

Leadership letter for the week of March 29-April 4

To our Zion Family,

We find ourselves in Holy Week, the most significant week of our church year. So much is condensed into this week, with the emotional roller coaster of highs and lows that Rev. Jen DeWeerth described in her sermon this past Sunday. Starting with Jesus's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, we witness the Last Supper gathering and betrayal on Holy Thursday, His brutal crucifixion on Good Friday, the grief that follows during the Easter vigil, and the sense of joy and fulfillment in His overcoming death and rising from the grave on Easter Sunday! We hope you can make time in the upcoming days to imagine and re-experience the events of this most important week. Pastor Anita and the Our Saviour congregation have generously invited us to attend their Holy Thursday and Good Friday services via Zoom. The Passion of our Lord booklet has been sent via US mail and/or electronically for those unable to attend those services. We have the chance to gather for in-person worship in our sanctuary this Easter Sunday. Harkening back to previous Easter celebrations in our sanctuary, I am imagining Bob Loomis calling out to all of us from the front of our sanctuary, "And the people of God said..." with us all responding, "Amen" and "Alleluia!"

Announcements and updates:

-**Holy Thursday and Good Friday Services:** Please join the Our Saviour Zoom services, led by our transition pastor, Anita Mohr.

Good Friday at 7 PM- **To Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89409861472>
Meeting ID: 894 0986 1472. One tap mobile: +19292056099, 89409861472# US (New York), Meeting ID: 894 0986 1472.

-**Easter Sunday service at Zion.** This Sunday, we have the opportunity to celebrate this Easter either in-person, remotely via Zoom, via the livestream on Zion's YouTube channel, or by reading the Service of the word.

In-person Worship: Our service begins at 10:00 AM. Please arrive early to answer the health questions at the front door and get seated without a rush. We will follow the same protocols as last week, printed in the previous leadership letter. Please wear a face covering from the parking lot and throughout the entire service. We will continue to observe social distancing at the entrance, in the Narthex, in the sanctuary, and upon exiting the church. We will be reciting together and softly the Nicene Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the responses to the Prayers of Intercession. Communion will be offered. Please pick up the elements at the entrance to the sanctuary if you plan to commune. If you want to connect with friends after the service, please do so from a safe social distance outside the church and at the perimeter of the parking lot. Please be cautious as everyone exits the parking lot. Reminders of the procedures will be read at the start of the service. Please contact Sara at the office if you are able to help staff this service as a greeter or usher.

Virtual via Zoom: To join this Sunday's service via Zoom, same log-in info as last week:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09>

Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#

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

****Recommendations to reduce the potential of glitches for our upcoming Easter service****

--It was wonderful to have many of our congregants (approximately 37) gather in the sanctuary for last Sunday's service, in addition to the folks who attended via Zoom. We did experience a few glitches, however, and continue to work to resolve them prior to Easter. Here's what we ask that you do to help us have as smooth an Easter Sunday service as possible:

- 1) If you attend the service in-person, please turn off your cell phones prior to entering the church. This will reduce the demand on our wifi bandwidth, allowing a stronger signal broadcast from the sanctuary.
- 2) If you attend the service remotely via Zoom, either on your computer/laptop/tablet, or smart phone, **PLEASE MAKE SURE TO MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SERVICE!!!** Our technologist will remind you of this before the service begins. Remember that, unless you are muted, the entire congregation can hear anything you say.
- 3) If you plan to attend the service remotely via Zoom and have not already done so, please download the Zoom app to your device. In case you have trouble getting into the service by clicking on the link provided (above), this will allow you to click on the app and type in the meeting # and password (provided above). A few congregants have had trouble getting into the service by simply clicking on the link. The Zoom app is free and can be found at: <https://zoom.us/download>.

--Zion continued its social ministry tradition by providing Easter food baskets to members of our congregation in need.

--We have a new tenant for the upper floor of Zion's parsonage! A big thank you to Shirley Eadline for securing our new neighbor and making all the arrangements run smoothly. Zion is now earning additional revenue with this new tenant and the continued lease agreement with the YMCA on the lower level of the parsonage.

