

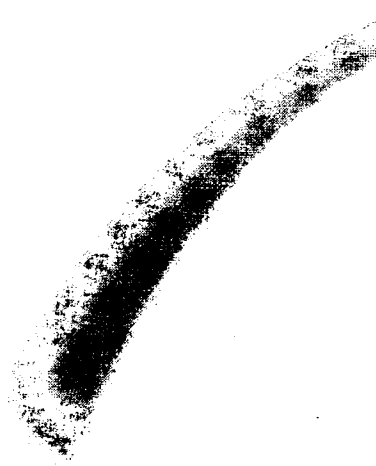
It seems hard to believe that the long, reflective, and often cold journey of Lent is now in our past. Even the excitement and joy of Easter morning—as warm and sunny as they were this year—may seem to have come and gone. But they are not. Easter may be a day on a calendar to some, who see only an opportunity to hide little plastic eggs, gorge on chocolate, or get together with family. As I mentioned in our Easter morning sermon, we didn't come to church just to show off a new pastel dress or our finest Easter bonnet; we came to remember (*or be jarred into recognition of*) Jesus present in our own lives.

Sometimes we take it for granted, and forget what an incredible sacrifice Christ made for us. Sometimes bread is just a dietary staple. Sometimes grape juice is just a refreshing drink filled with healthy antioxidants. But when we gather around Holy Communion, these same elements that we might take for granted in our own refrigerator become a sacrament that unites us with fellow believers here in our own congregation, around the world, and—most importantly—with our risen Savior.

When we experience Jesus during special seasons like Christmas, Lent, or Easter, our senses become awakened to experience even our surroundings in a whole new way. Similar to Mary's experience outside the tomb, we are awakened to the physical, emotional, and communal experience of Jesus in our midst—through the taste of the communion elements, the familiar scent of the sanctuary, the stirring melody of a favorite hymn, the feel of the Bible on your lap, and the wooden pew at your back.

Our challenge now is not only to remember Jesus' resurrection, but to continue believing and applying its joy in our lives. I hope that you are always ready to boldly proclaim, "He is risen...He is risen indeed!" Sitting in the pews on that bright, sunny Sunday morning it was easy to believe in and affirm the resurrection. But what about when someone lets you down, or a friend or loved one suddenly dies, or the things that you gave up during Lent seem to have returned even more tempting than before? Will Easter then be just a distant memory?

One way we encouraged Easter morning worshipers to continue recalling the glory of Jesus' resurrection and contemplating their own faith was through little packages of Skittles candies. When you need a little pick-me-up, let the words of the accompanying "Easter in My Hand" poem encourage you through rhyming verse to put your Easter faith in motion every day:



*There's a rainbow in my hand, full of colors that are bright;
they remind me of the Savior who was born on Christmas night.
He left his throne in heaven, to forgive the sins of man;
the candy from this rainbow will reveal his mighty plan.
The purple one reminds me of the sin that's in my heart;
it separated God from man and drove them both apart.
The red candy reminds me of the blood that Jesus lost,
when he went up on the hill and he died upon the cross.
Then Sunday morning came, and the stone was rolled away;
by the orange light of sunrise Christ arose on Easter day.
Green is the color of the new life in the spring;
it tells me of the new life that knowing Jesus brings.
Yellow is the color of the gold that lines the street,
in heaven up above where Jesus we will meet.
The rainbow in my hand says that Jesus died for me;
the Savior in my life says that now my heart is free.*

May we echo the joy of Mary's announcement that first Easter morning, sharing our joy as we carry the message into a lost and hurting world during the days, weeks, and even months ahead: **Christ is risen! Jesus Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Yours in the glory of our risen Christ,

Rev. Cory Germain