**3-21-19 (Easter Sunday)**

 **Where is Jesus?**

**By Rev. Sheryl Stewart**

Isaiah 65: 17-25 1 Corinthians 15: 19-26 Luke 24: 1-12

RR: Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

**Summary: Jesus is not in the tomb. He is out and about. He is with the Father, He is within me, and His Spirit still shakes the world. Maybe a better question is, “Where am I?” Where we are, there He is, amongst us.**

 Isaiah and the Apostle Paul speak of a future when God’s promises are fulfilled. We think of Heaven when we hear them, but the prophets of the Kingdom of God foretell a new Heaven and a new Earth. Jerusalem is no longer rubble with one pitiful, remaining Wailing Wall. Heaven’s temple is on Earth. God’s angels are still residents in the spiritual realm created as their natural environment, but God, as in Eden, has made His home among us.

 That time is still in the future. Now, we are in the situation of the women who came with spices to Jesus’ tomb to anoint a corpse, but He is not there. He is risen. Jesus is not waiting to meet us at His empty tomb. Where is Jesus?

 There is more than one right answer, because Jesus doesn’t stay put! He is up and about His Father’s business. So, in the days before His Ascension, we see Jesus visiting His friends. He appears in secret rooms despite locked doors, He goes hiking to Emmaus, He cooks lunch for His disciples during their fishing break in Galilee. Jesus even climbs a mountain and preaches to as many as 500 people at once before rising into the air and out of sight among the clouds. Everyone looks at each other: where did He go; where is Jesus?

 Jesus will even appear again after His Ascension in a blinding light to a man who persecuted the church as he travels to Damascus. Paul was planning to continue his efforts to wipe out those blasphemous Christians. Since that vision, many others have seen Jesus, not the least of them, John of Patmos as he penned the book of Revelation. Some of us sitting right here in Gaines Congregational church have had such visions and dreams. So, where is Jesus?

 This is one of those multiple-choice exam questions when you get to choose “all of the above.” Jesus is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. Through the gift of Holy Spirit, Jesus is in the Word we believe and share; thus, He is in us. Jesus is in the cup of cold water given in His Name. Jesus is in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Where two or more of us gather in His Name, He is among us, unseen but vital. Yet, Jesus is also coming again.

 Like Peter and John running to the empty tomb, we can dash about trying to find Jesus, but He has already found us. Even when we are lost, He is there. I recall a poem about the empty tomb. Although most of its words are as lost to me as the name of the person who wrote it, it still haunts me.

 As on the first Easter, the question the poet asks is: “Where is Jesus?” The answer still lingers in my memory. “He isn’t here. Jesus has left His tomb and He is headed to yours.”

 So, where is Jesus? Maybe a better question is, “Where are we?” Wherever Jesus is, may you be found, and may we find each other as well. Jesus is out and about God’s work. What is that work? To heal the sick, give sight to the blind, to bring liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord to the unacceptable. If we are about these things, we cannot miss Him. He will be right there, in our midst. Amen.