



Loving God. Serving others. Changing lives.

April 6, 2021

God's Beloved--

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, Indeed!!

This time, with more cowbell! I've always wanted to say that in worship. If you were at our Drive-In Easter Service, you know that I mean.

Though resurrection is a story God tells again & again, all year long, there's something about Easter coinciding with the coming of spring--and this year, the hope of a vaccine--that makes it seem as though we can almost smell, touch, and taste it. As the psalmist proclaims: "O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him" (Ps. 34:8).

Now that we're on the other side of Holy Week and the tomb, I've been reflecting on our congregation's capacity to adapt beloved traditions *and* to adopt new ways of being church.

Just in the past week alone, our Outreach Team creatively shifted our recent tradition of reaching out to others like the crowds reached out for Jesus by stretching out Palm Sunday into **Palm SATURDAY**, when we received countless donations for ministries near and dear to us: Habitat for Humanity and Laurel Elementary and one new-to-us, introduced by one of our college students: Period Kids.

Our Elders still took the lead on our **Maundy Thursday** service, but they did so from the "Upper Zoom" where we broke bread together and remembered Jesus' command to love another as he loved us. One worshipper even commented afterwards: "I never really got in to the foot-washing thing on Maundy Thursday, but hearing a reading about it this year helped me see it in a totally different way."

We also got to experiment with some ways of worshipping we've wanted to try out for the past couple of years and never really dug into fully: a **collaborative Good Friday service** with 5 other local faith communities and an **Easter Sunrise Service** on the Tylers' farm (even the meadowlarks joined us with their song!).

Meanwhile, we've continued to move forward on The Next Big Thing, our Open & Affirming discernment process, and our pastoral transition. I don't know too many churches who are tackling ways of engaging their faith and their community in such big, bold ways--let alone during a global pandemic!

It makes me proud to be your pastor and humbled by your consistent generosity of time, talent, and treasure. I can't wait to see how God continues to transform us in 2021!

Grace and gratitude,

Melissa

Melissa St. Clair, Pastor

thank you!



Easter Sunrise Service @ the Tylers' Farm