We have been through a very difficult year. But, through it all, we have been sustained by our loving God. Let us offer a prayer of gratitude on this Easter Sunday. *"Lord we lift our hearts to you. As the dawn breaks, may we carry the unity we share into every moment knowing that we are one with the risen Christ. Lord, we lift our eyes to you. As the sun rises, may this moment stay with us, reminding us to look for the beautiful colors of promise in your word. Lord, we lift our prayers to you. As the dew air falls, may we breathe this morning in and know that, like the earth, you sustain us, keep us, and work within us always. And so, we lift our voices to you. We celebrate the greatest day in history, when Jesus rose from death, defeated darkness, and bathed the world in stunning resurrection light. May we ever live to praise you! Amen."* — Author Unknown and printed in the CountryLiving.com website.

Happy Easter to all! May peace and good health be with everyone!

Mark Thompson, church council co-president

Zion Lutheran Church,
New Hartford, NY



The Resurrection of Our Lord,
Easter Sunday

WELCOME TO EASTER SUNDAY

PRELUDE *Were You There? Arr. Albert Zabel -Kelli Watson*
Please stand, if able

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Lord, we give you thanks, O God, O Living One, for you have created all, and you water the earth abundantly. Oceans and aquifers praise you. Rivers and streams bless you.

All life is sustained by you, our Source. We praise you for Christ, the firstborn from the dead, who frees us from sin and raises us up to new life. Here at this font we touch the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing through the city of God. Here, death is washed away forever. Here, we are grafted into the tree of life, with leaves for the healing of the world. Pour out your Holy Spirit on this assembly, into this community, and throughout all creation. Cleanse us from our fears and drown our divisions. Grant that all may drink of your mercy and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN *Jesus Christ is Risen Today Hymn #365 vs. 1 & 4 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia! our triumphant holy day, Alleluia! who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Vs. 4 Sing we to our God above, Alleluia! praise eternal as his love; Alleluia praise him, all you heav'nly host. Alleluia! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

GREETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

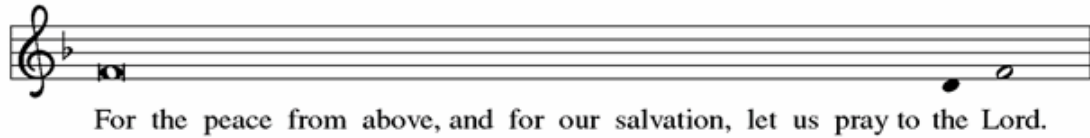
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.



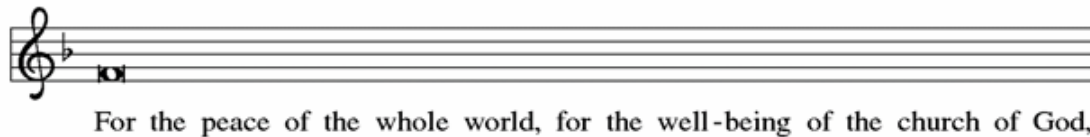
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



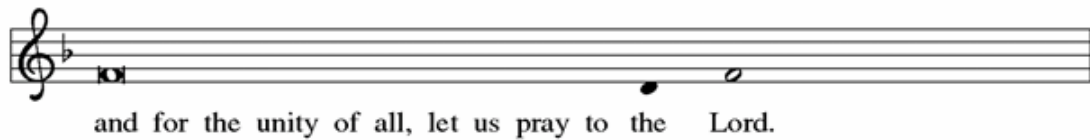
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



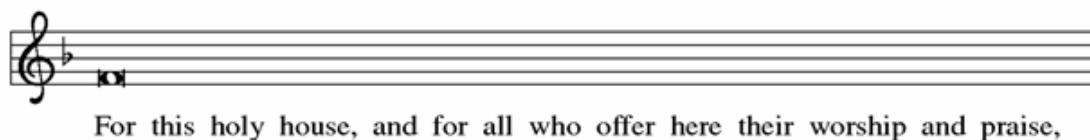
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



