

THE LION'S TALE

EASTER
2019

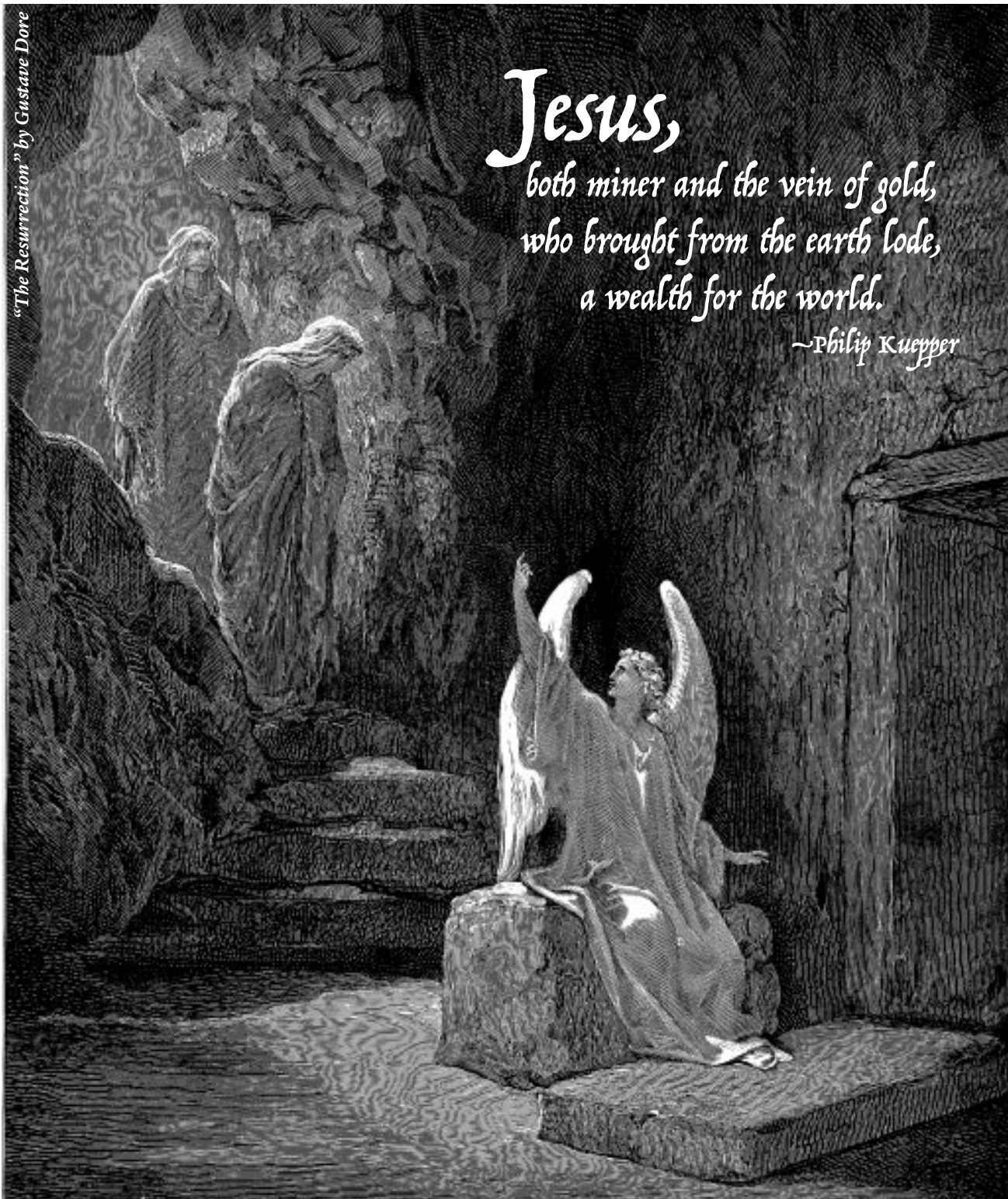
The Seasonal Magazine of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

"The Resurrection" by Gustave Dore

Jesus,

*both miner and the vein of gold,
who brought from the earth lode,
a wealth for the world.*

