

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

March 23, 2008

[] = Instructions for worship planners and worship leaders: delete from the worship folder
() = Information for the congregation: include in the worship folder and/or PowerPoint.

[Note: **Worship Alive Plus!** is designed to be useable/adaptable in planning contemporary, blended and “fresh traditional” worship.]

[Revised Common Lectionary © 2007 WorshipOutlet.com by Julie Koenemann and Rev. Maxwell Quinn]

WORSHIP THEME: “A Rock Rolling Resurrection!”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ changed everything! It changed a rock that stood in the way for the women who had made their way to Jesus’ grave. Even today the resurrection still has the power to roll away every rock in our lives that blocks our lives of faith. He is a rock rolling-resurrected Savior! Because He lives we too shall live; forgiven and filled with hope we celebrate! And like the women we run to our world to give the word that HE IS ALIVE!

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

[Worship Planners: A Worship CD and/or the praise team can play in the background 10-15 minutes before the service.]

INVOCATION AND INTRODUCTION OF TODAY’S THEME

Pastor: He is risen!
People: He is risen indeed!

Pastor: He, who died our death,
People: Lives again that we might have life!

Pastor: The stone is rolled away...
People: Look! The tomb is empty!

Pastor: O death, where is your sting?
People: O grave, where is your victory?

Pastor: Thanks be to God
People: Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Pastor: He is risen!
People: He is risen indeed!

OPENING PRAYER:

[This prayer is offered as an idea — Almighty God, Eternal Father, You gave Your only Son to die for us, and You raised Him from the dead. Give to us the Spirit of Your risen Son, that within our lives doubt might be replaced by faith, despair by joy, death by life. In the cross of Christ our sins

have been put to death. In His empty tomb, we are empowered to live as new creatures. Help us to live within the power of the cross and empty tomb. In Jesus Christ, who died and is alive forevermore. Amen.]

TIME OF GREETING

TIME OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

[choose 2 or 3 of the songs listed below or from elsewhere in this service]

All The Earth Will Sing Your Praises

[HMS 19:1487; HMS 20:1564; SD 1:47]

Paul Baloche

You lived, You died;
You said in three days You would rise.
You did, You're alive,
You rule, You reign,
You said You're coming back again;
I know You will.
And all the earth will sing Your praises;
All the earth will sing Your praises.

You took and You take our sins away, O God.
You give and You gave Your life away for us.
You came down, You saved us through the cross;
Our hearts are changed because of Your great love.

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Alive Forever Amen

[HMS 20:1561; SSA; Integrity Worship Software 4.0]

David Moffitt / Sue C. Smith / Travis Cottrell

Let the children sing A song of liberation
The God of our salvation Set us free
Death where is thy sting The curse of sin is broken
The empty tomb stands open Come and see

Chorus 1

**He's alive alive alive Hallelujah alive
Praise and glory to the Lamb
Alive alive alive hallelujah
Alive forever amen**

Let my heart sing out For Christ the One and only
So powerful and holy Rescued me
Death won't hurt me now Because He has redeemed me
No grave will ever keep me From my King

Chorus 2

**I'm alive alive alive Hallelujah alive
Praise and glory to the Lamb**

**Alive alive alive hallelujah
Alive forever amen**

Ending

Worthy is the Lamb Worthy of our praise
Worthy is the One Who has overcome the grave
Let the people dance Let the people sing
Worthy is the mighty King Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy of our praise Worthy is the One
Who has overcome the grave Let the people dance
Let the people sing Worthy is the mighty King

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My Redeemer Lives!

[BOB 166; HMS 14:1165; HMS 15:1241; MSPW 2:73; SD 26:2]

Reuben Morgan

I know He rescued my soul; His blood has covered my sins.
I believe, I believe.
My shame He's taken away; My pain is healed in His name.
I believe, I believe.

I'll raise the banner, 'Cause my Lord has conquered the grave.
My Redeemer lives, My Redeemer lives.
My Redeemer lives, My Redeemer lives.

