**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**April 17th, 2022**

**Alleluias in Bloom**

**Easter Sunday**

1. All that we have buried

As we began our Lenten journey, we buried things in the cold

and frozen ground. We buried our joy, we buried our normal ways of being, and we buried our alleluias. On Ash Wednesday, we took some scrabble tiles and spelt Alleluia and put them in a jar, wrapped in them tape, and buried them in the ground. The alleluias were to be put away, the joyful praises were to stop, and we were called to pause.

 It was work that we were called to do, for we needed a time to slow down and consider all that it meant to be a child of God in light of this resurrection moment. We needed to sit in the reality of the darkness, sadness, and ponder once again the story of Jesus’ birth, ministry, to the journey to the cross. This is important work, for it informs how we live and act and love in this world.

1. Considering the Word

 As we think about our passages we’ve heard this morning, they are often so familiar that we can lose sight of the drama that unfolds. We have the gift and curse of being 21st century Christians – we know the story, we know that Love will defeat all powers, but knowing the story so well diminishes the meaning for us this morning.

 So I ask you to try to step back, to try and imagine yourself in those women’s shoes. Try to imagine not knowing, but carrying spices under your arms and mourning, ready to dress the body of Christ at the tomb. Can you imagine what the walk was like for them? What were their conversations? What were they thinking could have been or should have been? Do they walk in silence, do they speak to pass the time?

 They come to the tomb and come to see that the tomb is left open, the stone is rolled away. Yet joy does not immediately come, in fact, fear does. Depending on what Gospel you read, we hear that the women are terrified, in another reading Mary asks the Gardener where Jesus is – she is so scared – where have they put her Savior?

 An open tomb isn’t immediately good news. And then it is, slowly but surely, as they hear the voices of two men, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has risen.” Can you imagine the expressions on the women’s faces as they internalize the news…what Jesus said was indeed true, and there’s no time to waste. The good news is here, the disciples need to know. Granted, they all thought it was an idle tale, except for Peter, who ran to the tomb and took it all in. Everything that seemed inconceivable has just become the reality – Jesus Christ has indeed risen, he is risen indeed.

1. Journey

 Maybe in all this time that has passed as we have read the stories, we have forgotten that little jar of alleluias in our waiting. Yet on this crisp morning, the one where we say that death cannot defeat Love eternal, we see that the alleluias have bloomed. They have not only grown and come out of the ground, but they have grown within us to the point where we cannot stay silent anymore, the good news is just too good to hold back.

 We are called to the work of the women and Peter. The women share the good news – and so the call is very much the same for us – go and share the good news. After all this time, this mourning, this darkness, go profess that the light has entered the world and because it has, nothing will ever be the same.

 Maybe we are called to be like Peter, who cannot help but to run. It’s not a walk, it’s not a jog, it is a full-fledged run to the tomb because to see is to believe for him. What if we, alike Peter, don’t sit idly, but are focused on finding Christ in the real world, so much that we run to see God everywhere? Where do we see God at work? Where can we name it, because, again, the good news is too good to hold within ourselves.

 I challenge you though to not only remember the women and Peter this morning, but I also wish for you to hold onto what Lent has taught us. How do we carry what it has taught us into our lives and into our world? Can we remain curious enough to return and remember everything we’ve explored? Can we trust in this promise of new life and then carry it forth wherever you go?

 No Lenten experience is a wasted one, we carry it with us, it is embedded in how we are shaped and move about the world. Except now, we have the good news to carry with it and because of the wholeness of this picture, of this image of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ, we are given a view of the wholehearted people we are called to be.

1. Our First Reading

We are now a people who echo the words of Isaiah, who say

that what has been prophesied has now been fulfilled. This news is news that people have waiting centuries for has now come to fruition.

 In our current world, maybe it is hard to hear the words of Isaiah and believe the truth they offer. In a world where there is war, strife, conflict, between nation and neighbor, we still stand up and proclaim the good news. We share those words from Isaiah – God is doing a new thing. Can you not see it, do you not perceive it?

 Even in this world of conflict, we do not turn our hearts away and forget, but we lift it in prayer to the only one who can create change in the human heart. We also seek to be people who see the flower bloom, who witness to the words of children, and who remember the sweetness that God has indeed given us. We are committed to prayer, in concern and joy, lifting up the struggles, but proclaiming each and every day that Jesus’ death and resurrection indeed means something – it means that new life has come and inspired by that new life, we now live differently.

1. Instructions for Life

I leave you with this thought as you set out from this glorious

day and into the future. Hear an excerpt of the words of the poet Mary Oliver in her poem named, “Sometimes.” She says, “Instructions for living a life: pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”

 Pay attention to what God is doing. Be astonished by both the big and small moments. And then don’t keep it to yourself, let others know and bring joy into focus and share with all who you meet.

 May those instructions guide you as a disciple of Christ today, tomorrow, and for the rest of the days ahead. Alleluia, Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed. Amen.