

3 Easter– April 18, 2021

To our Zion Family,

Rev. Janet never ceases to amaze me. Those attending last Sunday's post-service "joyful chaos" on Zoom heard me say that her sermon was one of the best I've ever heard. I meant that in all seriousness and with no exaggeration—so many pearls of wisdom, so many thought provoking, challenging, and comforting ideas. I won't do them justice with my summary, but instead encourage you to go back and read Rev. Janet's sermon again for yourself. But let me quote the final few lines of her sermon: *Easter is not a day, it's not even a season. Easter is a way of life. Every day we are called to make Easter choices. Every day we make choices that refine and deepen whatever faith we have. We choose to act in ways that indicate whether we believe in compassion or indifference, love or hate, persons or things. As God didn't let the disciples stay locked away, so we are called to move forward with deep peace and wonder-filled joy, for God is good, and God's steadfast love is forever. There is nothing in life or in death that can tear us from God's arms of grace and mercy. No trouble. No doubt. No anguish or uncertainty. No power can separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord.* Let us continue to live the good news of Easter and share it generously with others!

Announcements and Updates:

-Upcoming in-person worship in our sanctuary: The church council approved the Task Force recommendations for future in-person worship. Our next in-person worship service will be on **April 25th**. In May, we will move to alternating weeks being in-person on **May 9th and 23rd**. **In June, we plan to return to weekly in-person worship**, assuming there is no surge in the Oneida County COVID infection rate and we are able to secure supply pastors for each Sunday. We will confirm the June (and beyond) schedule within the next week or two. **We will continue to Zoom our Sunday morning services even when we are back to weekly in-person worship.**

-Volunteers are needed for our in-person worship services! We will need five volunteers to staff each Sunday service: a worship assistant, two greeters (temperature check, health questions, recording the information, and hand sanitizing), and two ushers (bulletins, communion elements, offering plate, directing people to leave the sanctuary). If you plan to attend the in-person worship service, we ask that everyone take a turn volunteering for one of these roles on a quarterly basis, if not monthly. We do not want to burn out the people who have been serving in these roles thus far. Please contact Jim Marscher if you are interested in being a worship assistant. A big thank you to Barb Wilson and Jeanne Gymburch, who have graciously volunteered to coordinate the greeter and usher schedule for in-person worship services. Barb can be reached at 315-737-9319 (home), 315-368-4111 (cell), or at B62950@aol.com. Jeanne can be reached at jgymburch@gmail.com. Thank you to all of our volunteers!

-Worship this Sunday, April 18th, will be offered remotely via Zoom, livestreamed on YouTube, or via the Service of the Word, found later in this document.

To join **this Sunday's service via Zoom**, same log-in info as last week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwwSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09>

Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#. **If you are joining us on Zoom, please be sure you are on mute and that your video is turned off from 10 AM when the service commences until it ends and the "Joyful Chaos" begins.**

Livestreamed: If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7-bIPvxp62lA>

The Service of the Word is found later in this mailing.

-**Confused about opening the packet of elements for communion?** From the conversations I've heard about communion at our in-person worship services since Palm Sunday, I'm not the only one for whom this posed a challenge. If you found yourself if this boat, too, check-out the following: [Fellowship Cup - Prefilled Communion Cups - Juice and Wafer - Opening Demonstration - YouTube](#)

-**The YMCA has concluded their use of the Fellowship Hall for the supervised day-program** needed while schools were remote due to COVID. (Most elementary, middle, and high schools in Oneida County welcomed children back into the classroom beginning this week.) The Y will continue to use this space during school vacations, snow days (next year, we're hoping), and their summer camp program.

-**Thank you to Katie Marscher, Jim Marscher, Kim Marscher, and Matt LaFave for their tireless work in getting the technology issues ironed out**, enabling us to broadcast the in-person worship services via Zoom. After some wrinkles on Palm Sunday, several adjustments were made and some needed pieces of equipment purchased. From all reports, the Easter Service broadcast went very smoothly!

-**Our Church Council met on April 12th.** Major topics of discussion were the plans for returning to in-person worship, the Nepali Congregation use of Zion facilities during this period of pandemic, and the Call Process.

-**The Task Force for Return to In-person Worship met on April 6th.** Recommendations for in-person worship and the Nepali Congregation's use of Zion facilities were presented to the Church Council.

-**Thank you to everyone for their continued financial support** with your stewardship contributions. Your generosity enables us to continue carrying out Zion's mission despite the challenges we face.