You lift my burdens;
I'll rise with You.
I'm dancing on this mountaintop
To see Your kingdom come.

My Redeemer lives, My Redeemer lives.
My Redeemer lives, My Redeemer lives...

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[Traditional Options:]

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today [AKA Christ the Lord is Risen Today] ELW 365; LSB 457; CH 360;
LBW 151; CH 367; CW 157; GB 17; H82 207; HFG 289; HPW 31; LW 127; NCH 233; PH 123; RS 593;
WC 234; UMH 302]

The Strife Is O'er [ELW 366; LBW 135; LW 143; LSB 464; UMH 306]

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

[It is suggested that the introductions be read out loud as well as the Scripture itself]

FIRST READING Acts 10:34-43 (NIV)

Peter proclaims the message of salvation – Jesus, Son of God, was crucified and resurrected.

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

SECOND READING Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV)

We died with Christ, and have been raised with Him.

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:1-10 (NIV)

[Note: Easter is an especially fitting time for a Gospel processional. Consider reading the Gospel from the midst of the congregation. It is fitting to sing a hymn during the processional, a few verses before the reading and a few verses after.]

¹After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." ⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

MESSAGE "Rock Rolling Resurrection!"

[NOTE: See "Sermon Starters & Seasonings" provided at the end of this service]

+ WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD +

RESPONSE

My Savior Lives

[\[www.musicnotes.com\]](http://www.musicnotes.com)

Glenn Packiam | Jon Egan

Chorus

**I know that my Redeemer lives And now I stand on what He did
My Savior my Savior lives Ev'ry day a brand new chance to say
Jesus You are the Only Way My Savior my Savior lives**

Our God will reign forever And all the world will know His Name
Ev'ryone together Sing the song of the redeemed

The King has come from heaven And darkness trembles at His Name
Victory forever Is the song of the redeemed

Ending

My Savior lives My Savior lives My Savior lives

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Celebrate Jesus

[BOB 31; ATBS 1:242; CH 362; C&W 27; HMS 3:197; SPW 121]
Gary Oliver

Celebrate Jesus, celebrate,
Celebrate Jesus, celebrate.
Celebrate Jesus, celebrate,
Celebrate Jesus, celebrate.

He is risen, He is risen,
And He lives forevermore.
He is risen, He is risen,
Come on and celebrate
The resurrection of our Lord.

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[Traditional Options:]

O Sons and Daughters of the King [ELW 386; LSB 470/471; LBW 139; LW 130; CW 165; H82
206; NCH 244; PH 116; RS 579; WC 249; UMH 317]

We Know That Christ is Raised [ELW 449; LSB 603; LBW 189]

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

He is risen! He is risen indeed!

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son into death. Jesus died the death that is the wages of sin. Our sin.

But the grave could not hold Him. The stone is rolled away. Jesus lives.

I believe. I believe in the love of God the Father, who gave His Son as an offering for sin.

I believe. I believe in the love of God the Son, who, in obedience to the will of His Father, entered the world as a man, lived a sinless life, and proclaimed the Kingdom through Word and deed. He was crucified, offered as the Lamb Who takes away the sins of the world.

I believe. I believe that Jesus rose from the grave, and lives and reigns to all eternity. His death is my death. His resurrection is my resurrection. His righteousness is my righteousness.

I believe. I believe in the love of God the Holy Spirit, who has rolled away the stone in front of my heart, that Jesus might enter there. Through the Holy Spirit, I am brought to faith, and moved to live under the Lordship of Jesus forever.

I believe. I believe in the Kingdom and the power and the glory.

I believe. I believe in forever and ever.

I believe. Amen.

