

Family Morning Praise – Easter Sunday

Words of Invitation

We have gathered here in this holy and sacred space to worship our God. God is good and God is here within, among, and around us. *Sit quietly and breathe deeply. With each breath, imagine yourself opening up to God's presence within, around, and among you.*

Sing/Listen: *This Is the Day that the Lord Has Made* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pupwXqg-6jw>)

Opening Litany

One: This is the day that the Lord has made.

All: Christ is alive!

One: This is the day that the Lord has made.

All: Christ is alive!

One: This is the day that the Lord has made.

One: Christ is alive! Let us rejoice and be glad!

Sing/Listen: *Rejoice in the Lord Always* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzyckxqXoZ4>)

Read: Matthew 28:1-10

Reflections

He had told them what would happen: that he would be killed and then raised on the third day. But I'm not sure they remembered his words as they made their way to the tomb that morning. They didn't go to the tomb expecting a miracle. They went to the tomb to grieve. But the empty tomb and the message of the angel was enough for the women. Even without seeing the risen Jesus, seeds of hope buried in the soil of their suffering and grief, took root and sprouted, allowing them to believe the angel's announcement that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They quickly headed back the way they'd come with "fear and great joy" to share the good news with the rest of Jesus' disciples. And THEN they saw him—the risen Christ. His promise and their hope in that promise did not disappoint.

On this day we celebrate Jesus' triumph over the grave. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection. We celebrate hope realized. In the midst of this crisis, it may feel as if we are stuck in the darkness, fear, and sorrow of Friday and Saturday. It may feel as if any seeds of hope we have are deeply buried. And we may find it hard to celebrate. But just as the women found hope in the promise and possibility of new life even when all they could see was an empty tomb, we can find hope in the promise that the sun will rise each morning, bringing light to the world, even when it is hidden by the clouds...we can find hope in the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly even when it happens out of sight in the hidden confines of a cocoon...we can find hope that spring will emerge from the barrenness of winter even on a cold and snowy day in April...and we can find hope in the promise of resurrection and eternal life in the witness of the women who went to the tomb, carrying a hidden seed of hope buried by their grief, and there encountered the risen Christ. We can find hope and we can live with great joy...even in the midst of uncertainty.

Respond

In the uncertainty and disruption caused by the coronavirus, what are the seeds of hope planted in your soul? Where do you see signs of new life in new routines?

Draw a picture of something that gives you hope or represents new life. Hang it where you can see it in the coming days and weeks and let it serve as a reminder that new life can emerge from the darkest times.

Sing/Listen: *Hymn of Promise (In the Bulb)* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RHek8k5WoY>)

Prayer

God of Mystery, God of Promise, we have so much to be thankful for this Easter morning: for the gift of this new day, for the gift of your Son, for his triumph over the grave, for seeds of hope, for the promise that new life can emerge from darkness and despair. On this Easter day, may we embrace the joy the women experienced when they heard the news, saw the empty grave, and encountered the living Christ. And as we continue to move through these days of uncertainty and disruption, help us hold onto the hope of resurrection and new life. In death and in grief, in resurrection and joy, you are still our God and we are still your people. Alleluia. Amen.