

Call to Worship/To be present:

We began in Advent.

We knew...we didn't just want
Christmas...a one day celebration

...but rather wanted something new to
be born in us that would last a lifetime.

We didn't walk to Bethlehem, but
through Bethlehem on our way to the
rest of our lives...wherever it is faith
would lead us...
making Christ-mas really real as
something new comes to life in us.

And as we set out, we knew...the path we
walk isn't a straight line;
it is a spiral. You continually come back
to things you thought you understood
from a new (Christmas) perspective and
see deeper truths. Walking through
Bethlehem on our way to Jerusalem.

A Joyful Path...Journeying Beyond Jerusalem:

"Easter Joy!"

Psalm 16:11a; John 15:11; Luke 24:1-12
April 21, 2019 Easter Sunday

A Christian is not someone who
believes in Jesus.
And Christ is not Jesus last name!

A Christian is someone who walks the
talk...
stays life's path *with Jesus*...walking
with Him and alongside neighbor,
stranger, and enemy;

We, together, as individuals, stayed the
path with Jesus all the way to
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem...a place of confrontation
with authorities...inner and outer
authorities in our lives.

We journeyed a path of risk and
revelation.

Letting go of what no longer works
well and creating space to be that new
human being.

We came to Jerusalem...and now, with
Jesus Christ, we're on our way
through...to new life with integrity
and deep peace.

Our new path is a Joyful Path!

a Christian shares table with those
outside conventional
thinking and acceptability...like those
without homes,
those challenged by mental wellness,
people who don't look like you, shop
like you,
worship like you.

A Christian walks life's path with the
have's and have not's...and, in so
doing,
recognizes their own humanity.

Their own vulnerability.
There but for the grace of God, go I!

*And so sees all others differently than conventional society does.
And see themselves...powerfully!*

A Christian is someone...who dares to confront the powerful in the systems in which they live and work...
confront with story and questions...

while coming alongside those in need...as Jesus did;
someone willing to suffer daily deaths
rather than renounce their conviction that justice and kindness will indeed prevail.

Someone who deeply knows...there may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice,

but there must never be a time when we fail to protest (elie wiesel) what is unjust...

And through His death and resurrection,
Jesus shows us the Way as individuals to **trust** in that power of love and non-violence to change our world...

trust love's power to help us
overcome our fear...to stay the path.

A Christian is someone who shows up
at the Christmas tree, the Baptismal Font
and the Mountaintop...

The bedside, the road side, alongside those who walk alone...

shows up to walk the talk all the way to Jerusalem,
willing to get nailed for what they believe...**and do!**

A Christian gets it: what it means to come alongside Jesus on the cross

and come down with Him through the cross...
to amazing new life...

accepting uncertainty, willing to think differently!

Are you Christian?

Will you be...at least for a few minutes today,
maybe some of tomorrow too...

and begin to reflect on new ways of being truly alive...
beyond the culture's focus on self-deception
and self-preoccupation, anxiety and fear?

**For just one moment...walk that Joyful Path...*with Him*...
it changes everything!**

Let me say it again this way...

Is there any power strong enough to break the cycles that trap us in cruelty,
poverty, oppression, despair, and death?

Is it only possible to live a happy life by creating a miserable existence for someone
else...indeed, for most of the planet's inhabitants?

...or is there another way through? Another source of power? Another path?

Yes, You know there is!

The path is in living the life of resistance...based upon love of self, and for
others...resisting what is life-stopping, unjust.
The joyful path is LOVE.

The path is living Jesus' non-violent resistance to the way things are being
unjustly done...to you personally and us collectively...a resistance which breaks
through life to true life...

when witnessed to...when invited in!

You are the one who invites!

You are the one...who is called as a Christian to non-violent resistance that is
action...integrity lived and preached by Jesus.

The ends do not justify the means!

This is not an abstract theory. This changes the world.
This is Easter!

Love and so peace actively participate in *human brokenness*
by *doing* kindness, expecting kindness!

...*being with* those suffering and oppressed,
offering yourself to stand alongside,
...not playing by the world's rules.
Seeing no gain in the world's desired "ends".

Justice for all. Peace through Justice. Now, that's joy!

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The undelaying reality of all our lessons this Easter morning:  
**the resurrection is not something to believe in;**  
**it is something to do!!!**

It's not a set of defensible beliefs or literal happenings;

If the resurrection were meant to be a historically verifiable occurrence,  
God wouldn't have performed it in the dark without eyewitnesses.

It really happened, but we will never prove it (or disprove it) historically.  
Maybe God plays it out this way...to avoid distraction.

YES! Something did happen,

Jesus is alive...in us! In who we be! And what we do!

Christianity is a spiritual practicum, a chosen behavior...  
our daily actions.

**It's about showing up in life to walk that Joyful Path beyond Jerusalem!**

The Bible's Resurrection story is a **truth** story...more than an individual's  
resurrection, the resurrection of the many who choose the ways of justice.

A witness to what is truly powerful in life.

Our call as Christians, as Easter people is...  
to practice involvement, kindness, and non-violent passionate resistance in the All  
and Everything of our lives!

Our call as Christians is to simply remain in awe of the life around us, made able to resist the ways of the world.

Our call as Christians:

Stay the path and show “all we are” to those who are counting on us to show up. Counting on our awareness and presence.

To walk with Jesus in integrity and peace  
up against those who are counting on our being worn down and out

...counting on our human tendency to go to sleep...  
to numb, to shut down and tune out, to go away, to give in and give up,  
to say “not mine”.

“Christianity is not about saving people from their sins. It’s about expanding the sense of what it means to be human.

What Christianity does is lift us beyond the survival mentality into a kind of humanity that can give itself away in love. That’s what the Jesus story is all about.” (Bishop John Shelby Spong)

Divine Presence came amongst us as Jesus.  
He is still with us...  
Staying with us as we journey.

The path never ends. A never ending story.  
There is always more possibility. More freedom and joy.

We each go on our own, together.  
It is indeed a Joyful Path.

Our call as Christians is not to come to church,  
but to go out into the world.

Stay the path. Trust your journey...learn, grow, evolve, become.

Have some fun! A Joyful Path!!!