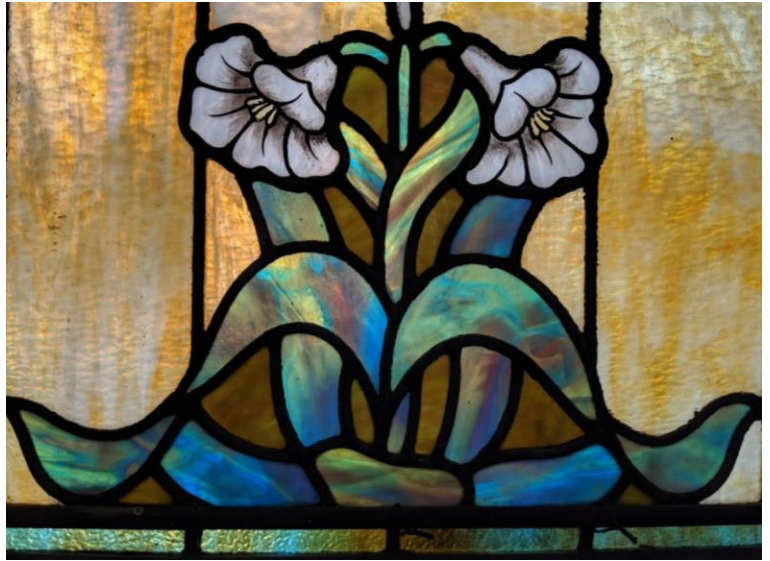


First Baptist Church in Needham

Meditations for Sunday, April 12, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect,
and pray)

Easter Sunday

Edition 4



Lighting the Candle of Life

(You may wish to light a candle or use the photo of our Candle of Life as a focus.)

ALL: We light the Candle of Life — a candle that represents community, spirit, and the fullness of all of life — birth and death and all of the transitions in between and beyond.

Imagine

It is early morning—before dawn. You have not slept in days. Weary to the bone, you have gotten up, dressed, and now are making your way in the hush of night with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. You carry baskets of herbs and myrrh ointment. You are prepared to honor your Teacher one last time by preparing his body for final burial....You grieve...

Hymn 288

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

EASTER HYMN

(Welcome the risen Christ singing or speaking these joyous words from Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Or, sing along with Myers Park Memorial Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC, at: <https://youtu.be/15dmjnB8FZU>)

Christ the Lord is risen today, *Alleluia!*
All creation join to say, *Alleluia!*
Raise your joys and triumphs high, *Alleluia!*
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, *Alleluia!*

Love's redeeming work is done, *Alleluia!*
Fought the fight, the battle won, *Alleluia!*
Death in vain forbids him rise, *Alleluia!*
Christ has opened paradise. *Alleluia!*

Lives again our glorious King, *Alleluia!*
Where, O death, is now thy sting? *Alleluia!*
Once he died our souls to save, *Alleluia!*
Where thy victory, O grave? *Alleluia!*

Soar we now where Christ has led, *Alleluia!*
Following our exalted Head, *Alleluia!*
Made like him, like him we rise, *Alleluia!*
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, *Alleluia!*

A Reading from Matthew 28: 1-10

(Read the text aloud. Pause and notice what image or phrase stands out or “shimmers” as you retell the Easter story.)

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 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."

So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

ALL: The word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.

Eastertide Alleluia Hymn 736 Celtic Alleluia

arr. by Fintan O'Carroll &
Christopher Walker

(This Alleluia response to the scripture reading will follow us through the season of Eastertide. Alleluia means “God be praised!” May this response seep into each day in moments great and small as we continue to live in the complexity of both Eastertide and COVID19. You may choose to recite it as a prayer of thanksgiving, sing it to your own tune, or sing along with this online version: https://youtu.be/kSS_TanMwWE¹)

Alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of the Lord lasts forever.

What is the word that is living?

It is brought to us through God's son,

Jesus Christ.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Time of Reflection

(Choose one or more of the following notes to reflect upon the scripture text. Perhaps write your thoughts, call a friend or family member to discuss it, or allow the story to seep into your imagination.)