In addition to Rev. Janet's wonderful sermon last Sunday, we continue to be blessed with the presence of Kelli Watson as our supply organist. This past Sunday, Kelli played **Be Not Afraid** as our Anthem. The words were so apropos to go along with the sermon. Here's the final verse and chorus: *...And blessed are your poor for the kingdom shall be theirs, blest are you that weep and mourn for one day you shall laugh, And if wicked men insult and hate you all because of me, blessed, blessed are you. Be not afraid, I go before you always, come, follow me and I will give you rest.* If you have access to YouTube, here's the link to view and listen again:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWpG7qHtB8g>

On a feel-good note, if you have a minute, check-out the Masaka Kids Africana Dancing To Jerusalema at the YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TH4V-yHbJXk> Tell me it doesn't make you smile! Have a good week.

Peace,
Mark Thompson, church council co-president

Zion is requiring that all people who are attending in-person services wear masks in the appropriate manner (*covering both nose and mouth*) throughout the church service except for when we are receiving the communion elements. We are striving to keep our commitment to the health and well-being of all church members.

Thank you so much for your cooperation!

3 Easter



SERVICE OF THE WORD
GATHERING

WELCOME

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus Vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #392 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; his the scepter, his the throne; Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone. Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood: "Jesus out of ev'ry nation has redeemed us by his blood."

Vs. 4 Alleluia! King eternal, Lord omnipotent we own; Alleluia! born of Mary, earth your footstool, heav'n your throne. As within the veil you entered, robed in flesh, our great high priest, here on earth both priest and victim in the Eucharistic feast.

Prayer of the Day

Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 3:12-19

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-7

Gospel: John 21:1-19

Sermon: *-Pastor Janet Hoover*

One of the reasons the Bible means so much to me is that I find myself in its pages. Its stories of squabbling siblings, wandering exiles, struggling disciples help me understand my own life. Like Thomas, I ask questions and doubt. Like Martha, I immerse myself in work until I am reminded that there is more to life than doing. But of all the characters of Scripture, the one I am most drawn to is Peter. He wants to be faithful. He tries to understand. Yet over and over he misses the point. He wants to be brave, yet, when the moment comes, his courage fails him. This disciple whom Jesus calls the Rock, when challenged, denies any knowledge of Jesus. He fails utterly and yet—that's not the end of Peter. With threads of failure and victory, his story is woven through the larger story of Jesus' ministry. We read of his willingness to follow Jesus, his struggles to understand what it means to be a disciple. We hear his promises to remain faithful. And we see him crumble when danger threatens. I imagine that, as much as Peter longs to believe the women when they run to him with the news that Christ is risen, he is also afraid—torn between the hope that it is true and the fear that it is true. For if Jesus is alive, Peter, still aching over his denial, will have to face him—meet the eyes of the One he let down and abandoned. Early in the morning, just as the sky begins to lighten with the approaching dawn, Peter and some of the other disciples are back where

they started three long years ago—in a boat fishing. After the turmoil and confusion and grief and fear, he has returned to the familiar routine of work—where he knew what was expected of him. Where he could push the events of the last few days to the back of the mind. But, no matter how busy he kept himself, no matter how exhausted, he couldn't forget. He had been so sure of his courage. So sure, that nothing could sway his loyalty to Jesus. Not family pressures, not prison, not even death. And yet, when the time for courage came, he heard himself deny that he even knew Jesus—not once, but three times. After that, everything happened so fast. When Jesus died, Peter wasn't there. He was in hiding with the others, full of grief and guilt and fear. And then the women came with the news that the tomb was empty. Mary told him that she had seen Jesus—that the grave could not hold the love and light of God. It was too much. Peter needed time to think, to process these events. So, it was back to the nets and the familiar challenge of the wind and the waves. And it is there that Peter experiences the resurrection for himself. For Jesus meets him on the shore. **Peter**, he says, **do you love me?** Peter has another chance. He can make up for his denials. *Yes, Lord*, he trumpets, *I love you*. Looking him in the eyes, Jesus says: **Feed my lambs**. A second time Jesus asks the question, and a second time Peter replies with an affirmation of love. And then a third time the question is posed. **Do you love me?** Peter is hurt. *Why won't Jesus believe him? Lord—you know that I love you*. And the reply: **Feed my sheep**. And then at last Peter gets it. Three times he had denied Jesus. Then, through the gracious gift of God, three times he is able to speak of his love to Jesus. It's as if Peter's denials are erased. He is cleansed, forgiven, and trusted—given the task of sharing grace and hope with others. The story of this cowardly lion is every bit as much a resurrection story as that of Mary in the garden. Christ's love frees him from his tomb of fear and shame. The power of the resurrection sweeps through the dead and dried out places of his soul, transforming him into the person of love and courage he was meant to be. For Peter and for us, the resurrection means that since the power of death is broken—there is nothing of which we need to be afraid. Not only are we assured of eternal life, but we are equipped for the life we live here and now. We, too, can experience resurrection moments. Times when, despite fear and uncertainty, we are emboldened to take a leap of faith. Times when, even though others may label us as foolish and weak, we love and forgive even those who wound us. Times when we leave the cocoon of silent safety to speak out in the face of injustice, even when the price we may pay is dear.