~Philip Kuepper



SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

15 Pearl Street • Mystic, CT 06355 • (860) 572-9549 • stmarksmystic.org



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Ministers

All members of the congregation

The Rev. Adam Thomas, Rector

The Rev. Stacey Kohl, Curate

David Tubbs, Music Director

Madeline Wilson, Parish Admin

Ken Knott, Senior Warden

Kurt Cramer, Junior Warden

Eric Bookmiller, Clerk

Bob Ness, Treasurer

Vestry

Craig Koehler

Lisa Noonan

Sarah McDermott

Erika Roberts

Kim Carlson

John Kennedy

Doug Barrett

Joanne Murray

Louisa Broadbent

Gene Roure

Ted Kietzman

Ann Ragsdale

BOTH MINER AND THE VEIN OF GOLD

A Sermon Preached on Easter Sunday

by the Rev. Adam Thomas

Here we are at long last: Easter Sunday, a long wait this year, two-thirds of the way through the month of April. But it could have been longer. April 25th is the latest Easter can be, but that hasn't happened since 1943 and won't happen again until 2038, which coincidentally is the year I'll be eligible to retire. Unlike most holidays, which are fixed on a particular date or day of the month, the date of Easter (and the Jewish Passover) springs from something much grander – the motion of celestial bodies. We start with the vernal equinox, the day in March when the earth is tilted just so in relation to the sun to make day and night the same exact length. Then we find the next full moon, and the Sunday following is this day of Resurrection.

I've always loved this astronomical system for finding the date of Easter because it reminds me that the event we celebrate today does not just affect us, but affects all of creation. The Gospel of John tells us, "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son..." This "world" is the whole cosmos, both the big, starry universe beyond our sight and the depths of the universe held within each soul. The Resurrection is the reality of God, in which all things are drawn to the Creator; in which the love of God reveals its eternal, participatory nature; in which the sin of humanity does not stand a chance against the reconciling desire of God to bring us back into right relationship.

Such a universe-aligning event is impossible to describe, so I'm glad the Gospel writers never tried. Indeed, the four accounts of the Gospel tell the stories of the witnesses to the aftermath of the Resurrection, not the moment of resurrection itself. Today we heard the story of Mary Magdalene, who comes to the tomb in the darkness of the first day of the week and finds the stone removed. She fetches Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved and they race to the tomb, find it empty, and go home. Mary stays behind, weeping at the tomb, and she meets the Risen Christ and becomes the Apostles to the Apostles, bringing the good news to them: "I have seen the Lord!"

In the midst of this story of the empty tomb, one tiny detail stands out to me today. The Gospel writer tells us that the witnesses see "the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself." This little detail about the folded head-cloth has always set my curiosity on fire. Again, the Gospel writers are silent on the moment and the mechanics of the Resurrection, but here we get a glimpse, just a glance, perhaps, at the Risen Christ tidying up the place before exiting the tomb.

And this detail brings me to a poem by my favorite poet, our own Philip Kuepper, whose words never cease to astound and deepen me. Philip,

with his poetic wit and whimsy, attempts what the Gospel writers won't do. This is his recent poem "Jesus in Limbo." (Please find the poem to the right.)

In his poetic words, Philip picks up on imagery Jesus himself uses: the seed that must be planted in the ground in order to grow, "purpling up out of the earth." The boredom, too, for why else would Jesus fold up his burial shroud, unless he was more fastidious than I give him credit for. And finally, those last words of the poem that have been singing in my heart these past few weeks: "Jesus, both miner and the vein of gold, who brought from the earth lode, a wealth for the world."

Jesus, both miner and the vein of gold. This image paints the truth of God's relationship with us and our relationship with God. For the love of God is that which animates us, the spark that gives our souls eternal life in the power of the Resurrection. Before we claim any other identity, we own a fundamental identity as God's Beloved.

All of us. Every one. Full stop.

