

## **“The Way of Life”**

**Psalm 118:1-4, 14-24; Matthew 28:1-10**

**April 5, 2026 (Sunrise Service)**

**Rev. Deborah Dail**

**Denbigh United Presbyterian Church**

### Psalm 118:1-4, 14-24

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” Let the house of Aaron say, “His steadfast love endures forever.” Let those who fear the Lord say, “His steadfast love endures forever.”

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

### Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and

worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

### **Easter Sunrise Meditation**

Before his death, Jesus tried to prepare his followers for his death, saying “Don’t be troubled.” To which we might ask: “How could they not be troubled as they heard him speak of his impending death?”

Jesus told his friends that he was going to prepare a place for them and that they would be together again in that place. “And,” Jesus said, “you know the way to the place I’m going.”

The disciple Thomas, ever honest and willing to say things not one else will say, replies: “Actually, Jesus, we don’t know where you’re going. How could we know the way?”

Jesus responded: “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life.**”

Despite Jesus’ comforting and reassuring words, nothing prepared the disciples for what was to come.

The dark day of Good Friday – the day Jesus was executed on the cross of Calvary – cast doubt in the hearts and minds of the Christ followers.

If he’s **The Way to God**, why is he in a stone-sealed tomb unable to lead the way?

If he’s **The Truth**, why didn’t others believe he was the Messiah?

If he’s **The Life**, why is he dead?

Some mysterious answers come on the Third Day – the day we now call Easter. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb in which Jesus had been encased.

They were probably coming to pay their respects, but while they were there, they experienced a great earthquake. They saw an angel whose appearance was like lightning. The guards at the tomb were scared almost to death.” I suspect it was the same for the two Marys.

The angel says “Don’t be afraid.” “Jesus is not here. He has been raised.” Remember, just like he told you it would happen when he was

preparing you for all of this? You came to see the tomb. Come, see it. He is not there. Go and tell the disciples. Jesus, who is “The Way,” is on his way to Galilee.

The women left the tomb with **fear and great joy** and ran to tell the disciples. I find it encouraging that fear and great joy, along with many other emotions, are not mutually exclusive. Our friends who are facing sorrow speak of holding grief in one hand and gratitude in the other. Grief and gratitude are not mutually exclusive, they say.

Jesus makes way to Galilee and later goes to the place he prepared for the disciples and for all who believe. Fear and joy, grief and gratitude, doubt and belief, despair and hope, all these emotions and more are part of the journey, part of the way as we journey to and with Jesus.

For the disciples of Jesus, the Way would lead them to salvation and eternal life. And it is the same for all who believe. He is The Way, He is the Truth, He is the Life.

We get stuck sometimes. We forget Jesus, “The Way.” We get lost sometimes. We don’t listen to Jesus “The Way.” We doubt sometimes. We can’t get past the stone at the tomb or the hardness of our hearts. Sometimes our fears are so strong we cannot even look at the empty tomb, much less believe it’s true that “He is not here, he has been raised, as he said.”

Today, if you have any of those feelings, listen to the Angel. Remember the two Marys. Even with fear mixed with joy, they started to believe. They ran to tell the disciples and along the way, they encountered Jesus. Their response, amid a thousand mixed emotions, was this: “They came to Jesus, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.” They didn’t have all the answers. They were likely still afraid, confused, and overwhelmed. Their tears of grief were mixed with their tears of joy. All they could do was worship him and that was enough. They worshiped the One who was The Way and who would show them the way. They worshiped the One who was the Truth, even though they could not fully understand or explain the Truth. They worshiped the One who was The Life and who would give them Life eternal.

This morning, I think it’s enough just to worship Jesus. Later, let us run and tell others, even if we are filled with both fear and joy, grief and gratitude, despair and hope, doubt and belief.