



WORSHIPPING AT HOME

*with UCC Westerly
during the Covid-19 outbreak*

**April 12, 2020 @ 6am
Easter Sunrise on the Front Porch**

- The purpose of this or any Easter sunrise service is to greet the dawn as did the women who visited the tomb on that first Easter morning, expecting to tend to the dead body of their beloved Jesus. Instead they encountered a miracle which changed the world forever.
- Find a place to welcome the Easter dawn outside your home – a front porch, a patio, a favorite garden spot in a nearby park. If you want to witness the dawn break the horizon (assuming the weather cooperates), it will help to be facing east. But the sun will rise no matter what direction you are facing or whatever the weather so don't get too hung up on that. Be comfortable and be warm. It's okay to be sitting. God's

Creation around you is the only worship center you will need.

- A reminder I will be streaming this worship service on Facebook Live beginning at 6am. You can still access the service even if you are not on Facebook by going to the church website, www.uccwesterly.org, and clicking on the Facebook icon on the homepage.

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Gathering Music -- The sounds of God's Creation all around you!

Words of Welcome and Call to Worship – from Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness;
It is God that made us and we are his people. Give thanks to God and bless God's name.
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever.

Opening Song – “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

1. *Christ the Lord is risen today, Allelulia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Allelulia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Allelulia!
Sing ye heavens and earth reply, Allelulia!*
2. *Love's redeeming work is done, Allelulia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Allelulia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Allelulia!
Christ has opened paradise, Allelulia!*
3. *Soar we now where Christ has led, Allelulia!*

*Following our exalted Head, Allelulia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Allelulia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Allelulia!*

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-12

Easter Sunrise Meditation -- “Side by Side”

Song of Response: “In the Garden”

- 1. I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses
Refrain: And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
and he tells me I am his own; and the joy we share as we tarry there
none other has ever known.*
- 2. He speaks and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that he gave to me within my heart is ringing.
Refrain*
- 3. I'd stay in the garden with him though the night around me be falling
But he bids me go through the voice of woe, his voice to me is calling.
Refrain*

An Easter Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, through Jesus Christ you overcame death and so gave us freedom from the fear of death. Be with all our dear ones this day, fearful as we are in the face of this great pandemic dominating our lives. Keep safe all those laboring for its defeat and making possible for so many a resurrection from the throes of this dreaded illness. Especially be with those for whom this illness proved too much so they are now in your eternal care. Welcome them into the light of your presence and wrap your arms around their loved ones who grieve. Be with each of us, Merciful Creator Redeemer. Grant that we who celebrate this day of Resurrection may leave all sin behind and accept renewal in this new life that is life as followers of the Risen Christ. We give you thanks and praise for this great eternal gift as we say together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, saying **Our Father...**

Closing Song – “This Little Light of Mine”

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3 X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!*

*Easter light spreading around the world, I'm gonna let it shine (3 X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!*

**The Ancient Easter Greeting to Welcome the Dawn!
Christ Is Risen! Christ Is Risen Indeed!**

A Prayer of Benediction

May the God of peace be with you, stilling the heart that hammers with fear and doubt and confusion. And may the warm mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and anxious. May the blessing of peace be on you and in you every moment of the week ahead. Amen.

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Easter Sunrise Meditation -- “Side by Side”

Key points:

- A Resurrection account appears in all four Gospels but they are all different. These differences usually go unnoticed because we never look at the stories side by side. But, when we do, the differences are striking.
- Matthew’s version:
 - Mary Magdalene and the “other Mary” are the ones who go to the tomb just before dawn
 - As they arrived, there was an earthquake and then an angel rolled the stone away from the tomb’s entrance
 - The guards placed there by Pilate fainted
 - The angel tells the women not to be afraid and that he knows they are looking for the crucified Jesus who has been raised from the dead.
 - The angel tells them to go quickly and tell the disciples that Jesus has been raised and is going ahead of them to Galilee where he will meet them.
 - As the women were running back to the disciples, Jesus himself appears to them, saying greetings. They take hold of his feet to worship him. Then he tells them to continue on to the disciples which they do.
- Mark’s version:
 - Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went very early to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus’ body
 - As they walked to the tomb, they worried about who would roll the stone away from the tomb’s entrance for them
 - When they arrived, they saw the stone had already been rolled back
 - They went into the tomb and encountered a young man dressed in a white robe and they were frightened
 - He told them not to be alarmed and they he knew they were looking for Jesus
 - He told them Jesus had been raised from the dead and pointed to the place where he had lain.
 - Then he told them to go and tell the disciples that Jesus was going ahead of them to Galilee where they would all see him again.
 - The women fled the tomb but were too afraid to tell anyone.
- Luke’s version:
 - Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the “other women” who went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body with spices but we do not learn their names until the end of the story
 - They found the stone rolled away and went in to the tomb but they did not see Jesus’ body

- While they were there, two men dressed in dazzling white came and stood beside them.
 - They asked the women, “why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen.”
 - The men reminded the women that Jesus had told them something like this would happen on the third day and they remembered Jesus’ words then.
 - They returned to the disciples to tell them what had happened.
 - Most of the disciples thought what the women were telling them was “an idle tale” but Peter ran to the tomb, stooped to look in and saw the grave clothes lying there and he went home amazed.
- John’s version:
- Mary Magdalene went to the tomb by herself. When she got there, she found the stone had been rolled away.
 - She ran to find Peter and the “other disciple” telling them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.”
 - The two disciples ran back to the tomb; the “other disciple” gets there first and stoops over to look in the tomb but does not go in.
 - Peter gets there, goes into the tomb and finds the grave clothes lying there, Peter and the other disciple returned home.
 - Mary remained weeping outside the tomb
 - She then looked in the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus’ body had been; they asked her, “woman, why are you weeping?”
 - She answered, “they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.”
 - Then she turned around and saw someone she thought was the gardener.
 - She asks him if he knew where Jesus’ body had been taken.
 - He says to her, “woman, why are you weeping?” She tells him and then he speaks to her, calling her by name. Then she recognizes him.
 - He tells her not to touch him but to go to the disciples and tell them what she has seen.
- What is the same between these stories?
- Jesus is Risen
 - Mary Magdalene is the one person present in all four stories.
 - A message given to women to go and tell the disciples
- Does it matter that the stories are different? If not, what does matter?
- No, it doesn’t matter that the stories are different because they are human accounts of a divine/mystical event.
 - What does matter is the miracle of new life in the aftermath of certain death; that hope is always present no matter how fearful and challenging the circumstances – like here in the Valley of Covid 19.