

St. John's Good News

To be Given a Backbone An Easter Reflection

By The Rev. John Beach

Let every man and woman count himself immortal. Let him catch the revelation of Jesus in his resurrection. Let him say not merely, "Christ is risen," but "I shall rise."
~ Bishop Phillips Brooks

Goodness is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate, light is stronger than darkness, life is stronger than death, victory is ours through Him who loved us.
~ Archbishop Desmond Tutu

John's Gospel describes the disciples trembling in fear in a locked room after the death of Jesus (John 20:19). The movement which held such promise only a few weeks earlier had turned very sour, very quickly. Every ounce of energy that remained within them was used in trying to survive the day. There was no creativity left within their minds to consider tomorrow. Their hearts were void of faith, hope, and love.

What we celebrate at Easter is the transformation of group of terrified and pathetic men into a community who was inspired to unlock the door, leave the darkness, and proclaim the healing love of God in Christ Jesus. They were given courage, creativity, humor, and compassion. Death (such as they had experienced in the locked room) no longer had victory over them.

I use the word inspired (meaning to be filled with breath) because that is quite literally what happened to them upon their encounter with the risen Christ. He breathed into them, a re-enactment of the tender and loving act of God in creation described in the second chapter of the book of Genesis. Jesus breathed upon them, at which point his spirit filled the empty space within them that had previously prevented them from walking upright in the daylight.

This is what we celebrate at Easter. Jesus breathes into the fearful trembling souls and enables them to stand upright in the midst of danger and uncertainty. He also speaks these strange and powerful words to us: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained." We are given the ability and mandate to equip the world's people to stand upright. We are given a spirit which empowers us to "Speak the Truth in Love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Alleluia, the Lord is Risen!

John+



April 2021

**Sunday at 10am,
online at Zoom**

All are welcome to join in virtual worship. Please contact the office for more information.

Our weekly service bulletins are posted at www.StJohnsSaugus.org

Phone: 781-233-1242

Twitter:
@StJohnsSaugus

Facebook: St. John's Episcopal Church Saugus

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Easter
By Frederick Buechner

Christmas has a large and colorful cast of characters including not only the three principals themselves, but the angel Gabriel, the innkeeper, the shepherds, the heavenly host, the three Wise Men, Herod, the star of Bethlehem, and even the animals kneeling in the straw. In one form or another we have seen them represented so often that we would recognize them anywhere. We know about the birth in all its detail as well as we know about the births of ourselves or our children, maybe more so. The manger is as familiar as home. We have made a major production of it, and as minor attractions we have added the carols, the tree, the presents, the cards. Santa Claus, Ebenezer Scrooge, and so on. With Easter it is entirely different.

The Gospels are far from clear as to just what happened. It began in the dark. The stone had been rolled aside. Matthew alone speaks of an earthquake. In the tomb there were two white-clad figures or possibly just one. Mary Magdalen seems to have gotten there before anybody else. There was a man she thought at first was the gardener. Perhaps Mary the mother of James was with her and another woman named Joanna. One account says Peter came too with one of the other disciples. Elsewhere the suggestion is that there were only the women and that the disciples, who were somewhere else, didn't believe the women's story when they heard it. There was the sound of people running, of voices. Matthew speaks of "fear and great joy." Confusion was everywhere. There is no agreement even as to the role of Jesus himself. Did he appear at the tomb or only later? Where? To whom did he appear? What did he say? What did he do?

It is not a major production at all, and the minor attractions we have created around it – the bunnies and baskets and bonnets, the dyed eggs – have so little to do with what it's all about that they neither add much nor subtract much. It's not really even much of a story when you come right down to it, and that is of course the power of it. It doesn't have the ring of great drama. It has the ring of truth. If the Gospel writers had wanted to tell it in a way to convince the world that Jesus indeed rose from the dead, they would presumably have done it with all the skill and fanfare they could muster. Here there is no skill, no fanfare. They seem to be telling it simply the way it was. The narrative is as fragmented, shadowy, incomplete as life itself. When it comes to just what happened, there can be no certainty. That something unimaginable happened, there can be no doubt. The symbol of Easter is the empty tomb. You can't depict or domesticate emptiness. You can't make it into pageants and string it with lights. It doesn't move people to give presents to each other or sing old songs. It ebbs and flows all around us, the Eastertide. Even the great choruses of Handel's *Messiah* sound a little like a handful of crickets chirping under the moon.

He rose. A few saw him briefly and talked to him. If it is true, there is nothing left to say. If it is not true, there is nothing left to say. For believers and unbelievers both, life has never been the same again. For some, neither has death. What is left now is the emptiness. There are those who, like Magdalen, will never stop searching it till they find his face.

