

## **Easter Sunday 04/20/25 – 10:15 AM Message** **Panama Methodist Church**

**Sermon Title:** *“The Road to Redemption” Sermon Series: Part 7 of 7 – “The Veil Was Torn!” John 20:1-18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-14*

**(Slides 1-24 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)**

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! On this day nearly two-thousand years ago, death was defeated. Sin was defeated on Good Friday, through Christ’s cross, for all who believe in Him. Without Christ’s resurrection though, we just have a crucified man named Jesus of Nazareth. The resurrection of Jesus Christ that we celebrate on this Easter morning is the bedrock our two-thousand-year Christian faith. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then we have no faith, and we have no hope.

I have been in churches before where I heard on Easter Sunday that there was resurrection and new life, but I want to specifically declare to you all this morning what happened on that first Easter Sunday almost two-thousand years ago. On that first Easter Sunday, Jesus Christ our Lord, physically stood up and walked out of his tomb alive. It was not just a spiritual breakthrough that some had. It was a sense of new life, instead what I am declaring is what the majority of Christians have always believed for two-thousand years. This is that Jesus physically got up and was alive again. Jesus said that he can lay down His life and that three days later He can pick it back up. Today Jesus is alive again, and in His

same body! For the next forty-days Jesus will appear to many, who are eyewitnesses of His resurrection. These people will see Jesus in the flesh resurrected. Some of them will touch him, as this day Jesus Christ our Lord, God in the flesh is alive and well! Christ will ascend into heaven on Pentecost Sunday, but until then, he will appear to hundreds when it is all said and done. Jesus, therefore, is not just risen from the dead this morning, because I say so, and because all four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John say so, as well as other scriptures. Also, because hundreds of people saw the resurrected Christ. Some people heard it from Jesus' original twelve disciples, and their various historical evidence, as well.

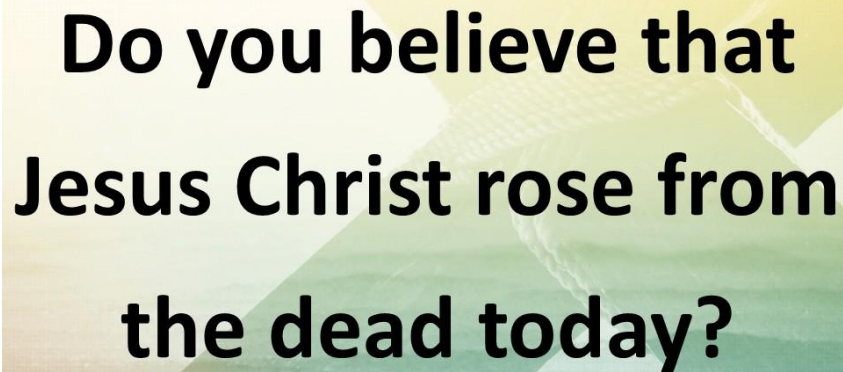
This Easter Sunday, 2025, I am completing my "The Road to Redemption" sermon series this morning, and this morning's message is called, "The Veil Was Torn!"

**Slide 1 – ("Opening Slide: Part 7 of 7, "The Veil Was Torn!")**



With this said, here is a question to think about on this Easter Sunday:

**Slide 2 – (“Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead today?”)**



**Do you believe that  
Jesus Christ rose from  
the dead today?**

I just made a case for the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ on that first Easter Sunday, when the tomb was found empty. Do you believe it though? Why or why not?

I invite you all on this Resurrection Sunday to open your bibles or bible apps to the gospel of John 20:1-18. All four gospels have a narrative of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and I discussed the one from the gospel of Matthew at our 8:00 AM Cantata/Worship Service this morning. In this service let us read together the resurrection of Christ narrative in John 20:1-18. This is what it says:

**Slide 3 – (“John 20:1, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:1, NRSV**

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

**20 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.**

**Slide 4 – (“John 20:2-4, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:2-4, NRSV**

**<sup>2</sup> 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.’ <sup>3</sup> Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. <sup>4</sup> The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.**

**Slide 5 – (“John 20:5-7, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:5-7, NRSV**

<sup>5</sup> He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

**Slide 6 – (“John 20:8-10, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:8-10, NRSV**

<sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples returned to their homes.

