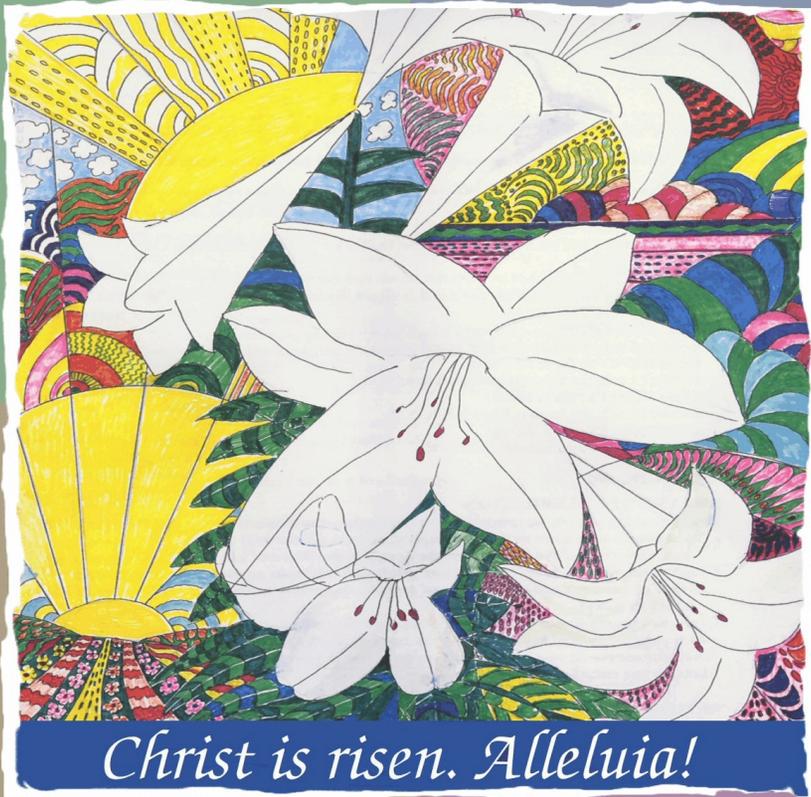


Easter Sunday 2013



Our Time is Now

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
March 31, 2013 Rev. Larry Moffet

*Fears and doubts too long have bound us,
free our hearts to work and praise.*

- Harry Emerson Fosdick

When you pause to give thanks, please give thanks for the way this day frees us from fear.

So many things make us entertain fear. Am I doing what I need to be doing?

Step by step Mary overcomes fear. So do we. The remedy for fear is understanding that “**Our Time is Now!**” Fear immobilizes us. Instead of focusing on the possible, fear makes us worry about failure. Others can control us if they focus our energy on fear.

The Easter story tells us it was hard for Jesus’ friends to overcome fear.

Mary shows us how to deal with fear. She just keeps moving forward:

*Mary Magdalene came to the tomb
and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.
²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple,*

The Beloved Disciple runs toward the symbol of death, the tomb:

*the beloved disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.
⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there,*

Peter runs too. Who knows what fears were on his mind! He goes in:

*⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb.
He saw the linen wrappings lying there,
⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head,
not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.*

The Beloved is the first to believe. No voice, no vision. Simple belief:

*⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in,
and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the
scripture...*

¹⁰The disciples for some reason returned to their homes. Mary stays:

*¹¹...weeping outside the tomb.
As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;
¹²she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had
been...*

¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord. I do not know where they have laid him.”

Another voice asks the same question. She doesn't let her misperception stop her:

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

Each one of these – Mary, the Beloved, Peter – strengthened each other in the process of believing and acting on those beliefs.

Step by step they began to understand that **the Time is Now** That empowered these three to overcome fear and strengthen each other.

Science is giving us new ways to talk about what we already know:

We are more connected than we think.

In fact, some who study neuroscience are making bold statements we have been slow to talk about even though it is part of the faith:

Our brains are social organs. There is no such thing as an individual mind, says Daniel Segal, psychiatrist drawing on neuroscientists' research, and author of *Mindsight*:

We come to know our own minds through interactions with others.

That's the Easter Story. Little by little the interactions among Mary, the Beloved, and Peter help them help each other to embrace New Life.

So it is with us. We show that in everyday talk: we say, "I've got your back" or "I feel you." That's more than affirmation. Says theologian Andrew Root:

Our brains, our hearts are wired together.

Andrew Root, The Relational Pastor, Intervarsity Press, 2013

Now look at Jesus. Jesus is our guide for overcoming fear. He doesn't chide or criticize Mary (or us). He simply asks:

¹⁵why 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." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

Resurrection means new life: Resurrection means **our time is now.**

Easter Season has 50 days.

It takes about 50 days for the disciples to overcome their fears, and each year we need this 50-day season to overcome the fear we live in too. **Our time is now.**

Often I'll refer to the fact that there are two words for "time" in Greek, the language the first Christians used for worship:

Chronos is **chronological time.** **Kairos** means an opportune moment.

Kairos is a moment of time when something special happens.

Kairos describes an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Kairos people meet challenges and embrace new dimensions of life.

In the Bible, Kairos means "the appointed time in the purpose of God," the time when God acts (the kairos is fulfilled).

New Life of Easter is happening all around us. We live in a Kairos moment.

A bookstore clerk said to me: "Your church is in the top 1% of readers."

There's more new depth, new joy springing up all around us and in us.

Surrounded by so much fear, we ask "What can we count on?"

like Mary, the Beloved, and Peter, when we see love, it is real. like the three at the tomb, and the others who gradually overcame fears, we will move forward together we will work together to keep everybody safe and live into "Kairos"

To put it in plain talk, it's time to take it to the next level: Our time is now.

You sang "Glorious Day!" Look around you. What do you see? Our time is now.

people are hungry to overcome fear and find meaning. It's here. people are hungry for practical ways to make a difference. It's here.

people are hungry for spiritual friendships. They're here. More are forming.

Not because we are so perfect, but because the Risen Lord is here!

We follow in the steps of Mary Magdeline, the Beloved Disciple and Peter.

Tonight we will sing “Because he lives I can face tomorrow.”
This morning “He tore the bars away.” I saw that happen at LPI. Our new school building has no bars on windows. Why? An elderly, disabled El Paso man kept raising the subject. Finally we said **our time is now!**

“You become like what you worship. When you gaze in awe, admiration, and wonder at something or someone, you begin to take on some of the character of the one you worship.”

- N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*

GOSPEL JOHN 21:1-18

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.
²So 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.”
³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.
⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.
⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.
⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,
⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.
⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.
¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.



As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;
¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been,
one at the head and the other at the feet.
¹³They 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.”
¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there,
but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus 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.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary!”
She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to our Abba God. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Abba and your Abba, to my God and your God.’”
¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord.”

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