[NOTE: The following are contemporary song options for speaking the Apostle's Creed: *Because We Believe* ATBS 119; SPW 6; INTEGRITY 12 **OR** *This Is What I Believe* GB 249 **OR** The Apostles Creed Integrity 8 **OR** you may choose to do the thematic contemporary creed written specially for this service **OR** use the historic Apostles' Creed]

[OR...]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

OFFERINGS

[Anthem by Praise team, choir or soloist:]

On The Third Day

[Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com; chord charts on www.iwillworship.com]

Marc Byrd | Matt Maher

Chorus 1

**On the third day behold the King On the third day death has no sting
On the third day We're forgiven and reconciled**

Creation brings an offering As autumn leaves turn to gold
The trees bow down in highest praise Now made bare before Your throne
The western sky an amber blaze At the end of the day
For ev'rything must die To rise again

The winter's chill a bitter cold As sin and shame leave us to fall
The clouds now full of newborn snow For grace to come and save us all
Within the darkest night of man Was found Your saving hand
For ev'rything must die To rise again

The earth it groans in labor pains As flowers stretch to heav'n above
Your creatures sing the prophet's song To be a gift of selfless love
The sun is rising in the east And Your Spirit is unleashed
For ev'rything must die To rise again

And so we wait in joyful hope For You to come and take us home
And so we join beneath the cross In suffering from whence we go
The greatest act of sov'reign grace In the universe displayed
For ev'rything must die To rise again

Chorus 2

**On the third day the saints rejoice On the third day we lift our voice
On the third day We're united and glorified**

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TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*(Note: The confession may be adapted to accommodate a lector, or assisting pastor. The part of the confession designated **Pastor** is easily divisible into two parts)*

Pastor: This is the feast of victory for our God! Let us confess our sinfulness, and profess the power of the risen Lord to bring forgiveness:

Father, we confess to You our sinfulness.

People: You have called us to live in faith. So often we are still overwhelmed by doubt. Forgive us lord, and empower us to live as those who walk in newness of life.

Pastor: You have called us to live in joy. Yet we still find ourselves often in despair.
People: Forgive us lord, and empower us to live as those who celebrate Your victory.

Pastor: You have called us to life in You. So often, we still choose our own way, the way of death.

People: Forgive us, and empower us to live abundantly as those who have died and risen again.

Pastor: Jesus died.

People: Our sins are forgiven.
Pastor: Jesus rose again.
People: We are redeemed. This is the feast of victory for our God!
Pastor: All your sins are forgiven, in the Name of the Father and of + the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS¹

Pastor: Let us pray for all people according to their needs:

For the sick or sorrowing,
The lonely or lost,
The fearful or frustrated,
The tempted or troubled.

People: Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten. Replace their despair with joy, their hurt with comfort, their struggle with peace.

Pastor: For those who do not believe, those who do not know the saving power of the death of Jesus, those who do not know the joy of the resurrection.

People: Send laborers into Your harvest, Lord. Open hearts to receive the message of salvation. Allow us to be witnesses to your love.

Pastor: Let us praise and thank God for the feast of victory which is ours in Jesus Christ: You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.

People: You are worthy to receive blessing, and praise, now and forever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

[Consider having the congregation sing the Lord's Prayer using the Malotte version using one of the lower keys such as B flat.]

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.

[A communion option to insert for churches celebrating the Lord's Supper on this day]

+ The Lord's Supper +

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

THE THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

¹ Formal language and "perfectly read" prayers are not recommended for contemporary worship. People appreciate the touching sincerity of informal prayer. "Heartfelt" prayer also teaches/models simple prayer language that anyone can use at home, in the car, the office, etc. These "**Prayer Topics Starters**" are offered to help facilitate spontaneity.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

Pastor: He is risen!.

People: He is risen indeed!

WORDS OF THE NEW COVENANT

EASTER PROCLAMATION AND SHARING THE PEACE

Pastor: We profess the mystery of the faith:

People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ is present. Christ will come again.

Pastor: The stone is rolled away. Death could not hold Him.

People: We are set free from the power of death. We live in the joy of the resurrection.

Pastor: The peace of the risen Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

(Worshippers may turn to one another and share the peace which comes from the Lord with words such as, "God's peace to you.")

