

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
April 4, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

HE IS RISEN!! HE IS RISEN INDEED!! ALLELUIA!!

The tomb is empty, he has been raised. The good news that God loves us so much that he has done the unimaginable, raised his beloved Son Jesus from the dead. And by the faithfulness of Jesus all the way to the cross death has been defeated, so that we live in the peace that passeth all understanding and the promise of eternal life with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Praise be to God!!!

The Church Council met this past month and voted to begin in-person worship OUTSIDE on the parking lot on May 2nd.

If you have prayer requests, please send them to me so that I can include them in my weekly newsletters.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

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Luke 24:1-12

A reading from the 24th chapter of Luke beginning at the 1st verse.

24 ¹⁻³ At the crack of dawn on Sunday, the women came to the tomb carrying the burial spices they had prepared. They found the entrance stone rolled back from the tomb, so they walked in. But once inside, they couldn't find the body of the Master Jesus.

⁴⁻⁸ They were puzzled, wondering what to make of this. Then, out of nowhere it seemed, two men, light cascading over them, stood there. The women were awestruck and bowed down in worship.

The men said, "Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery? He is not here, but raised up. Remember how he told you when you were still back in Galilee that

he had to be handed over to sinners, be killed on a cross, and in three days rise up?" Then they remembered Jesus' words.

⁹⁻¹¹ They left the tomb and broke the news of all this to the Eleven and the rest. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them kept telling these things to the apostles, but the apostles didn't believe a word of it, thought they were making it all up.

¹² But Peter jumped to his feet and ran to the tomb. He stooped to look in and saw a few grave clothes, that's all. He walked away puzzled, shaking his head.

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

Breaking News – it seems that every time I have the TV on, there is that three note warning that the programming is about to be interrupted with breaking news. Sometimes it is good news, like when the cargo ship was finally able to continue on its journey through the Suez Canal. But more often than not, the breaking news are stories of real time tragedies: tornadoes, fires, accidents, shootings.

Breaking news where the unthinkable has happened and it leaves us stunned as it is often impossible to comprehend that once again tragedy has struck some innocent person or persons.

The women in this morning's gospel reading: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women are headed to the tomb after having lived through a week of the unthinkable and inconceivable really happening.

For the one who they had come to believe in as truly the Messiah sent by God had fallen victim to the evil and corruption of this world. He was wrongfully accused, brutally abused and then cruelly crucified.

This innocent man, who had preached good news to the poor,

who had healed the lame, who had cast out demons, who had welcomed the foreigner, who had comforted the grieving and who had raised a man from the dead had been targeted and labeled as a troublemaker by the religious authorities of his own people.

And we hear in this morning's gospel reading of the women, who were there watching from a distance as these horrific events unfolded. They were there when they nailed him to the cross. And they were there when they laid his lifeless body wrapped in a linen burial cloth in the tomb.

As Jesus' body was laid into the tomb, the sun was about to set marking the start of the Sabbath, which gave the women no time to perform the burial

ritual of anointing the body with precious oils and spices. So, the women would need to return to the tomb on the morning on the next day with their anointing oils and spices.

So, before dawn on Sunday morning with their oils and spices in hand, the women walked to the tomb where Jesus' lifeless and broken body had been laid.

And as they walked, they wondered who would roll away the stone that had been used to seal the tomb. However, oddly enough when they got close enough to see the tomb, they were surprised to see that the stone had been rolled off to the side exposing the entrance to the tomb.

When they reached the tomb, they went inside and as their eyes adjusted to the darkness, they were stunned to see that all that remained in the tomb was the linen cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' body.

Who had taken the body and why had someone removed the body from this burial place?

Just then, two white dazzling men appeared and asked the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he has been raised.

Remember how he, himself told you, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and that he must be crucified, and he will on the third day rise and live again."

Then the women remembered the words that Jesus had spoken on a number of occasions. On the third day, I will rise and live again

They ran back to the place where they were staying and shared the good news that the tomb was empty and that messengers at the tomb told them He has been raised.

Peter, who wanted to see for himself, got up and ran to the tomb. And as he entered the tomb, he too saw only the linen cloth that had at one time been wrapped around the body.

He returned to where the apostles were staying to confirm

what the women had told them.
Yes indeed, the body was gone.
The tomb was empty.

But there was no rejoicing at
that moment in time. In fact,
they were so overcome with fear
that they locked the doors of the
place where they were staying
and hid.

On this first Easter morning,
there were no shouts of joy, there
was no singing *Jesus Christ is
Risen Today, Alleluia* and there
was no praising God for what
God had done; there was only the
fear and the anxiety of not
knowing what had really
happened and what it would
mean for Jesus' followers.

A few of the followers chose to
leave Jerusalem and head home.

Later in the day on that first
Easter, two of those followers
were traveling on the road to
their home in Emmaus.

As they were walking they came
upon a stranger and began to
talk with the stranger about
what had happened in the past
few days. When they reached
their home, they invited this
stranger into their home to share
a meal.

As they sat at the table, the
stranger picked up the bread,
blessed it and broke it and gave
it to them (just as he had done at
the Last Supper). At that point
their eyes were opened, and they
recognized this stranger to be
none other than Jesus in the
flesh. As soon as they realized

that this man was indeed the risen Christ, he vanished.

And even though the hour was late, the two men ran back to where the others were staying in Jerusalem to share the good news of their encounter with the risen Christ.

And while the two men from Emmaus were telling the other apostles that they had seen the risen Christ, Jesus appeared to all of them saying “Peace be with you.”

And all of their eyes were opened as they sat in the presence of the risen Lord himself.

And so, some two thousand years later we come together today and

every Sunday to hear the good news of what God has done for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior

We come together on this Easter morning and every Sunday morning not fearful or anxious but joyful, confident and full of hope as we sing praises to God for what God has done for us through the faithfulness of Jesus.

And like the women, like Peter and like all the faithful who have gone before us, we have embraced this story of God’s unconditional love as if we too were there to witness the risen Christ ourselves in that upper room on that first Easter.

And now, we are the witnesses who have been chosen to share the good news that there is a new covenant between God and all people that has been signed and sealed in Jesus' blood. A new covenant with God's promise that our sins are forgiven, with God's promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God and with God's assurance that one day we too will be resurrected to new life.

The stone that has been rolled away. The tomb was and is and will always be empty. Jesus has

been raised and death has been defeated once and for evermore for all people.

So let us celebrate and praise God

FOR - He is Risen – He is Risen
Indeed – Alleluia.

AMEN

HYMN
Jesus Christ is Risen Today

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia! | 3 But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
now above the sky he's king, Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia! |
| 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia! | 4 Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all you heav'nly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia! |

Text: Latin carol, 14th cent., sts. 1-3; tr. J. Walsh, *Lyra Davidica*, 1708, alt.; Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, st. 4

Blessing

May
The love of God,
The light of Christ,
And the joy of the Holy Spirit
Abide with you on this day
and forever more.

AMEN