- What image, word, or phrase stood out or “shimmered” to me? Reflect on its significance today. Consider holding the image or phrase as a focus of prayer this week.
- Reread the first paragraph. Notice all that occurs *on top* of Jesus' horrific death two days prior and the consuming grief and fear Mary Magdalene and Mary bore as they went to the tomb in the dark of night: they will face armed Roman guards, experience an earthquake strong

¹ Spirit & Song: Disc B © 2013 OCP. All Rights Reserved All Selections BMI Released on: 2013-11-15 Music Publisher: OCP

enough to bounce boulders, and witness an angel, and their rabbi's missing body all in short order. How am I balancing the multiple stresses, fears, and threats to my physical health and the health of others? What am I able to do well right now, and with what do I need help, encouragement, and God's guidance or courage? To whom may I turn to be present with me spiritually, if not in person?

- *What has been good about my day?* If the angel's good news this Easter is hard to hear this year, am I able to focus on one small space of gratitude within each day? Might a practice for this Eastertide lived with COVID19 be to end or begin each day with an acknowledged gratitude, or "good news"?
- As Christians, even in the face of isolation, illness, depression, and anxiety, we are called to share the Good News of *Christ's hope* woven throughout our fear, *Christ's love* in our actions of relationship and connection despite physical distance, *Christ's compassion* in our efforts to be of service—even when it calls for our bodies to be still and at home to protect the bodies of souls who must continue to work—, *Christ's justice* as injustice and inequities are laid bare with each week that we live sheltering at home, and *Christ's peace* in the face of an unknown future. How am I living this Good News? How can I share hope, love, compassion, justice, and peace in this transformative season of Eastertide and of our world today?

Hymn 300

In the Garden

GARDEN

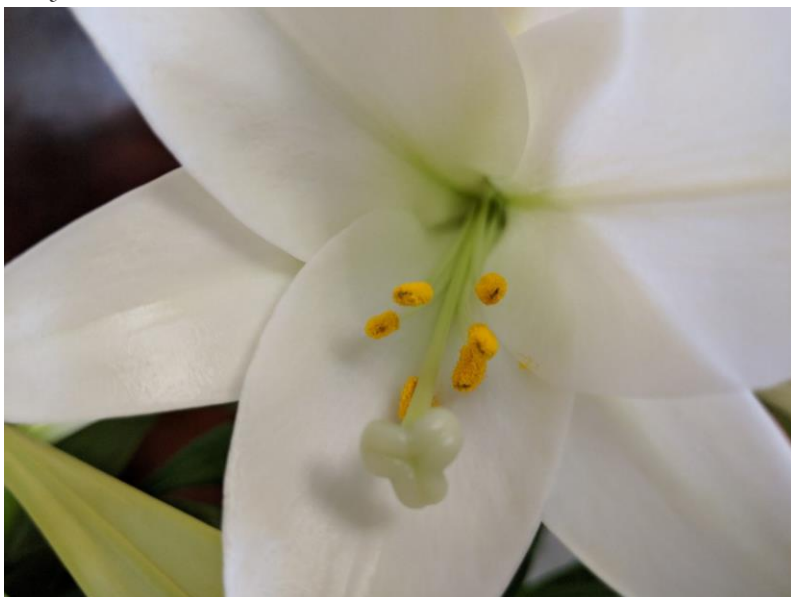
(You may choose to read aloud or sing this familiar hymn by C. Austin Miles (1868-1946) or listen online to the first and third verses beautifully sung in acapella harmony by participants at the 2011 Diana Singing in Diana, Tennessee at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8nD_t16mw0#action=share)

I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;
and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

[Chorus] *And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

He speaks, and the sound of his voice is
so sweet the birds hush their singing,
and the melody that he gave to me
within my heart is ringing. [Chorus]

I'd stay in the garden with him though
the night around me be falling,
but he bids me go; through the voice of
woe his voice to me is calling. [Chorus]



Prayers of the People

(If you have been attending Sunday worship, you know our sung prayer that brings us into the time of Prayers of the People. Enter into this time in song. If you don't know the tune, let the words be the doorway to your prayer.)

Sung Prayer

Hear My Prayer, O Lord

BENZENHAFFER
arr. Holly C. Benzenhafer

Hear my prayer, O Lord. Hear my prayer, O Lord.
I am asking, hear my prayer, O Lord.

Prayerful Meditation

Sometimes remembering our basic goodness takes a leap of faith.... Sometimes it helps to find little ways that the seed of goodness manifests in our life. To find our ability to rejoice and to care, even when its fleeting, strengthens our confidence. To see how we block our hearts and close our minds brings self-compassion and the longing not to do that anymore.

