

Peace Lutheran Church

4672 N. Cedar Ave. Fresno, CA 93726 • (559) 222-2320

Rev. Dennis Wenholz

Rev. Khai Lee

EASTER SUNDAY

APRIL 12, 2020

**AT THE CROSSROADS
A SERIES OF SERVICES FOR LENT
EASTER SUNDAY: LIFE**

OPENING RESPONSE

P Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain! Alleluia!

**C He gives us new life and hope through his resurrection!
Alleluia!**

P Rejoice then, even in your distress.

C We shall be counted worthy when Christ appears.

P God has claimed us as his own.

**C God has called us from our darkness into the light of his
day.**

P Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**C Risen and rising Lord, we confess that too often we live
as though we had not been given new life in you. We
muddle after our own schemes. We follow after
wayward leaders and cherish broken dreams. Forgive
us, Lord, for the times we keep the good news of your
resurrection to ourselves, hoard the blessings that you**

**give and live as though we were still on the path of
despair. Give us your Spirit, the spirit of new life, the
spirit of joyful service, the spirit of loving care for all
others around us. Make us truly Easter people in this
broken world. Fill us with the Spirit so that we might
overflow with the serving that proclaims your very
presence with us.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a
called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the
grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the
command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your
sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of
the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING ... ISAIAH 25:6-9

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all
peoples

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well
refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away
from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him,
that he might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING ... 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-26

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING ... JOHN 20:1-18

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² 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.” ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ 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.” ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” 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.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her,

“Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for 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.’”¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Lord.

SHORT MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

SERMON DIALOG WITH MARY MAGDALENE *(pages 4-5)*
(Hunter Xiong as Mary)

A TIME OF SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

PRAYERS

P Let us bring our prayers and petitions to God who hears and answers the pleas of our hearts. On this special celebration day, Lord, we pray your living presence with the leaders of all nations and peoples of the world. Give government leaders a vision of how your reign can help and heal all peoples. We ask your presence with those who suffer violence and persecution, especially those who suffer for your name. Give new life to the oppressed; hold the persecuted in your protective hand; send justice to the victims of injustice; and encompass all who cry to you for help with your saving presence. Make us agents of healing in this hurting world. In your mercy,

C Hear us, Lord.

P We pray for this congregation and your church. Send pastors and leaders who are filled to overflowing with the good news of your death and resurrection. Make this gathering of your people a place of healing and restoration for all who are broken in spirit. Inspire your followers to share the Gospel in their words and in their actions. In your mercy,

C Hear us, Lord.

P Risen Savior, fill and send us with the good news of your resurrection. Give us an urgency in telling the news of the open tomb. Make us Easter people in the joy we spread with our lives, the hope we share in times of sorrow, the vision of life we bring in the face of this world’s darkness. Lead us to take your rising power to all those around us who cry out for help. Make us able to choose the path of life. In your mercy,

C Hear us, Lord.

P We pray for the sick, the suffering, the grieving, the lonely, especially those we name in our hearts. We commit them to your loving care. Heal, help and comfort them according to your will. In your mercy,

C Hear us, Lord.

P These and all other petitions and requests we bring before you in the name of Jesus. Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

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At the Crossroads
A Series of Services for Holy Week

Easter Sunday: Life
Sermon Dialog with Mary Magdalene

The **Sermon Dialog with Mary Magdalene** is delivered by the pastor (P) and another reader (R) in the role of Mary Magdalene:

P Crossroads. They are there for all of us. We may move along from day to day easily, walking in the sunshine, enjoying the view, feeling at peace. And then it comes. A crossroad. A choice point. There we stand, frozen to the spot. Which way now? Right? Left? Straight? What waits down each of those choices? Which way does our heart call us to go? Which makes sense? Which is God's way?

The answers aren't easy. A crossroad can bring daunting spiritual pain. And it can bring us to our knees. It can even bring us to destruction. And it can bring us to new life. Today we have an expert on crossroads, she faced many in her life. But the most important crossroad was the one where she personally met the risen Christ.

Today we welcome Mary Magdalene, follower of Jesus, and famous in her own right.

*(Mary enters. She is dressed very well or in biblical costume.
She is smiling, joyful)*

P Welcome, Mary. You are well known to us, but can you tell us a little more about yourself?

R I was, I guess, an early follower of Jesus. I came from a hard life. My husband had died early in our marriage. He left me what some people call "well off" but my life as a widow was hard. Many people were jealous of me. Even my so-called friends turned against me. They spread stories that I was living an immoral life. And the stories not only ruined my reputation, but made me an outcast.

P And yet you followed Jesus.

R I heard him teach and saw his miracles. I thought he might be the answer to my questions about life and help heal my pain, the way he did for those with physical complaints.

P And didn't he do that?

R Well, he gave me hope. But it was a kind of wishful hope. In some ways he disappointed me. He didn't correct the evil stories that went around about me. And he didn't seem to do anything about the evil that surrounded us. The Romans still oppressed us. The religious leaders still cheated and troubled us.

P You were with the others when he was crucified, weren't you? Didn't you see him put to death?

R Yes, and at that point my life really did come apart. I had followed him, trusted him and there he was at the mercy of the hated Romans, mocked by the religious leaders. I had so hope that it would be the other way, that he would bring peace to our land and peace to my soul.

P And did that peace for you ever come?

R Yes. But it was when I had given up on him. I was there in the garden looking for his body so I could help with his burial, and maybe remember him. I was crushed. You can't know how broken my spirit was at that time. I was desperate.

P And yet you are here sharing joy with us.

R Here is the miracle, the miracle I would like you to share on this Easter morning. I did not find him. He found me. He came to me, even when I was so broken I could not recognize him. He came to me, spoke my name, healed my spirit and changed my life.

P All with the speaking of your name?

R Don't you see? He knew what I needed. He knew where I was. He came and by his resurrection made everything new for me—and he will do it for you too.

P Everything.

R At that point I knew I could stop searching for him, for meaning, for all the things I needed to fulfill my life. Then I knew that my life was caught up in him. He made me whole and gave me a challenge.

P Challenge?

R I knew that my purpose in life now was to tell what he had done and what he had done for me. Don't you see? Easter, the resurrection is not just a miraculous event, it is a life-changing crossroad for all of us. In the Risen Christ we are found at all of the stopping places of life, all of the

dead ends, and called to new life by the one who purchased and gifted new life for us.

P I know that the Risen Christ sent us to teach the new life he has given us. He said: "Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

R There it is, our Easter challenge and promise. He sends even you and me to be his witnesses and he promises to be with us, to keep on being with us, to keep on coming after us, picking us up and sending us again—to the end of the age.

P Amen.

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