

Community: Beyond Resurrection

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Easter morning. Before dawn. Twenty of us gathered on the porch of our big red barn @ Brookpark Farm, facing East.

The rain was starting. Just a mist at first. The birds were singing. And we stood there in the dawn's-light, waiting for the sun we couldn't see yet knew was appearing behind the clouds, joining our voices in song and listening to Mary's story one more time.

The tomb. The stone rolled away. The angels. The risen Jesus calling her name.

"Mary."

And then we went on to prepare for our morning, by the time we gathered for breakfast another 150 people had showed up.

People kept coming. Filling the tables. Finding seats and it spilled over into our morning worship. The back row filled up first—it always does—but there were visitors happy to sit on the front row too. We added chairs. We filled every seat. Some gathered in the classrooms with children. Some sat bravely on the porch in the damp cool morning air.

The Choir brought us in beautifully and we joined our voices and sang together, too. And we worshipped. And we celebrated resurrection.

My heart was so full I thought it might break open.

Not because of the numbers—though yes, record numbers of worshipper's who joined us between Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Not because everything went perfectly—but it felt perfect.

My heart was full because of what I saw.

I saw people welcoming each other. First-time visitors greeted like old friends. People returning after being away for the winter—embraced. Strangers finding their way to a seat and someone saying, "Here, sit with us."

I saw the congregation becoming what we always pray for without even realizing it was happening.

A bigger table. A bigger and warmer welcome for all. A safe and open sacred space for the timid, the introvert and the extrovert, for singles and couples and families of every shape, size and make-up.

The whole week felt like that.

Palm Sunday: Jesus entering the city on a young donkey—through the back gate, not the front. Humble. Unexpected.

Maundy Thursday: Jesus in the upper room, washing feet. Sharing a meal with the one who would betray him. Asking us: What would it take for us to love like that?

Good Friday: The Passion read. The walk to the cross. Human, raw, forgiving words. The silence of that death.

And then Sunday came. Rain. Birds. Dawn. Mary at the tomb. Jesus calling her name.

All of us—gathered around tables, around the meal, around each other—and worship, being asked if we could hear our names called too.

But here's the question that stayed with me after the Easter Lillies were gone and the crowds went home:

Can we say "He is risen" on Easter Sunday with conviction, and then actually live it on Tuesday?

Because that's the work, isn't it? It's easy to sing it. It's harder to live it.

The resurrection wasn't just something that happened two thousand years ago. It's an invitation. To love radically. To welcome the stranger. To make room. To reach out a hand and say, "You belong here." To build a bigger table. To serve. To forgive. To choose grace when judgment would be easier.

That's what living resurrection looks like.

In our faith tradition, when we gather at a funeral, we talk about the good works of the person we've lost. We grieve them—yes. But we also ask: Will you pick up what they started? Will you live into their legacy? Acknowledging doing so will bring comfort.

I believe we're called to do exactly that for the one who died for us. To live into His legacy. To pick up his work—not just to proclaim it on Easter, but live it every day. Through love of neighbor. Through service. Through grace for all we meet.

That's how Christ rose indeed. Not in words alone, but in the way we treat each other. The way we look at each other. The way we make room.

So, on this third week of Easter, I invite you, the reader: He is risen. Now—will you live like it too? Will you go and love every neighbor?

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