

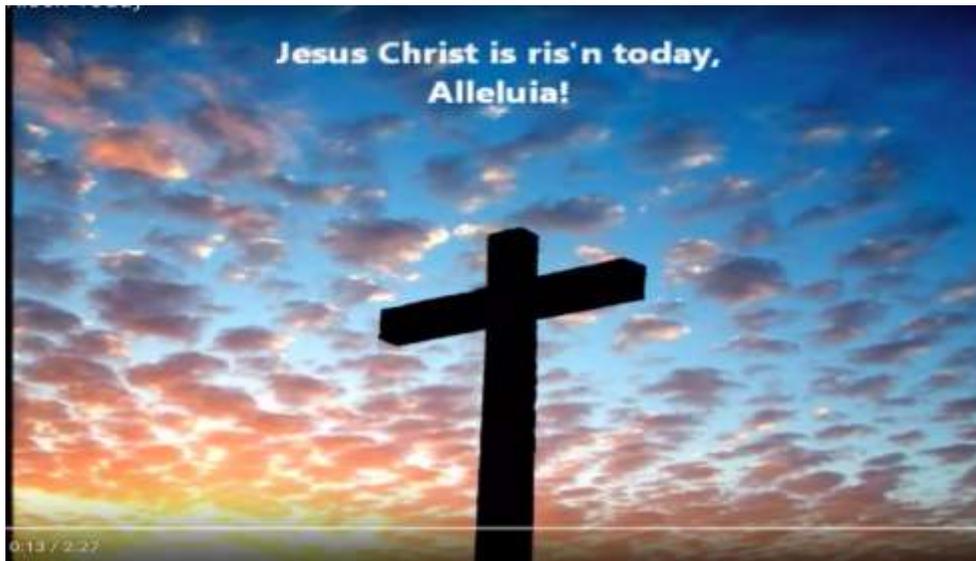
## *Christ is Risen!!! Alleluia!!!*

Easter 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you on this most holy of days in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in name of the Holy Spirit.

Although, I miss being present with you this Easter morning; it is with such joy that I share with you my thoughts and prayers as we celebrate what God has done for us through the life, death and resurrection of his beloved Son. As, on this Easter day, we may be mourning what is not occurring (worship together, family dinners, Easter flowers), let us find strength, comfort and joy in God's victory over death on that first Easter morn. For it was on that first Easter morn, when also no one was present, God raised our beloved Jesus from the dead. And we hear the angel say: "He is not here. HE HAS BEEN RAISED".



### [Jesus Christ is Risen Today, Alleluia!!](#)

*Click on the above title to play.*

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Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!  
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!  
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

But the pain which He endured, Alleluia!  
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!  
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!  
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
Praise eternal as His love, Alleluia!  
Praise Him, all you heavenly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!

THE READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CHAPTER.

**Mark 16:1-8**

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.

2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back.

5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

## EASTER 2020 MESSAGE

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN

***Christ is Risen. He is Risen, Indeed. Alleluia!***

*Let us pray:*

*Holy Lord Jesus, on this day we rejoice in your glory and stand in awe of how you have transformed this world with your dying and your rising. Receive our joyful praise. Alleluia! Amen.*

They had a dream. They – that is the descendants of Abraham – They had a dream that one day God would come and rescue them as God had done in the past.

A dream which filled them with hope that they would one day be free from those who oppressed them, hope that one day they would return to their beloved land of milk and honey, hope that one day their God would restore them to wholeness.

And their vision of this dream was based on the stories about the ways that God had rescued them, blessed them and restored them in the past.

In the past, God had provided them with mighty and powerful leaders and Kings who protected them and led them through their challenges to the times when life was good. And so they lived in hope that one day God would again anoint a new leader, a Messiah who would come into their lives to be their leader, their king, their Savior– They (so they thought) had a clear image of what this leader would do and how this leader would act to bring back “the good old days”

They never imagined that this anointed one would come with a message that would challenge “the way they had always done things.” They never imagined that this Messiah would eat, socialize and care for “those people.” They never imagined that the Messiah would offer a “new and different vision” of who God was and what God’s newly restored Kingdom would look like.