**Slide 7 – (“John 20:11-12, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:11-12, NRSV**

**Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

**<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> 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.**

**Slide 8 – (“John 20:13-14, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:13-14, NRSV**

**<sup>13</sup> 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.’ <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.**

**Slide 9 – (“John 20:15-16, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:15-16, NRSV**

**<sup>15</sup> 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.’ <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher).**

**Slide 10 – (“John 20:17-18, NRSV”)**

## **John 20:17-18, NRSV**

**<sup>17</sup> 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.”’ <sup>18</sup> 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.**

Now before we dive deeper into John 20:1-18, I want to explain my sermon title.

The title of my sermon “The Veil Was Torn!” is actually something that happened on Good Friday in the gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is what is meant

by “The Veil Was Torn!” Inside of the Temple in Jerusalem was a holy room, that only the high priest could go into once a year. This holy room was closed off by a heavy curtain or veil. Here is the background on this:

**The veil was a heavy curtain that separated the Holy of Holies (the innermost sanctuary of the Temple) from the Holy Place, where the public could access. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year, carrying blood to atone for sins**

(<https://www.refreshinghope.org/blogs/1/6811/the-torn-veil#:~:text=The%20curtain%20was%20renewed%20each,Amen!>).

On Good Friday though, in the gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke though, when Jesus died on the cross this heavy curtain or veil was torn. This is why this curtain or veil to the Holy of Holies being torn was so significant:

**The tearing of the veil is interpreted as symbolizing the removal of the barrier between God and humanity, signifying that believers can now have direct access to God through Jesus Christ, who is the High Priest**

(<https://www.refreshinghope.org/blogs/1/6811/the-torn-veil#:~:text=The%20curtain%20was%20renewed%20each,Amen!>).

So why is the event from the gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke from Good Friday my sermon title for this morning? It is my sermon title because we all have equal access to God now through Jesus Christ. When Christ dies on the cross and the veil or the heavy curtain was torn, this opened universal access to God for all people. All we need to do is repent of our sin, turn to Christ, and on this Easter Sunday, Jesus’ resurrection cements this reality. Jesus conquering the grave on this day, combined with the torn veil to the holy of holies on Good Friday, shows us

that Jesus is indeed our risen savior, and that we all have the same access to the God through Jesus Christ.

With this said, let us look more closely at our gospel of John 20:1-18 resurrection narrative for this morning. In John 20:1-18 we hear, once again, that it is early on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. The scripture says, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and noticed that the stone that had been put in front of Jesus' tomb had removed. Immediately, Mary Magdalene then ran to Simon Peter or Peter, and the other disciple, John, the one whom Jesus loved, and she said to Peter and John that Jesus' body had been taken from his tomb. Mary Magdalene also told Peter and John they did not know where Jesus' body was laid. This is to say, upon first observation, Mary Magdalene thought that Jesus' body had been stolen and put somewhere else.

At this point Peter and John race to the empty tomb of Jesus. I wonder what they were thinking along the way. Did they think Jesus' body was stolen, or were they just confused? As they were running, our gospel lesson says that the other disciple or John got to the tomb before Peter. John was therefore a faster runner than Peter. Since John arrived at the tomb first, he bent down and looked into the empty tomb of Jesus. In looking in the empty tomb, John, saw the linen wrappings laying on the empty surface where Jesus' body had laid. John wanted to go in though, but when Simon Peter or Peter got to the tomb, Peter entered the tomb.

Simon Peter or Peter saw the empty linen wrappings or shroud that held Jesus' body, but he also saw the cloth that been on Jesus' head. This head or face cloth was not lying with the linen wrappings that held Jesus' body, but it was rolled up in a place by itself. At this point the other disciple, or John, entered the tomb with Peter, and they believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Both Peter and John believed, but they still did not fully understand the scripture at this point, and Jesus physically rising from the dead. Peter and John then returned to their homes.

