



April 2018

From the Rector

Alleluia. Alleluia. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

We've made it through the long journey of Lent and the disturbing and sobering journey through Holy Week. The purple and scarlet vestments and paraments, the black shrouds with which we covered everything Thursday evening in preparation for Good Friday, they have all been put away, not to be taken out again until NEXT year! We have arrived at Easter. That happy time. That joyous time! Color has returned to our sanctuary and flowers adorn our worship space. And, once again, we can shout, "Alleluia!"—that word that we carefully tucked away through the duration of the Lenten season. It's as if the "happy needle" has tilted back into the green....Or has it? I mean, really, the truth is that whatever problems we had last night when we went to bed, whatever worries troubled us, whatever concerns we bore for ourselves, for our families, our nation, our world, they are still with us this morning.



In that regard, today is no different than yesterday or any other day in Lent, and yet, here we are gathered to join in the audacious claim that what we are celebrating today changes everything, that that which took place 2,000 plus years ago has unparalleled significance not only in our lives but for the entire world. But how is that possible when Jesus' resurrection took place so long ago, and the world's and our problems continue?

Yesterday's devotion from the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, one of the online resources we suggested at the beginning of Lent, gave me pause to think *in a new way* about this resurrection that upended the world some 2,000 years ago and the significance that it has for us today. Brother Curtis Almquist pointed out that when Mary encountered Jesus outside that tomb, Jesus was alive but still very wounded. His body was still wounded by the whipping that preceded his crucifixion. He was still wounded by the sword thrust into his side and the nails pounded into his hands and feet from which he hung on that cross. None of those wounds was healed. And then there were the emotional wounds. Jesus had been betrayed, denied, and abandoned by his *closest* disciples, the ones

who had been with him day and night for three years, and as he went through the worst suffering of his life, they were missing. That *must* have wounded his heart. There were women who stood at a distance watching until the bitter end, and for them, too, that must have been an emotional wounding as they witnessed that brutality. They had been followers of this Jesus, too. And then there were the disciples, hiding in fear. That was also a wounding and a hurt that cut deep because for them *their* wounds were heaped with shame. As Brother Almquist said, "No one was OK on that first Easter. Everyone was wounded."¹ Even those who so callously or so fearfully called for Jesus' death.

In thinking about that, it seems that this is the reality of Easter this side of eternity. We celebrate the resurrection while, at the same time, we acknowledge that "everything is not all right in our world." Never in my lifetime has that truth been so "in our face" as this year when Lent began with the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School just as our mid-day Ash Wednesday service was beginning. With that tragedy at the start of Lent, there was no way to avoid the painful admission that we all bear

wounds in this life of one sort or another, collectively and individually. As retired Episcopal Bishop Barbara Harris put it, “We are a resurrection people living in a Good Friday world.”

But Easter tells us that even with these wounds, Easter comes. On that first Easter morning, in her grief, Mary Magdalene found herself heading to that tomb. Death could not keep her away. When the bottom had dropped out of her world, when the bottom has dropped out of *our* world, we find ourselves on our knees crying out to God—just as Jesus did in that Garden of Gethsemane, just as Mary did at the tomb, just as my community did in Littleton, Colorado, the evening of the Columbine High School shooting. People were drawn instinctively to their churches. There was a need to be in sacred space, a need to be near a source of hope greater than ourselves, greater than our wounded and broken world. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb—bereaved, wounded. She needed to be near Jesus. But what she found caused her even more pain. The stone had been removed from the tomb. Someone had stolen Jesus’ body. She ran to tell the disciples. Finally, she returned, weeping, and ventured inside that tomb. Amazingly, two angels in white were seated there, but even their presence and their engagement with her could not break through her grief. Then a gardener appeared. He, too, wanted to know why she was weeping. Was that not obvious? Jesus’ body was gone. Not only was her hope for the future, her lifeline, her touchstone dead, but now she couldn’t even be in the presence of his body. And then Jesus called her by name, “Mary!” and immediately she knew. God had called her by name, and her world changed forever—even with the wounds.