So our practice is to keep watering the seed. We water it by thinking of others, both when we're happy and when we're in distress. We water it by recognizing our kinship with all beings throughout time and space. We water it by noticing our negative and positive reactions to whomever and whatever we meet. We water it with gentleness and honesty. We learn to ask, "How can I use this suffering and this joy as a vehicle for transformation?"²

We Hold in Prayer...

(Many of this week's prayers are requests from members of our congregation in the past week. If you have general or specific prayer requests—joys as well as concerns—to share please contact Holly or Daryn to pass them along.)

As a community of faith gathered in Spirit when we cannot be in person, we offer our hearts and voices in prayer where we are, as we are, entrusting the Spirit's moving among us and responding far beyond our individual reach and influence...

We continue to hold Jim Fuller's sister, Cathy, who has tested positive for COVID19. For her healing and ease from her symptoms. We also hold to God's care and healing John Crimmings as he recovers from surgery; Marty Fassett's niece, Linda Corkoran, recently diagnosed with cancer; for Marty, herself, who continues to have difficulty walking after a fall; for Andrew Thoresen who is dealing with laryngitis...and for souls sick and injured whose names we speak aloud...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....

We are grateful for Gretchen Leary's testing negative for COVID19 and for her recovering enough to be able to return to work this week. With Louise Mason we give thanks for the continued good health of so many of our extended families and friends and pray it continues. With Liz Mercer we offer thanks for David Eldridge's recovery from COVID19 and for all souls

² Pema Chödrön, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2018), 85-86.

who have weathered illness so far in this season and are on the road to a return to health. We also celebrate with Liz the news that her cousins Bob and Amanda Blanton are expecting a second son in September...and for souls recovering and awaiting new life whose names we speak aloud...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

For persons in vulnerable populations requiring extra care to avoid unnecessary contact, especially Kathy Johnson's father, Joe. For the homeless clients of Pastor Holly's colleague Johnny Gall and the hospice patients, families, and caregivers of her colleague Andrew Tripp...For souls forgoing necessary treatment, surgeries, tests, and preventative care...and for vulnerable souls we know whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Clif Holbrook, Anthony Calilung, Andrew Thoresen, and Kathy Johnson, we offer thanksgiving for all the personnel who remain dedicated to their work in the medical field, especially Kathy's nephew Connor, Andrew's cousins Ben and Toby Jackson, and custodial and security staff, administrators, lab techs, nurses, physicians, researchers, food service workers, chaplains, and all the support service workers whose work is vital but hidden from the general public...and for souls in these groups we know personally whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

For volunteers, neighbors, family, and strangers who are making grocery runs, checking on home-bound folk, cooking and delivering meals, covering expenses, providing safe spaces to live, sewing thousands of masks, donating funds to non-profits, and offering their skills and services pro bono or on sliding scales... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

We hold Gloria and Jim Beall, Marilyn Blake, Bruce Wile, Barbara Arnold, and Burr Johnson's mother, Harriet, in prayer as they persevere in isolation within assisted living communities. For their continued forbearing with loneliness, separation from family and friends, and safe-guarding of physical and mental health...for persons living with memory loss and dementia for whom necessary precautions are disturbing and confusing...for the staffs, families, and friends who are committed to their well-being and safety ...and for souls in these groups we know personally whose names we speak aloud... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Pastor Holly, we hold ministers, imams, rabbis, chaplains, gurus, priests, and faith and spiritual leaders across traditions who are working tirelessly to learn new technologies on the fly, check in with congregants, patients, and student and address all manner of new needs and griefs amid restricted movement and access... who seek to offer pastoral care, spiritual presence, spaces, and practices even though they, too, are impacted by the fear, anxiety, pain, illness, and grief of this pandemic...for souls in these groups we know personally whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

We hold Jess Day's family in continued prayer as they weather COVID19 restrictions and discern next steps in Jess' work and as a family... We continue to hold Nancy Twombly's niece Emma, in prayer as she remains out of work in Utah and isolated from friends and colleagues, and Andrew