DISTRIBUTION SONGS – [choose as many you need]

The Wonder of Your Cross

[HMS 20:1625; SSA; Integrity's Worship Software 4.0]

Robin Mark

The wonder of Your cross Shall be our meditation
To gather in that shadow When the sun went down
To weep with those Who thought that You were leaving
You were leaving Jesus The humble King
Who never wore an earthly crown

To steal away at night When they took down Your body
With love and tears To leave You in a borrowed grave
To go with Mary to the place they laid You Where they laid You Jesus
And in the morning find the stone was rolled away

Chorus

**The cross O the wonderful cross
What glory what vict'ry I've found
I'll come to the wonderful cross
And my whole life I lay down**

Were heaven's praises Silent in those hours of darkness
Your Holy Spirit brooding 'Round that empty throne
Until the declaration He is risen You are risen Jesus
He is not dead Behold He lives for evermore

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At The Cross

[SSA; [Praise Charts.com](http://PraiseCharts.com); MusicNotes.com; IWillWorship.com (chord chart only)]

Darlene Zschech | Reuben Morgan

Chorus

**At the cross I bow my knee Where Your blood was shed for me
There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave
Your glory fills the highest place What can separate me now**

Oh Lord You've searched me You know my way
Even when I fail You I know You love me

Your holy presence Surrounding me
In every season I know You love me I know You love me

You go before me You shield my way
Your hand upholds me I know You love me

Ending

You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that It is done
You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that It is done

And when the earth fades Falls from my eyes
And You stand before me I know You love me I know You love me

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[Traditional Options:]

At The Lamb's High Feast [(Sonne der Gerechtigkeit) CW 141; ELW 362; LSB 633; LBW 210; LW 126; (Salzburg) H82 174; RS 578]

Awake My Heart With Gladness [ELW 378; LSB 467; LW 128; LBW 129; CW 156]

Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands [ELW 370; LSB 458; LW 123; LBW 134]

COMMON DISMISSAL

Pastor: Almighty God, we praise You for Your gifts to us. You have rescued us from our sins and have given us new life, through the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Here we have tasted of Your life-giving love.

People: Strengthen us, we pray, that we who here have celebrated the power of the empty tomb, might live in faith, joy and victory. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: He is risen!

People: He is risen indeed!

Pastor: He, who died our death,

People: Lives again that we might have life!

Pastor: The stone is rolled away...
People: Look! The tomb is empty!

Pastor: O death, where is your sting?
People: O grave, where is your victory?

Pastor: Thanks be to God
People: Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Pastor: He is risen!
People: He is risen indeed!

CLOSING SONG

Happy Day

[www.musicnotes.com; www.worshiptogether.com]

Ben Cantelon | Tim Hughes

Chorus

**And oh happy day happy day You washed my sin away
Oh happy day happy day I'll never be the same
Forever I am changed**

The greatest day in history Death is beaten You have rescued me
Sing it out Jesus is alive The empty cross the empty grave
Life Eternal You have won the day Shout it out Jesus is alive
He's alive

When I stand in that place Free at last meeting face to face
I am Yours Jesus You are mine Endless joy perfect peace
Earthly pain finally will cease Celebrate Jesus is alive
He's alive

Ending 1

Oh what a glorious day What a glorious way
That You have saved me And oh what a glorious day
What a glorious Name Hey

Ending 2

What a glorious glorious day I'll never be the same

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For All You've Done

[SSA]

Reuben Morgan

My Savior, Redeemer
Lifted me from the miry clay

Almighty, Forever
I will never be the same

Bridge
'Cause You came near From the everlasting
To the world we live The Father's only Son

And You lived and You died
And You rose again on high
And You opened the way
For the world to live again
Hallelujah For all You've done

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[Traditional Option:]

I Know That My Redeemer Lives [ELW 619; LSB 461; LBW 352; LW 264; CW 152; HFG 295;
RS 582; WC 239]

