***Wind IN THE WILDERNESS***

**Lenten Worship Series – Easter SonRise**

***If a Tree Falls in the Woods…***

**April 17, 2022**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

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| **Drama – Telling His Story** |

**Call to Worship:**

“If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” This question is so popular, it has its own Wikipedia page. So what do you think? If a tree falls in the woods but nobody is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

Let’s ask our question a different way: If a tree falls in the woods and there were people to hear it, but they deny it, does it make a sound? The resurrection of Jesus is a reality that we cannot deny. From the angelic proclamation of Jesus’ birth through the angelic proclamation of his resurrection, Matthew’s Gospel consistently highlights the fulfillment of the Hebrew prophets’ message that the Messiah would come. And two women were the first to witness it, the first to receive the good news that Jesus is risen.

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, pp. 81, 84-86)

***5*** *“Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.* ***6*** *He isn’t here, because he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said.”*

Matthew 28:5-6 (CEB)

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| **SB#228/SOS#182 – Low in the grave He lay** | TB-905 – Up from the grave He arose  SOS-182 | HTD2-T17 (3 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#379/HC#78/SOS#44 – Lord, I lift Your name on high** | TB-948 – You came from Heaven to earth  HC-78  SOS-44 | No HT CD  HCD6-T18 |
| **HC#204 – See, What a Morning** | HC-204 | HCD19-14 |
| **HC#209 – Come People of the Risen King** | HC-209 | HCD19-T19 |
| **HC#294 – Glorious Day** | HC-294 | HCD28-T14 |
| **SB#139 – He came to give us life** | TB-645 – same | No HT CD |
| **SB#218/HC#233/SOS#181 – Christ the Lord is risen today** | TB-248 – Easter Hymn  HC-233  SOS-181 | HTD3-T9 (4 vs.)  HCD22-T13 |
| **SB#276 – Thine is the glory** | TB-746 – Maccabeus | No HT CD |

***Tell the Good News***

**Choric Reading:**

**Leader:**If a tree falls in the woods and there were people to hear it, but they deny it, does it make a sound?

**Women:** *11While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, 13telling them,*

### Men: *“You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”*

### Women: *15So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.*

### Matthew 28:11-15 (NIV)

**Leader:** The people in charge denied that it happened. But the Gospel of Matthew makes clear that there is no denying the Resurrection. There were witnesses—two women who came to the tomb—and there was even an earthquake and a message from Jesus himself:

**Women: *1****After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

**Men: *2****There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.****3****His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.****4****The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

**Leader: *5****The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.****6****He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.****7****Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”*

**ALL: *8****So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.****9****Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.****10****Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”*

Matthew 28:1-10 (NIV)

**Leader:** What’s really significant is, both the angel and Jesus instruct the women to tell someone else about what they have seen. The Christian message is good news that we are called, even commanded, to tell others about! It is our privilege to tell others about this dramatic, world-changing event, witnessing to the way that we have experienced the risen Christ.

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, pp. 84-86)

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| **HC#204 – See, What a Morning** | HC-204 | HCD19-14 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#379/HC#78/SOS#44 – Lord, I lift Your name on high** | TB-948 – You came from Heaven to earth  HC-78  SOS-44 | No HT CD  HCD6-T18 |
| **SB#466/HC#105/SOS#32 – How marvelous!** | TB-769 – My Savior’s love  HC-105  SOS-32 | HTD10-T8 (4 vs.)  HCD9-T15 |
| **SB#861/HC#149/SOS#41 – In Christ alone** | TB-132 – same  HC-149  SOS-41 | No HT CD  HCD13-T19 |
| **SB#243/HC#164 – Before the throne of God above** | TB-52 – same  HC-164 | No HT CD  HCD15-T14 |
| **HC#209 – Come People of the Risen King** | HC-209 | HCD19-T19 |
| **HC#294 – Glorious Day** | HC-294 | HCD28-T14 |
| **SB#139 – He came to give us life** | TB-645 – same | No HT CD |
| **SB#276 – Thine is the glory** | TB-746 – Maccabeus | No HT CD |

**Testimonies/Theme – I believe in the Resurrection because….**

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| **SB#565/HC#89/SOS#43 – All I once held dear** | TB-725 – Knowing You  HC-89  SOS-43 | No HT CD  HCD7-T19 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#204/HC#5/SOS#27 – There is a redeemer** | TB-881 – same  HC-5  SOS-27 | No HT CD  HCD1A-T15 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **SB#699/HC#207/SOS#88 – Grace alone** | TB-640 – same  HC-207  SOS-88 | No HT CD  HCD19-T17 |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **SB#222 – He is Lord** | TB-649 – same | No HT CD |

**[Congregational prayer, please print in bulletin.]**

**Congregational Prayer:**

Sacred One, a tree has fallen in the woods. The tomb stone has been rolled away. You have lived the lives we live and defeated death. You alone know the way out of the wilderness, just as you know the way out of the tomb. Thank you for knowing my name. Thank you for loving creation and all that is within her. May your will be done. May your love be shared. May it begin with me so that all of creation will sing your praises. In your son’s name, Jesus the Christ, I pray. Amen.

