



# The United Methodist Church

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“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24, we read, “*On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. Two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them and said, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but risen!”*”

We often look to which has already died to find life. We dwell in broken dreams, lost loves, what could have been, and what is not. We can wallow in our hurts and pain, “*looking for the living among*” that what should have been buried by now.

We *tend* to our grievances, or grudges, and our griefs.

We *rehearse* our anger and disappointments.

We *cling* to our sorrows.

We *plan* our revenge and *seek* rétribution.

We *want* to set things right according to some ideal that we imagined.

And by nurturing our hurts and pain, we can miss the miracles around us. We can even miss the presence of the Risen Christ in our lives.

This is a time to let go of all that burdens us down and claim our relationship with a Risen Savior who gives us hope in every circumstance.

Elaine and I have been married for many years. Fifty-seven years to be exact. I could share a lot about our journey, but I am not sure it would be helpful to describe our relationship. *Where* we had our first date, *when* we first realized we were in love, and the events around the vows we made are much less significant than whether our love is alive and powerfully real in the present! Our relationship is more than an account of our early life together.

To put it another way, unless Jesus is alive for you today, knowing the facts of 2000 years ago will not make you have faith in the power of God.

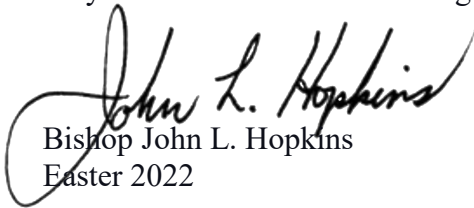
Is Jesus alive for you today? or “Do you still seek the living among the dead?” Do you believe that Christ is Risen? Will you stake your life on the resurrection of Jesus?

Belief in the resurrection is *not* a claim that Jesus did not die or a claim that he was resuscitated to his former existence. No, belief in the resurrection is a claim that Jesus entered a new form of existence with God so he could continue to be with us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is alive! He lives! He is present *with* us and *for* us!



Jesus is set loose in the world to bring light out of darkness, forgiveness out of sin, and life out of death. He is the One who can bring joy out of sorrow, faith out of doubt, hope out of despair, and love out of fear. And he invites us to join him and proclaim God's power to all who are lost and without hope. The "real Jesus" is not just a figure from the past but a relationship in the present. "*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*" Do you believe that? Let your relationship with Jesus transform your life and set you free to serve others in his name.

May the Resurrected Christ bring peace to you and our broken world this Easter.

  
Bishop John L. Hopkins  
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