

Menifee United Church of Christ

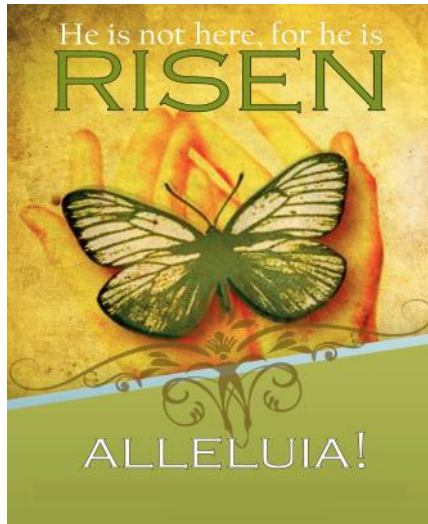
Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

SERMON FOR

April 5, 2015

Easter Sunday

“You Are Risen”



Reverend Bill Freeman: Senior Minister
Eckart Seeber: Music Minister
Marie Paulus-Nyquist: Children's Minister
Donna Scott: Lay Reader

Menifee United Church of Christ

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 AM

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Live Life Fully Alive!

Psalm 118:20-24

This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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“You Are Risen”

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A radio preacher I heard a couple years ago said, “God created a good-looking minister once.” The radio preacher said, “God’ll do that every now and then, just to break the monotony.”

Happy Easter! He is risen! And: You are risen! That's what I want to talk with you about today. You are risen! Whenever you share the love of God, follow the teachings of Jesus, and listen to the Holy Spirit. You are risen! Whenever you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger. You are risen! Whenever you speak love in the face of hate, forgiveness in the face of revenge, and peace in the face of war. You are risen! (Say to those around you: You are risen! You are risen! You are risen!)

On the first Easter Sunday (what we now call Easter Sunday), when the sun had risen, three women - Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome - went to the tomb of Jesus. They bought spices, so they could anoint his body. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" But then they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting there and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Don't be alarmed. You're looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. Go tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there." So they went out and fled from the tomb, because they were afraid and amazed by what they saw. So they said nothing to anyone, because they were scared.

How come we know about this story, if they didn't tell anyone about it? Do you think that maybe they didn't tell anyone about it...at first...because they were afraid and amazed by what they saw? But eventually they said: Well, we better go tell Peter and the other disciples what we saw, because Jesus is going to meet them in Galilee. What I like about this story is that women were the first ones to learn about the resurrection of Jesus. So women must not have been silent. In fact, they must have preached the

first Easter Sunday Sermon: He is risen! What I also like about this story is that Jesus showed us on that first Easter Sunday just how profound the UCC motto is. “Don’t place a period where God has placed a comma.” Jesus showed us that death is where God places a comma in our lives, not a period. Jesus showed us that he lived on after his death. And Jesus showed us that we will live on after our death. I hope that gives you some comfort about the future of your life, about the salvation of your life, about the heavenly destination of your life. He is risen to eternal life! And you are risen to eternal life!

The Psalmist could have been writing about that first Easter Sunday, even though he was writing hundreds of years before that first Easter Sunday. The Psalmist writes, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” The Psalmist writes, “This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” The Psalmist writes, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Let us rejoice and be glad on this Easter. Easter is not about the death of Jesus. Easter is about the resurrected life of Jesus. It’s too bad we can’t sing a song on Easter that we sing at Christmas. Although it would have to be modified a bit. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come...again.” Maybe what we can sing is a song I heard when Kathleen’s grandsons made me watch The Lego Movie. (Actually, the movie was pretty good.) The song is, “Everything is Awesome.” It’s a fun song and perfect for Easter. “Everything is awesome. Everything is cool when you’re part of a team. Everything is awesome when we’re living our dream.” That must’ve been how the disciples felt on that first Easter Sunday. Everything is awesome. Is that how you feel after 2,000 years or so of Easter Sundays? I hope so, so you can live an abundant life.

