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St. James', Mt. Airy
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Easter Day C
Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:19-26
Luke 24:1-10

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Happy Easter!

Today is the culmination of 40 day journey through the season of Lent, and a trek through Holy Week – from Palm Sunday last Sunday, to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday last night. And now here we are – finally celebrating the resurrection.

The resurrection is the climax of the story we've been telling on this journey. Every year we tell the same stories, which are, in essence, one love story, told in multiple parts.

On Maundy Thursday we remembered the last night Jesus spent with his friends. So much happened that night, and our Gospel reading from John told us: *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*

Jesus loved them so much he gave them (and us) the gift of Eucharist – with the promise that whenever the bread and wine are shared in his name, he will be there. This is why we share the communion every week.

He also showed those gathered what it means to love in community, taking on the role of a servant and washing their feet – bidding those who would follow him to reach out in loving service to others. You can see the results of our Lenten Outreach here – a veritable mountain of food and personal hygiene products to go to Mt. Airy Net.

And he gave the final commandment – to love one another as he loved us – proclaiming that it is by our love that we will be known as his disciples.

But that night wasn't the end.

On Good Friday, we marveled at the love and compassion Jesus showed to everyone he encountered on his final day, from those who arrested him in the garden of Gethsemane, to those who put him on trial, to the frightened few of his friends that followed him all the way to the cross.

He breathed his last, saying, "*It is finished,*" and then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

But that wasn't the end either.

And now today, we journey with Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James to the tomb – finding it empty – except for messengers from God proclaiming that **he is risen**.

Resurrection is the purest representation of God's love. When we talk about resurrection what we mean is a love so unconditional and strong that nothing – not even death – can separate us from it.

Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

That love went beyond the end of his life. That ending, became a glorious beginning on the first Easter morning. It is only fitting, then, that the capstone to the 50 days that the church celebrates Easter, is Pentecost – when we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit – another sign of God's abiding love in our midst.

And it's why we baptize on Easter – coming together to invoke the Holy Spirit and welcome new members to this family of families we call the church. As we pray in the Baptismal rite:

We thank you Father, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

Through our baptism we are resurrection people – which means we are called to love one another as Christ loved us, sharing God's abundant love with everyone and all of creation. When we do this, God's love never ends.

Today and throughout this entire Easter season, my prayer for all of us is that we will choose love and live resurrection.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!