Thoresen's cousins Rick and Marianne Jackson who are sheltering away from their New York City home...For individuals facing unanticipated work and family decisions, who are discerning major life choices, and who are finding new purpose as transitions continue to unfold...and for souls in these groups we know personally whose names we speak aloud... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Ernie Steeves, Nancy Twombly, Liz Mercer, and Pastor Holly we voice the loneliness of so many persons living alone in self-isolation even knowing we do so for the well-being of all persons around us...for the difficult decisions and preparations they need to make—often alone—in case they become sick or die...and for souls living alone we know personally whose names we speak aloud... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Ernie Steeves, we are thankful for familiar hymns and prayer songs that find their way into our daily routines such as our congregation's prayer song, *Hear My Prayer, O Lord*. For the music of our hearts and the love song of God's Spirit that lifts us to hope and comfort in this distracting season...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

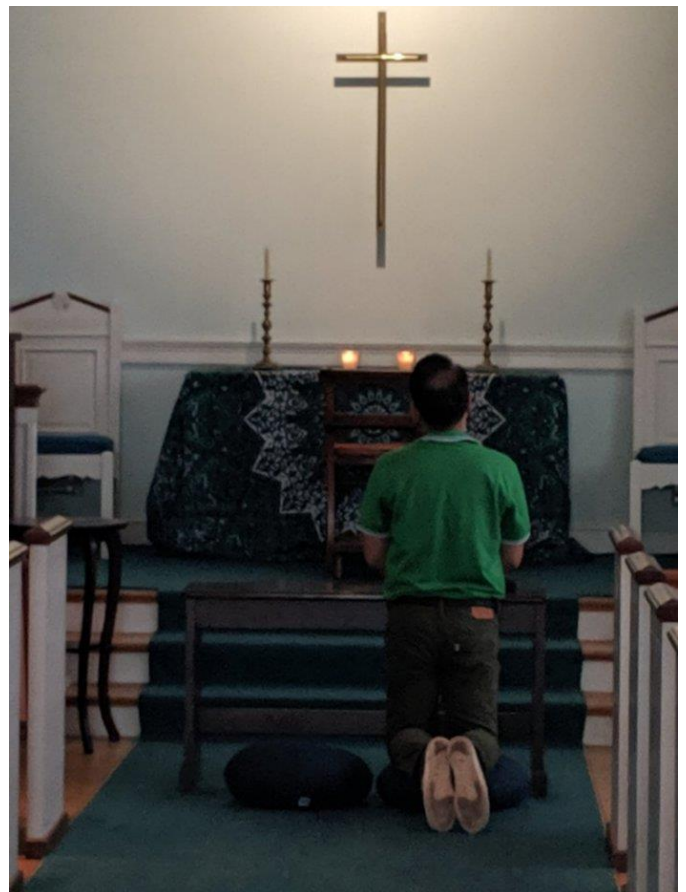
With Nancy Twombly and Pastor Holly we are grateful for the ability to work from home and for spans of time to clean out and order households...With Liz Mercer, we celebrate space for creativity; and with Kathy and Katie Johnson, we are grateful for the ability to go outside, exercise, and maintain new routines...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

For the lives lost to COVID19 and the souls who grieve this day... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

And for the prayers of our hearts that you, Holy One, know even when words cannot hold them... *Hear my prayer, O Lord.*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.



Hymn 398

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

EBENEZER

(Sing or read the words of this hymn by Samuel Trevor Francis (1834-1925). Or, listen to the Hereford Cathedral Choir, Hereford, UK, sing it online at: <https://youtu.be/TliCy09D3v0> .)

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,
rolling as a mighty ocean
in its fullness over me.
Underneath me, all around me,
is the current of thy love;
leading onward, leading homeward,
to thy glorious rest above.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Spread his praise from shore to shore;
how he loveth, ever loveth,
changeth never, nevermore;

how he watches o'er his loved ones,
died to call them all his own;
how for them he intercedeth,
watcheth o'er them from the throne.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Love of ev'ry love the best:
'tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'tis a haven sweet of rest.
O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;
and it lifts me up to glory,
for it lifts me up to thee.

Offering

(Online giving is available on our website! Check <https://www.fbcneedham.org> for a Paypal donation link. You may also continue to support the ongoing ministry of the church by sending a check to the church office via mail to: First Baptist Church in Needham, 858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA 02492. Please indicate it is your offering or pledge on the check.)

Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

A Reflection as We Prepare to Turn Our Worship into Living Hope in Eastertide

We are living a strange Easter—one unique and perhaps unexpectedly familiar, too. The story of an empty tomb and angels, Mary Magdalene's speaking the good news, of Jesus' appearing, and the disciples sheltering in place behind locked doors and gates hasn't changed. How we hear it, meditate upon it, pray with it, and live it within the specter of COVID19, however, changes us.

