

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. *John 3:16*

### **Evidence of the Resurrection**

Happy Easter!

I pray that you felt the life-giving power of God's love as we celebrate the rising of Jesus Christ.

I have to confess that Holy Week this year was a whole new experience for me. I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that my lumpectomy was scheduled for Maundy Thursday, and it did happen last Thursday. I was comforted to find that my surgeon, Dr. Jeannie Shen, is a member of San Marino Community Church, and greeted me before the surgery by sharing that she was hoping to go to their sunrise service and telling me she has been praying for me. After the surgery she said the surgery went very well, so I am feeling good. I have my follow-up consultation this Friday, but this was my last planned surgery, so yeah!

By Sunday, I was able to get up to attend a couple of Easter services, and I was able to recognize evidence of the Resurrection in those services.

The first service was at Westminster Presbyterian Church, and you should be seeing an article in the *Pasadena Star-News* that highlights how there are now three churches worshipping at the same time on Westminster's campus! I love that Westminster, right on the border of Altadena, has opened their doors to churches and community groups that have lost their buildings. Last week I was able to visit two of the churches; yesterday I stayed in Lawrence Chapel, across the hall from the church office. As Altadena Community Church gathered this Easter morning, they brought in some lovely accents of color. First, folks were happy to see some strands of origami cranes strung over the backdrop to the lectern that acts as the pulpit. This church was known for having 1000 cranes for peace flying from the ceiling of the sanctuary. One of the young people of the church started to fold new cranes; some she left in the rubble of the ACC building—apparently some folks saw them and thought it was a miracle they survived the fire! Some she left with her mother, an elementary school music teacher. Mom learned that the third-grade class was reading *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, so their teacher offered to have the class string up the cranes. Though there was no timeline for the project, Mom was thrilled that the teacher showed up on Friday with the cranes, just in time to adorn the Easter service.

The other splash of color came from one of the church's treasured Easter traditions, the flowering of the cross. Of course the original cross frame burned in the fire, but the pastor emeritus, upon his retirement, was gifted with a miniature version of the cross frame. Though his house also burned in the fire, the cross was in the garage and was spared—so they had a flowered cross again! Several families in that church lost loved ones in just the last month, yet they were there, with the most beautiful flowers to add to the cross. The bounty of color from all the flowers was a testament that life bursts forth, conquering death.



The second worship service I attended was the third anniversary of Interwoven as a new worshipping community, and there were signs of new life there as well. The renovation is progressing, including new chairs and carpeting in the sanctuary, and they had their first wedding at the church last week. The soloist from the Eagle Rock church now sings with the Interwoven worship team, and she began the service with “Lamb of God” and ended with “Risen.” The chorus of “Risen” filled my heart with Christ’s love:

Risen  
to set the captives free.

Risen  
to ransom you and me  
to bind up every broken heart  
to conquer death and sin.

Risen  
to bring us home again.

There are so many ways God’s death-defeating love is made evident in our lives, and they are not restricted to words, as important as they are. I pray that your Easter was filled with evidence that Christ has risen, that death is not the final answer—that life goes on, and thrives in God’s world.

May you see evidence of the Resurrection . . .

in the scent of orange blossoms  
in music, performed with passion  
in the beauty of a rose  
in the kindness of a stranger, or a long-lost friend  
in a meal shared with family  
in a moment of rest and trust in God’s provision  
in the gathering of Christian community, joined by the love of Christ, shared with all the world.

Happy Easter, and may the fulfilled promise of Easter bloom in your hearts and throughout your lives.

With Resurrection joy,

