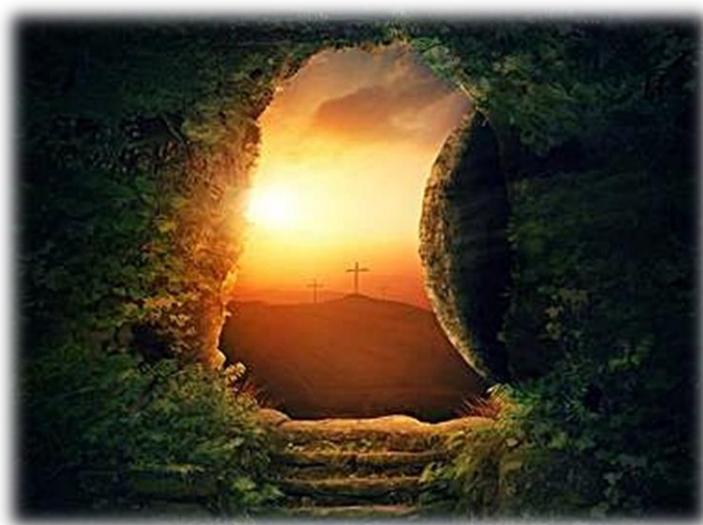


Edgecomb Community Church

United Church of Christ

15 Cross Point Road, P.O. Box 113, Edgecomb, ME 04556 Phone: 207.882.4060
 Email: edgecomb.church@gmail.com FB/EdgecombCongochurch



Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Message: "Do not be alarmed"

- Thurs. April 18 *Maundy Thursday Service* in Fellowship Hall.
 We'll share a meal together at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Service of Communion and Tenebrae.
- Sun. April 21 *Easter Sunday Sunrise Service* at 6:00 a.m. at Fort Edgecomb, 66 Fort Road, Edgecomb, ME
Easter Sunday Service at 9:30 a.m. at Edgecomb Community Church
 Coffee Hour will not be held after worship.
- Sun. April 28 Second Sunday of Easter – worship at 9:30 a.m.
ECC Annual Meeting after worship.
- Sun. May 5 Third Sunday of Easter – worship at 9:30 a.m.
 ECC is forming a group to walk the *Walk to Build Habitat for Humanity Walk* at 2:00 p.m.
 The walk starts & ends at St. John the Baptist Church 39 Pleasant Street, Brunswick.
 There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall if you'd like to walk.



*****The Edgecomb Community Lunch is served on Tuesdays at Noon in Fellowship Hall!
 All are welcome. Bring a friend!**

*****Bible Study is held on Thursdays mornings at 10:30 a.m. Come learn with us!**

***** Edgecomb Community Thrift Shop hours: Tuesday 9 to 1 pm, Thursday 1 to 4 pm & Saturday 9:00 a.m. to Noon.**

Easter by Frederick Beuchner

Originally published in *Whistling in the Dark* and later in *Beyond Words*

Christmas has a large and colorful cast of characters including not only the three principals themselves, but the angel Gabriel, the innkeeper, the shepherds, the heavenly host, the three Wise Men, Herod, the star of Bethlehem, and even the animals kneeling in the straw. In one form or another we have seen them represented so often that we would recognize them anywhere. We know about the birth in all its detail as well as we know about the births of ourselves or our children, maybe more so. The manger is as familiar as home. We have made a major production of it, and as minor attractions we have added the carols, the tree, the presents, the cards. Santa Claus, Ebenezer Scrooge, and so on. With Easter it is entirely different.

The Gospels are far from clear as to just what happened. It began in the dark. The stone had been rolled aside. Matthew alone speaks of an earthquake. In the tomb there were two white-clad figures or possibly just one. Mary Magdalen seems to have gotten there before anybody else. There was a man she thought at first was the gardener. Perhaps Mary the mother of James was with her and another woman named Joanna. One account says Peter came too with one of the other disciples. Elsewhere the suggestion is that there were only the women and that the disciples, who were somewhere else, didn't believe the women's story when they heard it. There was the sound of people running, of voices. Matthew speaks of "fear and great joy." Confusion was everywhere. There is no agreement even as to the role of Jesus himself. Did he appear at the tomb or only later? Where? To whom did he appear? What did he say? What did he do?

It is not a major production at all, and the minor attractions we have created around it — the bunnies and baskets and bonnets, the dyed eggs — have so little to do with what it's all about that they neither add much nor subtract much. It's not really even much of a story when you come right down to it, and that is of course the power of it. It doesn't have the ring of great drama. It has the ring of truth. If the Gospel writers had wanted to tell it in a way to convince the world that Jesus indeed rose from the dead, they would presumably have done it with all the skill and fanfare they could muster. Here there is no skill, no fanfare. They seem to be telling it simply the way it was. The narrative is as fragmented, shadowy, incomplete as life itself. When it comes to just what happened, there can be no certainty. That something unimaginable happened, there can be no doubt.

The symbol of Easter is the empty tomb. You can't depict or domesticate emptiness. You can't make it into pageants and string it with lights. It doesn't move people to give presents to each other or sing old songs. It ebbs and flows all around us, the Eastertide. Even the great choruses of Handel's *Messiah* sound a little like a handful of crickets chirping under the moon. He rose. A few saw him briefly and talked to him. If it is true, there is nothing left to say. If it is not true, there is nothing left to say. For believers and unbelievers both, life has never been the same again. For some, neither has death. What is left now is the emptiness. There are those who, like Magdalen, will never stop searching it till they find his face.