In *Les Misérables*, the hero, Jean Val Jean, faces a moment of truth when a case of mistaken identity is about to land an innocent man in prison. Val Jean knows that, if he acknowledges that he himself is the man they are looking for, he will be sent back to the hellish existence of prison. He wrestles with what to do and then says: *If I speak, I am condemned. If I stay silent—I am dead*. That is the lesson Peter gives us. If we speak of our faith, if we live as Jesus calls us to live, it may make us unpopular, bring about less than affluent lifestyles, take us into places of suffering and struggle. But if we don't—

Most of us can remember moments when we should have spoken up and remained silent, when our actions enabled the suffering of another, when our fears or selfishness drew us away from the light of love. Sometimes these moments haunt us for years, crippling our joy and diminishing our lives. The good news is that God doesn't leave us in the tomb but is always at work to bring us to newness of life. The pivotal experience of my life was a journey to Central America several years ago as a part of my seminary coursework—countries which were, at the time, in the midst of horrific civil wars. El Salvador, in particular, was wrenching, listening to the stories of people who lived in the midst of terror we can only imagine—and bore the scars to prove it, holding the hands of children whose entire lives had been lived in the shadow of violence, being stopped and held at gunpoint more than once. The smell of poverty and death still comes at me from time to time. And yet in the midst of the awfulness, I witnessed a joyful faith that was so deep, so true, that it took my breath away. The church in El Salvador was marked by their government as a subversive group, which meant it was dangerous to be known as a Christian. But even with the very real threat of death squads and prison, the church of Jesus Christ could not be stopped. Even as they were arrested and tortured, they continued to worship and pray and serve their neighbor. The day before we left the country, we worshipped in a Lutheran congregation. As the service ended, we were each given a simple wooden cross, crosses made by the women of the church. As it was slipped over my head and the minister, a courageous man named Medardo Gomez, prayed a blessing over me, I vowed to myself that I would wear it proudly and live as courageously and faithfully as these Salvadoran Christians. The next day, we boarded a plane for Nicaragua. We were told that we needed to be particularly careful in the airport, for the government was watching carefully all who entered and left the country. We were advised not to dress like church people (whatever that meant), to avoid “church talk”, to make sure any religious material was packed well down in our luggage, and to cover the crosses we had been given. Our group was scattered throughout the plane, and I ended up sitting next to a well-dressed man—most likely a government official or businessman. After we had been in the air for some time, he turned and asked me if the group I was with was some sort of missionary group. Immediately I responded: *No, we're students*. As soon as the words were out of my mouth, I felt sick—guilty and ashamed. I had spoken the truth. I had just omitted the fact that we were seminary students. But I knew he was really asking: *Are you Christians?* And I had said no. I tried to make myself feel better with the thought that, if I had told him the whole truth, he might have tried to find out more about the places we had visited and the people we had talked to, thus

putting them in danger. I tried to convince myself that my half-truth was not a denial of Jesus, but a sensible and reasonable response. If I spoke, I was condemned. If I was silent... in an attempt to distract myself, I asked the man what he did for a living. He looked at me for a long moment. Then, reaching into his shirt, he pulled out a cross and said: *I'm the Episcopalian Archbishop of Colombia.* I felt as if my very soul had been pierced—not by pain, but by relief and a joy I have never experienced before or since. God was giving me another chance. And as I pulled out my own cross, I knew that I would never be the same again. As we talked further, I learned that there were no Episcopalian ministers in El Salvador, so the bishops of the surrounding countries rotated a monthly visit. They would go into that place of death at great inconvenience and risk to themselves—to administer baptism and communion—to be the presence of the church with a wounded and broken people. Through his witness and his courage, I glimpsed the face of the risen Christ. And I felt the tomb of caution and timidity that had held me for so long shatter. I left that plane a new person. Oh, I am still a bit of a cowardly lion. I don't like to speak or act in ways that threaten my comfort. I struggle on a regular basis with fear and doubt and worry. But whenever I am tempted to let caution control my life, I remember that moment—the sickening feeling of failure and the incredible relief of grace.

