Easter 2021

“*This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,*

*Time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that’s gone.*

*For by the life and death of Jesus, God’s mighty Spirit, now as then,*

*Can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again.*

*Then let us, with the Spirit’s daring, step from the past and leave behind*

*Our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.*

*Christ is alive and goes before us to show and share what love can do.*

*This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new.”*

*This is a Day of New Beginnings*, by Brian Wren & Carlton R. Young, UMH 383

This Lent we are struggling. Our hearts are heavy, our burdens are deep. As we look at the suffering and pain that Jesus endured, we are also reminded of the hope that future brought.

 Easter **IS** Coming! The day of resurrection is only days away. The day of new beginnings is just around the corner. Jesus’ words don’t end suffering at the cross. Jesus’ words continue after the grave. Jesus speaks words of compassion to those in grief, heartache, despair and fear. A new day dawns with new beginnings. As we await this victory over death, I share this prayer that we might be ready for what God has in store for us all….

 *God of new beginnings, we open our hearts to you in this new day.*

*In all that is new and different we look for your creating hand, and wonder*

*at your Creation still unfolding. In all that is not as we are accustomed to,*

*we confess our desire to control, acknowledge our powerlessness, and turn*

*to you as our only Lord and Creator. Bless our grief, and turn our hearts to*

*your loving care. In all that is unfamiliar remind us to pay attention; to see*

*what is, not merely what we remember; to see as if for the first time.*

*In our uncertainty, return us to the certainty of who we are, and to your sure*

*and unfailing presence with us. In all that is unknown, unwrap us from*

*the grave cloths of our expectations; help us to be lovingly present to what is,*

*free from having to know, free from needing to be comfortable, poised to*

*behold and to love without fear. God of Creation, in this new day we let go*

*of all that we cling to, and return to your Holy Presence in this moment.*

*Help us to die and rise with Christ, to become new people, born not of our*

*own will or knowledge, but born anew of your Spirit. This is the day the Lord is creating.*

*Let us rejoice and be glad. Amen*

By: Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Unfolding Light

Easter Is coming indeed! And it begins with Jesus’ procession into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and moves through the pain of betrayal, servanthood, prayer, a final meal, and yet another procession to the cross. I pray that we will commune together [insert in person or virtual] with Jesus and one another throughout the coming days of this holiest of weeks so we might fully experience the new beginnings that comes with Easter.

I would like you to consider two things this Easter…

1. Invite someone to our Easter Service. Maybe there is someone who needs to hear the

words of Jesus this Easter. Words of compassion, care, and invitation.

2. [amend according to whether in person or virtual]Help us provide a radical welcome.

Greet one another with warm and welcoming smiles, whether in person through a mask or over FB Live. Save the best parking spots for the newcomers and be on the lookout for someone who needs to hear “we are glad you are here today.” You are part of the beauty, goodness and hope that God is doing in the world, let our new faces see that in you.

This year our Easter Offerings will be used to assist others in our community experiencing despair, heartache and grief. We will be using all gifts marked as “Easter Mission Offerings” or placed in Easter Envelopes (which will be in the pews) for our pastor’s discretionary fund. This fund shares the love of Jesus to those who need a little help with rent or utilities. Your help brings hope to those who are facing the challenges of life.

I pray that your journey of Holy Week may empower your awareness of God’s presence through the ministry, death and resurrection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

*In Christ-Like Love and Service,*

[insert service times and details here]