(*Wind and the Wilderness*, p. 90)

**Offering**

**Message – *If a Tree Falls in the Woods…***

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| **HC#226 – I Worship You** | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **HC#123/SOS#55 – Shine on Us** | HC-123  SOS-55 | HCD11-T13 |
| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **SB#201/HC#137/SOS#66 – Thank you for the cross, Lord** | TB-947 – Worthy is the Lamb  HC-137  SOS-66 | No HT CD  HCD12-T17 |
| **SB#439/HC#139 – There is a message** | TB-879 – same  HC-139 | No HT CD  HCD12-T19 |
| **HC#160/SOS#125 – I Surrender** | HC-160  SOS-125 | HCD14-T20 |
| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
| **SB#935/HC#203/SOS#61 – They need Christ** | TB-886 – same  HC-203  SOS-61 | No HT CD  HCD19-T13 |

**Benediction:**

**20** May the God of peace, who brought back the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, from the dead by the blood of the eternal covenant, **21**equip you with every good thing to do his will, by developing in us what pleases him through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory forever and always. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21 (CEB)

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| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#861/HC#149/SOS#41 – In Christ alone** | TB-132 – same  HC-149  SOS-41 | No HT CD  HCD13-T19 |
| **SB#89/HC#161/SOS#48 – O for a thousand tongues to sing** | TB-59 – Azmon  TB-75 – Grimsby  HC-161  SOS-48 | HTD3-T4 (4 vs.)  No HT CD  HCD15-T11 |
| **HC#128 – My Tribute** | HC-128 | HCD11-T18 |
| **SB#358/HC#241/SOS#30 – Crown Him with many crowns** | TB-162 – Diademata  HC-241  SOS-30 | HTD1-T8 (4 vs.)  HCD23-T11 |

**Announcements**

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| **Lent 2022 – Easter SonRise** | |
| **DRAMA**  **Telling His Story**  **By Martyn Scott Thomas**  © Copyright 2005 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. | |
| **Topic:** | The Resurrection |
| **Scripture:** | Matthew 28:11-15 |
| **Synopsis:** | The High Priest tries to determine what happened to Jesus’ body. |
| **Characters:** | Caiaphas – the High Priest  Benjamin – his servant |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Biblical or modern dress. A desk and chair. |
| **Setting:** | Caiaphas’ chambers. |
| **Running time:** | 4 minutes |

[*Caiaphas is pacing, deep in thought. He finally sits at the desk and buries his head in his hands.*]

**Benjamin:** [*enters*] I bring news, sir. But I do not think you will be pleased.

**Caiaphas:** [*looking up*] Please tell me you found the body.

**Benjamin:** [*lowers his head*]

**Caiaphas:** Great… I thought that this would be the end of it, but even in death, this Jesus is nothing but trouble.

**Benjamin:** The men are still looking. I’m sure we’ll find his body soon.

**Caiaphas:** What about the disciples? Where are they? Find them and you’ll find the body.

**Benjamin:** They’ve scattered, sir. We think we know where most of them are, but I really don’t think that . . .

**Caiaphas:** I’m not paying you to think. Find the disciples and you’ll find the body!

**Benjamin:** Yes, sir. We’re looking, sir. But it’s been two days since the incident. Don’t you think that maybe . . .?

**Caiaphas:** Maybe what? That he actually rose from the dead? Suggest that again and we’ll see if you can pull the same feat!

**Benjamin:** It’s just that there are already reports of [*pause*] well, appearances.

**Caiaphas:** Lies! Lies! That’s just what they want you to believe! And that’s why we must find the body. Am I making myself clear?

**Benjamin:** Yes, sir. We will find the body. [*Turns to leave. Stops*] I almost forgot. The guards from the tomb are here.

