



Sermon

Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2,14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 28:1-10

The Rev. Emily Williams Guffey

“Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a card
and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something,
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit, they will let you know.

“So, friends, every day do something
that won’t compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world ...

“ ... Love someone who does not deserve it ...

“ ... Give your approval to all you cannot understand.
Ask the questions that have no answers ...

“ ... Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.

“Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to the carrion – put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts ...

“ ... Practice resurrection.”

These are excerpts of a poem called “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front” by Wendell Berry,¹ in which Berry notes so poignantly that resurrection happens all around us. Resurrection happens without our knowing it, without our doing anything about it, certainly without our understanding. Resurrection does not compute.

Resurrection is the work of God and *it is marvelous in our eyes. On this day, God has acted,*² God who creates endlessly and loves without boundary—at least without the boundaries that we hold, see, and even cherish. For who, in pain, does not want to shut their heart away, close our hearts to pain so as to manage how to live? Who, in anger, does not want to just turn your mind off to think peace for a little while? Who, in frustration and fatigue can barely summon a prayer, when the words don’t come, when we can’t lift a prayer for our enemies – when in fear, we need those boundaries, those stones, those tombs to close ourselves off, when we’re at a loss for what to do, at a loss for hope.

Beyond our boundaries, amid our feelings, resurrection happens. Resurrection, beyond our computations, is as real as the soil beneath our feet, as real as the seed in the soil that we would take for dead—but one day, we will look, and it will have risen, risen into something new entirely.

Notice that today in Matthew’s Gospel there’s an earthquake and an angel. This angel descends during this earthquake and rolls away the stone that has been closing the tomb—and at that point, we do not see Jesus emerge. No, resurrection has already happened, beyond their knowing it, beyond their doing anything about it, certainly beyond their anticipating it or understanding it. Resurrection has happened.

Notice what this angel does: descends and lands right at the stone, rolls it away and sits on it. The angel is there for the women. The angel is there for the men that the women will tell. The angel is here for us. Practicing resurrection is for us.

The angel meets us, regards with an unflinching gaze the gravity of our grief, the pain that we clench, the distance we create even in ourselves as we shut away parts of our selves in little drawers here and there. The angel regards us with tender, loving eyes, as we feel dead inside, as we feel calcified by frustration, as we are effaced with fatigue.

The angel’s message for you and for me is that there is no loss so heavy, no pain so searing, no fatigue so numbing, no fear so dividing that God will not show up, that angels will not be with us, saying, “Do not be afraid. Let your fear go. This heaviness, this stone, is not yours to carry. Be free, and free others.”

And that is what the women, the first witnesses of the resurrection, do. They do not do anything to bring about resurrection, they do not understand resurrection, they certainly did not expect resurrection. They went to dwell in their grief, and the angel met them in it and sat with them and said, “Live. Live fully, live freely, live abundantly. Practice resurrection.”

And so, friends, let’s every day do something that, like resurrection, does not compute. Let’s love the Lord. Let’s love the world with a bared heart. Let’s let go of fear and pain. Let’s even love someone who doesn’t deserve it. Let’s be joyful, though we consider all the facts. Let’s practice resurrection.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

¹ Accessed online such as at

<https://allpoetry.com/poem/12622463-Manifesto--The-Mad-Farmer-Liberation-Front-by-Wendell-Berry>

² Psalm 118:23-24