

Easter Sunday April 12, 2020

Matthew 28:1-10

A long time ago, when I was a minister in Thornbury, I had 4 funerals during Holy Week. One person died from the congregation, and then a parent of one of our members died, then another member died, and when they told me there was a fourth death, I thought it was a bad joke.

The Ladies of the church prepared lunches for 3 of them, and most people of the congregation went to all four funerals.

We were ready for Easter Sunday!

We were ready for the empty tomb, and ready for kids to be searching for Easter Eggs, the choir to be singing Hallelujah and God to wipe away the tears from our eyes.

Hallelujah Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed! Hallelujah.

This Easter is a little different.

I had hoped when the pandemic started that we'd be together in the sanctuary this Easter morning.

Probably we all did.

The tomb is empty, but so is our sanctuary, and sanctuaries all over the world.

We are waiting for the pandemic to be over.
WE are waiting for new life to arrive.
And we are waiting for the day when Jesus will return in glory and finally set all things right again.

The empty tomb is a sign of the promise.
Because Jesus lives we shall live also.
Paul, one of the early followers of Jesus, describes the Holy Spirit as a kind of down payment, a sign, or a guarantee that Jesus is going to return for all us all.

I see the empty tomb as a similar sign.
The empty tomb is a sign that one day everything will be made new.
Death is defeated.
Jesus has trampled down death by death, giving life to those in the grave.

Hallelujah Christ is risen! He is risen indeed hallelujah!

The empty tomb tells us that Jesus is loose in our world, and no power can stand against him.

He promised that he was going ahead of his disciples, back to Galilee, back to where his work began.

It wasn't the end, it was just the beginning. And then he met his disciples in unexpected places.

After the darkness of Jesus' death they thought all hope was lost, but when they found the tomb was empty, when Jesus met them face to face, they were transformed. Everything changed.

So today we rest on the sure promises of God. Nothing can separate us from his love. Jesus goes before us. He will meet us on the road, he will enter into closed rooms and bring light and hope and continue to equip his church for his mission.

The tomb is empty.
He is not here, he is alive and you will see him.

**Hallelujah Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed hallelujah!**