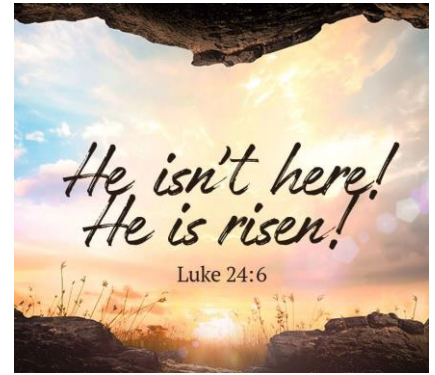


Knox Presbyterian Church
Rev. Emma Duncan
April 20, 2025

EASTER SUNDAY



Greetings

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Special Music: Rise up thy Heart with Gladness

J.S. Bach

Sung by Susan Gudgeon and accompanied by Carolyn Haacke

Call to Worship – PWS&D Lenten Liturgy

Janine and Jeanette Jaconelli

One: Words of faith's story help celebrate this day of resurrection:

All: God creates a new heaven and a new earth, be glad and rejoice!

One: God's steadfast love endures forever; the Lord has become our salvation.

All: The stone was rolled away – he is not here, he is risen.

One: We say with joy: Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Music: Jesus Christ is risen today (#243, all verses)

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise the Lord in the heights!

Praise the Lord, all the host of heaven!

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

Let all of creation praise the name of the Lord, whose name alone is exalted;
whose glory is above earth and heaven.

O Creating Father, in the fullness of time, you sent part of yourself into the form of a human being. Born to a young couple of no consequence, you grew into a man who would become a great teacher and leader. You would heal the sick, feed the hungry, welcome the outcast, and raise Lazarus from the dead. And if that wasn't enough, you would humble yourself and become obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Today we gather to unite ourselves with believers throughout the whole world to rejoice and give thanks for the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

O Risen Saviour, on this holy morning, we acknowledge the inadequacy of our resurrection faith. We have been slow to believe in the promises of the prophets from so long ago who proclaimed that the Messiah is on the way. We have been doubtful like the disciples who ran to the empty tomb and were afraid of what they saw. And even when we do believe in Christ's resurrection, we are reluctant to follow his command to love one another as he has loved us. We hope that someone else will proclaim the Gospel message while we just go about our daily living.

O Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers of confession in a time of silence...

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your forgiveness, mercy, and grace. We are all sinners who do not deserve such a perfect gift, so freely given. Roll away the stone that keeps us from the life that you desire for us. Raise us into new life. Send your Holy Spirit into our lives and into the Church so that we may be transformed into your disciples who proclaim, I have seen the Lord!

We offer our worship and praise to you in the name of the risen Christ, who taught us to pray, saying...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty. All that was left were the linen cloths that were wrapped around his body.

People of God - because of what Jesus did for us on the cross and in the empty tomb – receive this assurance of pardon...forgiveness, mercy, and grace are ours. Feel that forgiveness in your heart, knowing that God loves you and desires great joy for your life. Amen.

Announcements

1. Welcome!
2. Join us for a time of fellowship and conversation after worship in our Fellowship Hall downstairs.
3. Thank you to Janine and Jeanette Jaconelli for doing the readings today.
4. Thank you to Peter Hanson, Susan Gudgeon, and Carolyn Haacke for sharing their musical gifts with us today.
5. Thank you to everyone who has helped with our Easter weekend services! It really does take a village!
6. Celebration of Life service for Barry Saunders
Saturday April 26 at 1 p.m. at Knox with reception to follow.
7. Mission Awareness Sunday (April 27th)
8. Annual General Meeting
We will be having our AGM on Sunday May 4th after our worship service. A luncheon will be served. Print copies will be available next Sunday.
9. Spring Concert
Sunday May 25, 1 p.m.
Circle of Harmony women's *A Capella* choir
10. 180th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday June 1, 10:30 a.m.
Guest preacher: The Rev. Dr. Richard Fee,
former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada
Special Music: Dr. Peter Hanson and Carolyn Haacke, organ and piano duet
Jada Dawson, soloist
Luncheon at the Legion to follow worship service

Music: I danced in the morning (#250, all verses)

Children's Time: Let's get cracking!
(no Sunday School)

Prayer of Illumination

Let us pray. O God of our salvation, we rejoice in the Good News proclaimed today. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the Scriptures, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms and we will be reading Responsively Psalm 148.

Leader: Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise the Lord in the heights!

People: Praise the Lord, all angels; praise the Lord, all the host of heaven!

Leader: Praise the Lord, sun and moon; praise the Lord, all you shining stars!

