

# The Lily Pad

“I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.” Solomon 2:1



## Christ Is Risen! He Is Risen **INDEED!**

**CHRIST  
IS  
RISEN!  
HE IS**

**RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!**



Now what do we do? Our Lenten Journey is over. We traveled to the upper room on Maundy Thursday with Jesus and his disciples. We heard Jesus say those powerful, effective words that are still effective when we hear them on Sunday mornings, **“Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins”** (Matthew 26:28). We traveled to the foot of the cross on Good Friday and heard Jesus utter a lonely cry of abandonment, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”** (Mark 15:34)? We heard the words of finality that Jesus spoke with his last breath, **“It is finished!”** (John 19:30), paying in full the price for our **SIN** in that separates us from God.

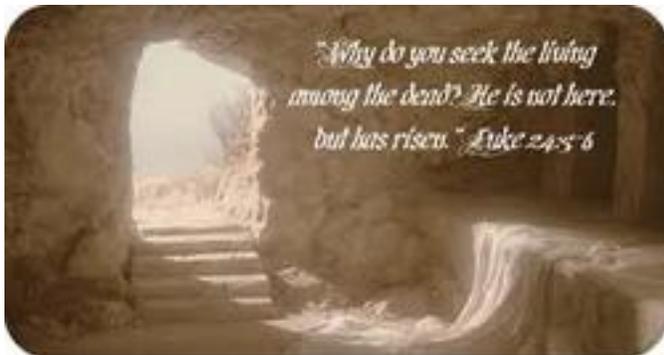
And we traveled to the **EMPTY TOMB** to hear again about the group of women that traveled there early on the first day of the week to find it empty. We heard once more the words of the angels at the empty tomb, **“HE IS NOT HERE, BUT HAS RISEN”** (Luke 24:6). The final, culminating Day of the Resurrection is over. **Now what do we do?**

The month of April reminds us that Easter is more than just one day. Easter is an **“every Sunday”** celebration during which we come together to receive the fruit of the cross and resurrection of Jesus—the forgiveness of sins and the certainty of eternal life with God. Easter is also an **“every day”** celebration in which we live each day trusting in God through Christ, knowing that Jesus is **“THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE”** (John 11:25) for us.

**So what do we do now as we go forth from the empty tomb?** Let us follow the example of the first witnesses of the empty tomb. After the two angels reminded Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the

other women that Jesus had risen, St. Luke tells us that **“they remembered the words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest”** (Luke 24:8-9).

They went forth from the tomb changed by the **RESURRECTION OF JESUS**. They went forth from the tomb to bring an **“every day” witness of God’s power over sin, death, and Satan himself.**



*So where do we go once we leave the empty tomb?* Let us follow the example of Jesus' first disciples. After Jesus walked through locked doors to appear to the eleven disciples and to show himself to Thomas, seven of the eleven disciples went back to their fishing business (John 21:1-14). They went back to their vocations or stations in life and took the witness of the **RESURRECTION** with them. They lived in the joy of the resurrection of Jesus while carrying out the daily, routine labor and responsibilities given to them.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, disciples of Christ, we are *"every day"* witnesses and participants in the **RESURRECTION** of Jesus. We believe and have been baptized – *an inward phenomenon of coming to and accepting Jesus Christ as real, as God incarnate, as the sacrificial means by which we believe in him and are forever reconciled to God.* We have the hope of eternal life. We have the joy of the **RESURRECTION** living inside of us. Like the women at the empty tomb and the eleven disciples, we too have been given callings or positions in life, divine gifts from God.

Most of us are not fisherpersons, but all of us have one or more of these callings: father, husband, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparent, employee, retiree, friend, and neighbor. Each of these callings comes with a set of absolute duties and responsibilities. As remorseful Christians, by God's grace we wrap the daily duties and responsibilities of our callings in the *joy, love, peace, and forgiveness* of Christ. And, more than likely, others will take notice and God will bless your faithful work by giving you opportunities to *"tell all these things to all the rest"; the Good News of Jesus Christ* and the *free salvation* that he provides.. (Luke 24:9).

*Blessed and highly favored children of the God, disciples of Risen Christ, Holy Spirit anointed,* go forth from Easter Sunday and the celebration of the empty tomb free as God's forgiven children in Christ. Let us go forth empowered by God's Holy Spirit living and active within each of us to live in the divine **JOY** of the *resurrection* as *"every day" witnesses.*

1. Come! live in the light!  
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!  
We are called to be light for the kingdom,  
to live in the freedom of the city of God!

**Refrain: We are called to act with justice.  
We are called to love tenderly.  
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.**

2. Come! Open your heart!  
Show your mercy to all those in fear!  
We are called to be hope for the hopeless,  
so all hatred and blindness will be no more!

3. Sing! Sing a new song!  
Sing of that great day when all will be one!  
God will reign and we'll walk with each other as sisters  
and brothers united in love!

## **FOR TIMES SUCH AS THIS**

*So keep your thoughts continually fixed on all that is authentic and real, honorable and admirable, beautiful and respectful, pure and holy, merciful and kind. And fasten your thoughts on every glorious work of God, praising him always. Follow the example of all that we have imparted to you and the God of peace will be with you in all things. Philippians 4:8-9*

I begin with humble words of thanks, appreciation, and admiration for all of you! Each of you have responded to the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in with creativity, generosity, and goodwill. As The Lily Pad reaches you Pastor Clarissa, Accountable Leadership Board, Ministry Leaders, Laity Leadership, Committee Chairs, Prayer Warriors – each and everyone of you have worked to adapt our worship experiences, pastoral care, visitation ministry, community service, and Christian educational, Spiritual Formation, and our financial offerings in light of our decision to suspend public worship and normal church operations.

**THESE WERE NOT EASY STEPS TO TAKE, BUT TOGETHER, WITH GOD’S HELP,  
WE’VE LEARNING NEW WAYS OF BEING THE CHURCH.**

When church buildings are damaged, we remind ourselves that the church is not a building, but a community gathered around the ministry of Jesus. In times when gathering together as a body of Christ to praise and worship is restricted, we learn that what unites us transcends social distance. And when society at-large is under duress, we realize with great and amazing clarity that our primary ministry is to serve others and the common good.

Yet this is also a time when our own weaknesses and fears come to the forefront; when real disappointments and frustrations affect our spirits and weariness takes its toll. As losses and uncertainties grow, we would be made of stone if we didn't feel the strain of an uncertain future and urgent concern for those facing the harshest consequences of all that is disrupting our lives.

**THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT FAITH IS FOR--TIMES LIKE THIS**, when we and those around us need assurance that we're not alone, and that together we will get through whatever lies ahead. Now is the time to draw close to God in prayer, and to one another in acts of kindness and love. **REMEMBER THAT WE DO NOT WALK THIS ROAD ALONE.** Christ is, as the celtic prayer reminds us,

**BEHIND AND BEFORE US, WITHIN AND AROUND US,  
SPEAKING TO US THROUGH THE WORDS OF FRIEND AND STRANGER.**

*Let us with oneness of heart and mind pray: God of healing and hope, in the promise of the resurrected Jesus, meet each of us in our places of pain, fear, and uncertainty. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on those who are vulnerable, and all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your comforting Holy Spirit, bring out the best, not the worst in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other and the strength that though we are many, we are one body, so it is with Christ. In the Name that is above all Names, our wounded resurrected healer, Jesus; Emanuel – you are truly with us. Let the people say - Amen. Amen Amen.*

**A Happy & Blessed Easter,  
PASTOR CLARISSA & Brother MARTIN**