

## Easter Sunday April 12th

### Call to Worship Psalm 118:24

**Leader:** This is the day that the Lord has made.

**People:** Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Pastor:** Christ is risen.

**People:** He is risen indeed!

### Prayer of Praise

**O Christ our Lord, in light and splendor You are exalted over the earth, that You may reign in the hearts of all people. You bear love never to be eclipsed, whose brilliance illumines and empowers us. You are the life of the world, life-giver to all. We praise You in wonder and joy and cry "Alleluia!". Amen.**

### SONG of PRAISE - The Day of Resurrection

1 The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;  
the passover of gladness, the passover of God.  
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,  
our Christ hath brought us over, with hymns of victory.

2 Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright  
the Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light;  
and listening to his accents, may hear, so calm and plain,  
his own "All hail!" and, hearing, may raise the victor strain.

3 Now let the heavens be joyful! Let earth the song begin!  
Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein!  
Let all things seen and unseen their notes in gladness blend,  
for Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end.

### SCRIPTURE

#### John 20:1-18 The Empty Tomb

**20** 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. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!"

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

### ANTHEM – The Old Rugged Cross – Tom Ballou with music

#### DISCUSSION

*When I was a girl, the ice cream truck would make its way down the street. "Cones- 25 cents" the driver would yell. Standing on my front porch, I could see children from all over the neighborhood, and of course there was also some adults. Everyone ran towards this delight- ice cream on a hot summer day!*

*The reading from the gospel of John paints a similar picture of people running. Tom Long, one of my favorite Presbyterian preachers, points out that there is a lot of running on the first Easter. First, Mary Magdalene came. She saw the stone rolled away and the tomb empty and she started running. In the darkness before dawn, she begins to run to tell the rest of the disciples that Jesus' body is gone. Jesus was crucified, dead and buried. Someone had taken his body- and so Mary Magdalene ran.*

*She meets Peter and the beloved disciple on her way. When she tells them what she saw, they also begin to run. But while she ran away from the empty tomb, they ran towards it. Tom Long calls our attention to another interesting detail: the disciples didn't run together. They got into some kind of race. We can imagine it: first one gaining, then falling behind, then out in front. I wonder why they ran against each other? What were they expecting to find? Perhaps they glimpsed in this strange event that they were running towards a new future.*

*The gospel of John says the beloved disciple outran Peter. He won the race. That may seem a small detail, but isn't it interesting that John mentions that the beloved*

*disciple got there first? He also tells us that the beloved disciple was the first one to peer inside the empty tomb and believe. He was the first to believe in Easter. I think that John wanted us to know that it is important that he was first- and that he got there running!*

*The disciples came to Easter in different ways. Mary will not believe until she sees Jesus and hears him call her name. Thomas doesn't believe until the risen Christ gives him the opportunity to touch his wounds. The beloved disciple comes to Easter believing without seeing. He believes, although Jesus is absent. When he saw the empty tomb, he must have remembered Jesus' words and trusted in his relationship with Jesus. Each of us comes to the resurrection by the same path as the beloved disciple. Jesus said "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

#### Reflection

- Identify a time in your life when you were confronted with a challenging situation. How were you like Mary? Peter? The beloved disciple?

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: Apostles Creed

#### FOR CHILDREN

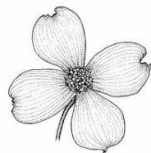
##### Ecclesiastes 3:11 (Easy-to-Read version)

*"God has made everything beautiful in its time."*

The Dogwood tree is a beautiful little tree that explodes in white blossoms each spring and is a favorite blooming tree that grows across the South. Legend says that the tree was once very large, like a Great Oak tree. Its wood was strong and sturdy. According to the story, it was the dogwood tree that provided the wood used to build the cross on which Jesus was crucified.

Because of its role in the crucifixion, it is said that God both cursed and blessed the tree. It was cursed to stay small, so that it would never grow large enough again for its wood to be used as a cross for a crucifixion. Its branches would be narrow and crooked--not good for building at all. At the same time, the tree was blessed so that it would produce beautiful flowers each spring, just in time for Easter. To remember God's promise to the tree, its four petals form the shape of a cross.

- Look for dogwood trees in your neighborhood. Look carefully at the trees' petals. How many petals form the shape of a cross?



#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We thank you, Redeeming God, for the glorious message that you bring new hope out of despair, resurrection out of defeat, and new life out of death. You offer surprises in life: experiences like the parting of the Red Sea and the empty

tomb. You call us as a community of faith to do things differently than we have ever done: to risk going forward in faith, not knowing what we might find.

Your word gives us images of hope. You call dry bones to dance. You give living water so that new life blossoms. We bring before you the dead and dried up places in our lives. Forgotten dreams, lapsed indentations, hardened resentments. We hand these over to you, knowing that you will return them to us renewed and transformed. We bring before you the places in our lives and in our world where despair reigns unchallenged. With grief, we bring our concerns for the world as people confront the challenges of the coronavirus.

Point us towards actions, however small, which lead us to a more hopeful future for ourselves and our world. Gracious, God, we thank you that you walk beside us as we journey through life. Because you are with us, we can accept each new day's joys and challenges as a gift. Raise us to new life each day. Hear our prayer, O Lord. Amen

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

#### SONG OF RESPONSE CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY!

*"Christ the Lord is risen today!" Alleluia!*

*All creation, join to say; Alleluia!*

*Raise your joys and triumphs high; Alleluia!*

*Sing, O heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!*

*Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!*

*Fought the fight, the battle won; Alleluia!*

*Death in vain forbids Him rise; Alleluia!*

*Christ has opened paradise. Alleluia!*

*Lives again our glorious King; Alleluia!*

*Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!*

*Jesus died, our souls to save; Alleluia!*

*Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!*

*Hail, the Lord of earth and heaven! Alleluia!*

*Praise to You by both be given; Alleluia!*

*Every knee to You shall bow, Alleluia!*

*Risen Christ, triumphant now. Alleluia!*

#### CHARGE AND BLESSING

May the loving power of God, which raised Jesus to new life, strengthen you in hope, enrich you with love, and fill you with joy in faith.

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed!

All: Alleluia