

March 31 Worship
Easter

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.' and she told them He had said these things to her.”* John 20:18

Opening Scripture- Isaiah 25:6-9(page 605-606)

Opening Chorus- 269- Then Came The Morning

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Friends, the tomb is empty! The stone has been rolled away!

People: Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!

Leader: For three days he lay in that cold and lonely cave.

People: But God's love cannot be contained by anything, not even death!

Leader: Thanks be to God, who gives us victory throughout our Risen Lord.

People: Death has been swallowed up in victory!

Leader: Where, O death, is your victory?

People: Where, O death, is your sting?

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: He is risen, indeed!

All: Come, let us worship the Risen Christ!

Hymn- 259- Christ The Lord Is Risen Today

Unison Prayer- Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternity. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the scriptures, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray, saying...*Lord's Prayer*...

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 118:1-2,14-18(page 531)

Special Music- Hallelujah- Leonard Cohen(Easter Lyrics by Kelley Mooney)

Gospel Scripture- Mark 16:1-8(page 886)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 261- The Day Of Resurrection

Message

“Have You Seen Him?”

The gospel verse that opened today's service is from the gospel of John, chapter 20, verse 18; “Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.' and she told them He had said these things to her.” In this statement, Mary tells the disciples that she has “seen the Lord,” and they did not believe her. Why should they? Jesus was dead. They knew this because John had been there when He died and watched as they took the body down from the cross. Most of the disciples had not seen Jesus since He was arrested in the garden and taken away to be tried. They were hiding, in fear for their own lives, when Mary came to them and told them that Jesus was alive. As I said, they did not believe her.

That very same evening, as they were locked in that room. Suddenly Jesus appeared to them and spoke to them. He did not knock on the door and ask to be admitted, He simply appeared and spoke with them. Jesus was definitely alive, risen from the dead, just as He had told them would happen. Thomas was not there and when the others told him he said that he didn't believe them. “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in His side, I will not believe.”(John 20:25) He had to see for himself what all the others claim they saw. 8 days later, Jesus allowed Thomas to see for himself.

Jesus stayed for 40 days before ascending into heaven to be with His Father and appeared to over 500 people. When Jesus left, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to take His place to guide those who would believe. He would not be seen again until His 2nd coming. Here is the question for today; can we “see” Jesus? Have you “seen” Jesus? According to the Bible this is not possible.

The word “see” can be understood in many ways. We can look with our eyes and observe the physical. We can also “see” with our senses and perceive or know using our inner vision. It is also possible to “see” through vision of the mind and dreaming and through the use of metaphor. We are able to see something in ways that do not depend on our physical sense of sight. When someone explains something to us that we don't understand, we often say to them “Oh, I see,” when we are simply trying to say “I understand.” The sense of sight is one that takes in more than 1 way of seeing.

Each of us has a different idea of what Jesus looks like. No one alive today has ever seen Jesus or has had a face-to-face meeting with Him. Those who have accepted Christ may have a personal relationship with God but we will not see Him until the time when He comes again to claim His world. Our perception of Jesus comes from all those different ways that He has been presented to us through artist's renderings, movies and our own imaginations. Scientists have even gone so far as recreating the image of Jesus using ancient skulls to show what he might have looked like. No one ever drew a picture of Jesus or made a statue of Him while He was alive. This is something that only a wealthy person would have had done. So why doesn't the Bible tell us what He looked like? Perhaps it is because God knew that we'd try to make idols or images of Jesus and that would go against the commandment that says; “You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve

them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me.”(Exodus 20:4-5)

As much as we would like to say that we have seen Jesus, it is not important that we see Him, the primary thing is that we believe in Him. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”(Hebrews 11:1) The Bible promises us that we will see Jesus again; “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”(1 John 3:2)

The question has been asked time and again; Since Jesus rose to be in heaven with His Father, did he lose His physical body and become only spirit? The answer to this is provided again and again in scripture. When Jesus rose from the tomb, He did so in the same body that He had during His life. When He appeared to the disciples, they touched Him. The scars on His hands and feet were real. “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.”(Luke 24:39) He ate with them and walked and talked with them. When He ascended into heaven after 40 days, it was in His human form.

The Bible promises us that when Jesus comes again and all who believe will rise, we will do so in a new body, created for us by God and live forever with Him in heaven. The joy that we feel today will be nothing like the joy we feel when Jesus comes to us again and we see Him in all His glory. Praise Be to God. Amen

Prayers of People/Prayer- We praise you, living God, with songs and prayers and listening hearts and lives trying to obey your will. You have created and are creating, bringing life and hope and love. You come in Jesus, your Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new. In a culture where the power death gets all the headlines your Holy Spirit summons us to be people shaped by your power to work resurrection. We are not sure we believe as fully as we think we should. We are not sure we trust as deeply as we think you require. But we bring who we are and what we have become into your presence, longing to know your grace and your love. Forgive what has gone wrong. Repair in us what is broken. Reveal in us what is good and turn us toward it. So may we follow wherever your Spirit may lead. So may we love with the love of Jesus flowing through us. So may we, body, mind and spirit, be children of resurrection, children of hope, children of grace. In Christ Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Communion Hymn- 370- Come Celebrate Jesus

Prayer Of Thanksgiving- May this bread and this wine become for us in this moment your life-giving body and blood, And may we who share this meal, be joined with you, and with one another, as one body united in resurrection life, and sharing with all of creation in your eternal salvation. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 260- Because He Lives

Benediction- Go out into the world as the people of God in this place, and may the God who raised Jesus from the dead grant you grace, the Son who gave his life for you give you peace, and the Spirit who is with you day by day, inspire you to greater service both now and forever more. Amen