We hold this belovedness deep within, so deep we might never realize it's there. This is the vein of gold that Jesus mines for in each of us and teaches us to excavate in each other. Philip's poem invites us to become prospectors, sifting our experience to find the gold of God's presence. And unlike Old West prospectors panning in cold mountain rivers, we will find this gold when we look for it. Because God's presence is always looking for us. Indeed, this presence finds Mary Magdalene in her sorrow outside the tomb when the Risen Christ calls her by name and gives her a mission. And this presence finds us in our sorrow, in our joy, in our exhaustion, in our enthusiasm. The Risen Christ beckons us to rise too, open the mines of our hearts, and let the love of God shine like that vein of gold.

Today we celebrate the day of Resurrection, and we remember that this holiday is not just a day, but an invitation into the very reality of God. In this reality, worthiness is a function of belovedness. In this reality, all people and all members of Creation have an essential spiritual value that goes beyond the economic. In this reality, the eternal love of God never ceases to bring Creation back into right relationship with God.

The Risen Christ invites us into this reality, the Risen Christ who is both miner and vein of gold. And so I sing with a joyful heart: "Alleluia! Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

Jesus in Limbo

*Of course, he was bored,
Lying there in the dark
in the damp crypt.*

*I, too, would think how
to get out of there.*

*Look at the crocus
purpling up out of the earth,
the instant the fingers of spring touch it;
and the glad laughter of daffodils.
Tulips kiss, with relish, the air.*

*It only stood to reason
Jesus would rise
in the darkness, and look
for the way out,
look for the chink in the rock
where starlight quivered faintly,
like the wings of a white
moth drawn to the imprisoned
light emanating; Jesus,*

*both miner and the vein of gold,
who brought from the earth lode,
a wealth for the world.*

~Philip Kuepper

LORD, IT IS NIGHT...

By the Rev. Stacey Kohl

As I sit to write this article, night has fallen, and I find the line of one of my favorite prayers has stuck in my head.

“The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.”

These beautiful lines are from the New Zealand Prayer Book’s Night Prayer and the full prayer is one my family and I pray on Friday nights as part of our practice of entering into the next day’s Sabbath observance. As a family, we have chosen to set aside Saturday as a time of rest and replenishment—a time when we choose to do, as much as humanly possible, only things that are life-giving. Night Prayer invites us to begin to step into our Sabbath observance even before the new day arrives, confident that God has new joys and new possibilities awaiting us.

That this particular prayer has risen to the surface of my consciousness on this particular night (which is not, I must note, Friday) is perhaps not surprising. As we all know, Adam is preparing to leave for his sabbatical on Easter Monday, and I will be stepping into a new space within the life of our parish—that of “solo priest” while he is away.

I would be lying if I didn’t admit to some nervousness as this new step in my journey approaches. I have been well-prepared for this day, and already feel the immense support of the Wardens, the Vestry, and the entire parish as I live into this new experience. And yet, this is a big step for me as I live more deeply into who God is calling me to be. These next few months, while not exactly a trial-by-fire, will be a time of great learning and stretching.

And so I find myself returning to Night Prayer—to God’s reminder to me that God is already preparing the way even as I close my eyes to sleep. The way forward into my “new day,” into all of our “new days” begins not with our own striving, but with our settling—resting deeply in God’s love. Our “new days” begin not with the bright morning light and its siren call to “GET UP AND TO WORK” but with the quiet darkness of night. When we step into our day at night, as we close our eyes in sleep, we are reminded that we are loved not for what we do, but for who we are.

As night falls, and we each look expectantly to the exciting “new days” to come; to the “new joys” we’ll experience and the “new possibilities” we’ll explore, I invite you to take a moment and join me in resting deeply into God’s love and pray the words of the New Zealand Prayer Book’s Night Prayer.



*Lord,
it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.
The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
rest in you.
The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.*

FOLLOW PASTOR ADAM'S SABBATICAL

Every Monday on WheretheWind.com



Week 1

Building the *Millennium Falcon*, a 7,541 piece LEGO set, which will take all week to complete.

Week 2

Trip to Alabama with New London clergy to visit Civil Rights sites, including the new National Memorial for Peace and Justice (shown below).

Week 3

Reading, resting, & writing time.