March 2008 Worship Alive Plus Songs & Hymns

Music charts downloadable through:

www.Praisecharts.com

www.songselect.com

www.worshipkitchen.com

www.worshiptogether.com

www.Wordmusicnow.com

www.musicnotes.com

Chord charts free downloads available at:

www.Iwillworship.com

www.pwarchive.com

Mp3 downloads available through:

www.Songtouch.com

www.Worshiptogether.com

www.Walmart.com

www.Iitunes.com

New Songs to consider:

Everything Glorious

(Recorded on David Crowder's *Remedy* & Passion's *Everything Glorious*)

Lisa Gungor & Michael Gungor, © 2006 worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing) sixsteps Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing) [Lead lines and chord charts on www.songselect.com, www.praisecharts.com, www.pwarchive.com, and www.Iwillworship.com]

Keep watch on SongSelect & Praisecharts for the music for this amazing new song:

With One Voice (Recorded on New Life Church)

Chris Ochterbeck, © 2007 New Life Church (Admin. by New Life Church of Arkansas, Inc.)

SSS – SERMON STARTERS & SEASONINGS

The following ideas are merely intended to help get your own creative juices flowing and prepare your heart for God's Spirit to inspire and speak through you.

Theme: “A Rock Rolling Resurrection!”

Matt. 28:1-10

The resurrection of Jesus Christ changes everything! It changed a rock that stood in the way for the women who had made their way to Jesus' grave. Even today the resurrection still has the power to roll away every rock in our lives that blocks our lives of faith. He is a rock rolling- resurrected Savior! Because He lives we too shall live; forgiven and filled with hope we celebrate! And like the women we run to our world to give the word that HE IS ALIVE!

Theological Reflections and Practical Applications

28:1 after the Sabbath: The Sabbath ended at sundown on Saturday. The events of this verse took place at dawn on Sunday morning. The two Marys are identified in 27:56, 61.

28:2 An **earthquake** marked the death of the Lord Jesus (27:51); here it evidenced His resurrection. The tomb was not opened to permit Christ to come out but to allow others in, so they could see that it was empty.

28:3, 4 Brilliance is a characteristic of heavenly beings (Matt. 17:2; Dan. 7:9; 10:5, 6; Acts 1:10; Rev. 3:4, 5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14).

28:5, 6 He is risen, as He said: For Jesus' predictions of His resurrection, see Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:9, 23; 26:32.

28:7, 8 The Lord Jesus made post-resurrection appearances first in Jerusalem and Judea, then in Galilee, and then again in Jerusalem. Both Matt. 28 and John 21 emphasize the appearances in Galilee. Christ's command to “come, see” (v. 6) is followed here by **go ... tell**. This is always the divine order: to tell others the Good News about our Lord.

28:9, 10 Galilee was the appointed location for Jesus' rendezvous with His disciples (v. 7; 26:32) and also the setting of the Great Commission (vv. 18–20). Note that the Lord referred to His disciples as His **brethren** (Matt. 12:48–50; Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:11, 12).

28:11 The Roman guards **reported to the chief priests** because they had been assigned for duty to the religious authorities (27:65).²

Outline Possibilities

Easter Contrasts

- I. From doubt to faith
 - stone was rolled away so disciples, and we, would know
- II. From despair to joy
 - hope is restored, disciples on the road to Emmaus, “We hoped He was the One.”
- III. From death to life.
 - Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

Stones that Easter Rolls Away

- I. Doubt
- II. Defeat
- III. Death

²Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Mt 28:1-11

The Kingdom, The Power and the Glory

- I. His is the Kingdom, ours is the Peace
- II. His is the Power, ours is the Freedom
- III. His is the Glory, ours is the Treasure (in an earthen vessel)

Quotations

We live and die; Christ died and lived!

John Stott

[Christ] takes men out of time and makes them feel eternity.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

On Easter Day the veil between time and eternity thins to gossamer.

Douglas Horton

Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;
Death is strong, but Life is stronger;
Stronger than the dark, the light;
Stronger than the wrong, the right

Phillips Brooks, "An Easter Carol"

Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there.