Praise the Lord, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

**People: Let them praise the name of the Lord,
who commanded and they were created.
who established them forever and ever;
and fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

Leader: Praise the Lord from the earth,

**People: you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling God's command!**

Leader: Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

People: Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Leader: Rulers of the earth and all peoples, leaders and all judges of the earth!

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

**People: Let them praise the name of the Lord, whose name alone is exalted;
whose glory is above earth and heaven.**

Leader: The Lord has raised up a horn for the people, praise for all the faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to their God.

All: Praise the Lord! Amen.

Our New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of John and we will be reading chapter 20, verses 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. 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."

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

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

Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

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

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."

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

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."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not touch 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.’ ”

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.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Reflection: I have seen the Lord!

Let us pray. Father, we come in awe and wonder at the miracle of the empty tomb. Through the death and resurrection of your Son, you broke through the darkness of sin and death to shine the light of your redeeming love on us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, open our hearts to hear this familiar story with hope and joy. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

How many of you remember playing on this as a child?



What about this one?



I found these pictures on a website for an 'oldies' radio station with this caption - old school playground equipment that might have killed you! And of course, they are 100% correct! The seesaw – or teeter-totter as I remember calling it – was a painful experience, especially if the person opposite you was heavier or taller. And the merry-go-round was an extra special kind of torture device. If you were on the merry-go-round, you ran the real risk of becoming dizzy or nauseated. If you were the one running around the merry-go-round, you were in danger of falling and getting caught underneath the platform.

The playground where my sister and I played as children – unsupervised by the way – is still there, but it has totally different equipment!

When I was reflecting this week on all that the disciples experienced in the days leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection, for some reason this old playground equipment came to mind. If the disciples were on the seesaw, they would have been the smaller and weaker ones – with the might of the Roman Empire and the weight of the religious establishment – holding them hostage. They couldn't control the situation from their vantage point, so all they could do was jump off the 'ride' and make a run for it – which is EXACTLY what they did! Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and then vanished. Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. And don't forget that John – who wrote the Gospel that we have been reading through since January – was also there. He too abandoned Jesus. All of the disciples ran for it.

And after Jesus' death on the cross, they were running around in circles, dizzy from the harsh reality that Jesus – their Teacher and Lord – was gone. On the cross, Jesus said, [it is finished](#), and they believed that this was true. (John 19:30) Everything that they had worked for was gone. The movement that Jesus began was over. All hope of a new kingdom of God was lost. And now it was time for them to go back to their families and return to their old jobs, nauseated from the horrible ride that they had been on.

And along came Mary Magdalene.

According to the Gospel of John, she was alone at the tomb early that morning when she discovered that the stone had been rolled away. In her confusion and fear, she ran to the disciples to tell them what she



saw. Peter and John ran back to the tomb to see for themselves what had happened. Their eyes believed what they saw – the stone was rolled away and there was no body, just the linen cloths – but their hearts did not understand that Jesus was raised from the dead. So they went home.

It was Mary Magdalene who the risen Christ chose to reveal himself to. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that tells this curious story about Mary confusing Jesus with a gardener. That said, she does indeed recognize Jesus and proclaims – **I have seen the Lord!** (John 20:18)

Mary Magdalene – a woman who was possessed by 7 demons (Luke 8:1-3) – was the first witness of the resurrection. She was also the Church's first preacher and evangelist because she shared her experience of the risen Lord with others.

But can this woman - who we know virtually nothing about – can she be telling the truth that Jesus Christ is risen? Can we believe that she has seen the risen Lord?

And even if she did – what difference does that make to us?

Leave the pulpit

Mary Magdalene's proclamation – I have seen the Lord – makes all the difference in the world.

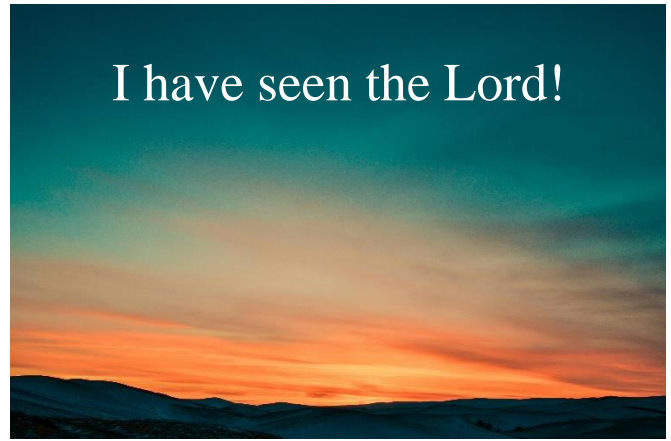
We all know that we live in a world where it feels like we are trapped on a dangerous ride with no easy way to get off.

Many people suffer in pain because there are still bullies in the playground. Change is happening at a dizzying pace and it feels like we are going round and round in circles with no end in sight.

