

Easter Sunday Message

A sermon shared with the congregation of St. Andrew's United Church
via YouTube Worship on April 12, 2020
by Rev. Dave Le Grand

So I want you to imagine the Marys, forlorn, arriving at the tomb. Then a sudden shaking of the earth, and they encounter an angel. What would they have felt? Wonder? Fear? When an angel in a Bible story says, "don't be afraid," well, the person encountering that angel is probably afraid.

Couple that encounter with meeting Jesus outside the tomb and you have a breathtaking morning... having started in sadness... but a surprising turn of events. In what might look like just another day today defined by a virus, what holy surprises might be in store for you today? Look back in your mind's eye at the past week. Did you have surprising, even joy-filled encounters, that dispersed your sense of isolation and routine? Maybe it was a spontaneous driveway party, a phone call. Or perhaps it was a seeing your grandchildren on a video call. This morning I heard on CBC radio an interview with a very elderly man who contracted the Spanish Flu as a child.¹ He spoke of being isolated high up in his house, but his father coming home from a trip. The man remembers the joy he felt watching his father climb up a ladder to his window with a box of toys under his arm. He treasured for many years a fire engine from his father.

The Easter story, the story of Jesus overcoming death, is a reminder to always be open to God's surprises. These stressful times tempt us to expect death, but Christians are sometimes aptly referred to as an "Easter people."

Right now, our families, our friends, neighbours, even people we don't know well and meet on social media – they need perhaps more than ever our generosity of spirit. The world needs Easter people, you and me, embodying Christ's love in even simple gestures. Whether we share the good news stories we find on social media, or we just pay attention to every moment in a day when we can be a blessing to someone else. We are an Easter people.

Will you pray with me? God, thank you for the blessing of this resurrection story of Jesus and the Marys. Help us to pay attention to surprising moments filled with new life. It won't be easy. Daily isolation in our homes, news that seems to only talk about one thing. May we remember your surprise you gave those women, disciples. May we always be looking for your surprising joy and wonder in our everyday lives. May we be your Easter people. Amen.

¹ The story was, in fact, Scarlett Fever survivor Don Robertson, remembering his dad, "One day he did put a ladder up to my window and there was a cardboard box that he hoisted up to my window filled with toys," remembers Robertson. "It was just an incredible experience and a wonderful memory of my dad climbing this ladder". <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-april-10-2020-1.5529055/this-107-year-old-remembers-the-1918-spanish-flu-and-sees-the-similarities-with-covid-19-1.5529264>