

From the Pews, Jennifer McDavid

We are living through deeply challenging and heartbreaking times while we navigate this SARS-CoV-2 (COVID19) pandemic as a global community. The best and worst of humanity are inevitably exposed when such tremendous upheaval is experienced by all. The cruel effects of systemic racism, vast resource hoarding (everything from money to clean water to toilet paper), and exploitation of the environment are highlighted, and it can become nearly impossible to find the “silver lining.” The good is there, but fear and uncertainty threaten to overwhelm it.

My husband and I are considered “essential” as veterinarians, and we have been navigating the fear and unknown of this pandemic while caring for our almost 4-year-old son, Thomas, and awaiting the arrival of our second child. I think I can safely say that this Lenten Season and Holy Week have been the weirdest any of us have ever experienced. We have had to adjust our schedules and find new ways to make life work while trying to maximize the health and safety of our family and community. Thomas said something to me early last week that stopped me in my tracks (especially since I was having an especially “negative” day). He put his hands on either side of my face and said “Mama, I think I love this virus.” What?!?! How?!?! Is my child suffering a psychotic break?!? Then he continued: “It lets me spend more time playing with you. I miss my friends, but I really like getting to spend so much time doing things with you other than shopping and running errands.”

And there it is. That positive spark to which we should pay attention, especially now, during this Easter Season. We fill our lives with things and activities and the pursuit of what we don’t have. We want “more” for our children, but in the pursuit of “more,” we fail to see the greatest gifts of all: relationships, quality time, small expressions of love and joy, the beauty of the world all around. These are the gifts that God wants us to seek. We are called to be good neighbors and to live as Christ lived: building relationships especially among those outside of our “circles,” giving of ourselves, our time, and our resources to build up the lowly, and using our gifts to overthrow systems of power and oppression. Indeed, the last two verses of our text for today encourage us that while we have not seen Jesus with our own eyes, we rejoice in his resurrection, for in his life and death, we have received our soul’s salvation. The silver lining of this pandemic may well be the slowing of our daily lives to strip away the unnecessary and lay bare what is truly important in our lives.

We welcomed our daughter, Anna, a bit earlier than anticipated this past Wednesday. I am writing this on Easter Sunday with her asleep on my chest thanking God for this life, this family, and the lessons of this particular Lenten Season. May we never forget to “rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy” this life that we have been given and the love of God that is so evident if we can stop and take a moment to reset and re-evaluate what is truly important.



Prayer of Preparation

Risen and reconciling God, your greeting after the grave acknowledged the trauma and turmoil of that time and our own. The message of peace was what your disciples needed to hear, and what the world needs now. Perhaps as we begin to see as you see the reality of who we are, we might begin to love as you love, answering compassionately the cries we hear, and learning to forgive, ourselves. Amen.
—the Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland

Gathering and Preparing for God’s Word

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude, *Improvisation on Dunlap’s Creek* Smith
Sentences of Scripture, *excerpts from Psalm 16*
Hymn #246, *Christ is Alive* TRURO
(See hymn sheet.)

Prayer of Confession

Holy and generous God, seeing the wounds of Christ
we acknowledge our part in them and in the woundedness of others.
We hide our wounds from others and walk by the injuries
we feel are too big to heal.
But in you, O Lord, is mercy and the power to change us.
You gift us with your Holy Spirit to turn us once again to see you,
to see one another, and to respond in love, belief, and trust.
Guide us back to your presence
so that we may know the fullness of joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon
Response, *Be Not Afraid*



Be not a - fraid; sing out for joy! Christ is ris-en, al - le - lu - ia!



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Hearing God’s Word

Prayer for Illumination
Epistle Lesson, *1 Peter 1:3-9*
Time for Children
Gospel Lesson, *John 20:19-31*
Homily, “Seen”
Response, *I Know that My Redeemer* Lampley

Responding to God’s Word

Affirmation of Faith, *PCUSA Study Catechism*
Question 8. How do you understand the love and power of God?
Through Jesus Christ. In his life of compassion, his death on the cross,
and his resurrection from the dead,
I see how vast is God’s love for the world
— a love that is ready to suffer for our sakes,
yet so strong that nothing will prevail against it.

Question 14. If God’s love is powerful beyond measure,
why is there so much evil in the world?
No one can say why, for evil is a terrible. Its enormity perplexes us.
Nevertheless, we boldly affirm that God’s triumph over evil is certain.
In Jesus Christ God suffers with us, knowing all our sorrows.
In raising him from the dead, God gives new hope to the world.
Our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen,
is himself God’s promise that suffering will come to an end,
that death shall be no more, and that all things will be made new.

Question 18. What does our creation in God’s image
reflect about God’s love for us?
We are created to live wholeheartedly for God.
When we honor our Creator as the source of all good things,
we are like mirrors reflecting back the great beam of love
that God shines on us.
We are also created to honor God by showing love
toward other human beings.

Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving
The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.**

Hymn #817, *We Walk By Faith* DUNLAP’S CREEK
(See hymn sheet.)

Charge and Benediction
Postlude, *Christ is Alive* arr. Smith

Leading Worship this Morning

Lauren Slingerland, *preaching*
Ben Dorr, Mary Kathleen Duncan, Leigh Stuckey, *liturgists*
Nancy Smith, *organist*
Mark Kemp, Judy McKenney, *vocalists*

Christ Is Alive! 246

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No lon - ger bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - ery age, till earth and sky and

prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - ery place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

In 1968 Easter fell ten days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and this text was written to express an Easter hope while mindful of that terrible event. Buoyed by a triple-arched tune, it affirms the presence of a wounded, risen Christ with all who suffer.

817 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

1 We walk by faith and not by sight; with
 2 We may not touch your hands and side, nor
 3 Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; and
 4 And when our life of faith is done, in

gra - cious words draw near, O Christ, who spoke as
 fol - low where you trod; but in your prom - ise
 may our faith a - bound to call on you when
 realms of clear - er light may we be - hold you

none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."
 we re - joice and cry, "My Lord and God!"
 you are near and seek where you are found.
 as you are, with full and end - less sight.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

The opening line here is essentially a quotation of 2 Corinthians 5:7, but that affirmation is fleshed out by references to the appearance of the risen Christ to Thomas (John 20:19–29). The shape note tune, named for a stream in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, adds resolution to the words.