**Caiaphas:** At least there’s some good news today.

**Benjamin:** I don’t understand. Surely the Romans won’t let you handle their discipline.

**Caiaphas:** The governor does not know they are here.

**Benjamin:** But I don’t understand.

**Caiaphas:** They are not here for discipline. I have other plans for them.

**Benjamin:** What plans can you have for these men?

**Caiaphas:** They are my fail safe; my back up plan.

**Benjamin:** I told you our men are looking for the body. If it is still in Jerusalem, we will find it. Do you really think *they* will be able to find it?

**Caiaphas:** They are not here to search. I have complete confidence in our men. But the Romans are here for other reasons.

**Benjamin:** I’m not sure I follow you, sir.

**Caiaphas:** Until we find the body, these men will tell everyone that they fell asleep, and that his disciples stole the body.

**Benjamin:** But, sir, a Roman centurion can’t fall asleep on the job. The governor will have their heads.

**Caiaphas:** I will handle the governor. I haven’t been paying him off all this time for nothing.

**Benjamin:** But will they be willing to lie?

**Caiaphas:** We don’t know that it is a lie. As far as we know, the disciples did steal the body. But we need to get this story out there before these rumors of resurrection are too many to be swept away.

**Benjamin:** How will you convince them to tell your story?

**Caiaphas:** That’s where you come in. You will send them in on your way to the treasury.

**Benjamin:** The treasury?

**Caiaphas:** There will be two bags waiting for you. Bring them to me.

**Benjamin:** Are you sure you can buy these men off?

**Caiaphas:** Trust me, with the amount of silver in those bags, they’ll be willing to say anything I want them to.

**Benjamin:** Will that be enough?

**Caiaphas:** Unless you have a better way to explain the empty grave that doesn’t involve Jesus waking up from the dead . . .

**Benjamin:** I’ll send them in. [*exits*]

[*Blackout*]

***Wind IN THE WILDERNESS***

**Lenten Sermon – Easter SonRise**

***If a Tree Falls in the Woods…***

**April 17, 2022**

**By Major Katherine Clausell**

**Scripture:** **Matthew 28:1-20**

**Opening Illustration:**

Anyone who has ever taken a philosophy course is frequently presented with the question: “If a tree falls in the woods and there is no one to hear it, does it make a sound?” This question is so popular that it has its own Wikipedia page. So, what do you think? If a tree falls in the woods but nobody is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

Here is another question for you: “What if a man sits in a tree and draws national attention?” Some years ago, a man sat atop an eighty-foot-tall sequoia tree outside of a major downtown Seattle department store for more than twenty-four hours. This tree is affectionately referred to by local Seattleites as the Seattle Christmas tree. For a couple of days during Holy Week, a man sat perched near the top of this historic tree and drew the attention of the nation. When he finally came down, folks had a mixture of responses. Many were saddened by the damage done to the historic tree; others worried about the amount of tax dollars invested in the police, fire fighters, and others who enticed him to come down from the tree. Still others cried out for justice and asked that he face the consequences of his actions. One person said, “It caused a lot of inconvenience, it cost a lot of money, and he damaged a tree nurtured since the 70s—Seattle’s Christmas Tree. That’s the real crime,” he said. No one seemed to be concerned about his well-being.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 81-82)

**Introduction:**

While I am saddened whenever nature is hurt or damaged in any way, I’m not sure damage to the tree is the crime here. A man slept in the branches of a great Christmas tree during Holy Week, and society neglected the simple fact that he was a human being with a name and a story. Did we forget? Or did we not care? From everything said in response to the story, it seemed that people cared more about the tree than the man. But in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Christians are challenged to reexamine our priorities and shape them toward justice, first and foremost for vulnerable humans in our midst.

This has been the whole point of this Lenten series. We have spent the last six weeks pondering the message of some of the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures who gave us glimpses of the Messiah in Jesus Christ. Time and time again, the prophets’ message to the people of God was to anticipate and expect that the Messiah will come. The Kingdom is coming, they said through their calls for justice. This was the wind in the wilderness.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* p. 82)

**Transition:**

In the first chapter, we unpacked Isaiah’s message to God’s people about the Kingdom to come. We compared the Kingdom to come with the building of a skyscraper. We also looked at words that can harm and work for good, every bit as powerful as sticks and stones, through the prophet Jeremiah. We took a deeper look at the life of Hosea and his family as we sought to understand Yahweh. We even went for a run with Jonah! Along the way, we paused with Job as we focused on becoming present as we wait. Last week, we looked at Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, using the words of the prophet Zechariah to gain deeper insight.