All of this true.

And some days, what's happening in our world is simply overwhelming. Some days, we just want to get off this ride and run away.

But Mary Magdalene's witness and testimony give us hope. She tells us that all is NOT lost. That the kingdom of God is NOT over, but is just beginning. And in God's kingdom, there is more to life than just going round in circles with no meaning or purpose except to make it until the end of the day when you collapse into bed. In God's kingdom, there is love and forgiveness. In God's kingdom, the sick find healing, the lonely find belonging, the outcasts are welcomed to the table, and the lost are found. In addition to all of these amazing things, our faith in Jesus Christ – the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Son of the Most High God – tells us that the bullies do NOT have the last word. Justice, peace, and unity are indeed possible because our risen Lord has defeated the ultimate bullies - sin and death – for you and for me. As the Apostle Paul so beautifully wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians – **death has been swallowed up in victory...through our Lord Jesus Christ.** (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)



Friends, beloved in the Lord, people of God – life doesn't have to feel like an endless merry-go-round. When you believe in the life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, you can experience a love like no other. You can receive forgiveness for all of your past mistakes. You can know a feeling of peace that is beyond your understanding. Your weeping can turn into joy. Your life can have meaning and purpose and strength and hope, so much so that you can join with Mary Magdalene and proclaim to the world – I have seen the Lord!

To God be all honour and glory. World without end. Amen.

Invitation for Offering

On this Easter Day, we celebrate God's most precious gift to us. As we present our offerings to God, may our generosity reflect God's goodness and the hope we have in our risen Lord.

Dedication of our Tithes and Offerings

We will now sing our Easter song of thanks, He is Lord. (#252)

He is Lord, He is Lord;

He is risen from the dead and He is Lord

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Let us pray.

Bountiful God, today we recognize how much you have given us in Christ Jesus and what that gift has cost. Bless and multiply these gifts so they offer hope and healing to the world that you love so dearly. In the name of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Special Music: The Gospel of Grace

Sung by Susan Gudgeon and accompanied by Carolyn Haacke

Prayers of the People

Today I will be leading you in a guided prayer. Throughout this prayer, I will leave space for silence so that we can all offer our prayers to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, long ago, Mary Magdalene proclaimed the Good News of Christ's resurrection, and the world was changed forever. We give you praise for her courage to proclaim – I have seen the Lord! Thank you for the disciples, the early Church Fathers, the missionaries and evangelists who carried the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. Thank you for the men and women throughout the generations who have told your story so that we may hear it again today. We remember family members, friends, ministers, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, church musicians, and dedicated Christians from all walks of life who have faithfully shared the Good News of the Gospel.

And Lord, the world desperately needs to hear this Good News today!

God of safety and security, we pray for the world and all people. Over and over again we come before your throne, praying for peace and unity. We remember those regions in the world where war and violence are a way of life. Be with victims of war – heal the injured, comfort the bereaved, give strength to the helpers. We remember the poor and the marginalized, the unhoused, and the refugee. Turn their weeping into joy. As Jesus taught us, we also pray for our enemies and the bullies of this world. Soften their hearts, O God, and guide them to work for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

In the silence of our hearts, we pray for those situations that worry us so deeply...

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of renewal and faith, bless the global Church on this holiest of days. The body of Christ is diverse, yet you call us to be one in Christ. Be with those in the global Church who are persecuted. Be with congregations that are struggling to refocus their mission in the post-pandemic world. Unite us in joyful worship and faithful service. May we show – by our words and actions – that Christ's resurrection makes all the difference in the world.

In a time of silence, we pray for Christ's bride, the Church...

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of healing and hope, we pray for our family and friends. So many people who we know and love are struggling right now. They are dealing with health issues. They are struggling in their relationships. They are worried about their finances. They feel lonely and isolated. They are overwhelmed by the state of the world. They mourn and grieve the loss of a loved one.

May the people who we name before you in a time of silence, experience the hope and joy of the resurrection...

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of resurrection and new life, we pray for ourselves. Being a Christian is not easy and so, we pray for wisdom and strength as we seek to be the people that you need us to be in this time and in this place. Take our confusion and fear and by your Spirit, transform us into people who are witnesses of the resurrection. Teach us how to love and forgive in our relationships as we have been loved and forgiven. Give our lives meaning and purpose.

In a time of silence, we lay our personal cares at the foot of the cross...

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of new beginnings, there are no words or prayers or songs that can ever express our gratitude for the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Renew our faith and revive your Church so that we can proclaim and bear witness to Christ's resurrection with hope and joy. All honour and glory are yours, O Triune God, world without end. Amen.

Music: Thine be the glory (#258, all verses)

Blessing (Revelation 21:1-6)

Sung Amen