Clarence W. Hall

Apart from the resurrection of Jesus, the eschatological orientation of the church appears as the spoke of a wheel without a hub.

Richard R. Niebuhr

Christianity begins where religion ends...with the resurrection.

Herbert Booth Smith

Don't forget the principle. Never underestimate the power of a seed.

God didn't. When his kingdom was ravaged and his people had forgotten his name, he planted his seed.

When the soil of the human heart had grown crusty, he planted his seed. When religion had become a ritual and the temple a trading post, he planted his seed.

Want to see a miracle? Watch him as he places the seed of his own self in the fertile womb of a Jewish girl.

Up it grew, "like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground." The seed spent a lifetime pushing back the stones that tried to keep it underground. The seed made a ministry out of shoving away the rocks that cluttered his father's soil.

The stones of legalism that burdened backs.

The stones of oppression that broke bones.

The stones of prejudice that fenced out the needy.

But it was the final stone that proved to be the supreme test of the seed. The stone of death—rolled by humans and sealed by Satan in front of the tomb. For a moment it appeared the seed would be stuck in the earth. For a moment, it looked like this rock was too big to be budged.

But then, somewhere in the heart of the earth, the seed of God stirred, shoved, and sprouted. The ground trembled, and the rock of the tomb tumbled. And the flower of Easter blossomed. Never underestimate the power of a seed.³

³Lucado, Max: *The Applause of Heaven*. Dallas [Tex. : Word Pub., 1996, S. 147

Illustrations

Rest of the Story

The story is told of a man who was viewing an Easter display in the window of a department store when a little boy came and stood beside him. The man pointed to the picture of the crucifixion and said, "Do you know who that is on the cross?" "Oh, yes," said the little boy, "That's the Savior." And with the excitement only a little boy can feel, the little boy began to tell the man about the rest of the characters in the display. "See that woman crying? That's His mother. And those are the soldiers. They're the ones who killed Him."

The man patted the little boy's head and walked away. He was almost a block away when he heard the little boy shout after him:

"Hey mister, I forget to tell you. He rose again."

Unknown

What a Difference Two Days Makes

It's perhaps an apocryphal story...

It concerns the battle of Waterloo, in which the British Duke of Wellington met Napoleon. In those days, news was transmitted throughout the countryside by means of semaphore signals. So, after the battle of Waterloo, high atop Winchester Cathedral, the semaphorist began spelling out the message to the surrounding countryside, letter by letter...W..E..L..L..I..N..G..T..O..N...D..E..F..E..A..T..E..D. At the precise time, a heavy fog rolled in and the semaphore signals could no longer be seen. The message spread from village to village. Wellington defeated. And England felt gloom and despair. And then the fog lifted, and the message was repeated...W..E..L..L..I..N..G..T..O..N D..E..F..E..A..T..E..D, only this time the rest of the message could be seen, WELLINGTON DEFEATED T..H..E...E..N..E..M..Y.

What a difference two words made.

What a difference two days makes.

Unknown

Same to You

It is my favorite Easter story.

I was at the hospital on Easter afternoon, visiting a parishioner who would die the next day. As I walked through the hallway, I saw the pastor of another church coming toward me. I greeted him with the Easter salutation, "He is risen." He perhaps was not expecting my greeting, or was not coached in the liturgical response of "He is risen indeed." He kind of grunted and said, "Same to you."

Isn't that it exactly? Jesus is risen. Same to you. He is eternal. Same to you. His is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory. Same to you. His is the Amen. Same to you.

Maxwell A. Quinn

On the Lighter Side ☺

Top Ten Reasons to Celebrate Easter

10. You absolutely love the movie, "The Ten Commandments".
9. You look really, really good in yellow.
8. You just went on a low cholesterol diet and didn't want to waste all those eggs in the fridge.
7. You figure any Holiday that starts with a "Good Friday" can't be all bad.