~originally published in *Whistling in the Dark*

Holy Week and Easter Schedule

As we enter Holy Week, we will be slowly opening the church for in person worship. We shall be gathering on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday at 10 a.m. We are limiting the number of persons in the church to 35 and ask that you register in advance by calling or emailing the church office to state that you are intending on coming. We will be also be transmitting our worship services by Zoom and will be sending invitations to parishioners.

Our Holy Week worship services can be found below:

Palm Sunday: Eucharist at 10 a.m., followed by drive-by distribution of palms.

Monday in Holy Week: 8:45p.m. Compline

Tuesday in Holy Week: 8:45 p.m. Compline

Wednesday in Holy Week: 8:45p.m. Compline

Maundy Thursday: Service (by Zoom only) 7:30p.m.

Good Friday: Service at Noon

Easter Morning: Sunrise Service at 6:30a.m. - details to be announced

Easter: Eucharist at 10:00a.m.

Note that all of the liturgies will be on our website. If it is difficult to join us live, you are welcome to participate at the time of your choosing.

Peace,
John+

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Easter Prayer List

Easter List remembrances/thanksgivings are due no later than **Friday, March 26th.**
Kindly email or call the office—thank you!

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Every Child Deserves to Smile



It is with a grateful heart that I write this update! Our snack and fruit basket is overflowing with donations of snacks and Easter treats for those in need that we aid with our monthly donations! Our collection to date will allow us to send 3 large boxes of snacks and \$50 worth of fresh fruit to the motel. Many thanks to all who have contributed and those who pray for the homeless families who reside at the motel. A special thanks to Jeannine Cutter, Julia Aston, the Meireles Family, the Mears Family and Jane Selvitella. May the light of hope that we are able to provide be a beacon to those who find themselves in darkness.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items and everyday needs (paper plates, napkins, plastic utensils, baggies, etc.). Donations may be left in the *Every Child Deserves to Smile* collection container in the vestibule or by contacting Jeanne Seaboyer: 781-662-4342 or jeanneseaboyer(at)gmail(dot)com

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For the Lancaster Family

Please lift up Joanne and her family in prayer, as they recently commemorated a memorial service for her husband Kevin, who passed away in March of 2020.

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St. John's Online Site

Handmade Easter cards and cloth face masks are still available to purchase at our site: st-johns-church-saugus.square.site. They are well-made, affordable, colorful, and a good fit! The cost is \$8.00 per mask; we offer quick delivery, and payments can be made with a credit or debit card.

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Lobster Roll Sale

Our next lobster roll sale is **Friday, April 23rd**; includes one lobster roll, condiments, a bag of chips, and a brownie for \$12/ea. Deadline for orders is **Tuesday, April 20th**. Pick-up at St. John's on April 23rd from 7am to Noon, and local delivery for orders of 5 or more. Please call or email the church office and kindly include your phone Number with your order. We appreciate your ongoing support!



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WORD SEARCH

Several of these terms are associated with Easter...can you find them?

V K P W X N A Z L D A N D R Q L S
 P K I A G Q A I P T O Y K P X F U
 Q S U I J Z P L O C T O M B B G S
 Q B A J Y X N K Z V I G I L M P D
 Y K S S J S L A J C O V E N A N T
 Q R K O C E C O N S E C R A T E D
 X E H H D E R E V E I N I R E C P
 O J Z P S J N U C V V L T G T Y A
 W O T Y R A O S S U D J U A E P S
 D I F D N E C V I A M P A X R A C
 M C N Z L Z A R L O L E L X N L H
 L E I B M T I C I I N E N D A M A
 T A C U E H G J H F K U M I L S L
 M O T E N E B R A E I J B A C F Y
 U X X M I R A C L E R C W X V A T
 F M A U N D Y G O A Q P E V V A L
 R E B O R N C Z V C B W T H O B Q

Ascension ~ Consecrated ~ Covenant ~ Ecumenical ~ Eternal ~ Jerusalem

Maundy ~ Miracle ~ Palms ~ Paschal ~ Preacher ~ Rejoice ~ Ritual

Reborn ~ Tenebrae ~ Sacrifice ~ Tomb ~ Vigil

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Have a very blessed Easter!

Officers: The Rev. John T. Beach, Priest-in-Charge ~ Daniel Casey, Sr. Warden ~ William St. Clair, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Paul Felci, Asst. Treasurer ~ Brenda Caggiano, Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry: Rose Holt (2022) ~ Duana LeMay (2024) ~ Donna Manoogian (2024) ~ Samantha Martin (2023) ~ Kristina Palazzo (2023) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2022) ~ Kenneth Webber (2023)