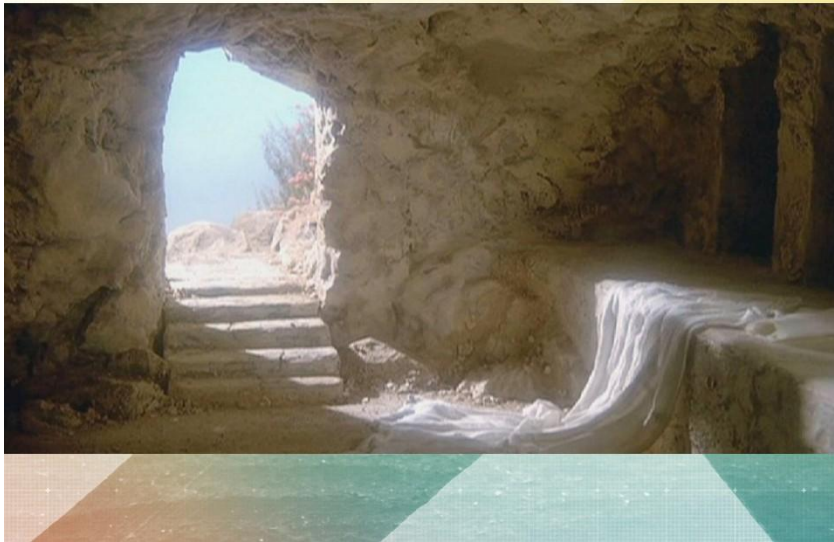
Mary Magdalene, however, stood outside of the tomb weeping or crying, and then she bent over to look into the empty tomb. As she did, she two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus been lying. One of these angels was sitting where Jesus' head had been placed, and the other was sitting where Jesus' feet had been placed. The two angels then asked Mary Magdalene why she was weeping or crying. Mary Magdalene said she was weeping because someone had taken Jesus body, and she does not know where they put it. Suddenly, Mary Magdalene turned around, and Jesus was standing there, yet Mary Magdalene could not tell that it was Jesus. Jesus then asked Mary Magdalene why she was weeping, and who she was looking for. Mary Magdalene thought that this man was the gardener, and told this man who was Jesus, to tell her where Jesus' body is, and she would get Jesus' body.

Just at this very moment, the risen Christ, who Mary Magdalene could not fully see, said “Mary!” She turns with joy and excitement, realizing that it is the risen Christ, and she says “Rabbouni!” which is Hebrew for Rabbi or teacher. Jesus then tells Mary Magdalene to hold onto Him, because he has not yet ascended into heaven. Further, you have to be physically resurrected with a body, to tell someone not to hold on to you, by the way. The risen Christ then tells Mary Magdalene to go to His brother and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Mary Magdalene then went and announced all this to the disciples, In fact, she said, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them everything that Jesus said to her.

Now I mentioned when I preached on the resurrection of Jesus’ from Matthew 28:10 at the 8:00 AM Cantata/Worship Service this morning that we do see discrepancies in all four resurrection narratives, in the four gospels. What they all have though is this, an empty tomb, and a resurrected Christ. Can you imagine the excitement and the pandemonium when everyone saw Jesus resurrected. It is not that four gospel resurrection of narrative of Jesus, got it wrong in some way, but more that a lot happened when Jesus’ tomb was found empty! So, I do not see the four gospel accounts of Jesus’ resurrection as discrepancies, I see a lot happening quickly after Jesus’ tomb was found empty, and the different gospel writers recorded the portions they had, to connect the fullness of that first Easter

Sunday. One way to say it is this, the four resurrection narratives of Jesus in the four gospels are complementary, not contradictory. Here is a picture of what the empty tomb of Jesus Christ could have looked like:

**Slide 11 – (“Empty Tomb - Picture”)**



So, on Good Friday, when Jesus died, in the three of the four gospels we hear that veil or curtain was torn to the holiest place in the temple in Jerusalem. This symbolizes that we all may now enter into God’s most sacred space, and that we all now have equal access to God, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

I also chose the gospel of John’s version of Jesus resurrection for this easter morning because this gospel includes something very unique. This unique addition is in John 20:7 that says that Jesus head or face covering that was on His body in the tomb was rolled up or folded in place by itself and separate from his burial wrappings or shroud. This is a very distinctive thing that John writes in his gospel.