They never imagined that they needed to let go of their old dream and replace it with a new dream which would create a new vision of who God was and what God was about to do to restore their lives.

In fact for many in power, for whom the current system was working really well, they were threatened by the message of a new vision of God’s reign. And when the powerful and the religious elite saw that the crowds began to embrace this new vision that the Messiah professed. Those in power plotted first to discredit the Messiah and when that did not work, they plotted to kill him.

This past week, we walked through those final dark days of Jesus' life, as those who were threatened by his teachings and his actions turned him over to the Roman authorities to be crucified.

And it was on Friday when we heard the story of Jesus breathing his last breath and being laid in the tomb that the hopes and dreams of being rescued, being blessed and being restored were snuffed out.

We find in this morning's text no inkling that even his most faithful and devout followers, believed in what he had told them – that is, after three days he would rise again

For on this Easter morning, we find Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bringing spices to the grave to anoint his body – a ritual of reverence and a ritual of practicality to cover up the stench of the decaying flesh. This ritual of reverence, honoring the life that had departed served as a ritual of closure for those who had been left behind. And so, we see these women with the spices in their hands conceding that evil, corruption and death had won.

Their dream of God acting to rescue, to bless and to restore them as God had done in the past seemed to have died on the cross. And we see these women only concerned about bringing closure to the rite of burial.

And now with the spices in their hands, they had one last job to do, which was to anoint the body with spices. And as they walked toward the tomb, they expressed only one practical concern. WHO would roll away the boulder so that they could perform this final ritual to honor their deceased loved one the way they had always done. They approached the tomb desolate and hopeless only first to be surprised that the stone had already been rolled away. And so with spices in hand, they entered the tomb

And before their eyes could adjust to the lack of light in the tomb, a young man, dressed in a white robe, said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. - go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

And with spices still in hand, they ran out of the tomb horrified and traumatized. And according to the gospel of Mark that's where the story ends - them running away with spices still in their hands – like a real cliff hanger of a season finale.

But you have to wonder if after the two women ran far enough away from the entrance of the tomb still holding their jars of spices - they stopped – and perhaps just stared at one another in disbelief of what they had just experienced

And as they looked at one another – each of them still holding the spices in their hands – They looked at one another to confirm that they had both heard the young man say: He is not here - He has been raised – He has gone ahead to meet you in Galilee – just like he told you he would. Go, go and tell the others.

But, who would ever believe them. They never imagined that they, lowly women who had just come to anoint the body would be the ones chosen to be the first to see the empty tomb, the first to hear the words – he is not here he has been raised - and the first commissioned to take the news to the others.

They never imagined that their hopes and dreams of living in the Kingdom that Jesus talked about had not died on the cross, but that it was through the cross that new and restored life had been given to all people.

These women and the descendants of Abraham had forever had a dream that God would act to rescue, to bless and to restore God's people. They just never imagined that their dreams would be realized through the death on an old wooden cross and that their hopes and dreams were for all people.

He is not here – death and corruption and evil have not won.

He has been raised – and you, Mary Magdalene and Mary – and you – the followers of Christ go tell the others!!!

For God so loves the world, for God so loves us that he gave his only Son to die for us. And through the faithfulness of the Son who obediently went to the cross for us – we have been rescued, we have been blessed and we have been restored to right relationship with God –

so now WE ARE LIVING THE DREAM. As we now and forever and for always - live in the amazing grace, the abundant mercy and the unconditional love of God.

**Christ is Risen!!! He is Risen indeed!!! Alleluia!!!!**

AMEN



### [Thine is the Glory](#)

*Click on the above title to play.*

*It may take a few minutes to load and you may want to skip the ads*

#### **Thine Is the Glory**

1 Thine is the glory,  
risen, conqu'ring Son;  
endless is the vict'ry  
thou o'er death hast won!  
Angels in bright raiment  
rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes  
where thy body lay.

#### *Refrain*

Thine is the glory,  
risen, conqu'ring Son;  
endless is the vict'ry  
thou o'er death hast won!

