

ORDER of WORSHIP with TEXTS
April 12, 2020: EASTER SUNDAY

Scene 1: Countdown to worship, 5 minutes, welcome
-ccli, one license, thank yous

Scene 2: Prelude: Fanfare to the Risen Savior

Scene 3: One verse of scripture, voiceover (Tom Fischer)

Matthew 28:5-6

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Scene 4: Bells: Processional Joy

Scene 5: Greeting
-Sanctuary photo
-Rachael Greeting
-Videos from church folks

Scene 6: Videos from church folks saying "Christ is Risen, Indeed"

Scene 7: Christ the Lord is Risen Today
-backdrop flowers in sanctuary

Christ the Lord is risen today Alleluia
Earth and heaven in chorus say Alleluia
Raise your joys and triumphs high Alleluia
Sing ye heavens and earth reply Alleluia

Lives again our glorious King Alleluia
Where O death is now thy sting Alleluia
Once he died our souls to save Alleluia
Where's thy victory boasting grave Alleluia

Love's redeeming work is done Alleluia
Fought the fight the battle won Alleluia
Death in vain forbids Him rise Alleluia
Christ hath opened paradise Alleluia

Soar we now where Christ has led Alleluia
Following our exalted Head Alleluia
Made like Him like Him we rise Alleluia
Ours the cross the grave the skies Alleluia

Charles Wesley | Samuel Arnold; © Words: Public Domain; Music: Public Domain

Scene 8: First Reading: Jeremiah 31:1-6 (read by Randy Warren)

At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus says the Lord:

The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,
the Lord appeared to him[a] from far away.[b]
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
O virgin Israel!
Again you shall take[c] your tambourines,
and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.
Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant,
and shall enjoy the fruit.
For there shall be a day when sentinels will call
in the hill country of Ephraim:
“Come, let us go up to Zion,
to the Lord our God.”

Scene 9: Easter People, Raise Your Voices

-backdrop, flowers

Text: William M. James

Music: Henry T. Smart

©1979, 1991 The United Methodist Publishing House

Easter people raise your voices
Sounds of heaven in earth should ring
Christ has brought us Heaven's choices
Heavenly music let it ring
Alleluia alleluia
Easter people let us sing

Fear of death can no more stop us
From our pressing here below
For our Lord empowered us

To triumph over every foe
Alleluia alleluia
On to victory now we go

Every day to us is Easter
With its resurrection song
When in trouble go the faster
To our God who rights the wrong
Alleluia alleluia
See the power of heavenly throngs

Scene 10: Offering Intro (Pastor Laura)

-Info for sending in offering

Scene 11: Offertory: The Earth is Risen (Chancel Choir, Brass 360, prev. recorded)
-Play photos from past Easters

“The Earth is Risen” by Gwyneth Walker. © Copyright 2015 by E. C. Schirmer Music Company, Inc., a division of ECS Publishing. www.ecspublishing.com All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Scene 12: Gospel Reading: John 20:1-18 (Pastor Laura)

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’ 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 hold on to 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.

Scene 13: Sermon (Rachael): Again You Shall Plant Vineyards

It doesn't feel like Easter. Not the way I remember it from growing up, anyway.

We're not hustling and bustling to get our dresses and tights on, shirts pressed, hair just right. We aren't squeezing our feet into extra dressy dress shoes. We're not even going to the sanctuary to pile into the overfilled pews and hush each other when the brass and bells begin to play. All of that has been taken away from us.

What's left for us then, of Easter? How will we remember this day?

Our first reading this morning came from the prophet Jeremiah. This is not a text we usually choose to read for Easter. In fact, in preparing for this day, I couldn't find many resources out there with tips on preaching Jeremiah for Easter.

That's not really a surprise. Jeremiah is a tough book – full of lamenting, struggle, and angst. It chronicles the prophet's oracles or proclamations against Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem. Jeremiah describes for us, sometimes more vividly than we're comfortable with, the up and down relationship between God and the people of Israel.

TIMELINE ON SCREEN

Times are tough in Judah when the words recorded in the book of Jeremiah deliver both warning and challenge to Judah and Jerusalem between 627 and 585 BCE. The already divided kingdoms of Israel have struggled to find their way to enduring faithfulness in God. The conquering Assyrian Empire has taken first the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and then Judah in the South as well, exiling many people from their homes and homelands.

MAP ON SCREEN

And even as Jeremiah warns of the impending trouble to come for Judah, the time of exile and number of people displaced from their homes, families, and livelihoods will be increased when Babylon conquers Assyria and eventually the city of Jerusalem is taken and the great Temple is destroyed.

Our reading this morning began,

The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness.

This is not typically where we settle in for Easter worship.

But this, dear ones, is not a typical Easter, is it?

...

This particular passage in Jeremiah is known as the *Book of Consolation*. It provides some relief in a book full of warnings, judgments, exile, and despair.

And it is a word of hope. For the ancient people of Israel. And it is a word of hope for us today.

