prayer.

God of New Creation,
hear us as we name in the silence of our hearts the people in our thoughts this day. ...
(Hold a silence)
Resurrect, renew and revive your people.

Hear our prayer.

Now we pray in one voice in the words that Jesus gave:

The Lord's Prayer

God sends us with His blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord be kind and gracious to you,
the Lord look upon you with favour,
and grant you peace.
Amen.