



HE IS RISEN

This year, Easter is different. This year, everyone's life is different.

Beloved Lodi family, in this unprecedented time of uncertainty and isolation, how is it with your soul? How is your spirit doing? *Really*, how are you? You are missed. You are cared about. You are in my heart and prayer.

Easter is coming! Can you feel it? Do you feel all that fear being turned to hope, darkness giving way to light in your heart? Or, do you feel that it is not the good news of Easter but the virus that has a power to change everything in your life? ... To be honest, I thought a lot about rescheduling our "Easter" celebration. There's no way to hear an Easter congregation sing triumphant songs in the lily decorated sanctuary. This year's calendar chosen Easter Sunday has lacked many traditions and rituals which would uplift our spirits as in the previous years.

(Here, hold on! You might wonder how the Easter date is determined every year. Easter occurs on the Sunday after the first full moon (this year it was Tue, April 7) that occurs after the spring equinox.)

Then, a question is this: Is spring here in your heart? Staying at home is at times like hibernating. Everything seems to have been suspended. In the meantime, my hope and prayer is that you may wait with eager anticipation for spring to come in your heart first, without regard to when the pandemic will pass. Our heart is where our celebration of Easter should start. I am not asking you to let us pretend nothing has happened. Let us not forget that we can sing. We have memories of the freshly experienced presence of God - like a sun shining at noontime on an April day. Because the resurrection happened, people who love Jesus continue to experience the risen Christ in the midst of their situation. Because followers of Christ had an Easter faith, the Church happened.

Let us celebrate Easter, not because the calendar says so, but because we know the power of faith. Our faith reminds us of the promise that God would never leave us nor forsake us. We can sing Easter songs. These songs remind us that in this life and in the life to come we are always in God's hands. We are all in this together, not simply in this pandemic; but much more importantly in this blessed community of faith, and in this God's hands.

Faith is not cancelled; Hope is not closed; Love is always present.

Jesus is not in the tomb. He is risen! He is alive!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Peace

Postscript: During this difficult time, we continue to do our best in our mission and ministry to stay connected and active within our community. This is a time that our church is needed to tend to the vulnerable and offer Christ's love to a troubled world. If you are willing and able, please share your gifts in the form of an Easter Offering.