2 Lo, Jesus meets thee,  
risen from the tomb!  
Lovingly he greets thee,  
scatters fear and gloom;  
let his church with gladness  
hymns of triumph sing,  
for the Lord now liveth;  
death hath lost its sting! *Refrain*

3 No more we doubt thee,  
glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without thee;  
aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conqu'rors,  
through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan  
to thy home above. *Refrain*

Text: Edmond Budry, 1854-1932; tr. R. Birch Hoyle, 1875-1939

*PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE*

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

L: You give a voice to all your children, even when we are frightened into silence. Empower all those who work with people struggling to make themselves heard, and to remember what their own voices sound like. Risen Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Blooming and growing things begin to greet us in this season of resurrection. May we see in them your eternal promise to renew all of creation, according to your great vision of life. Risen Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Like the impossibly heavy stone at Jesus' tomb, we often perceive great obstacles to what we are meant to do. Show us that you always provide a way, and that joys beyond our imagining await us when we are faithful. Risen Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Your new life also gives us life, great Creator. Bestow your healing spirit upon all those who need it this day, we especially pray for:

- Charles Michael Henzie , Diane and Gary O'Brien's grandson, as he continues in critical condition in the NICU at CHOP,
- Naomi Hinnershitz, my sister Lynne Hinnershitz' mother-in-law, who has been hospitalized with pneumonia
- Martha Loaiz and her husband, grandparents of one of our pre-schoolers who had become ill with COVID-19
- One of our families from our Kids Korner who have lost a family member and a friend to COVID-19 and have two other family members who are ill.
- For all those who are suffering from effects of COVID-19, for those who mourning the loss of loved ones, and for those who are isolated and separated from loved ones in their hour of need.

Risen Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Lord, you children are in danger, and we ask that you protect all those who risk their safety to care for others, we ask that you give wisdom to those who are making hard decisions day in

and day out, we ask for strength and discipline to carry on the fight to “flatten the curve”, we ask that you inspire our medical professionals and scientists to discover the answers that will lead us out of this health crisis and we ask for all that you know that we need in this time of crisis. Risen Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: All your saints in heaven and on earth join together to rejoice at your resurrection. Make us joyful in our communion with them, and grateful that because of you, we also have a place in your eternal kingdom. Risen Lord,

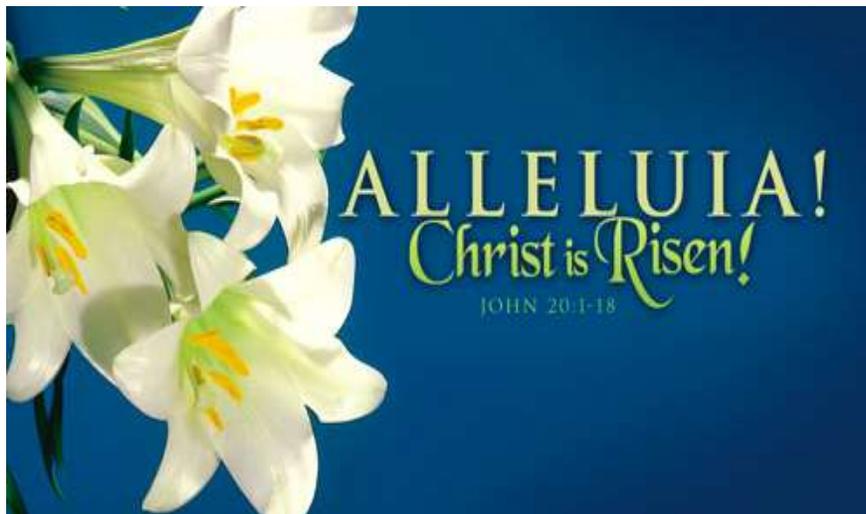
**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: In sadness and in joy, you hear our prayers, O God. Hold in your hands all these things for which we ask, trusting in the mercy of the one who defeated death, Jesus Christ.

**C: AMEN**

#### *EASTER BLESSING*

And now may the truth of the empty tomb – the astonishing reality of Jesus’ resurrection – keep you fearless and sure that you will see the Resurrected One again and again in this life. May the power of God’s endless love surround you and guide you, this day and always. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN



*Have a Blessed Easter!*