Why would the gospel of John and only the gospel of John mention that Jesus' face or head covering was rolled up or folded up in a place all by itself? Here is one story that has a theory as to why John included this his resurrection narrative of Jesus:

**In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, we need to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the master and servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating. The servant would not dare touch the table until the master was finished. Now if the master was finished eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers and mouth, clean his beard, and wad up the napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, "I'm finished." But if the master got up from the table, folded his napkin and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because the folded napkin meant, "I'm coming back!"** (<https://www.citizen-times.com/story/life/2017/04/21/devotional-why-did-jesus-fold-napkin-tomb/100612470/>).

I believe that John included in his resurrection narrative of Jesus Christ, that Jesus' face or head covering was rolled up or folded up in a place by itself, to tell us all on this Easter Sunday, and in general, that Jesus Christ our Lord is coming back.

For the season of Lent that we just concluded, some of us did a lent study of a book called, "The Case for Easter," by Lee Strobel. In part, this book defends and backs up the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ on this Easter Sunday. By the way, the reason that most churches have their main day of worship on Sunday is

because every Sunday is a mini resurrection. We gather to worship every Sunday because Sunday is the day of Jesus' resurrection. In this study, it was discussed that the earliest known written account of Jesus' resurrection in the bible, came not from the four gospel writers on paper, but the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-14. This written about 20-25 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. I would invite you to turn to 1 Corinthians 15:1-14 in your bibles or bible apps, as we read through this scripture together. Here is what I Corinthians 15:1-14 says:

**Slide 12 – (“1 Corinthians 15:1-2, NRSV”)**

### **1 Corinthians 15:1-2, NRSV**

#### **The Resurrection of Christ**

**15** Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you— unless you have come to believe in vain.

**Slide 13 – (“1 Corinthians 15:3, NRSV”)**

### **1 Corinthians 15:3, NRSV**

**<sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,**

**Slide 14 – (“1 Corinthians 15:4-5, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:4-5, NRSV**

**<sup>4</sup> and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

**Slide 15 – (“1 Corinthians 15:6-7, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:6-7, NRSV**

**<sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.**

**Slide 16 – (“1 Corinthians 15:8-9, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:8-9, NRSV**

**<sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.**

**Slide 17 – (“1 Corinthians 15:10, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:10, NRSV**

**<sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them— though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.**

**Slide 18 – (“1 Corinthians 15:11-12, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:11-12, NRSV**

**<sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.**

## **The Resurrection of the Dead**

**<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?**

**Slide 19 – (“1 Corinthians 15:13-14, NRSV”)**

## **1 Corinthians 15:13-14, NRSV**

**<sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; <sup>14</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.**

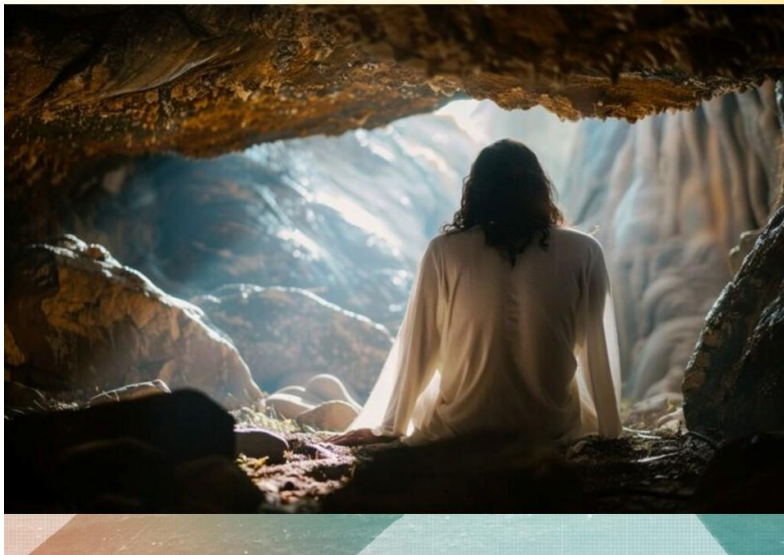
In the Book of Acts, chapter 9, Saul of Tarsus, or the Apostle Paul encounters Christ on the road to Damascus, Syria. The Apostle Paul returns to Jerusalem not as a persecutor of the Christians, but as a Christian himself. Even though, the

Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians about 20-25 years after Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected from the dead, the Apostle Paul is telling us in 1 Corinthians 15 what we was told about Jesus' death and resurrection. The Apostle Paul said, once again in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that he received the information about Jesus' death and resurrection that we just read, and as result he is sharing what he received about Jesus' death and resurrection with the church in Corinth, or the Corinthians. Likely, when the Apostle Paul returned from his conversion to Christ on the road to Damascus, Syria, he was then taught by the disciples in the church in Jerusalem. He was taught by Peter, James, John, and others. They likely told the Apostle Paul the whole story about their three years with Jesus, and how he was crucified and resurrected. Further, how more than five-hundred people saw Jesus after He was resurrected from the dead.

According to church tradition all of the original twelve disciples, and except the apostle John died terrible deaths for there faith in Christ. If they did not believe that Jesus died for our sins and rose again, there would be no logical reason for them to sacrifice their lives for the gospel. Yet, they did just this, and church tradition also holds that the Apostle Paul was beheaded with a sword in Rome, Italy for his faith in Christ. The point is, it not just that the four gospels declare that Jesus physically rose from the dead on this day, but hundreds of eyewitnesses say the same thing. Many of these people then became willing to die so that truth

would be known to us and to the world. As the Apostle Paul says, once again, in 1 Corinthians 15:13-14, if Christ is not raised from the dead, He is still dead, and our faith would be in vain. The reality though is this, nearly two-thousand years ago on this day, Jesus Christ our Lord physically stood up and walked out of His tomb. I cannot explain it medically or scientifically, but hundreds of people saw it and they were willing to die to tell the story to others. Here is a good picture of the resurrection of Jesus:

**Slide 20 – (“Jesus’ Resurrection - Photo”)**



This is why for centuries Christians on Easter Sunday have proclaimed this "He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

Let us tie this all together with some application slides:

**Slide 21 – (“Application to our Lives – Slide # 1”)**

## **Application to Our Lives # 1**

**Why does Jesus’ Resurrection Matter?**

- The resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith because it validates His claims as the Messiah, offers hope of eternal life and forgiveness, and demonstrates God's power over sin and death. Without the resurrection, Christianity would lack a foundation for its core beliefs, including salvation and the promise of a future with God.

**Slide 22 – (“Application to our Lives – Slide # 2”)**

## **Application to Our Lives # 2**

**Offers Hope and Promises Eternal Life:**

- The resurrection demonstrates that death is not the end, and that there is hope for life after death.
- It gives Christians hope for their own future resurrection and eternal life with God.
- The empty tomb is a symbol of this hope and the promise of a new life in Christ.

**Slide 23 – (“Application to our Lives – Slide # 3”)**

## **Application to Our Lives # 3**

**Provides Forgiveness and Salvation:**

- The resurrection demonstrates that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was effective in defeating sin and offering forgiveness.
- It validates the power of his blood to atone for the sins of the world and provide a way of reconciliation with God.
- Through faith in Jesus and his resurrection, Christians can experience spiritual rebirth and live a life transformed by God's grace.

Slide 24 – (“Application to our Lives – Slide # 4”)

## **Application to Our Lives # 4**

### **Power of God and Overcoming Sin:**

- **The resurrection is a powerful sign of God's omnipotence and his ability to overcome the forces of evil and death.**
- **It shows that sin and death no longer have the final word, and that God's love and power have triumphed.**
- **It gives Christians courage and hope in the face of adversity and the promise of a future free from sin and suffering.**

As I call the praise team forward on this our Easter or Resurrection Sunday, I want to say again, that Jesus on this day is alive and well. The veil is torn, Jesus is risen, and through Him we all have equal access to God. He is Risen! He is Risen  
Indeed! Alleluia! Let us say it together brothers and sisters, He is Risen! He is Risen  
Indeed! Alleluia! Happy Easter and Amen!