

From the Pastor's Desk

We too are Resurrected! One of the most profound recollections surrounding my Confirmation concerns Public Examination. ‘When I was young’ all those who were scheduled to participate in the Rite of Confirmation met with the Council and congregation for an evening of questions and answers. The questions could be as simple as, “What is the third commandment?” or as difficult as “Sum up your understanding of grace and forgiveness.” I remember standing in the church kitchen praying with the class, that we would do well, remember what we had learned and be confirmed. AMEN. Those are good memories. Robert Beringer shares a similar experience in his reflections on Easter. There was a group of confirmands being examined by the church elders. The first young man was asked, “Who is the patriarch Abraham?” After a moment’s thought, the boy said, “Wasn’t he the first President of the United States, the one who won the Revolution, and freed all the slaves?” There was a deep groan of frustration among the church officers. Hoping for a better answer, they asked another student, “What happened on Good Friday?” Eagerly, the young student said, “That’s when Jesus died on the Cross .. and they buried him in a tomb, and rolled a stone in front of the door … and on the third day, the stone is rolled away and he comes out … and if he sees his shadow, he goes back in and there are six more weeks of winter!” Okay, so those confirmands needed a little more work! But for many people Easter is little more than an event buried in the long ago and far away. The whole idea of someone coming back to life after three days in the grave raises more questions than most care to admit. But a careful reading of the Easter scriptures reveals that resurrection was not just something that happened to Jesus - resurrection was a personal experience that happened to his followers as well! Christ arose; he came forth out of the tomb, but in a very real sense his followers arose as well from their spiritual and emotional graves! Resurrection for them was not just an event in Jesus’ life they lived through - it was something powerful that happened to them! Look at what happened to people on that first Easter. Mary Magdalene, came trudging to the tomb that first morning, weeping and filled with despair. She was broken hearted over the loss of a friend she dearly loved. We’ve all know what it’s like to walk through the valley of grief. There is no more universal experience than death, and for those who remain it is painful. We know something of how Mary must have felt. But, suddenly, everything changes! Mary came looking for a dead body, but instead she meets the Risen Lord! Suddenly, Mary experiences a resurrection! There is no more sighing or weeping in despair. Instead, she is filled with an amazing joy and rushes to tell the others. “I have seen the Lord!” We rejoice on Easter because we believe the same power of God that raised Mary from grief and despair can raise us up in our times of loss and pain. Or recall those two travelers on the road to Emmaus on Easter evening. They’ve not heard the news of Jesus’ resurrection and, as they walk along, they are the picture of disillusionment, disappointment and defeat. This too, is something we know something about. Again, that’s not the end of the story! While they are gripped with despair, Jesus comes and walks beside them. That night, as he breaks the bread, their eyes are opened and they recognize that the same Lord they know in this life is with them for all time! Suddenly they know there is no grave deep enough and no evil power strong enough to defeat the Living God! So let us rejoice today, tomorrow, throughout this Easter season in not only Christ’s resurrection, but in the wonderful assurance that we too can be resurrected to new life!! May it be true in each of our lives!!

Pastor Karen

