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St. Luke's Episcopal Church ~ Anchorage, Kentucky  
Easter April 15 & 16, 2017  
Matthew 28:1-10

While driving in very early this morning, it was quite dark and the rain was falling heavily. When I pulled into the church parking lot, I heard a multitude of birds singing. It was as if they knew there was something very special about this day! I imagine if St. Francis were here among us this morning he most certainly say “Of course they know!” In spite of the darkness, the rumble of thunder, and the pouring rain, these earthly elements would not deter their morning song! And as for the rain, aside of perhaps having to move the Easter Egg Hunt indoors, it is a blessing. How many times did Jesus mention water in His teachings? Water is such a significant part of life, both physically and spiritually. We cannot live without it. And, the water that Jesus alludes to while on earth is life-giving through the Spirit. In the gospel of John, Jesus states ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ (John 7:38 NRSV). Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well - “those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” (John 4:14 NRSV). In Christ’s resurrection we have eternal life! This whole story – the greatest story of all-time – is all about LOVE. The Lord is risen! Alleluia!

It was his singing that did it. At first I didn’t really notice, as I had no reason to really. The circumstances were frequent and commonplace - a mom picking up her seven-year-old from a Cub Scout meeting. Lucas loved cub scouts; he enjoyed the activities, and he really felt a sense of pride when wearing his neckerchief and slide. He had climbed in the car that evening and showed me the merit badge he had just earned. I turned onto the road, turned on his favorite music, and then turned my attention to my do list, and my other obligations for the

evening. As I stepped into the maze of thought, but then I stepped back out, only to notice that Lucas was singing and he was singing about Jesus, and singing to Jesus. His head back, chin up, and lungs full, he filled the car with music. As I recall, the song went something like this, “I’m H double O ked on Jesus – He’s HOOKED on me....” I feel sure the heavenly chorus stopped to listen to my son that night.

I thought to myself – Is this my son? He sounds older, looks older, even taller. Did I sleep through something? What happened to those chubby cheeks? Somewhere in the night a page had turned - I thought. If you’re a parent, or have been around little ones, or have affection for little ones you can probably relate to this. Time goes by so quickly, does it not? When we pulled into our driveway, I placed my hand on Lucas’ shoulder and said, “Lucas, when you grow up some girl is going to steal your heart and whisk you right off your feet!.....” He tilted his head, looked away for a minute, and then looked back at me and said “Momma, why are you acting so weird?” I suppose my words sounded strange to my seven-year-old, as the love of a parent falls awkwardly on a child’s ears sometimes. Yet, my burst of love and emotion for him was beyond him. Yet - that didn’t keep me from speaking and sharing my love toward him.

Love – the most profound gift there is on this earth. There is no way that our miniscule (in the grand scheme of the universe) minds can truly comprehend the love of God - but that didn’t keep Him from coming. We too have tilted our heads, and wondered what our Father is doing in our lives. From the cradle in Bethlehem to the cross in Jerusalem, and to His glorious resurrection, we ponder to fathom the immeasurable love of our heavenly Father. What can one say to that kind of emotion? How can one even begin to explain such love and compassion?

Though many of the disciples went astray upon Jesus’ capture, this was of no consequence upon Jesus resurrection, as when the angel in the tomb told Mary Magdalene and

Mary to “go quickly and tell the disciples that Jesus has been raised from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee; and there they will see him!” As they fled to share the good news they encountered Jesus and worshipped him. They were filled with both joy and fear! Jesus said to them “Do not be afraid, go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Jesus makes use of flawed people in his mission, and in spite of our weaknesses and perhaps wavering faith, He wants the disciples (and us) to know that they will meet him in Galilee. What is so amazing about that is that Jesus forgives them (and us) for their/our failures. He calls them his "brothers" (28:10). They betrayed him and deserted him at the time of his trial and death. But now he restores them as his messengers and trusts them once again to represent him. And so it is with us. We are like the disciples. We are flawed persons and have perhaps failed him, both as individuals and as the Church (the Body of Christ). But Jesus continues to call his disciples (and this include each of us) to follow him into the world and to represent him, as we walk as children of Light.

Easter’s sunrise promise is that after death, we also will have a glorified and a glory-filled body. In Paul’s letter to the Galatians the body is described as the Church and our risen bodies. “There does not exist Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female. All are one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28). Here on earth we have bodies with a national identity with various social, racial, and gender differences. Yet, after he had risen, Jesus became the Christ, entering in to the fullness and completion of “human-hood” and “Godhood.” This is the Easter gift that is promised to us and to all in this life who are in Christ. For those who believe in His promise, their homecoming after death is more than life after death; rather it is a fullness of life and personhood that is beyond our imaginations! Let us rejoice in this glorious gift that is promised

to us! Rejoice today in the boundless Grace of God, and the New Covenant in Christ! This gift of grace is God's favor toward us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills. The inward and spiritual grace that we receive through Baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit. (p. 858 BCP), and through our Baptism – by water and the Holy Spirit, grace brings us into a concrete existence in God's family, the Church.

So where do we go from here? Tomorrow begins a new work week, a new school week, or simply a week governed by the sheer business of our lives. Look around you...breathe in the air, and the fresh fragrance of the Easter Lilies on this glorious day as we celebrate, as the Body of Christ, His resurrection! This is why we are here – this is what holds us together, and this is what gives us strength and hope for the journey. Feel His presence in our midst, as this is the holy day of Easter –we celebrate His resurrection, as we also celebrate our new life in Christ!

Hold on to this feeling of love, peace, and joy. Wrap it up in your hearts. As we return to our daily lives, let us never forget that He is with us always. Through his resurrection, Jesus has overcome the world! As I have said time and time again, as followers and Disciples of Christ Jesus – we are in the world, but we are not of the world. Rejoice in this knowingness! Because of his resurrection we are born anew. As we died with Christ in our Baptisms, we live with Christ in His mighty resurrection. It's all about love, folks....

Share the light of His love while rejoicing in the power and the assurance of his resurrection! Alleluia! Christ is risen!