

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, full of compassion and mercy,  
abounding in steadfast love. **Amen.**

*The Gospel according to St. Matthew: **Glory to you, O Lord***

**Hearing of the Gospel:**

<sup>1</sup>After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." (Matthew 28:1-10)

*The Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ***

**Tonia's Easter Sermon:** "With Fear and Great Joy"

**Alleluia. Christ is Risen. He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia!**

It had been quite a ride. The week had started with a victor's parade and then Friday, the unimaginable, they had crucified Jesus. Their friend, their teacher, He who healed the sick, feed the hungry, made the lame to walk, and the blind to see. He who raised the dead, just the week before. Their minds were in a whirl. Things are going to be different now. They were in shock. They mourned. They wondered. They feared.

After the Sabbath the women went to the tomb, the earth moved and an angel descended. He rolled back the stone and sat upon it. They looked for the body of the Rabbi – and the tomb was empty. "He is not

here; for He has been raised," the angel said. He gave them this message, "Jesus has been raised from the dead, and indeed He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." The women ran off with fear and great joy.

Can it be? He said He would be raised. Is this real? Can we go? Suddenly Jesus appears and with love acknowledges their fear and gives them joy. "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Complex and simple. God so loves the world. God sent God's Son to show us how much, how completely God loves. Christ walked among us, taught us, healed us, laughed with us, cried with us. With us, the world. God's love is as complete today as it was in creation, as it was 2000 years ago when as a human, God came to show us love.

Today we have fear. An unknown, a virus out of our control, has come to wreak havoc, to throw us into chaos. Where is God in this? Yes, things are going to be different, but God is right here with us. He holds our hands, dries our tears, calms our minds, relieves our fear, brings us joy. He goes before us to Galilee; will we go and meet Him there? Will we tell others the Good News, help to relieve their fears, give them hope? Will we acknowledge God's presences as we watch people lay their lives aside to provide essential services? Ministering, to heal the sick. Driving trucks, delivering mail, keeping the pharmacy and the grocery store open, so we can know food and medicine is available for us in the midst of this. Businesses switching gears to make supplies needed for the battle against this virus. Instead of making wedding dresses which sell for thousands, they use their material to make masks to protect those who offer healthcare. To stop the spread of the virus. To keep us safe. The stories are being told of many businesses which have kept people working, but with a different goal. We are seeing the best of what we have to offer.

God loves us and asks us to follow God, by loving one another. It is the best of times. It is the worst of times. We will come through this. There is fear and there will be joy. Use the fear, do not let it use you. Yes, life is changing, but Christ has gone ahead of us, let us go and meet Him there. Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed.

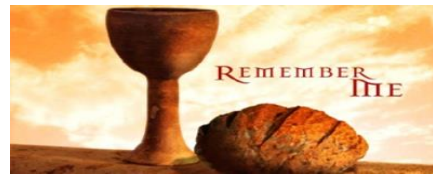
Blessings to you, your family and your friends on this Easter Sunday.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Pastor Tonia*

We are honored to Celebrate Easter with  
Montana Synod Bishop Laurie Jungling speaking and preaching.

*Have your bread and wine or juice  
ready for Easter Morning Communion.*



*Many thanks to our Missoula ELCA pastors who have been working  
collaboratively to organize live-streamed joint worship services!*

**What a blessing to have this opportunity of worshipping together  
with Lutherans from across the Synod.**

**[CLICK HERE](#) for the Easter Sunday Synod Service starting at 11am.**

The link to Immanuel Lutheran Church for service, just in case.....

**<https://livestream.com/imluchurch/events/4716330>**

This worship will be offered in cooperation with our ELCA Lutheran Missoula churches  
and the entire Montana Synod.