

Gospel lesson

It had been the worst Sabbath ever. Jesus had been betrayed, had been tortured on the cross, and died. All Mary wanted in her grief was to properly dress His body for burial according to religious custom.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>

John 20:1-18

(NRSV)

¹ 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.

² 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."

³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;

¹² 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.

¹³ 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."

¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ 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."

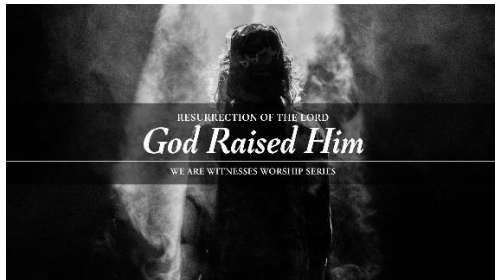
¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷ 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.'"

¹⁸ 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.

The word of God for the people of God

Message: God Raised Him



picture from

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Please pray with me?

Miraculously risen Savior,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may celebrate fully Your grace for the world.

Amen.

Happy Easter!

Does it feel like Spring to you this morning? It turned a bit chilly and wet yesterday – even some flakes of snow last night! Just when we thought things were getting green at last, we get hit with that. It chills a body to the bone, making it seem like winter will never end.

The disciples went through a chilling of their souls during Holy Week. Just when they thought things were looking up after all their work, after Jesus paraded into Jerusalem, things changed. It got dangerous around the temple; Jesus was arrested in the night, and then He was even killed on a cross!

They spent that Sabbath chilled to the soul, their great Messiah gone, nearly all of them having abandoned Him in His hour of need, and none of them able to have stopped it, let alone undo it.

Like someone going out to shovel the walk after a snowfall, Mary went out before everyone else to take care of what was necessary, to put Jesus's body to rest. But the situation was not what she expected!

Frantic about the apparent despoiling of Jesus's grave, she ran for Peter. Peter and another disciple ran to see for themselves, but had no idea what to do about it, any more than during Jesus's crucifixion. Their souls were still chilled.

<Share picture from Mike Sheridan>

God began the rewarming of the disciples' souls with the messenger angels in the tomb. Mary cried outside the tomb, and got a rapid rewarming – Jesus Himself before her! Afire with joy, she went to warm the souls of the others with the Good News.

As we hear in the reading from Acts, the apostles too, their souls afire with the Spirit, went to warm the souls of others with the Good News. Because they did, the warmth of God's love has spread throughout the world and through the ages to billions of people.

As the world warms up again this Spring, as new life takes hold, go warm the souls of everyone you meet with the love of God. Tell them the Good News – that Jesus our Christ is alive, God raised Him from the dead, and we can all have new life because of that!

And now let our souls be further warmed with the celebration of the Great Thanksgiving.

<THE GREAT THANKSGIVING Communion – UNCOVER elements>

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

In love you formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

<slide change>

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

<hold hands out over bread/elements>

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

<hold hands out over juice/elements>

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,

<slide change>

we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

<hold hands out over elements>

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and juice.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each
other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at
his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit
in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours,
almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God,
let us pray: *<Lord's Prayer>*

<Breaking of the bread and lifting of the cup>

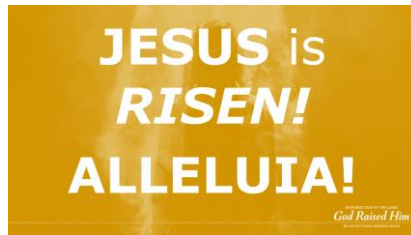
<Serving of the elements;

communion hymn "The Day of Resurrection" UMH #303>

<COVER remaining elements>

<Hymn "He Lives" UMH #310>

<Benediction>



background picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/we-are-witnesses/easter-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-c-graphics>, recolored

Go into the world proclaiming Christ's glory
and celebrating the new life we have
because God raised Him from the dead.
Alleluia!