Week 4

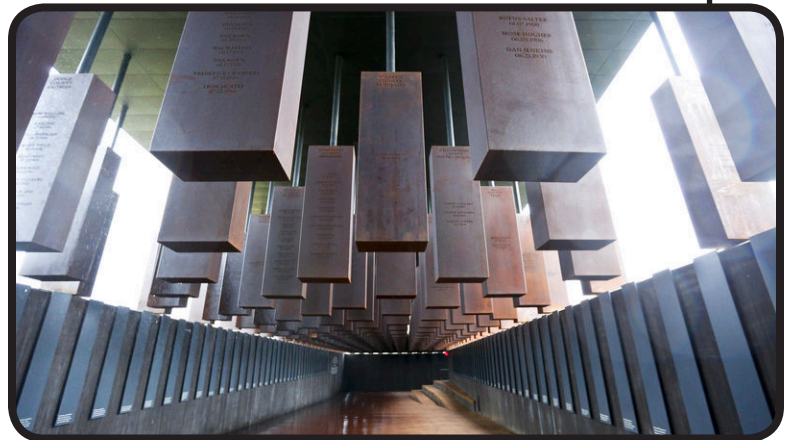
Visit parents in North Carolina; quiet time to write.

Weeks 5-7

Reading, resting, & writing time.

Weeks 8-9

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with group from the Episcopal Church in CT, including both bishops.



Weeks 10-12

Reading, resting, & writing time, with possible retreat TBD.

The sabbatical ends mid-July and is followed by my normal vacation time, with our annual family trip to North Carolina. I will be back at St. Mark's on the first Sunday of August. In the meantime, all is in the good and capable hands of the Rev. Stacey Kohl and wardens Ken Knott and Kurt Cramer. I will be praying for you all while I am gone. Please pray for me, as well.



THE STORY BEHIND THE HYMN “ALLELUIA, SONG OF GLADNESS”

by *David Tubbs, Director of Music*

The word “Alleluia” (or Hallelujah) is the Hebrew expression for “Praise ye the Lord.” It was used in the Temple and synagogues in conjunction with the Psalms, notably at the beginning or end of Psalms 103-4, 113, 115-7, 134-5, 146-8, and 150. “Alleluia” was one of the few words adopted by the early Christian Church, but being used more independently away from the Psalms.

In the language of the church, “Alleluia,” has always been the highest example of a song of praise to God. But in the liturgy of the Medieval church, the use of this exclamation of joy was forbidden during the solemn season of Lent. According to tradition, Septuagesima Sunday (the third Sunday before the start of Lent and the ninth Sunday before Easter) was the day that Lenten preparations began. Many early Christians began their Lenten fasts on the day after Septuagesima Sunday. They had to start two weeks sooner than we do today in order to observe 40 days of fasting before Easter. This was because they considered Saturdays and Thursdays to be fast-free days, whereas today, only Sundays are never a day of fasting,

So, in the traditional Latin Mass, “Alleluia” (along with the Gloria) was not sung starting on Septuagesima Sunday. It was not heard

again until it was used as a glorious proclamation of Easter joy during the Easter Vigil when Christ’s resurrection from the dead was celebrated. This custom has been followed by many churches, (including ours), to this day. Churches in different locales developed their own ceremonies to bid farewell to “Alleluia.” Most were appropriate additions to the liturgy, but there were some interesting ceremonies. One such ceremony was held in Toul, France, where a full requiem Mass was held in order to bury “Alleluia” in a coffin. This practice continued up through the end of the 15th century. The clergy did not take part.

On Saturday before Septuagesima Sunday all choir boys gather in the sacristy during the prayer of the None, to prepare for the burial of the Alleluia.