Everything changed with the utterance of her name. Now, no matter how much she had been wounded in the past, no matter how much she would have to endure going forward, she knew she could face it because now she knew—**new life comes even in our woundedness.**

We have seen this over the course of this Lenten season—a Lent that began so tragically and with so many wounds needlessly inflicted. Yet, through these weeks, we have seen hope arise through young people across this nation who

believe that new life is possible, even from their wounds. I was moved by the passion and eloquent speeches of many of these young people during the nationwide March for Our Lives, which in itself was a phenomenal occurrence, occurring as it did not only in Washington, D.C. but in cities and towns all over this country, including in Hawai‘i, and even in other countries where Americans live. One young woman, in particular, caught my ear. She walked up to the microphone and announced that she was Edna Lisbet Chavez.² She spoke with a passion born from the pain of losing a brother, innocently, to gun violence. A high school student from South Los Angeles, she said that over decades, her community has become accustomed to lives lost through gun violence. It is normal, she said, to see candles. It is normal to see posters. It is normal to see balloons. It is normal to see flowers honoring the lives of black and brown youth who have lost their lives to a bullet....Enough is enough, she said. “How many more children have to die so that this problem is finally acknowledged?” she asked. “Arming teachers will not work,” she said. “More security in our schools does not work. Zero tolerance policies do not work. They make us feel like criminals.”—My adult ears pricked up. This was something we adults need to hear.—“We should feel empowered and supported in our schools,” she said. Instead of funding policies that make young people feel like criminals, her challenge was to fund mentorship programs, mental health resources, paid internship and job opportunities. She steered that conversation right where it needed to be—not on violence, not on fear, not on an eye for an eye, but on encouragement, on resources, on opportunities for the children of our society. How truer could words be in reflecting the way of Jesus?—caring for and investing in our youth—all of our youth and, especially, the lost, the lonely, the marginalized. Then she ended where she began, remember my name, she said. I am Edna Lisbet Chavez, and, in doing that, she claimed the future and the power to live into hope.

In our baptisms, our names are spoken and the words said, just as we will say today for Mischa, “Mischa, Child of God, you are sealed by the

Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever." In baptism, your name was spoken and the promise given that you now live in the resurrected life of Jesus—here and now, even in your woundedness. No matter what you have faced in your past, no matter what you will face in your future, God *knows* your name and in the power of the risen Christ your life is infused with hope.

This evening a special live version of the musical Jesus Christ Superstar is being shown on television. I'm not usually "up" on what's happening on television but thanks to an email from Father Chun yesterday in which he mentioned this musical, I read up on this special event. It's apparently quite a big deal because a cast of top rated vocalists are involved—John Legend as Jesus, Sara Bareilles as Mary Magdelene, Brandon Victor Dixon, the star of Hamilton, as Judas, Alice Cooper as King Herod. That last one took me by surprise. Alice Cooper was popular when I was a kid, and he was very weird. His make-up, costumes, performances were all meant to shock, and his music was a mix of hard rock and heavy metal. I remember him, though—hard not to forget a guy jumping around the stage in a skin-tight suit with skeleton bones and a face painted white to look like a dead man—but I remember, because when I was in middle school his song, "School's Out," became something of a clarion call for the start of summer vacations. He was King Herod? I had to check this out. To my surprise, I learned that his selection as King Herod actually wasn't so out of left field as he sang that part in the London stage version of Jesus Christ Superstar in the 1990s, but, to my even greater surprise, I discovered that he is a Christian and a practicing Christian at that.

In the early years of his music career, Alice Cooper not only played hard rock and heavy metal music, but he also was hard and heavy with drugs and alcohol. By the early 1980s, he was flirting with death not only on stage but with his life. With the prospect of losing everything, including his life, he became sober and reconnected with his faith. He has been active at his church every since. He explains, "My dad

was a pastor. My grandfather was an evangelist. And my wife's father is a Baptist pastor. I was basically the prodigal child — I grew up in the church, went as far away as you could possibly go, and then came back. When I got sober, I started understanding — I had all the fame and the money and everything that went with it, but I started realizing what was important to me was my relationship with Jesus Christ, who I just absolutely torture (as King Herod in the Superstar show). I study the Bible every morning. When I'm at home I have a Wednesday morning men's Bible study. I pray before every show. I go to church every Sunday with my wife and kids. I don't think I've ever been more happy in my life. People say, 'Think of all you gave up to be a Christian.' What did I give up? Dying of alcoholism? I'm not giving anything up. I'm giving it back, to him."³ That confession and commitment to Christian faith was not something I expected. In his woundedness, Alice Cooper experienced resurrection.