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly." Which tells me that when we follow Jesus after his death and resurrection, after he is essentially born-again, that we are essentially born-again, too. Of course, we are also told in the Bible to take up our cross and follow Jesus. We hear that all the time. Take up your cross and follow Jesus. And we should do that. But what does it mean exactly to take up your cross and follow Jesus?

I think it means to face the difficulties in your life and don't try to escape from them, because it won't work. Don't try to escape from the difficulties in your life by ignoring them. Don't try to escape from the difficulties in your life by running away from them. Don't try to escape from the difficulties in your life by thinking you can eat them away, drink them away, or drug them away. Take up your cross and follow Jesus by facing the difficulties in your life. What are the difficulties in your life? Only you can answer that. Are they the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of some aspect of your health? The Good News is you don't have to face the difficulties in your life alone. You can turn to God in prayer for help. You can turn to the church - the body of Christ, your fellow parishioners and your pastor - for help. And you can turn to the resurrected Jesus for help. He is risen! And because of that: You are risen! You are risen above the difficulties in your life. Hallelujah!

I preached a sermon once after the deadline for the Mayan calendar had passed. You may remember that people thought that the Mayan calendar was true when it said that the world would come to an end on December 21, 2012. Of course, it wasn't true, thank God. But I said in my sermon: Okay. Let's say the world has indeed come to an end. Now we have a new world. What are we going to do with this new world? I ask you today: What are we going to do after Easter Sunday, after Jesus is risen and after you are risen? Are we going to love one another?

Are we going to forgive one another? Are we going to make peace with one another? I hope so.

You are risen! Whenever you have the peace of Jesus. You are risen!

Whenever you have the love of Jesus. You are risen!

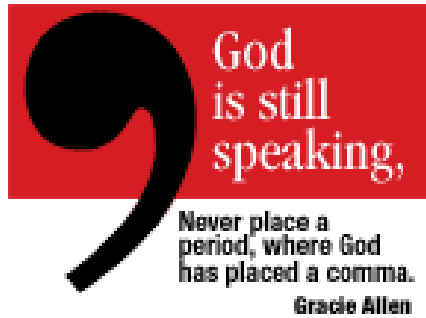
Whenever you have the joy of Jesus. You are risen!

He is risen! And you are risen!

Happy Easter!

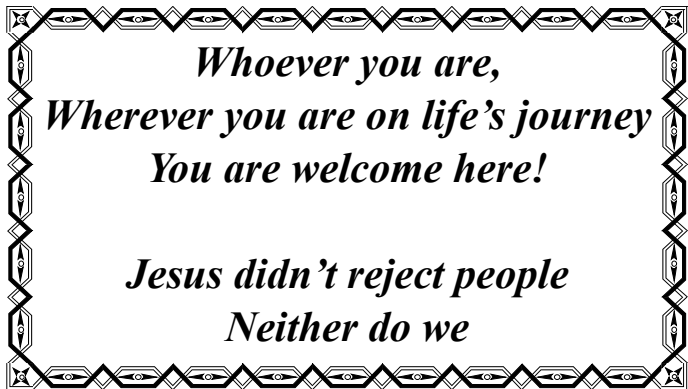
Let us pray...

*God of Love,
Help us to have the peace of Jesus.
Help us to have the love of Jesus.
And help us to have the joy of Jesus.
Now and forevermore.
By the power of the Holy Spirit.
And in the name of Jesus.
Amen.*



Never place a
period, where God
has placed a comma.

Gracie Allen



THE GOLDEN RULE

*What is hateful to you
do not do to others.*

Judaism

*Do to others what you would
have them do to you.*

Christianity

*None of you believes until he wishes for his
brother what he wishes for himself.*

Islam

*Do not do to others
what would cause pain if done to you.*

Hinduism

*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself
would find hurtful.*

Buddism

*Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,
and your neighbor's loss as your loss.*

Taoism

*Do not do to others
what you do not want them to do to you.*

Confucianism

*Treat other people
as you'd want to be treated in their situation.*

Humanism