

Since we are still in the Easter Season or some might say “Eastertide”, I wanted to share a passage of Scripture that I have always thought quite intriguing. In fact, it is a simple one liner but I think it captures so much of our Christian faith on this side of the resurrection. The line is somewhat sandwiched between two events. One, it appears right after the women arrive at the tomb and hear that Jesus is risen. Second, it is right before the women meet or see the risen Christ. The Scripture says “They left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy.” I’m not sure why, but this caught my attention. Fear and great joy. This has been resonating with me. I think it’s because Easter is somewhat summed up in those four words. I think those four words say so much about a life of faith. That is, faith is living with fear and great joy. Keep in mind when the Bible uses the word fear, it does not just mean scared. But, also it means struggle, doubt, grief, pain, and question. Fear is what happens when you look out at the world and say “What is going on?” Scripture tells us that Easter begins here. In fact, the story of all stories says Easter began in the dark. Literally because it was really early in the morning but also spiritually.

Remember the very first Easter was just a small group of women, women in grief who were able to testify to the resurrection and the Good News of Jesus. It was women in grief and fear who were the very first ones who began living with great joy even in the midst of the hardship and the unknowing. However, it was a choice to do that. In fact, some translations of Matthew 28:10 put a slightly different spin to the story with subtle switch. Instead of the women leaving with “fear and great joy” translators write “great fear and joy.” Perhaps we can all agree that it is purely human nature to sometimes lean slightly towards one of the versions. Maybe it depends where we are at in our spiritual journeys. Nevertheless, it was a choice the women made to believe that Jesus was alive, up ahead, and making a way for them. It was a choice they made to keep walking. Scripture continues to say “Suddenly Jesus met them and said ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me’” (Matthew 28:10). In short, it was as they started walking that they began to see Jesus and Christ suddenly appeared. I love to think about this, it has been over 2000 years, but the women started a chain reaction that has totally transformed the world! Jesus said to go and tell other people about this. Go and tell people that I am alive, I am up ahead, and I am making a way. Go live a whole and abundant life knowing there is no need to fear, that death is not final, and therefore all the hard things in your life are not final either. Tell people to just keep walking.

So as we get out of the Easter season, I want us to carry that same good news with us. I am not suggesting to ignore the dark or ignore the hard things in life. I am not pretending that there are easy answers or simple reasons why bad things happen. I am not asking for anyone to be fake about life. However, I am inviting you to believe and carry on this Good News. Jesus is alive, Jesus is ahead of you, He is making a way for you. I want to encourage us as individuals, families, and a church to keep walking. Remember fear comes easy. But, hope is a choice. The "difficult/messy/hard" is easy to see and we all know folks who are professionals at pointing the obvious out. Nonetheless, it takes faith to live with great joy and seeing with a different set of lenses. So where will you choose to put the emphasis on? Great fear or will you choose great joy?

Or, perhaps the late theologian Eugene Peterson in his popular paraphrase of the Bible, *The Message*, says it the best: "The women, deep in wonder and full of joy, lost no time in leaving the tomb." Let us go in deep wonder and full of joy being Easter People as we embody the love and grace of Jesus.



Eastertide Potluck with our friends from Pastor Joseph’s church, Full Gospel Assembly!

Speaking of a reason to have great joy, Lauryn Kay, one of our very first vocalists will not only be in worship on Sunday but also having a concert. Lauryn is the talented vocalists as well as faithful granddaughter of John Blasi Sr. and a beloved niece of her Uncle Johnny. Be sure to attend the concert this Sunday, May 3, at 4pm.

Recent Prayer Request

Family of Joyce Turney, in the death of Joyce,
Church Family

Maxine Simon, Church Family

Garlow Family, blessings to Bill and Linda Garlow as
they moved back to Ohio, Church Family

Riley Coates, back issues, Church Family

Carol Krueger, praise God for an overall good report
on important tests, Church Family

Dean Brown, in the death of his brother Gene Brown,
Church Family

Ulrich Knobel-Simonsmeier, recovering from a stroke
and is in rehab, Church Family

(update) Barbara Wodarczyk, recovering from a fall
and moved to rehab, Church Family

Bobby Spitzner, recovering from a fall, Church Family

Katie Elkins, recovering from a broken arm, Dean Brown (frie

Marie Eertmoed, began hospice, Linda Lee (cousin)

Ingee Stuart, leg complications, Church Family

Mary and John Burns, in the death of Mary's cousin,
Fred Poliziano, Church Family

Shirley Runyon, procedure, Church Family

Donald Hancock, eye complications, Linda Lee (cousin)



We thank God for
our newest elder
and deacon
emeritus: Rev. Ed
Bodanske, Rev.
Dr. Jim Carpenter,
Steve Larson,
Rev. John Vickers
as well as Sue
Fink and Shirley
Fizer.



On Sunday, April 26, we wished Bill and Linda
Garlow our best as they moved back to Ohio. But, we
had a beautiful sendoff as "The Incredible Lindas with
Dr. Asya" led the hymns and special music!

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Charlie Fink	5 th
Barbara Wodarczyk	5 th
Bruce and Debbie Morrison	10 th
Dr. Asya Teruni-Minasya	19 th

Outreach Corner

We had a complete
Easter Season! From
Maundy Thursday's play
and dinner to a fabulous
potluck dinner with the Full
Gospel Church. On
Memorial Day we are
planning a church picnic.
We will have food and
games. Please stay tuned
to the bulletin, weekly email,
and announcements for
time and date.

If you have not
joined us for game night, be
sure to come on Sunday,
May 10, from 6-8pm. And
as Porky Pig says "That that
that all folks."