

MINISTER'S MINUTE

Easter Sunday

Morning Prayer

Great and glorious God,
you have rolled away the
stone and raised Christ to
life, and now you invite us to
share in the Good News.

Give us the courage to
welcome the winds of change
in our lives as it sweeps the
sidewalks and brings hope to
hungry families, released
prisoners, sick and sad people
of all ages.

In this season of Easter, run
with us in the joy of new life
that transforms the way we
see the world and one
another.

For Christ is risen! Christ is
risen indeed! Hallelujah!

—from *Worship in the City: Prayers
and Songs for Urban Settings*
by Nancy Elizabeth Hardy (UCPH,
2015)



It has been especially hard to narrow in on an Easter message for this Sunday. Usually we would be coming together with flowers, joyful music and planned family gatherings. Instead, we are looking at each other on screens and listening in on phones. Some are not even able to be connected in this way. We are living in one of those really weird times in history and we are part of it, whether we want to be or not.

In this time of being apart, celebrating something like Easter will be especially difficult. The season of Easter, like the season of Christmas, is a period of time and not just a day. So, during this time, we must remember that Easter is not just one day, but a time that continues until Pentecost Sunday. It is with that in mind, that I tend to look forward to whatever other Easter celebrations we may be able to have in the future.

While many of us cannot be together with family and loved ones, we will be, instead, brought into a time of looking back at memories, perhaps with photos, of how we celebrated in the past. Easter for Christians all around the world is uniting us in a whole different way.

Sunday Scripture

Acts 10:34–43

Peter's account of Jesus' death and resurrection.

or Jeremiah 31:1

God's everlasting love.

Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24 (VU p. 837)

God is my strength and my song.

Colossians 3:1–4

Set your mind on things above.

John 20:1–18 or Matthew 28:1–10

Mary and the empty tomb.

Fun Fact:

The Easter season (Eastertide) lasts for 50 days. Eastertide ends on the Day of Pentecost, which celebrates when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples in the form of tongues of fire. The word Pentecost comes from Greek *pentecostē* "fiftieth day". This year Pentecost is Sunday, May 31st.

I, for one, will miss the delicious Easter dinner with family, the company and quiet chats. Growing up, I looked forward to pretty baskets with ribbons, little chocolate eggs, and cookies shaped like bunnies and ducks. These things now remind me of new growth, surprises and Springtime! Many enjoy traditions of painting and dipping egg shells into pretty colours and then hanging them onto Easter branches or trees. This is a way of showing how we celebrate, by putting up colourful symbols, to bring attention to the season.

In times of anxiousness, it is sometimes most comforting to try to focus on the things we know. So, let us go back to what we know in this time of wonder and worry. We remember that the first Easter was not spent in a church with flowers and singing. In fact, the disciples of Jesus were inside their homes behind closed doors, fearful that the Roman or religious authorities, who knew they were friends of Jesus, would come after them. We, too, are behind our doors hoping that we can escape the fear of the pandemic.

We remember that on the first Easter, there were two women who quietly approached the tomb of Jesus in the morning. There were no trumpets or parades or Easter hats. There was doubt, wonder, and questioning of whether a miracle could really have happened. Just like when we read the news, we wonder if something good could finally be coming. We hang onto news about vaccines being tested and good work that is being done by helping hands.

In a way, I believe by being apart from each other, it reflects a time much closer to the way it would have been on the very first Easter. In fact, those who had reason to celebrate Jesus were farther away than the tomb entrance. They were hiding behind locked doors, dispersed around Jerusalem. Those who would have likely heard that Jesus had died would have had to wait until news came that he had been resurrected. And even then, after hearing the news, they would have wondered if they could really say that it was over. The disciples had just watched their friend and teacher die and now they were expected to believe that he was back?

However, once hearing the news, Jesus' followers began to believe that it was possible that Jesus had returned. In weeks to come, we

will hear through scripture just what happened for them as they experienced the truth of the Resurrection. Just like when we finally are allowed to go out into the world as we normally did a few weeks back, we will be hesitant about it. We may not believe it at first, but when we finally do go out, it may feel just like the disciples would have felt.

When we reunite in community, we once again will share in the message of Easter by taking communion, eating meals together, baking, cooking, singing, and remembering our faith. Until then, we celebrate our first Easter online, away from each other, but together in spirit. It will be much harder this year to find the Easter message in all things, but nevertheless it is there. Amidst the many wonders and worries, God's message of life beyond death persists. With the awakening of Spring, the trees on the edge of blossoming, the tulips and sprouts beginning to emerge, we are given signs of hope. Beyond the death of the way things used to be, God is creating all things new. God journeys with us in the beginning, middle, and end of our journeys. New life is making itself known and it just enough for us to have a 'mini' Easter now. Once, we are allowed to worship together in person again, we will celebrate Easter on the very first Sunday back: even if it is June, July or August. We are going to celebrate Easter once more. Just hold on until then.

Amen. Rev. Emma

Sunday Fun: Can you find Gwen the Wonder Dog?



Leslie Pipes 2018