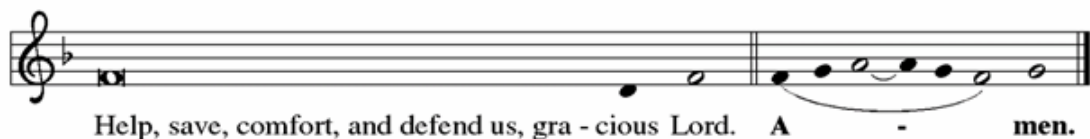
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb
who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and
strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of
God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,
glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.
 Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread, open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work, 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 10:34-43

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Please stand, if able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
 words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: Mark 16:1-8

The holy gospel according to Mark:

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

PASTORAL MESSAGE *Easter According to Mark: An Open-Ended Promise -Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth*

The end of the Gospel of Mark can be more than a little discomfoting. It is the “odd Gospel out,” because there are no appearance stories following the death of Jesus. Not at the tomb, not on the road, not in the garden, not at the lake. No, not one. Instead we have this:

The women go to the tomb, and they have no idea how they will roll away the large stone. But they find it already rolled away. As they enter the tomb, they encounter a young man in a white robe, and we don’t know who he is or how he got there. He sees that they are afraid, but tells them not to be alarmed. He tells them Jesus has been raised. He reminds them that he had told them that, after he was raised up, he would go before them to Galilee (Mark 14:28). They are to tell the disciples and Peter this news. The women leave, and they are terrified and amazed, and in their immediate fear they say nothing to anyone. That’s it.

We know that this felt uncomfortable to those who read or heard this story, going a long way back, because interpreters tried to shape up the end of the book so it was more like the other Gospels. But we can tell these additions were not from the author. Mark was the first person to put the story of Jesus into a narrative form, years before anyone else did. He basically invented the idea of a “gospel” as a narrative of Jesus’ ministry. But Mark’s ending for this story was hardly an ending at all. It was just the short message of the man in the tomb, and the immediate reaction of the women who heard it. That’s it. There’s nothing about how it turns out! Do they go to Galilee? Who sees him? What happens when they see him? According to the Gospel of Mark, we don’t know.

Why did Mark end his Gospel in this way? What was he trying to say? Well, for one thing, over and over in the story he tells, he shows that even the people closest to Jesus, his chosen disciples, did not always understand what he was doing, or what it really means to follow him. Understanding Jesus. Following Jesus. These are always harder to do than they seem, and you’re never sure you are doing it in the moment. So the disciples who follow him are sometimes unsure. You can tell by the questions that they ask throughout the story. Jesus casts out the unclean spirit and they ask, “What is this, a new teaching with authority? He is with them in the boat in the storm and they ask “Who is this that even the wind and sea obey him?” What authority is this? Who is this? They keep asking. So it is not surprising that they come to the tomb asking themselves, “Who will roll away the stone for us?” All that Jesus has done and said and still they don’t know who will roll away the stone for them! They see and don’t see. They understand and don’t understand.

Last week, on Palm Sunday, I talked about the crowds in Mark, how the same people responded positively to Jesus, coming to him on the road: “Hosanna!” and then negatively to him, rejecting him: “Crucify him!” Mark believes that we all have the capacity, the potential, to come to Jesus or to reject him. Whether we will or not, not to mention how and when, is not something he intends to answer in his story—he really believes this is up to each of us. He asks the question but doesn’t answer it.

