

**Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church**  
**At Home Worship**  
**April 12, 2020 Easter Sunday**  
**Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan**

*We gratefully acknowledge that we are on the ancient and traditional lands of The Blackfoot Nation, the people of the Treaty 7, and of Metis Region 3. May we cherish and care for the land and the people, as those who came before us did.*

**Your Worship Space**

As you worship at home, try to create a space for that. It could be as simple as lighting a candle (either flame or battery); or placing a small cross or a symbol that has meaning for you in front of you. If you are alone, perhaps start a journal, as you reflect on the worship experience. Or, perhaps call a friend and share this time with them over the phone. If you are with one or two others, enjoy the conversation that arises...as you practise safe distancing. ☺

**Opening Prayer**

Hallelujah! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

God has said a resounding “Yes!” to the world!

And so, we worship in joy, and we pray.

O God of resurrection, you gave us new life as we awoke this morning. Give us new life as we celebrate the risen Christ, as we shout our Easter hallelujahs, and as we share our faith. Help us to dedicate ourselves anew to being followers of the resurrected Christ. Amen.



**An Easter Gospel Reading**

**John 20:1-18**

20Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you

looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.



### **An Easter Message**

Normally this week, many families are gathering to practise Easter traditions. One in our family has been to gather at Grandma’s or Nanny’s to decorate Easter eggs. I am not yet a grandparent, however my sister has carried on this tradition with her granddaughters, and I have often been able to join in the fun. Not this year. I miss that. I have loved watching the girls get creative with their designs – their mom is an artist, and they’ve clearly inherited that gene! My cousin, also a grandparent, has taken up the tradition, too. And last year posted great photos of her 10 grandkids, filling her kitchen with love. Not this year.

There are other traditions that I have cherished over the years – the Easter worship service itself, and the wonderful music that fills the church always fills my heart with joy. Then gathering with family after worship, celebrating together and enjoying a wonderful meal tops the day off. Not this year.

Things are different, yes. However the story, the biblical message of resurrection can’t be confined by social distancing!

Those favourite Easter memories, there are resurrection moments that have emerged from those, as each generation shares the traditions – egg decorating with cousins and friends, cooking the Easter favourites, hot cross buns for breakfast, a delicious glazed ham and perogies for dinner.

Part of carrying on the traditions includes telling the stories of why we do this, and how we learned to do that.

Those traditions have been carried, in my family, but the women, cooking those “comfort food” dinners, creating art with food colouring, vinegar and eggs. And there is, too, a resurrection, of sorts, as while we are practising those traditions, we remember the women who are no longer with us – especially this year, the first Easter without my mom.

It's those family traditions, carried by the women, that remind me of that early women's story...as Mary and perhaps - depending on which gospel you read – other women, gather to share in another kind of ritual.

Remember that Jesus had died on Good Friday, and been laid to rest as the Sabbath approached, so the women, whose role it was to anoint the body with oils and perfumes, had to wait until the early morning, after Sabbath.

It was a woman, or women, who first came upon the tomb, arriving to tend to Jesus' body, to honour him in death, as they must have in life. It was a woman who found the tomb empty. It was a woman who in astonishment and surprise, saw Jesus in the garden. It was a woman – Mary of Magdala, who is now known as the apostle to the apostles, as she was the first to go and share the good news with them, that she had seen the risen Jesus.

Remember that first garden – the place of sacred beauty, where the first stories began...where humanity met God, in the Adam and Eve story. And then, full circle, in the garden, where Mary meets – a meeting on sacred ground, and God is found again, in the risen one.

I have a lovely wall hanging that says "Time began in a garden."

Time began in a garden, resurrection was revealed in a garden, new life springs forth in the gardens of our being, as we live resurrection moments.

This year, the moments will look a little different – the family dinner might include people gathering together virtually – with faces at the table on a computer screen, or voices on the telephone. The way we do church is different – you're reading this message, instead of



gathering in church, and perhaps you're watching another churches live-streamed worship, or pre-recorded worship.

It is a little different, however the story is the same – Jesus Christ is risen, Hallelujah! Thanks be to God! I think I'll decorate some eggs!

### **A Blessing for Today**

The everlasting love of the God of life surrounds us;

the presence of the risen Christ gives us hope;

the strength of the Spirit gives us confidence;

So let us live as witnesses to the life and love of God, let us live in joy and peace.

Alleluia, and amen!

*Thank you so much for using this worship resource! Feel free to share it!*

*We are grateful for your connection to the Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge, and to both Olds and Sundre United Churches. As the time of COVID 19 distancing progresses, know that we are still the United Church in our communities, striving to serve you and the community. Our ability to do that requires financial support, and we invite you to prayerfully consider making an Easter offering to either Olds United or Sundre United. If you already give to the church with PAR (Pre-Authorized Giving) things will carry on as usual. If you give through envelopes, it would be gratefully appreciated if you would mail your offering in, or bring it to the office, however please call first to confirm someone is there, as in these days our staff must be cautious as well. And finally, if you are not a regular giver, but wish to support our ministries, we would be gratefully accept your gift.*

*Olds United Church 4810 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Olds AB T4H 1E4*

*Sundre United Church PO Box 614 118 Centre Street N. Sundre AB. T0M 1X0*

*Here is a link to some on-line worship opportunities in the Chinook Winds Region.*

<https://chinookwindsregion.ca/2020/03/16/online-worship-opportunities/>