54 (For the last Sunday after Epiphany)
87. 87. 87
DULCE CARMEN
With joyful dignity
An Essay on the Church Plain Chant, 1782

1 Al - le - lu - ia, song of glad-ness, Voice of joy that can - not die;
2 Al - le - lu - ia thou re - sound-est, True Je - ru - sa - lem and free;
3 Al - le - lu - ia we de - serve not Here to chant for ev - er - more;
4 There-fore in our hymns we pray thee, Grant us, bless - ed Tri - ni - ty,

Al - le - lu - ia is the an - them Ev - er dear to choirs on high;
Al - le - lu - ia, joy - ful moth - er, All thy chil - dren sing with thee;
Al - le - lu - ia our trans-gres-sions Make us for a while give o'er;
At the last to keep thine Eas - ter In our home be - yond the sky;

In the house of God a - bid - ing Thus they sing e - ter - nal - ly.
But by Bab - y - lon's sad wa - ters Mourn - ing ex - iles now are we.
For the ho - ly time is com - ing Bid - ding us our sins de - plore.
There to thee for ev - er sing - ing Al - le - lu - ia joy - ful - ly. A - men.

Latin, 11th cent.; Tr. JOHN MASON NEALE, 1851, alt.

After the last *Benedicamus* [i.e., at the end of the service] they march in procession, with crosses, tapers, holy water and censers; and they carry a coffin, as in a funeral. Thus they proceed through the aisle, moaning and mourning, until they reach the cloister. There they bury the coffin; they sprinkle it with holy water and cense it; whereupon they return to the sacristy by the same way.

Also, in Paris, a straw figure inscribed with the word “Alleluia” was carried out at the end of the service by the choir and burned in the church yard.

The original Latin version of this hymn “Alleluia, Song of Gladness,” was used in many of these rites throughout the Middle Ages. The main purpose of the hymn, therefore, was to sing farewell to “Alleluia.”

These types of ceremonies disappeared along with this hymn until it was translated by John Chandler from a 10th century unknown author and included in his collection of “Hymns of the Primitive Church” (London, 1837), and again by John Mason Neale, 1818 - 1866, for his “Medieval Hymns and Sequences” (London, 1851). J. M. Neale, D. D., was a prolific writer both of prose and poetry, but his best success was in his translations. He was an excellent classical scholar, but also an expert in Medieval Latin. He also had an ear for melody and musical rhythm which kept his translations true to the original. His translations were accepted by the English Church, being true to its doctrines and discipline, but scorned by the Roman Catholic Church which accused him of softening and ignoring their doctrines.

“Alleluia, Song of Gladness” was set to the popular tune *DULCE CARMEN* and is found in the Episcopal Hymnal 1940, no. 54. This tune was set into print with no composer’s name included by Samuel Webbe in the Elder’s “An Essay on the Church Plain Chant (London, 1782) and was associated with the text of “*Tantum Ergo Sacramentum.*” It was harmonized by William Henry Monk in Hymns Ancient and Modern 1861. The Episcopal Hymnal 1982 has the same text set to “*Urbs beata Jerusalem*” plainsong, no 122, and also to a metrical version of “*Tibi Christe, splendor Patris*” plain-song, no. 123.

BLESSING TENT

By Bev Olsen

Last year during a 5k to raise money to fight opioid addiction, the South Central Region of the ECCT hosted a tent for saying prayers. A tent, like those we raise during the Mystic Art Show, was raised; beneath the tent folks prayed with and for one another, laying hands on those who sought such prayers. The SE Region Leadership Team liked this idea, and started thinking about how it might work in our region. We have since purchased a tent, and we will be raising the tent for the first time on April 28th at the 12th Annual Walk to End Homelessness on April 28th.

As we launch this new ministry, we invite you to join us on April 28th, to pray with us or to allow us to pray with you. We invite you to suggest times and places and events at which to set up this tent. Contact Bev Olsen (bwolsen73@comcast.net) for more information.



SPRING DATES OF NOTE

CHOCOLATE SUNDAY!

Sunday, April 28th after both services

*Bring a chocolate dessert to share
to celebrate the sweetness of the Resurrection!*

BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF LETTERS

Sunday, May 5th

YOUTH SUNDAY

Sunday, June 2nd

PARISH PICNIC

Sunday, June 9th

Last Sunday of Godly Play and Education Programs

FIRST SUNDAY OF LEMONADE ON THE LAWN

Sunday, June 16th

Summer Choir Begins

Nursery Continues Through Summer

Also Summer Stretch Children's Program



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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