“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” In the beginning, the very, very beginning, Jesus was. Jesus was with God and Jesus was God. But Jesus was dangerous; he threatened those in power. That power tried to overcome him, and they thought they had, but the darkness of this world always, always gives way to his brilliant light.

In the darkness of the very early sabbath day, as the light is just coming up on the horizon, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to Jesus' tomb. They are weighed down with their grief and this is the only place they can come to dwell in the finality of Jesus' death. They expect quiet and solitude at this early hour. Instead, the ground beneath them starts to shake, an angel appears from the sky and rolls back the stone in front of Jesus' grave. The angel's appearance is as shocking and brilliant as lightning. The guards at the tomb shake and fall down like they're dead because Jesus is not in the tomb at all. Somehow, some way, he has been raised from the dead. The whole empire of death is dead and the empire of God reigns.

The two Marys are to tell this unbelievable story to Jesus' disciples. So they leave the tomb, walking fast at first, then breaking into a run. Already they are filled with great fear and great joy, for while they don't understand what this all means, somehow they wonder if they should dare to believe their world has been changed forever. Then the impossible happens: a very real and alive Jesus is suddenly standing right in front of them! He is the light that breaks through the night's darkness and through the doubt of the women who love him. And now, as Jesus' magnificent message of light and resurrection and power is placed in the women's hands, they can hardly believe it.

They, wome with no power in their culture, afe the first ones to see the resurrected Jesus, the ones chosen to carry the precious news to Jesus' other disciples.

This day is a new beginning for the world, for you and me. Today, we come in the first light of a new day. The earth rumbles beneath us as the entire world is shaken by the news. Our Lord has acted on this day. As on the first day, when God began creation and brought light to the darkness, on this day, God raises Jesus from the dead and we celebrate God's ***new*** creation. On this Easter morning, we are witness to the good news of resurrection. We, along with the whole world, stand on the faith of those who have received and believed resurrection before us. Like the women at the tomb, the news fills us with great fear and great joy. To be honest, fear is our constant companion in life. This world is so unpredictable, so dangerous. We worry about money, jobs, marriages, children and grandchildren, about wars and rumors of wars, about scarcity in the shadows of greed and gluttony. In Mexico and the Phillipines and places in our country, where drug wars rage, in Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and the Ukraine, where bullets and bombs kill every single day, fear is a very real, palpable vibration.

Into this fear steps our risen Lord. This is earth's new beginning, God's promise of redemption. We – all of us – are being delivered from death into life. Our fears do not magically disappear, but they make way for the truth of this day, its great joy. Jesus is risen and has changed, is changing the dynamic of history. He is the energy of transformation in our world. He is the door from one reality into another. Today, this resurrected Christ invites us to walk through the door from death to life, from darkness to light, from where we were to where we will be. Our world is being transformed by the mighty power of peace. We know our sins are forgiven and our broken lives made whole. With great honor and hope and care and joy, let us carry this great news into our homes and then let us all, mothers fathers, grandparents, children, carry this holy news to all who need to know it. Today, we can look into the faces of our children and believe there is a future for them.

All because of one man and his sacrifice for every mistake, every evil action ever made upon this entire planet. This good news that is now placed in *our* trembling hands. With great honor and care and joy, let us carry it into our homes and then to all who need to know it. Because, from the very beginning, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not, cannot, will never overcome it.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

And Amen.

*Easter A*

*April 16, 2017*

*Floyd-Willis Lutheran Parish*

*Matthew 28:1-10*

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