This Easter story is the promise that God is present, that God is at work bringing new life, even in our woundedness, even where and when we least expect it. Like Mary, though, sometimes even when there are angels, we don't see them or we can't hear them. Sometimes our wounds are just too deep, our grief too heavy. Sometimes the turmoil and craziness around us cause us to become jaded and we lose hope. But, then there's Jesus calling our name. Bishop Curry experienced that, as did other church leaders around the country. That's why you find the statement, "Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis" in your bulletins and the bulletins of all Episcopal churches in the diocese at the request of Bishop Bob. This statement calls us to rise up and be the church, to follow the ways of Jesus at a time when there are deep wounds in our society, wounds that are infected by fear, hatred, and greed. But God knows about wounds. Jesus bore wounds that were the marks of violence—violence directed at him, but that violence, those wounds, that death could not defeat him. God's Word of LIFE prevailed—life marked by love over hatred,

justice over injustice, peace over conflict, unity over division. When endings come, when death happens, God is able to bring something new to life, and joy, joy is able to co-exist even amidst the wounds.

It is true that the problems we had last night when we went to bed, the worries that trouble us, the concerns we hold for ourselves, for our families, our nation, our world, they are still with us this morning, but we are reminded once again with powerful acclamation that even with our wounds, new life will come, even with his wounds, Jesus is alive, and wounds do heal. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Alleluia. AMEN.

- 1) <https://www.ssje.org/2016/03/27/experience-the-resurrection-br-curtis-almquist/>
- 2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_cMdDc3cuk
- 3) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/arts/john-legend-and-the-jesus-christ-superstar-cast-on-faith-and-musicals.html>

A New Ministry is Being Explored!

Thanks to a large bequest designated for outreach and/or counseling given to St. Peter's by the Kay Wery estate, the vestry is in conversation with Hawai'i Literacy to offer English Language Learner (ELL) classes specifically tailored to the Micronesian population. After a period of study on the part of Hawai'i Literacy, the need was identified within the neighborhood of the church. Classes would be held in the mornings, two or three times a week, in the Aloha Room.

Hawaii Literacy ELL Classes focus on grammar, phonetics, listening, speaking, pronunciation, and reading comprehension. Material is presented in a way that is applicable to real life situations and makes strong use of every day vocabulary and communication skills needed for workplace readiness, parenting, and competency. Specific topics are added to address student needs.

The classes will be taught by a certified ELL teacher along with a Micronesian translator. Opportunities will be offered for volunteers from the congregation to become involved. Watch for more information to come as this new ministry opportunity unfolds.

Lenten Mite Boxes

Mahalo to everyone who brought their mite box/bowls to church on Easter Sunday. Soon the counting of pounds and pounds of coins will be complete and the funds collected will go to Episcopal Relief and Development and Episcopal Migration Ministries. A report of your generosity will appear in the next newsletter.



Forgot to bring your box on Easter? Bring it any Sunday and put it in the offering plate. Please secure the lid with tape or a rubber band and write your name on the label.

Music, Music, Music! The organ pipes are in Canada being releathered and will be back in their rightful place by the end of April. And, yes, the fully restored pipe organ will finally be complete!



To celebrate this grand event, a concert has been planned featuring Dr. Joseph Eppink on the organ and directing the St. Peter's Chancel Choir and Ukulele Ensemble as well as guest choirs, Papa Himeni

Hospice Music Group and the Tokaikolo Choir. Please join us for **The Windows of St. Peter's through Music!** on May 20 at 4:30pm.

A free will offering will be taken for our youth, Jenna Matsumoto and Sela Kimura, who, along with Pastor Diane, will attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston, TX this summer. Food prepared by the youth and their families will follow in the Parish Hall. Don't miss this exciting event!