We all know fear. Fears twist our lives and hold us back from the abundant life God offers us. The fear of ourselves—that we cannot do what is expected of us. The fear of being found out for who we really are—uncertain, fallible, weak. The fear of being left out when joy and love are handed out. The fear of not being ready when opportunities present themselves. The fear of loneliness and poverty. The fear of becoming vulnerable or weak, of needing to depend on others. The fear of death—that, when it comes our time to die, we shall be found wanting. And so, we turn away from the richness of life to retreat into caves of safe routines and old patterns. Christ stands before us calling: **Look at me. See me. I am alive. Let me roll away the stone that holds you back from really living.** Almost 20 years later, I was in El Salvador again with a couple of people looking into partnering with a church there...that didn't work out, but the rest of the story. The Civil War had more or less ended, but now gang violence was terrorizing the country—and me. I wore my cross visibly, but I was still anxious and afraid and wanting to be home. The last day we were there, the man who had been driving us and our interpreter began chatting in Spanish. The interpreter turned and said, he just told me when he drops you at the airport tomorrow, he will be picking up his father-in-law, who is coming home from a church conference. Maybe you've heard of him...his name is Medardo Gomez. Medardo Gomez, the Lutheran pastor who slipped the cross over my neck and blessed me. This man's son-in-law had been driving us and helping to ensure our safety. And, again, I felt a wave of courage and hope wash through me. Resurrection is second chances and third chances, and as many chances as we may need. Resurrection moments may come through Episcopalians and Lutherans, and Presbyterians. They may come in places of danger or as we walk out our front door. Resurrection moments may come in the still of a garden at dawn or in the shadows of the valley of death. They may come in the midst of laughter or tears. Resurrection is recognizing Christ at work in the world around us. It is moving from hesitancy to courage, from doubt to trust, from self-preservation to a life of adventure. Resurrection means that what we see is not all there is, for there is nothing that separates us from God's love. It means that, in life and in death, we belong to God, so our future is assured. We need fear no one. Nothing. Resurrection means that, no matter what happens, how we fail others, God, ourselves, that we can begin again. New life is yours. Today. Right now. Jesus Christ is risen. Unclench your hearts and let him in. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ANTHEM: Easter Medley, arr. by Marcia Wells -Kelli Watson

Prayers of Intercession

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the church embodies repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, like a master artist you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it is in need of restoration. Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and sustainable home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness. Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, Doris, comfort for Patsy, Claudia, Bill & Rusty, healing for Jeanette, healing for Sadye & the Lotempio family, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Joyce, Your Neighbors clients, Matt & Jen and family, Bill, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Hear us O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations. In the night on which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Chris has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Come, Holy Spirit.** Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **Come, Holy Spirit.** With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and Holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #367* -Kelli Watson

Vs. 1 Now all the vault of heav'n resounds in praise of love that still abounds: "Christ has triumphed! He is living!" Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear! Repeat their song of glory here: "Christ has triumphed! He is living!" Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Vs. 4 Adoring praises now we bring and with the heav'nly blessed sing: "Christ has triumphed! Alleluia!" Be to the Father, and our Lord, to Spirit blest, most holy God, all the glory, never ending! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Blessing

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!** Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Church Office Notes:



On April 29th, Patsy Glista's Mom, Anne Rehbach will celebrate her 90th birthday. It would be fun if she could get **90 birthday cards!!**

Her address is: Anne Rehbach, 175 Charing Rd., Rochester, NY 14617.

Thank you!!



Fran & Claudia King need your help this spring! A few immediate needs are:

1. A meal or more specifically, a lunch on April 21st
2. Sitting with Fran on April 21st between 10:15-11:15
3. Running errands or sitting with Fran periodically while Claudia runs errands

If you can help, please call Claudia; home: 315-853-6286 cell: 315-749-4354 (*it is better to call Claudia rather than the church office.*) Thank you!!

*Thank
you* ❤️

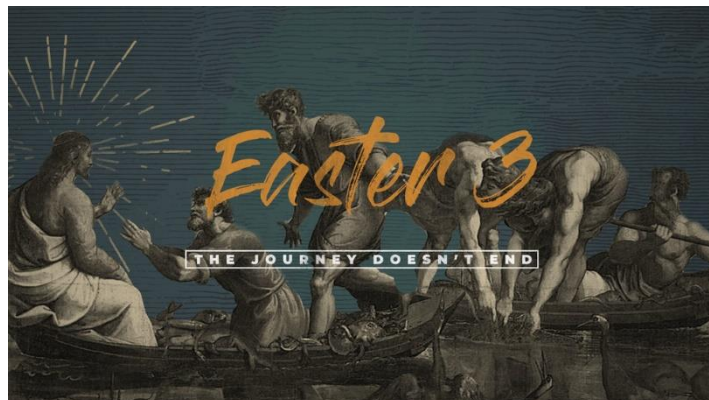
A Special Thank You

Let's give a shout out to the "quiet givers" at Zion. You know who you are- some we know who you are- some, God knows who you are- ALL!

You have worked and work, tirelessly and determinedly, to keep Zion afloat and moving forward during these difficult times.

May God continue to bless and strengthen you in the days ahead.

Thank you,
Your Zion family





Summer FULL OF LIFE

Blood Drive
Zion Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
630 French Road - New Hartford

Saturday, May 15, 2021
9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Please consider giving a POWER RED cell donation if you are O-, O+, A- or B-

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