



'Worship at home' Easter Sunday March 31st 2024



We come to worship this morning in expectant wonder. Easter brings a sense of anticipation, expectation, and hope; the promise of new possibilities; new life.

Find a **pencil** and a **small stone** to use for prayer and reflection – you may already have one in your worship space from Good Friday. **Hold the stone in your hand** and feel its weight, as you reflect on the weight of the burdens which fell upon Jesus, in the events of Easter. Imagine the burdens of the first disciples, as they approached the tomb that first Easter morning.



How might they have felt,
seeing the stone rolled away?
What might they have hoped for?
What do you hope for?

**Write some of your hopes on your stone
as you name them before God in prayer.**

Place your stone somewhere where you can continue to reflect on your hopes and dreams.



John 20: selected verses

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple...and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple...reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around

Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying... she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"

New International Version

An Easter Reflection

It was early in the morning. Still dark.
The dawn just starting to cut through the fog.
The air hung heavy with expectation,
as if the earth itself were holding its breath.

The echoes of the cross linger. His voice still rings out:
It Is Finished. Into your hands I commit my spirit.

The story comes to us in pieces and fragments,
hints and images:

A vineyard garden, grapes ready for the harvest.
A stone, rolled away. The guards asleep at its side.
A pile of clothes, folded in an empty tomb.



Peter and John, running in with disbelief.
Walking out with questions and with hope.
But Mary stays behind. To weep in the garden.
And we weep with her. There is so much loss.
So much grief. So much death.

With her we look up, and through her tears
We see angels, seated in victory on top of the stone.
Do not be afraid, they tell us. He is not here.
Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He. Is. Not. Here.

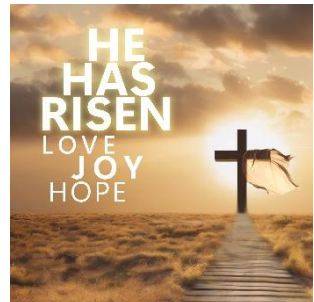
From the garden she hears a voice:
Why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?
She still cannot see. The sun is rising.
She is muttering with explanations,
But Mary's heart starts beating with tremors
Of hope. Whom do you seek?
He is not here.

And like a voice from heaven,
She hears that voice. The voice she is longing for.
The gardener speaks her name: Mary.
Christ looks at you and Christ speaks your name.
The world is new as he speaks your name.
You are made new as he speaks your name.
What the angels said was true. And it is true today.
Christ is risen.

Easter is announced by every breath he takes.
And every word he utters.
Easter means that love has won.
Death is finished. Evil is conquered.
God is good.

Love's redeeming work is done.
It. Is. Finished. It. Is. Finished.
He is not dead.
He. Is. Risen.

*~ adapted from Rev. Cambron Wright,
Faith United Methodist Church.*



Easter very powerfully reminds us that in darkness and despair we can find the hope of new opportunities. In Christ's resurrection we experience the power of God, and the truth that life is stronger than death, love is greater than hate, forgiveness overcomes judgement, and that the fear and pain of our lives are transient and do not represent the final reality. Easter brings the promise of new beginnings.

**How might you find hope and joy
in the promises of Easter?**

**Where do you see signs of hope and joy
around you?**



Pray that the spirit of the risen Christ will bring transformation and hope for those who live in darkness and despair; who are mourning and in pain; who live in fear or oppression. May they know joy in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and

entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. New Revised Standard Version

Closing: You are making all things new.

A new heaven - A new earth

A new way of thinking - A new way of being.

Alleluia! Christ is risen: Christ is risen, indeed!

You are making all things new.

Renew our minds to renew the world
by living out your commandment of love.

Alleluia! Christ is risen: Christ is risen, indeed!

~ adapted from the Christian Aid website. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/churches/weekly-worship>