This year, as we find ourselves singing *Alleluias* at home with family, as a single voice living alone, or during breaks as an essential employee, may we remember that this pandemic, too, shall pass. We will again be able to be together, to worship and laugh, cry and pray in each other's presence. May we celebrate the beginning of a most unusual Eastertide embodying its call to hope even as we await still the day we gather again as a community of faith.

(Bringing Easter into your life today where you are, as you are, consider the words of Carrie Ann Newcomer's song Gathering of Spirits or listen to her sing it online at: <https://youtu.be/M1WrNisRhDU> . Hold in heart and mind the beloved souls you cannot be next to today but to whom you are deeply connected in Spirit and Love.)

Gathering of Spirits³



[Chorus] Let it go my love my truest, let it sail on silver wings.
Life's a twinkling that's for certain, but it's such a fine thing.
There's a gathering of spirits. There's a festival of friends,
And we'll take up where we left off when we all meet again.

I can't explain it. I couldn't if I tried—
How the only things we carry are the things we hold inside.
Like a day in the open, like the love we won't forget,
Like the laughter that we started and it hasn't died down yet.
[Chorus]

Oh yeah, now didn't we, and don't we make it shine?
Aren't we standing in the center of something rare and fine?
Some glow like embers like a light through colored glass.
Some give it all in one great flame throwing kisses as they pass.
[Chorus]

Just east of Eden but there's heaven in our midst,
And we're never really all that far from those we love and miss.
Wade out in the water, there's a glory all around,
And the wisest say there's a 1000 ways to kneel and kiss the ground.
[Chorus]

Benediction

(Speak these words of benediction knowing that you are part of a loving community of faith. If you lit a candle at the beginning, you may wish to blow it out now.)

One: Our blessing to one another is that we are here for one another, that we are with one another, that we celebrate and remember one another along the journey.

ALL: We extinguish the Candle of Life, but the Light continues to shine within us. As we pass the peace we carry the Light of the Candle of Life from this hour into this world and beyond, offering peace, hope and light wherever the journey leads.

³ Songwriter: Carrie Ann Newcomer © BMG Rights Management. For non-commercial use only. Data From: LyricFind. Live performance of "The Gathering of Spirits" shot at the Buskirk Chumley Theatre in Bloomington, IN. Produced by WTIU. www.carrienewcomer.com

Passing of the Peace

(Picture in your mind's eye the faces of beloved souls with whom you would share the peace of Christ in person if you could, and offer each one your blessing of peace.)

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

One: Let us greet one another in peace as we prepare for the journey ahead.

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Announcements

The Church Office and Building are currently closed. Pastoral and office staff are working from home. Office voicemail and email are being checked regularly. If you have a pastoral concern, contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly by email, phone, or text.

Needham Interfaith Clergy Association is offering a weekly collection of online meditations from our different traditions. Both Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly are contributing. You can access the **third episode** on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/qbhSryEl0DY> and find other episodes by searching "Needham Interfaith Clergy." Or, go to their Facebook page, and Like and Follow them for updates.

Livestreaming Services: Many congregations are offering their services online both in real time or recorded to watch or listen as you are able. Here are a few you may wish to virtually "visit":

Pastor Daryn is participating in FBC Newton's online Easter Zoom Service this Sunday 10:00-11:00. Contact her if you would like to virtually attend this service.

Harvard Memorial Chapel – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WHRB (95.3 FM radio or on online at <https://memorialchurch.harvard.edu/sunday-services-0> and then click "Listen Live" on the current Sunday). Recorded services are available on the same link under "Listen to Sunday Sermons" along with daily Morning Prayers under "Listen to Morning Prayers."

First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. – Available online on Sundays 11:00-noon at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/upcoming-worship> and then follow links to Facebook Live. Prior recorded sermons are at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/listen-to-sermons>.

Boston University's Marsh Chapel – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WBUR (90.9 FM radio or on online at <https://www.wbur.org/> and then click "Listen Live"). Recorded services are available as a podcast on iTunes or other RSS feeders (search: Marsh Chapel).

Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS – Available livestreaming online on Sundays 11:30-12:30 Eastern at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live> . Prior recorded services are at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live/on-demand> and then click on "Playlist" to select a date.

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