6. You love to bite the heads off chocolate bunnies.
5. It's a good time to check out your neighborhood church and not be noticed.
4. You have this bunny suit you love to wear, but are too insecure to wear it without a reason.
3. Even though you don't know what it is, you really like the sound of going to a "Passion Play."
2. You figured since Jesus went to all THAT trouble to make it to the first Easter, you'd give it a shot.
1. As a Christian you celebrate the resurrection every other day, why not Easter too?

EasterHumor.com

What Happened On Easter?

A Sunday School teacher asked her class on the Sunday before Easter if they knew what happened on Easter and why it was so important. One little girl spoke up saying: "Easter is when the whole family gets together, and you eat turkey and sing about the pilgrims and all that." "No, that's not it," said the teacher. "I know what Easter is," a second student responded. "Easter is when you get a tree and decorate it and give gifts to everybody and sing lots of songs." "Nope, that's not it either," replied the teacher. Finally a third student spoke up, "Easter is when Jesus was killed, and put in a tomb and left for three days." "Ah, thank goodness somebody knows" the teacher thought to herself. But then the student went on: "Then everybody gathers at the tomb and waits to see if Jesus comes out, and if he sees his shadow he has to go back inside and we have six more weeks of winter." Some of us have some weird ideas about Easter. What does the Bible have to say about it? What's Easter to you? What really happened? Why is it important for Christians, and what implications does Easter have for the world?

Andrew Chan, Sermoncentral.com

Can't Say No on Easter

This being Easter our leadership met and decided, "You know, we want to get a really special speaker. Why don't we call the best preacher in the world and ask him to speak."

And they did and he said "No".

So they said, "Well if we can't have the best speaker, at least we can get the smartest one."

So they called him and he said "No".

And then they said, "Well, if we can't get the best or the smartest, at least we can get the best looking."

And they called him and he said "No".

And finally one of them said, "Well, we can always ask our preacher." And so they did. And what could I say, I'd already told them "no" three times.

[Ken Kersten](#), Sermoncentral.com

Dear Charles

A lady wrote in to a question and answer forum. "Dear Sirs, Our preacher said on Easter, that Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think?"

Sincerely, Bewildered.

Dear Bewildered, Beat your preacher with a cat-of-nine-tails with 39 heavy strokes, nail him to a cross; hang him in the sun for 6 hours; run a spear thru his side...put him in an airless tomb for 36 hours and see what happens." Sincerely, Charles.

Royce Hendry, Sermoncentral.com

Caterpillars

Two caterpillars were scrunching along the ground when a great Monarch butterfly soared above them. The first caterpillar said to the second, "Wow. Wouldn't you like to get up in one of those?" The second harrumphed and said, "Over my dead body."

Unknown

Video Resources

All Things New [Call to Worship OR Introduction to Message OR Insertion in Message OR as Benediction]

A powerful video that proclaims our circumstances do not determine our future. Lonely, doubting, hurting, discouraged...but God is making all things new. There is hope. This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$20 and runs 2:36. This video can serve as a call to worship, an introduction to the message, an insertion within the message, especially if making a point that Easter removes our despair. It is, perhaps, most effectively used as a Benediction. The final frame asks, "What's your next move?"

New Life [Transitions between readings or other service parts OR pre-service/post-service loop]

There are several very short videos depicting imagery of new life. There is no copy, nor any music. These are effectively used by inserting Scripture or a short message. These videos are available as downloads from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The videos cost \$5 and run 7 or 8 seconds. These videos would be effective as transitions between readings or various parts of the service, or as a pre-service or post-service loop.

Second Chances [Intro to Message OR Insertion within Message]

Interesting man-on-the-street video in which people are asked if they have ever been given a second chance. The answers are wide-ranging. The video concludes with a proclamation that we have been given a second chance through the resurrection. This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type the name of the video in the search bar. This video costs \$10 and runs 5:16. It can be effectively used as an intro to the message, or as a transitional insertion within a message about hope and new life.