

Easter 2023

*Alleluia. Christ is risen.
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

In congregations across the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, and in Christian congregations across much of the world, this call and response was heard on Sunday, April 9th in celebration of the resurrection of Jesus and to mark the beginning of the fifty-day-long Easter season. It was my joy to worship on Easter Day with the people of St. Mary's Church in Kinston, and it has also been my joy to see pictures and to hear stories of the ways in which so many others across our diocese celebrated Easter Day.

With this letter, you can find three attachments: a video recording of my Easter morning sermon and transcripts of that sermon in both English and Spanish. You may (or may not!) wish to take time with these, but I write today to share something of the gist of my sermon with you here. First, I spoke of the Easter message as being centered in "resurrection faith" and contrasted resurrection with other possibilities, such as revivification and immortality. Then I spoke of God's desire for each of us to be transformed by resurrection faith, as Mary Magdalene and others were transformed. Finally, I spoke of God's call for us to be "agents of transformation" in our own time and context.

As I would normally do during a congregational visit, I spoke to the people of St. Mary's about how these ideas might make sense to them amid the particulars of their context. Finally, in simple terms, I spoke of how this pattern can be seen in our life as a diocese. I made clear that when Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is with us in East Carolina for a time of revival on Saturday, October 21st he will proclaim a message of resurrection faith, invite each of us to be transformed, and call us together to be agents of transformation in the places where we live.

Our Presiding Bishop's visit with us on October 21st will be an exciting time for the people of the Diocese of East Carolina. It is my prayer that God's Holy Spirit will move powerfully in our midst these next months. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the revival, and consider which friends and neighbors you might invite to attend with you. In the days to come, we will publish more details about the revival itself, along with information about how our congregations and ministry groups can get involved. I hope that every congregation will build its own plans around full participation in this time of revival.

Personally, I am deeply grateful that Easter is a fifty-day season, and not only a single day of celebration. And, I am grateful that every Sunday, regardless of the season, is an opportunity to celebrate and proclaim the resurrection faith that is God's gift to us through Jesus. Our world needs to hear of God's love for us and for all people, and to know of our conviction that God's light will never be overcome by the darkness that crowds in on every side.

With our actions and with our words, may we bear witness to all that we have seen and heard, as followers of our risen Lord Jesus. May this Easter season be a time of joy!

Yours in Christ,

Rob