

Easter Sunrise Service
Fell's Point, Baltimore, MD.
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This morning we pause to celebrate the message of God's love through the empty tomb

We begin still being within the dark days of the passion story of Jesus' crucifixion.

Hymn: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g82KP4XXRRE>

Passion Scripture: Mark 15:22-25, 33-39

They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull").²³ Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.²⁴ And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.²⁶ The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died,⁴⁰ he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.
Let Israel now proclaim
His mercy endures forever.
The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.
There is a sound of exultation and victory
in the tents of the righteous:
The right hand of the Lord has triumphed!
The right hand of the Lord is exalted!
The right hand of the Lord has triumphed!
I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the Lord.
The Lord has punished me sorely,
but he did not hand me over to death.
Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord

This is the gate of the Lord;
he who is righteous may enter.
I will give thanks to you, for you answered me
and have become my salvation.
The same stone the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
On this day the Lord has acted;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Hymn: "Were You There?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLJ0ijLAmOA>

The Resurrection Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me

The Ceremony of the Risen Christ: The Black cloth of mourning is removed from the cross and the white cloth of the resurrected Lord replaces it.

Hymn: "Holy, Holy, Holy" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH6tbslLEaE>

The Resurrection Message

In almost thirty years we have gathered early on Easter morning in Fell's Point in order to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. In all kinds of weather we have kept this celebration a living part of our lives. These celebrations have had participants not only from Fell's Point but from throughout the metropolitan Baltimore region. We haven't missed this traditional event during all this time.

Tragically this year we are not able to gather together at the water's edge to celebrate at sunrise. The pandemic has necessarily placed restrictions upon us so that we may help save the lives and well-being of each other. Regardless, the sun this morning is rising and together in the spirit of this moment together we celebrate the story of the empty tomb. There is little doubt that we may be sacrificing doing many things which we normally would do and perhaps seem very necessary.

At this point we need to turn our attention to the Easter story. Two thousand years ago, during the dawn of the first day of the week, the women who were close to Jesus hurried to the tomb of Jesus to complete the traditions of burial. The tragedies of their last few days must have consumed their lives and emotions as they made their journey. To say the least, the past few days were a nightmare emphasizing the extreme tragedy and loss for them. They loved their friend and had to anguish through the horrors of His crucifixion. They knew it was all unfair and perpetrated by those fearful of losing their authority. What would life be without Him?

Arriving at the tomb and seeing the stone had been rolled away revealing an empty tomb, the women's emotions and anger grew for they thought someone had stolen Jesus body. Now there seemed to be no hope for closure. But the darkness of the moment was shattered by a messenger from God, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said." In that instance despair, anguish and sorrow began to be overtaken by hope. Then when Jesus actually appeared to them that hope no longer was a dream unfulfilled.

The message of that morning is alive and well with us today. We are not created to be beings without hope and the fulfillment of that hope. The Incarnation is all about a God of love and the promise that life is more than the physical life we are now living. The resurrected Christ gives us not only hope but the promise of life beyond what we see in the physical world. The sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross and then the empty tomb gives us the assurance that we will not only endure any sacrifices we make out of love but we will always end with fulfilled hope. This is His eternal love for us.

Therefore, together this morning we find the hope of new life as the sun begins to light our day out the darkness of night. Easter is not lost so long as we are able to celebrate and live God's message of love throughout even the darkest of days. No matter what we may be facing, we are able to joyously proclaim this Easter morning "He lives! He lives indeed!"

The Prayer:

God of all creation, this morning we gather in the spirit of oneness in order to celebrate the good news of the empty tomb. This morning, we are especially aware of all those who maybe suffering from the virus which has brought the world to a standstill. Give the doctors, nurses ,and technicians the wisdom, strength, and endurance in order bring about healing. We pray for all those who are risking their well-being in order to treat the ill and meet the physical needs and sustenance for living to a population held in bondage. If it be your will give the researchers and scientist the knowledge to find treatments for this dreaded disease. Grant to all of us comfort and peace during this time of trial. We ask this in the name of the resurrected Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: Sung by Agne Giedraityte https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paET32d_VbQ

Hymn: "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1brSOs0IMc>

The Benediction:

Brothers and sisters, live on knowing God's love; the joy of living this love; and the peace which can only come through the power of His presence within you. So live on in love, joy, peace, and power. Amen.

A JOYOUS EASTER TO YOU!