

Prayer for Others

Lord, like Mary in the garden, we weep.
We weep with all who suffer,
with all who are persecuted,
with all creatures who endure our cruelty.

Lord, we weep with those who are lonely,
with those who are grieving,
with those who are yearning for rest.

Lord, we weep through fires and floods,
Through drought and uncertain seasons,
through disconnection from the land.

Lord, we weep where diseases ravage,
where war decimates lives,
where tempers flare and hearts harden.

Lord, we weep with children betrayed,
with young people bullied and shamed,
with families broken by violence.

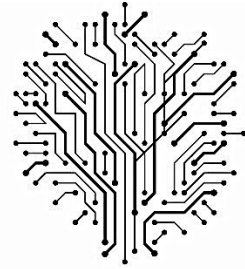
**Together, Lord, we weep.
Receive our tears,
call us by name,
and give us good news to share
in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Song

[Wonderful Words of Life](#) by Gwen Hughes,
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Closing Responses & Blessing

As Christ left the tomb empty
and the grave-clothes folded
as signs of his power and purpose,
may we go from Easter's Garden
to be living signs:
of the love of the Father,
the grace of the Son,
and the power of the Holy Spirit,
alive in and through us,
this day and always.
Amen.



SALT BUSH

UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

Worship for the scattered Christian community

**John 20:1-18
In the garden**

Lighting the Christ Candle

Welcome, beloved family of Christ,
to the dim hours of dawn
as the sun slowly climbs into the sky,
bringing light and warmth to the land.
How we have travelled these weeks,
through the wilderness of scarcity
and isolation, loss and loneliness,
uncertainty, ill health, and strange time
which passes now too quickly,
now too slowly,
to the praises of Palm Sunday
and the horrors of the cross
and the silent hours of waiting ...

to this moment.

<the candle is lit>

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!
Living One,
no darkness can overcome you,
no tomb can hold you,
no shroud can bind you.

**So, come. Lead us
into the light of this new day,
into the garden of abundant life,
and into the peace
of your risen presence,
oh, Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Song:

[The Age to Come](#) by Mac Meador,
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Questions for Conversation

- What makes this day so special in Christian communities around the world?
- How do you typically respond to messages of hope, especially when they come in unexpected or surprising forms?
- What does it mean to witness something that changes everything? Have you ever experienced that?

The Word around the Bush

John 20:1-18 (NIV)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that

Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then, the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Message

[From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.](#)