As we made our approach toward Easter, we waved our palm branches, examining our own hopes, expectations, and desires. Along the way to Easter Sunday, significant events happened in the final week of Jesus’ life. We reflect on Jesus, fully human and fully divine, assuming the roles of a servant and washing his disciples’ feet. We also remember the cross and the horror of the crucifixion of Jesus. And today, we celebrate that Jesus has risen! (He has risen, indeed!) This is the very thing toward which the wind in the wilderness has been pointing all along: the vindication of the One who came to serve, the victory of peace over violence and life over death.

It’s imperative that we keep this good news before us, holding it in our minds, as we walk through life after Easter Sunday. It’s so easy to forget that we worship the One who has been raised from the dead, and that this renews our own commitment to the justice that the prophets proclaimed. We need regular reminders of Christ’s victory at Easter to renew our own spirits and rekindle our own commitment to Kingdom Living.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 82-83)

1. **Historical Dilemma –** The Resurrection Story (Matthew 28:11-15)
   1. Before turning to the resurrection story, let’s ask our opening question a different way: If a tree falls in the woods and there were people to hear it, *but they deny it*, does it make a sound?
   2. In the Gospel of Matthew, the people in charge convinced the soldiers to lie about what they had experienced. They denied that it happened.
   3. But the Gospel of Matthew makes clear that there is no denying the Resurrection. There were witnesses—two women who came to the Tomb—and there was even an earthquake and a message from Jesus himself (read Matthew 28:1-10).
   4. The resurrection of Jesus is a reality that we cannot deny. From the angelic proclamation of Jesus’ birth through the angelic proclamation of his resurrection, Matthew’s Gospel consistently highlights the fulfillment of the Hebrew prophets’ message that the Messiah would come.
   5. And two women were the first to witness it, the first to receive the good news that Jesus is risen.
   6. At first light, these two women brought spices to the tomb to prepare Jesus’ body according to their custom.
   7. Matthew’s Gospel describes an earthquake, a bright shining angel descending, guards becoming “like dead men,” and Jesus giving the two women a message that would change the world.
   8. The Christian message is good news that we are called, even commanded, to tell others about! It is our privilege to tell others about this dramatic, world-changing event, witnessing to the way that we have experienced the risen Christ.

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, pp. 84-86)

1. **Current Context and Challenge –**

Rob Bell once said in his book *Velvet Elvis* that if the gospel isn’t good news for everybody, then it isn’t good news for anybody. Today, we celebrate that the gospel is good news for everybody. But it’s our responsibility to communicate that good news in a way that honors other people’s questions, struggles, and thoughts, so that they can really, truly understand just how good the news is!

If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to witness it, it still falls. The gospel message that Jesus lived, died, and rose again is true. Maybe the question for us is how we live this truth in such a way that other people can see its realness in our lives. The time of talking over one another is done. It’s time for us to stop waiting for our turn to speak and take the time to learn from one another. It’s time for us to bear witness to the truth of Jesus’ resurrection, the victory of live over death, by the way that we embody justice in the way that we live. It’s time to proclaim that Jesus is risen through our actions, our relationships, and our outlook of love.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* p. 88)

1. **Our Response –**

Today, let us sit in the mystery of faith. If the Pope washed and kissed the feet of Muslim, Christian, and Hindu refugees at a center for asylum-seekers just outside Rome, then maybe we can take a cue from him and celebrate the good news that is for everyone in a way that affirms their humanity and God’s great love for them. Jesus lived, died, and rose again, purely for the love of you and me.

We worship a God who knows our name. Let us be the church we are called to be, allowing space for all people to experience sacred moments and say to one another, “You are forgiven, and you are beautiful.”

**Conclusion:**

We worship Jesus, who appreciates our great joys, our deep hurts, and everything in between. We worship Jesus, who understands our loneliness and our fear of being abandoned.

May you experience Jesus in a new and profound way.

May you find Jesus this Lenten season in the simplest and humblest moments of your life, as you strive to live that life characterized by justice.

Whether you need proof for your head or your heart, may you find it today.

May you be for the world wind in the wilderness. Amen.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 89-90)

**[Print in Bulletin]**

**Focus for the Week:**

Write your name on a sticky note. Keep it in a place that you will see several times a day (bathroom mirror, car, and so forth). Each time you see it, take three deep breaths and contemplate the amazing significance that Jesus loves you and knows your name.

del Rosario, DJ. *Wind in the Wilderness.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016.