

St. Columba's Episcopal Church  
April 17, 2022 – The Sunday of the Resurrection  
John 20:1-18  
The Rev. Dr. Susan Kraus

Do you believe in miracles? The story of our faith is a story of miracles.

Jesus was a Jew born in the land promised by God to God's people. But the Jewish people were subject at that time to foreign rule, and any rebellions to that rule were put to an end with violence. Thousands of Jews were killed – many crucified. The history is horrifying. Jesus came into the world at that time and in that place to show people the way of God, the way of love. That was a miracle!

For three years Jesus traveled through this land with his twelve apostles to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught the crowds about God's call to love – even our enemies! And many people believed and followed him. He even invited tax collectors and sinners to repentance and forgiveness and welcomed them as disciples. Those were miracles!

Jesus took a few loaves and fish, gave thanks to God, and broke them. He fed thousands of hungry people who had been with him to learn from him. That was a miracle!

Jesus healed the sick everywhere he went. A man born blind. A paralyzed man. A woman with a hemorrhage that had lasted twelve years. Lepers. The insane. An epileptic boy. The slave of a Roman centurion. There were so many healings that the writers of the gospels couldn't record them all. These were miracles!

Jesus even raised the dead to life. His friend Lazarus. The widow of Nain's son. Jairus' young daughter. More miracles!

And all these are only a few of the miracles of Jesus recorded in scripture. His disciples had witnessed his miracles and so, they believed.

Jesus had taught his closest friends and followers that he would be betrayed and killed and raised from death on the third day. He said this more than once, but his disciples did not understand. Finally, they understood his betrayal and they understood his death, because they had been witnesses to these tragedies. And they were overwhelmed with grief.

Then at early dawn on Easter morning Mary Magdalene, who loved Jesus, went to his tomb. What did she find? The stone rolled away from the tomb and Jesus' body gone. Mary wept in grief. What had happened? Where was the body of Jesus, that she might properly prepare his body for burial, her final act of love for her Lord?

Then Jesus appeared to her and called her name, and she knew him. Her Teacher, alive! God had indeed raised Jesus from death to life! His followers would come to know that the risen life of Christ was something new – unending life, life more full of life than anything we know or can imagine. A miracle beyond all miracles!

What does the miracle of the resurrection mean? The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows us that no amount of human evil – not even the murder of an innocent man sent by God for the sake of love – can defeat God's goodness. Though it may be as covered with darkness as the sun on Good Friday, God's goodness will triumph. God's life will triumph. God's love will triumph. The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows us that love poured out is not lost, but glorified. For God is love.

The miracle of the risen Lord is alive today. When love overcomes indifference or hatred. When hope breaks in on fear and despair. When God gives us the strength we need to keep going. When we are healed and comforted. When we share our lives and what we have with others. When we trust – even when our faith is sorely tried by the evil in the world – when we trust that love is the way to live and that nothing good will finally be lost.

My friends, we are invited to know the Lord Jesus, to rejoice in the miracle of his resurrection, and with our hearts and souls and lives, to become miracles of love. Shall we? Let God's people say "Amen."

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!