

CALL TO WORSHIP

We've waited a long time – as the deer panting for the water, our souls have longed for this day. and now – the rain has begun and the floodgates of heaven have opened!

It's raining resurrection! Life and love and hope are set loose – justice is flowing and righteousness like an everlasting stream.

Dried out old death has been caught off guard – brittle and frantic - scurrying to put up an umbrella, build a dam, anything – but the dam has burst. One small crack, one wound in the heart of God, and eternity streams through.

Never underestimate it's power – water, my friends, water will always find a way. You can build walls, you can put up dams you can try your best - but water will always find a way.

Let that way be YOUR way -

Lift your face to the rain

Let us worship the Living God

EASTER SUNDAY WATER THEME APRIL 24, 2011 WHITEHORSE UNITED CHURCH

Sometimes -

sometimes the truth comes gently

and the life we seek seeps almost unnoticed into our parched spirits

Oh – there are tsunamis of the soul to be sure. Cataclysmic earth shaking spiritual events that overwhelm us and leave us dripping in glory

and delighted, we shake like a dog at the beach for the wonder of it all

there ARE times like that

But also – and often

the glory of the ages

the mystery that moves the sun and the stars

the well of living water springing up to eternal life always and forever

the risen power of a death conquering life affirming Lord

sometimes – that comes like a slow drip that wears away stone

like a cool drink, a tiny stream, a tear

or

like someone speaking your name.

He said to her Mary – and she knew.

Whatever else is true for you this morning

Whatever else is happening in your life -

please know

please hear

please believe this one thing

Jesus is alive, and he speaks your name with love.
And I pray with all my heart that today – right now – will be a time when the truth of that will wash over you
the Living Water of the love of Jesus
and the truth that love wins
life prevails
the truth of that will soothe the parched places in your soul
moisten lips dry and cracked by fear
until we can speak and sing praise once more.

Lubricate the joints of our world, joints made for justice and love but rusted from long disuse
lubricate them to dance the dance of life
move to the beat of truth and right relationships and joy

Jesus speaks your name – speaks it with love
and a new world is born -
Jesus is risen! Alleluia!

In one of the creation stories the Bible tells
the author says that at the beginning of the world
when as yet there was no rain
a stream rose up from beneath the earth to water the land
rose up from beneath the earth
and gave life to all the world.

God did it then
God did it again at Calvary.
And God is doing it right this minute.

He said to her Mary – and she said Rabboni

She had thought he was the gardener. Maybe it was because when she first saw him, he was gently watering a struggling little fig tree that had been damaged when the stone had been rolled away. There, beside the tomb, where the earth showed its bones of wind broken stones....there he was, watering it with water he must have got from....from where? And his hands....as he did that? She had noticed his hands....something was wrong with them...wounded in some way – but they were beautiful hands. As though he could touch anything without hurting it.

She thought he was the gardener. And in a way – he was.

But he spoke her name, and a new world bloomed.

The gardener of all creation – crucified and risen
risen to die no more – was her friend – and he spoke her name.

She said Rabboni - and from somewhere – somewhere deep as if from beneath the earth
her tears began to flow. For the first time she cried.

All through the hideous ordeal of the last week – it had been a dry dry time. As though all joy, all hope

had been siphoned off. The scene in the garden, the arrest...and then when Pilate washed his hands she had known it was over. The unspeakable humiliation of the cross – she watched as a Roman spear tore into the flesh she had loved – still loved – watched the blood and water gushing out, seeping into the hot and thankless dust below.

She could not, would not, let her tears flow. It seemed too small a thing, too banal, to cry. There were not enough tears in the world to do that moment justice.

But now – now she looked at him \
and heard his voice – the voice she last heard crying out in agony and thought she would never hear again
she heard him speak her name and she began to weep.
If you'd have been there
you could have seen how the tears rolled down her face
and the light of the new day caught them – the tears sparkled like stars – an gushing explosion of them
– as many as the stars in the sky -
and you'd have seen his face, not distorted but rather reflected and magnified in them not once not twice but a thousand times. More!

Jesus lives. He speaks your name. And he speaks it with love.

And death – that brittle old thing – is in spite of itself, porous
and yields, in the end, to the relentless drip drip drip of life

and I for one, am almost certain I caught upon death's face
a look of longing for more \and deep gratitude for its own defeat.

This my friends - this is the core of what it is to live. This is the mystery of the universe
and the crack through which eternity streams.

This is what your soul longs for. Deep calling to deep. This calls to the part of yourself still able to be surprised, still open to wonder – still willing to try again, to love in spite of it all; to make the changes that lead to life.

On this new day I have no words, nor have I the desire
to explain how or why - I only know that it is so

Jesus' risen presence was to her
and is to me
like breaking the surface after swimming underwater
lungs aching and reaching for the light.

Jesus is risen from the dead.
There is holiness undefined by boundaries, faithfulness unmeasured by performance, eternal life unmeasured by anything but the beating of your grateful heart and the speaking of your name.
Wonders have not ceased
and possibilities as yet undreamed, stuck in imaginations frozen by fear will melt and flow into being.
hope is gushing – the future is broken open
and it is not too late to build a better world -