

John 20:1-2, 11-18

The Resurrection of Jesus

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.'

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

It's always been amazing to me that the first witnesses of the resurrection were women (or in the case of this passage from Gospel of John, one woman). In Jesus' time women were not seen as credible witnesses and their voices were not respected. That's part of the reason why it's even more remarkable that each gospel insists women were the first to proclaim the fresh, hopeful news of Jesus' resurrection. Precisely because their witness was not deemed credible in their own time and place actually makes it far more likely that they were indeed the first witnesses!

It just goes to show that God has and will continue to lift up new, fresh voices for proclaiming God's good news in and for the world. In fact, this year the ELCA and its predecessor bodies are celebrating the 50th anniversary of ordination of women in this church (and 40th anniversary of ordination for women of color and our LGBTQ+ siblings, see more info here: <https://www.elca.org/50yearsofordainedwomen>).

Who are some women in your own life who have faithfully witnessed of the love of God in Christ Jesus for you? What fresh voices of witness might be out there for you to pursue and explore in this time and place? Lord give us ears and hearts to hear you in new ways.

Let us pray,

Gracious and living God, we rejoice and give you thanks for your strength on display throughout time and place, calling all kinds of people to be witnesses to your grace and power. We celebrate how the Spirit has blessed your church through the work of women and girls, including in this time and place. Guide us, as your people, into welcoming your prophets and teachers among us and into hearing Christ's good news through them. With gratitude, we pray. Amen.

- Prayer from the Litany of Thanksgiving from ELCA materials for the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women