

CLIFTON PASTORAL CHARGE
Old Barns and Hilden United Churches



EASTER 2024

Greetings Clifton Pastoral Charge! Happy Easter!!

Acts 5:27

When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council.

The high priest questioned them, saying,

*“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,
yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching,
and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.”*

But Peter and the apostles answered,

“We must obey God rather than any human authority.”

As I reflected this year on the perennial message of Easter, I thought of how experiential faith can bring us courage and hope amid continuing fear and despair.

While the Easter stories in the Gospels are varied in their details of the resurrection, what is clear is in the passage above from the Book of Acts is that a small group of disciples and followers of Jesus were transformed by some form of an experience of the risen Christ. The effect of it was in their original actions of courage and in the on-going faith in Christ that is still present today!

From cowering in fear and dread of threats from civil and religious authorities, the first disciples boldly proclaimed the Gospel at risk of life and limb! What a turnaround!

Something extraordinary gave them that courage.

Similarly, with the injustice and violence of Rome and its collaborators everywhere, it would have been easy to despair when Christ was crucified; easy to give up Christ’s mission.

But the experience of resurrection gave them hope that life, not death, has the final word; and the hope that God's will and way was possible "on earth as it is in heaven."

That kind of faith, hope and courage is needed more than ever in our world today. Individually and collectively, it feels like we are going through a tougher time than usual these past few years.

My hope and prayer for us all this year is that, like the coming of spring and sunlight, the transforming spiritual experience of resurrection can be personally ours as well and that Easter will bring our spirits back to life in all its fullness and give us the courage we need for deeper discipleship.

Come join us especially for the four Act drama of Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday.

March 24 th	ACT 1	Palm Sunday	9:30 a.m. Hilden; 11:00 a.m. Old Barns
March 28 th	ACT 2	Maundy Thursday	7:00 p.m. in Old Barns
March 29 th	ACT 3	Good Friday	2:00 p.m. in Hilden
March 31 st	ACT 4	Easter Sunday Celebration	9:30 a.m. Hilden; 11:00 a.m. Old Barns

Yours in ministry,

Rev. Phillip Kennedy

