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Easter for a Season of Lament and Hope for Creation

Rev. Allyson Sawtell, February, 2024

Notes to Pastors

It is my assumption that each church has its own particular way of engaging with the drama of Easter – the way your worship space is set up, how the Easter Proclamation is made (in a Call to Worship, or something more dramatic), how youth and children are involved, and so on. So, I'm simply offering you prayers and readings and a Benediction to supplement or even help frame what you are planning.

The Psalm below is a suggestion for an opening, but it can also be used elsewhere. It will have special meaning if you have used the previous two "Creation's Psalm" readings during Lent and Holy Week.

May these resources be helpful for you and your congregation.

Have a truly joyous Easter!

Worship Resources

Creation's Psalm: Jubilation *(a take on Ps. 51:6, 10-12)*

From the eyes of Creation,
From the heart of Creation,
From the very bones of Creation,
Comes weeping with sheer joy. Bone-deep, soul-deep joy.
Come cries of jubilation, hilarity, and surprise. Or perhaps whispers of awe and wonder.

Listen!

Listen and bear witness to Creation's embodied celebration!

Life-giving hope has been with us and always will be:

- In acts of compassion
- In the resilience and power of community within the web of life
- In those who do not give up
- In those who do give up for a time, but then stand up and try again
- In those who stand up and push back

Bone-deep, soul-deep joy is ours, even now in these times. Even as Good Friday threatens to conquer our vision of an Easter world of life and flourishing.

We bear witness to Creation's embodied celebration, for we are Creation, strong of body and spirit, full of life-giving energy, love, and community.

We are broken vessels made new, cracks and all.

We dance with the resurrected Christ

Blurb for the bulletin at the start of the service

[This can be printed in the bulletin as is, or, you could turn it into a reading that one or two people can read towards the start of the service]

All through Lent, we've held onto a story. It's a different story than Status Quo, or what the world would have us believe. It's a story of how life *can* be.

Through accountability, hard work, love, and community, we are creating a new story for our beloved Creation.

Yes, it is a story still unfinished, and likely will remain so in our lifetimes.

But we hold a story.

We hold a story of embodied Love: of justice, of accountability, connectedness, of possibility. And we hold that story in community, connected to each other and all Creation.

So today, Easter Sunday, let's celebrate this story of hope, and its promise and possibilities.

Rejoice!

Alternative Version of the blurb for the bulletin: A Responsive Reading

One: All through Lent, we've held onto a story. It's a different story than Status Quo, or what the world would have us believe. It's a story of how life *can* be. Through accountability, hard work, love, and community, we are creating a new story for our beloved Creation.

Many: We hold a story, for the sake of Creation.

One: It is a story still unfinished and likely will remain so in our lifetimes.

Many: But we hold a story! For the sake of Creation.

One: We hold a story of embodied Love: of justice, of accountability, connectedness, of possibility.

Many: And we hold that story in community, connected to each other and all Creation.

One: So today, Easter Sunday, let's celebrate this story of hope, and its promise and possibilities.

Many: Rejoice!

Prayer of Gratitude for Those Who Bring Us Hope

One: Let us pray together:

Many: On this day of life and goodness, O God, we offer prayers of celebration and gratitude for all those who bring us hope and who invite us to join in on the dance of Resurrection:

One: For the ones who work to take apart and transform destructive and greed-fueled systems into ones of liberation and life,

Many: Thanks be to you, God of our hope!

One: For the ones who write and sing and paint and dance, who bring beauty and wonder,

Many: Thanks be to you, God of our hope!

One: For the children and youth who march and speak out, who challenge us, and who take the powers and principalities to court,

Many: Thanks be to you, God of our hope!

One: For the ones who live every day in any way they can to call unjust systems to accountability; and the ones who, in any way they can, try to heal and create spaces for life to flourish,

Many: Thanks be to you, God of our hope!

One: And for the One who through his embodied love leads us in defeating death and hopelessness, whose Spirit never leaves us, and who is now, and always will be, joining with us in the celebration,

Many: Thanks be to you, God of our hope!

All: Amen!

Prayer of Celebration

One: It's Easter, and we're at the empty tomb with all the others.

Many: Let's celebrate!

One: In wonder and awe and curiosity tinged with grief (or maybe the other way around), we're at the tomb together.

Many: Let's celebrate!

One: In fear and trembling tinged with courage (or maybe the other way around), we're at the tomb together.

Many: Let's celebrate!

One: Through time and space, we share with others in this place of possibility and new life.

Many: Let's celebrate!

One: In this sacred space of this community, in the sacred space of God's web of life, let us celebrate the power of embodied love. Rejoice!

All: Amen!

Benediction:

Life overcomes death!

Love is stronger than hate and apathy!

The final word is not evil, but goodness.

The final word is not death, but life.

This is true! What cause for celebration!

Easter is real, O beloved Creation!

Go out in peace and be led forth with joy!



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