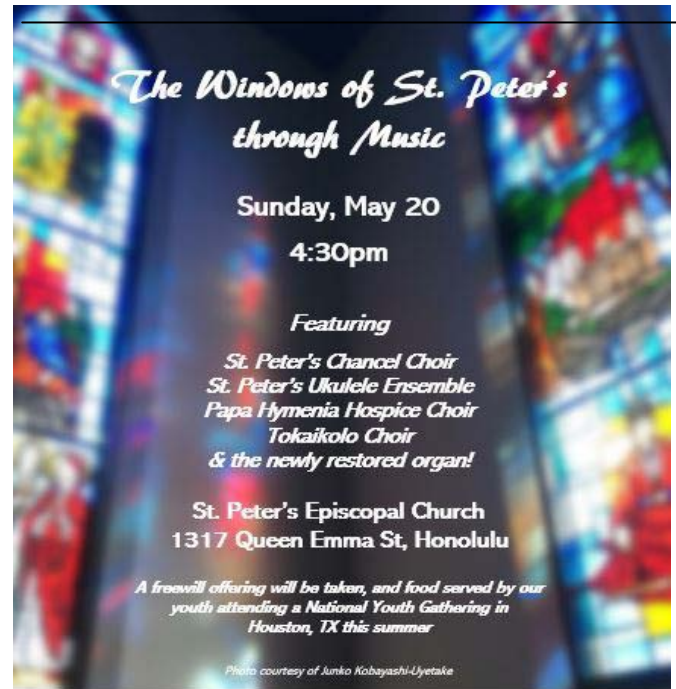
"WE ARE THE
Episcopal BRANCH
OF THE Jesus movement"
—Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Interested in being confirmed in the Episcopal Church?

Each year the Bishop celebrates regional confirmation services in the diocese. This year our region's confirmation service will take place on Sunday, April 22nd, at 4pm.

Confirmation is a service that draws you deeper into your identity as a Child of God who practices your faith through the Episcopal Church. The ritual includes the Bishop's prayer of blessing upon each confirmand.

Instruction and exploration of our Christian faith and the Episcopal Church will take place prior. All adults are encouraged to consider this if you have not been confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Please notify Estelle in the church office or Pastor Diane if you wish to prepare for this year's service. In this diocese, youth are eligible to be confirmed if they are 14 years of age or older.



At the request of Bishop Fitzpatrick, the summary version of **“Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis”** is included in this newsletter. The full text of the message is at http://reclaimingjesus.org/sites/default/files/downloads/reclaiming_jesus.pdf. Copies are also available on the greeters' table at the rear of the sanctuary. This ‘Confession’ is signed by the Presiding Bishop and leading church leaders and theologians from across the United States and denominations. It is being shared at the request of Bishop Bob, who fully affirms it and encourages its careful study.

Reclaiming Jesus

A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis

We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake.

It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography. Our identity in Christ precedes every other identity. When politics undermines our theology, we must examine that politics. The church’s role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government’s role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace.

When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.”

It is often the duty of Christian leaders, especially elders, to speak the truth in love to our churches and to name and warn against temptations, racial and cultural captivities, false doctrines, and political idolatries—and even our complicity in them. We do so here with humility, prayer, and a deep dependency on the grace and Holy Spirit of God.

Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar was not—nor any other political ruler since. We pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Our faith is personal but never private, meant not only for heaven but for this earth.

Applying what “Jesus is Lord” means today is the message we commend as elders to our churches. We pray that we, as followers of Jesus, will find the depth of faith to match the danger of our political crisis.

The present crisis calls us to go deeper—deeper into our relationship to God; into our relationships with each other, especially across racial, ethnic, and national lines; and into our relationships with the most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk. We need to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory. He is the light in our darkness. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Signed: Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, Rev. Dr. PeterBorgdorff, Dr. Amos Brown, Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Dr. Tony Campolo, Dr. Iva Carruthers, Bishop Michael Curry, Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Dr. Cynthia Hale, Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter, Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, Bishop Vashiti McKenzie, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Dr. John Perkins, Bishop Lawrence Reddick, Fr. Richard Rohr, Dr. Ron Sider, Rev. Jim Wallis, Rev. Dr. SharonWatkins, Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Bishop Will Willimon
Full statement and resources

I. WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God’s image and likeness. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God in some of the children of God. **THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We reject white supremacy and commit ourselves to help dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate white preference and advantage. Any doctrines or political strategies that use racist resentments, fears, or language must be named as public sin.

II. WE BELIEVE we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class. **THEREFORE, WE REJECT** misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women being further revealed in our culture and politics, including in our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God.

III. WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself. **THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees; we won’t accept the neglect of the well-being of low-income families and children.

IV. WE BELIEVE that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Jesus promises, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). **THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life. The normalization of lying presents a profound moral danger to the fabric of society.

V. WE BELIEVE that Christ’s way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger threatening democracy and the common good—and we will resist it. **VI. WE BELIEVE** Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples. Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. We in turn should love and serve the world and all its inhabitants rather than to seek first narrow nationalistic prerogatives. **THEREFORE, WE REJECT** “America first” as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal.



Alleluia!