We have been shut out of our churches. For a season.

Israel's beloved temple was conquered and completely DESTROYED.

We have been asked to stay home and spend some weeks, probably many weeks before we're done, in isolation, separated from the people we love and the traditions in which we find comfort and the activities that bring us joy. Many of us are feeling the strain of lost jobs and lost income to support our families. At all hours of the day we can read or watch or listen to experts tell us how bad it is, how bad it is going to get, and how hopeless or angry we should feel about it all.

The people of Israel were ripped from their homes, transported to strange and foreign places, separated for generations from everything that had been home and identity and community for them. And everything beloved and familiar that was left behind was destroyed.

The people to whom Jeremiah's oracles would be delivered were not strangers to hopelessness, helplessness, abandonment, separation, fear, or grief.

I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Into this pain, this suffering, this heartache, this loss, this trauma, this complete tragedy,

God speaks to these people words of consolation, words of hope, words that point their remembering to what God has done for them across history. Words that point their imagining to the future that will come, a future with hope that God's love and justice might be fully realized.

Again you shall plant vineyards.

Have faith. Be constant in hope. This story includes pain, but it does not end with pain. You will find your way home again. And you will be changed, and the world will be changed, but God will still be God.

Come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.

Come we that love the Lord and let our joys be known

Join in a song with sweet accord, Join in a song with sweet accord

And thus surround the throne, And thus surround the throne

We're marching to Zion, Beautiful beautiful Zion

We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God

There is a clear progression in Jeremiah's oracle. Weariness and grief -> dancing and rejoicing -> the work of planting.

This will be for us in the days, months, weeks, and even years ahead, what this Easter means for us, the people of God in this time and this place.

Right now we are weary. We are grieving what has already been lost and anxious about what we are still losing. This is honest and real and painful.

And it also presents us an opportunity to pause and wonder and listen to the ways we have been lost already, wandering already. How will we care for those most vulnerable right now, who have long been vulnerable and underrepresented? For those experiencing poverty and homelessness, for people of color whose experiences with healthcare have been historically inequitable, for our elders who are locked down without access to their advocates or those who have never really had advocates?

What will this Easter mean for them?

Will we dwell in the place of death, or will we, trusting in the God of everlasting love, the God of unwavering faithfulness, rise up this day with a hope that cannot be crushed by cynicism and fear?

Here's the thing.

Today we are missing our festival, the feast day of the resurrection of Jesus, Easter.

We are missing the rituals and the traditions.

We are missing our gathering with the brass and bells, the flowers and hats and the bigness and the joyousness and the celebration of it all.

But remember that progression? It's exactly out of this place – weariness and grief – that God calls us into dancing and rejoicing.

This morning we heard the Easter gospel, John's version. And it was not a story of flowers and trumpets and dancing in the streets.

It was the story of a quiet morning. The disciples? They were hiding out. Weary, angst-ridden, and afraid. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found it empty, and she went to get the disciples who saw that Jesus' body was gone and...

went back home.

This was not a day of feasting for them. The first Easter was filled with confusion, anger, doubt, worry about what persecution would come upon Jesus' followers and friends now that Jesus was gone.

Mary stayed at the tomb alone, weeping. This grief and loss on top of everything else was simply too much. It was all too much to bear.

Woman, why are you weeping?

She doesn't recognize him at first. Until he says her name. Mary.

Mary is overcome then, and Jesus warns her not to cling to him. It is time for his followers to carry on the work of God's kingdom. And Mary will be the very first to do so, as she returns to announce the resurrection of Jesus to the world.

This Easter, as we shelter in place and sit with the unknown of what is to come, we are closer to the heart of Easter than some of us have ever been. Don't run past the grief and anxiety – let it be what it is. Look for the lessons this season holds for us about where we have been and who we are becoming. Look for the risen Christ and rejoice with great hope. Sing and dance and rejoice.

And prepare, for there is work ahead of us. Again we shall plant vineyards.

Then let our songs abound And ev'ry tear be dry

We're marching thru Immanuel's ground, We're marching thru Immanuel's ground

To fairer worlds on high, To fairer worlds on high

We're marching to Zion, Beautiful beautiful Zion

We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God

Happy Easter, dear ones.

Christ is Risen. Alleluia. Amen.

Scene 14: It is Well with My Soul (Michael and Diane)
-for reflection with prayers written

Scene 15: The Lord's Prayer

Scene 16: Hallelujah Chorus

Scene 17: Benediction

Scene 18: Postlude (Diane)

Thank you:

Jake Berg, Dale Brown
Priscilla DeSpiegelaere
Erik Doucette, Tom Fischer
Diane Gronewold
Rev. Laura Hannah
Nathan Larsen, Dave Long
Michael Miller, Jon Warner
Randy Warren, Sue Wieland

all of our artists, video-makers,
and prayer partners!

JOIN US NEXT SUNDAY
April 15 at 9:30am on Facebook and YouTube
for a Celebration of Hope
with guest preacher, Bishop Bruce Ough!