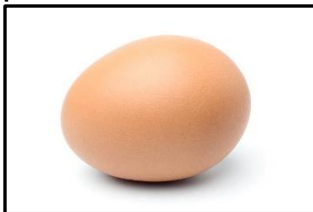


Easter Sunday Message - Promise
April 5, 2026
Inspired by Matthew 28:1-10

I've mentioned before that I did some work for the Pacific Mountain Regional Council Candidacy Board for several years. That was extremely fulfilling work, given our purpose was to interview and approve potential candidates for ministry in the United Church. The process begins with an interview for "Promise."

This "first hurdle" examines the candidate's ability to articulate their "call to ministry." We want to know something about their spiritual journey. Who and/or what is God to them? How do they see Jesus in the world? We want them to tell us a little about their journey in life. We ask, why do you want to be in paid accountable ministry? How have you discerned your call? What sort of gifts do you think you have for ministry? How do you know this is the right path for you at this time in your life? We ask them to give us a sense of their spiritual path.

These conversations are usually very rich, as we learn about this new potential church leader.



Before us is a whole egg, waiting to be hatched. We are trying to find out just what is going to burst forth from this incredible embryo. What future promise lies temporarily dormant?

Easter is an embryotic promise story. Christ's resurrection points us to much more than his personal return to the sides of his disciples and friends.

We know that time was limited. He would soon ascend into heaven to be with God. What he left behind is the real miracle event.

I think there are two pieces of that miracle. The first, that whether through human flesh or otherwise, Christ's love for us would never be diminished.

The second, planted in each and every one of us, is a DNA strand that has Christ-Like potential. It is part of a Christ-Embryo. Jesus wants it to burst out into the world so that his life-giving ministry can continue and God's love will forever be proclaimed.

That's the miracle I'm thinking about this morning. Fully formed, inside each and every one of us exists the essence of Christ. It is waiting to break out of its shell. It has the potential to change the world. Jesus sees that promise in all of us.



The first step in fulfilling that promise is the brave “breaking out” stage. You risk being seen. You risk being identified as someone who might care, someone who might be inclined to be a helper. You begin to realize you are comfortable with this. There is a certain satisfaction about giving that fulfills you. Perhaps you wonder, this might be what discipleship is going to be like. And you are inclined to think, “doing for others makes me feel good.”



Cracked open you begin to understand that the world is a complex place. There is more need for compassion around you than you could have imagined. It is cruel out there. Sometimes you have a sense you would just like to go back into your shell and pretend things are not so bad. You wish that it wasn't so hard to change things and there wasn't so much cruelty. But you feel a need, a call. The Jesus DNA is waking up inside you.



You learn much more as you mature. Everywhere you turn there seems to be violence, injustice, prejudice, mistrust and hatred. The essence of Christ within you is angry and it laments. You have been fully hatched into a cold reality, the world is not a happy or safe place. The Christ now fully formed within you, becomes more determined, even tenacious. You are going to at least try to make a difference. You become more comfortable being in the spotlight. You share your emotions more openly. You feel a deeper sense of commitment to peace and justice.



Yes you are ready, ready for your true discipleship. Call me into ministry. Call me to serve as best I can. Call me to speak out against prejudice and greed. Call me to hold the poor, falsely imprisoned and desperate in my prayers. Call me to spread Christ's love abundantly and continue to do that, even when my message falls on deaf ears. Call me to wave the flag of righteousness and right-relations in the faces of those who wish not to see. You are reaching your full potential.

That promise Jesus saw is filling the cracks and voids of pain and suffering with its own unique miracle work. You have become part of the resurrection story. Through your actions of grace, seeds of hope are planted where there was barren ground. The tears of the weeping have been dried. Community spirit has been enlivened. Your kindness and generosity have supplanted loneliness and despair.

This Easter Sunday I'm filled with great joy. That might seem exceedingly strange given the environment we are in (and the fact that my car just died). But I am seriously very joyful. Not just because the spring weather is bringing with it that incredible sunshine we adore and the warmer weather along with it. Not just because birdsong is filling the air and those little quail chicks are running across the back lawn. Not just because it's BBQ season and time to take Duffy to the lake once again. Joy because I know that you are all candidates for ministry in our time. In fact you are way past the entry point of the candidacy process. The "Christ-Embryo" in you all hatched some time ago. You are now mature disciples spreading your healing love in this community and elsewhere.



In his resurrection Jesus gave a great promise to all of us. From the Gospel of Matthew 28:20) **“remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

After a horrible betrayal, brutal torture and his final execution Jesus returns. In his return, the promise, **“I am with you, I will always be with you.”** It is a comforting hopeful message. Within that promise also came a request. **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit,”**

Today that ask is lived out through resurrection people like yourselves. A people who care deeply for one another and stand in solidarity with those who are not being heard. It is lived out in the little acts of humility that weave together a tapestry of a compassionate community of faith, whose members have burst from their shells in Christ's likeness. It is lived out in the spirit of disciples who collectively breathe hope into our troubled world. That is living the promise of resurrection.

Happy Easter and thanks for listening this morning. Amen