

Easter Day - Matthew 28:1-10
April 12, 2020

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Happy Easter! Today is the biggest celebration of the entire Church year!

And I know what you're thinking – it's just not the same as worshipping together as a community - singing songs and sharing in Holy Communion and giving hugs and wishing one another a boisterous "Happy Easter!"

It doesn't feel much like a celebration locked up in our own homes without the community and all of the decorations and Easter lilies and fancy clothes and special music and all of that.

But this is a celebration. Right here. Right now. This is a huge celebration. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And it's really not very different from that first Easter with the disciples locked away in in worry and fear and a woman went to them to share the good news. :D

So, even in the midst of a pandemic we can celebrate, and should celebrate, and need to celebrate the good news that death does not have the final say. Life wins! Life always wins, because God is all about life.

From the very beginning, God has been creating and gifting life. On the third day, God created vegetation and then a couple of days later animals were created and then on the sixth day people were created and God looked at all the life that God had created and God was happy and God said, "this is all good, and those people are really good. I done good!"

God was happy and God loves all of the creation. And even after all of the screw ups us human beings have done, including spreading the Covid19 virus, God still loves us and sees good in us and wants us to have life, because that is the gift God enjoys the most.

So, even after we put Jesus on the cross and kill him, God still says, "I love you, you are good, and I want you to have life – eternal life." So, instead of punishing us, God forgives us, erases all of our sin, and raises Jesus from the dead.

In the resurrection, Jesus proclaims that love and goodness can never be destroyed, because they are of God, they are eternal, and they are life.

Easter, as you may or may not realize, is also the celebration of Holy Baptism. During Easter, we celebrate that in our baptisms, we are joined into Jesus' death and resurrection. As it says in Colossians, we have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

In baptism, we are joined into God's proclamation that goodness and love cannot be destroyed. In baptism, we have been named and claimed and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Right here on our foreheads we are marked with the cross of Christ forever. The mark of God's eternal love and our inherent goodness. It's right there!

When God looks at us, God only sees beloved children. When God looks at us, God only sees that we are good.

Goodness and love are eternal. They can never be destroyed. That's why Jesus is risen from the dead and we are marked with the cross of Christ forever.

On our forehead, we carry around the most important piece of good news. We are God's. We are loved. We are good. And because of that, we have eternal life. We are eternally connected to God, who is life.

So, in the midst of pandemics and other horrible things, we need only trace the cross on our foreheads – after we wash our hands, of course, and it's good to do it with wet hands to really remember our baptisms – and know that good can never be destroyed. Even in the midst of death, there is life and goodness.

So, trace the cross on your head with me and say, "Goodness cannot be destroyed."

Goodness can never be destroyed. Good, which comes from God, the words are related, can never be destroyed. And that is our hope. That is what makes everything else bearable. Goodness cannot be destroyed. And that's the good news we need to share.

The angels appeared to the women and they were told to go share the good news. Jesus is risen. The tomb is empty. And with that charge, the women became angels themselves. The word angel in Greek means messenger, and they became messengers of God's amazing news! Jesus is alive!

In baptism, we become angels as well. We are messengers for the world that goodness cannot be destroyed. Love cannot be destroyed. Life is eternal!

And so, just as the angels are depicted in art with halos over their heads, I want you to imagine that cross on your forehead as a halo. You are messengers of God's good news for all of creation!

So, as you go out into the world, instead of looking for tombs, look for resurrection. Instead of looking for death, see life.

And don't be afraid. You're good. You're loved. And, God is with you – always.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Amen.