In a sense you could say that Mark believes that the narrative he tells about Jesus is one that we must engage in actively, like reading a “choose your own adventure” book. And, because he thinks that our response is not only up to each of us, but also is as yet undetermined, he just ends the story with things up in the air. In the moment, because they are still processing what they have seen and heard, the women are in a state of terror, amazement, and fear, and they say nothing, at least not yet. Mark gives us a cliffhanger, like you have with a tv series, but the kind where the show is cancelled, and you never really know how the story comes out, at least not directly. So Mark gives us a “choose your own adventure” book, and a television series cliffhanger, and the unknown is... *will they go to Galilee?*

Why Galilee? Why has Jesus promised to go ahead of them to Galilee? To Mark, Galilee is a physical place, where Jesus lived and taught and healed. Remember the first words that Jesus spoke in Mark’s gospel: “Now after John was arrested Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’” So Galilee is the physical place where Jesus began his public ministry, where he proclaimed the good news and enacted the kingdom of God. But Galilee is also where Jesus was both accepted and where he was rejected, over and over again. Galilee is a physical place, but it is also a symbolic place. It stands for where God revealed good news through Jesus, and for the risk that someone takes in

following Jesus. The good news of God is for sure, but following Jesus is kind of risky and hard. But the promise is that, if you take the risk, then “you will see him.”

Will the women overcome their fear and share the news? And will they and the disciples and Peter go to Galilee? I like that Mark shows us how this is not an easy decision for the women. They are still in shock. They are terrified and afraid. Maybe they need some time. We don't know. But we understand deep in our bones that it is not easy to move quickly from grief and shock to major life decisions. Debi Thomas, in a formulation that seems right to me, calls this Markan post-crucifixion story, where Jesus doesn't start showing up right away and, in fact, no one is even close to ready yet to encounter the risen Jesus' “slow Easter.” Good. Real commitment, real life-changing decisions don't usually happen fast. Sometimes the most important answers to the biggest questions take us a lifetime to work out.

So Mark isn't in a hurry to answer the question about who will go to Galilee to see Jesus or whether anyone will at all. He doesn't answer these questions at all. I think Mark doesn't tell us the answers to the questions he asks in his Gospel because he thinks we need to answer them for ourselves. That's why he has written this whole story. *He* believes that Jesus has been raised and is no longer entombed, that his truth could not be buried, that God vindicated Jesus~ the one who proclaimed the good news of God, the one who enacted God's kingdom. He believes this because he has already gone to Galilee, *but he knows that everyone must experience this truth for themselves.*

Will we go to Galilee? That is, will we leave the tomb and move on to the “place” of God's good news, where so much that is hard to understand actually happens: where true healing occurs, and the hungry eat in a fellowship meal, and the powerful and rich are challenged? Will we journey to a place where sins are forgiven, and the first are last and the last are first? He has gone to Galilee ahead of us. Will we follow him? Maybe we won't. But maybe we will. That's as yet to be determined. But if we do, **there we will see him.** That promise, the promise of Easter, is sure. Amen.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

ANTHEM: *Because He Lives*, by William J. and Gloria Gaither -Kelli Watson

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Trusting God's promise of new life, we pray for the renewal of the church, the world, and all of creation.

Alleluia! God, you are resurrection. Bring joy to your church as we spread the good news that Jesus is risen. Lead us to proclaim this message with persistence and confidence. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Alleluia! God, you are creator. Open our eyes to the first fruits of new life around us: to budding trees, nourishing rains, warm breezes, and freshly tilled soil. Inspire our gratitude and renew our commitment to stewardship of the earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Alleluia! God, you are reconciliation. You show no partiality among the nations, but instead call all people to the way of peace. Bring an end to conflict and division. Renew leaders and advocates for peace with a commitment to the common good. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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, Don & Wanda, healing for Jeanette, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Joyce, Your Neighbors clients, Matt & Jen and family, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God. Come near to us with your saving help, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE



PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...
and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

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.**

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION, *Please be seated*

Jesus draws the whole world to himself. Come to this meal and be fed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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.**

Sending Song: *Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing Hymn #389 vs. 1 & 5 –Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to the sky. Let streets and homes with praises ring. Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Vs. 5 **Christ** is alive, and comes to bring good news to this and ev'ry age, till earth and sky and ocean ring with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Dismissal

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

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Postlude: *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!* -Kelli Watson

*Today's altar flowers are given to the glory of God in honor of
Bob and Bonnie Loomis, from your Zion family.*

