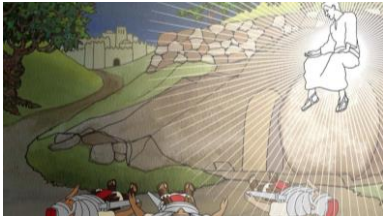


## Gospel lesson

We resume reading from the Gospel of Matthew where the Tenebrae service left off, after Jesus was laid in the tomb and the Sabbath day passed.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/yo-resurrection/>

### Matthew 28:1-10

(NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

<sup>2</sup> And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

<sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

<sup>4</sup> For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

<sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

<sup>6</sup> He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

<sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going

ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.'  
This is my message for you."

<sup>8</sup> So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

<sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.

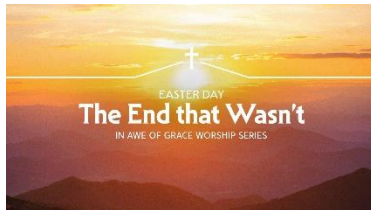
<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "Christ Is Risen">

UMH #307

## Message: The End that Wasn't



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/easter-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Astonishing risen Lord,

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 begin life anew with You in the light of Your glorious resurrection. Amen.

Our Holy Week series "In Awe of Grace" closes today with "The End that Wasn't":

"You will see him, that's the message of Easter. You will see him, the living one, the alive one, him. And in that seeing, you'll be able to breathe deeply again. Happy Easter."



*picture from MMMS collection*

I am [soon to be] a grandmother! It is the end of my daughter-in-law's pregnancy; what was growing inside her [is being] has been pushed out. Her womb [soon will be] is empty.

We know what that means, and we rejoice in the new life! It is easy to expect and immediately celebrate a miracle that we have experienced and of which we have seen the results many times.

Imagine not knowing about newborn babies, and thinking the end of pregnancy brings only that the mother's body is emptied, a feeling of something missing as she goes on with her life. That is a lot like how many people view death, and certainly how Mary and the disciples felt after Jesus was laid in

the tomb.

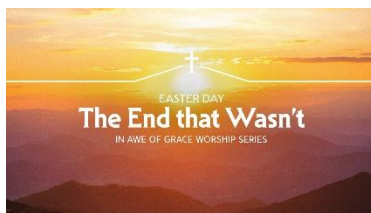


picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-101-jesus-resurrection/>

But it was not the end. It was the beginning: the beginning of new life in the love of God, a restoration to living as we were created to live! Jesus appeared out of the tomb, alive, and proclaiming that we too could have life in Him!

It was astonishing, completely overturning what people understood about life in this world. Just as Jesus taught, material gains truly did not matter in comparison with seeking life in Christ, living in God's love. Jesus Himself was proof of it in a way that was far more fundamental than His words or deeds. Physical death was no longer the ultimate end.

Through Jesus at the resurrection and through the Holy Spirit even EASTER DAY today, God reaches out to the world with abundant, renewing love. We have only to repent, put aside our sin, and gratefully accept this gift of life that God offers.



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/easter-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-a-graphics>

You may think that is the end of the story, that we are saved. But it is just a new beginning!

Once we are reborn through Christ's death and resurrection, we can let the Holy Spirit work through us to share the good news with everyone, to build community life beyond (and including) our individual lives. All of humanity is invited to this rebirth! Go proclaim this glorious news through your words and actions of love with everyone you encounter!

Happy Easter!