

Sermon: Easter Sunday 2020
 Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2 & 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 28:1-10
 Focus: He is Risen. Jesus promised to “Go ahead of us.
 Function: We believe and Trust in Christ—For He is the Gate of Our Salvation.

Christ is Risen! ***[He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!!!]***

Good morning my dear friends,

Oh, how I wish we could gather together on this Easter Sunday.

- I so want to see you all.
 - And I know you want to see each other as well.
- If it were my choice, this Easter Sunday we would gather outside in the Prayer Garden.
- [As I write this earlier in the week, the Prayer Garden is so beautiful.
 - The sky is blue, the air is crisp and clean, the birds are singing without ceasing, praising God in this out of doors chapel/prayer garden at St. Paul’s.]

While I lament that we can’t physically gather together today, [it would be irresponsible to do so], we can and we do gather together spiritually, united deep in our hearts as the Body of Christ in this world.

While we can’t physically enter the church building, we can and we do spiritually enter the sanctuary of the Lord in reading our Psalm today. Listen...and enter in the Spirit to hear God’s Word: From Psalm 118, verses 19 and 20:

***“Open to me the gates of righteousness,
 that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.
 This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.”***

The gate of righteousness is the Risen Christ—hear verses 22-24:

***“The stone that the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.
 This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
 This is the day that the LORD has made;
 let us rejoice and be glad in it.”***

We will rejoice in this day—for what God has done for us.

And I am confident that another day of celebration is coming soon—the day we will gather together again at St. Paul’s Church, to worship the Risen Christ!

- What a day of celebration that will be!



For now, let us go back 2000 years, to a garden tomb in Jerusalem, to the early morning of the day described to us in our gospel.

Two women got up early to go to the tomb:

- The gospel tells us that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.
 - In Mark’s gospel and Luke’s gospel we are told they got up early to go and anoint the body with spices they had prepared.

This was an act of love.

- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary loved Jesus in life.
- They were grieving for their friend, their teacher.

But the visit that day wasn’t going to be an ordinary visit.

There was an earthquake. [there was an earthquake at the cross on Friday, and now another one early Sunday morning.]

- Earthquakes are symbolic of God’s intervention in the history of humanity.
- God visits—there is an earthquake.

There was also an angel that morning 2000 years ago.

- The stone sealing the tomb was rolled away by the angel, and the angel sat on the stone.
- The women were terrified at seeing an angel.

But the Angelic message was one of great joy! The angel announced:

- Jesus had risen. Go ahead, look in the tomb—He is not there.
- The angel then tells them to go tell the disciples.
- The angels tells the women that Jesus goes ahead of them to Galilee—there you will see Him.

Jesus also appears to them in the garden, and tells them to go tell the disciples.

Jesus says they, the disciples, will see Him in Galilee.

What great news!
 Christ is Risen! ***[He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!!!]***

The resurrection of Jesus is the very center—the heart of our faith!

Jesus goes ahead of the disciples.
 It is of great comfort to know that Jesus also goes ahead of us.

It is a wonderful promise to realize that Christ goes ahead of us.

And so, we pray...

Go Ahead of Us, Lord!

In our families, In our friends,
 In people we love and who love us.

Go Ahead of Us, Lord!

In the children, and grandchildren.
 In their baptisms and in remembering our baptisms.
 Give us the faith of children...

Go Ahead of Us, Lord!

In strangers, In people in need.
 In serving them we serve You, O Lord.

Go Ahead of Us, Lord!

In the troubles of life, especially in this time of pandemic illness:
O Lord, we pray that you would go ahead of us and cut short this time of suffering, so we can once again gather and praise Your Holy Name in Community with one another.

In Your Son, O God...In Your Great love for us, Christ went to a cross to die for the forgiveness of all our sins.

Three days later, on Easter morning, Jesus was Raised from the dead, so that one day we too will be raised and have eternal life with Christ.

Go Ahead of Us, Lord!

O God of Mercy, as You have forgiven us our sins, You also bring us to new life
 In Your Son, our Savior.

And soon, we pray that you would bring us back to Your Church, to the sanctuary, to the altar, to the Prayer Garden, where we can once again share Holy Communion together.

Until then, bless us with your Grace and Mercy, and in the Unity of Christ, strengthen us O Lord, to enter the gates of righteousness in Christ Jesus.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter this gate willingly, joyfully, and gratefully—to live in the presence of Our Lord for today, and for evermore.



A very blessed Easter to you all!

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!