

Zion's UCC of Taborton
Easter Sunrise Service
April 1, 2018
Rev. Konrad Raup

My God and Your God
Acts 10: 34-43 & John 20: 1-18

Even as we shout our alleluias, and, we celebrate the knowledge that death has been vanquished, there is another important theme that is part of the Easter message.

Peter, in our reading from the Book of Acts says it quite plainly: God shows no partiality among people. That means that God is ready at any time to form a relationship with anyone and in any place. Our God is not the Christian God. Neither is God a Jewish God. Or a Muslim God, or Hindu God or any such deity. There is only God. A God who is still speaking to all who will listen.

That's why, at the beginning of the communion Rite this morning, I will say that this table is open to everyone. Whether you are a Christian, an adherent to another faith, a seeker, an agnostic or even an atheist, God welcomes you to the paschal feast because our God is your God.

It is truly as Jesus told Mary Magdalene in our Gospel reading: "I'm going up to my father and your father, and to my God and your God". And, Jesus speaks those words, not only to Mary Magdalene, but to every human being who has ever lived in any time and in any place.

We are all children of God, and God speaks to each of us. These words may be different in different times and in different places because God speaks in ways that the hearer can understand. The words may seem like gibberish to us, but they are profound to others. For many, it won't even be in words. It can be in the beauty of creation. Look around you. Don't you find God in this place? For some it may be in music. For others silence, the smile of a child, or even the love offered by a pet. God speaks in many ways because people listen in many ways.

Religion is our way of organizing our response to God's voice. Some of it we do pretty well. But, like all human endeavors, it usually falls short. Often, We try and make the words we hear the only words allowed. God speaks to us, so God can't be speaking to you. How God must laugh at our feeble attempts to limit the divine.

During his time on this Earth, Jesus continually expanded the concept of who were God's children in that place and time. He included rich and poor, women, and children. He brought in "foreigners" like the Syro-Phonecian woman, Roman officials, and even that mentally ill man from the land of the Gerasenes. My God, and your God, and their God.

The very name of this day— Easter— is taken from the Norse goddess Oestre, who, in their religion, was thought to bring springtime rebirth and new life. As their and our understanding of God evolved and deepened, we began to see the parallels and together we began to recognize the one God who speaks to all of us.

And, My friends, on this Easter morning, God continues speaking to us in many, many ways. So, My challenge to you today is to ask you just to listen. Listen in all the things you do; in the things you read; in all the sights and sounds of your life. Listen for God. The one you will find is my God and Your God. The one who shows no partiality.

One of the oldest non-verbal ways of coming closer to god is through the bread and wine of the Eucharist, and so I say...[go to communion Rite]

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