Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today’s Psalm tells us “This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it. We rejoice every day for God’s gift of each day but today heightens that feeling because today we discover He is Risen… This third day when the tomb was found empty changed the history of the world. For the hopeless there is now hope. This is good news indeed. If this would not have happened we would not be here today along with the millions also who have come together for worship. For us it begins in the baptismal font. We too die, we die with Christ, but we too join in Jesus’ resurrection. As baptized people we believe in Christ which opens us up to unconditional grace where God sees us a being blameless to be righteous. Paul tells us he is the least of the Apostles because he persecuted Christians. Yet, when Saul was blind Jesus opened his eyes so he could see him again and became Paul a new creation. This encounter is why Paul considered himself to be a living Apostle. Jesus died for Paul and everyone else so their sins could be forgiven. This means because of our belief in Christ we too will be forgiven. We heard last week in John 3:16-17 16 “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. 17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” What an act of love. Peter tells us God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. This is good news indeed for everyone. It compels us to tell everyone what he has done for us, giving us hope where there is hopelessness, bringing death to life.

In today’s story, Saturday has ended and on the third day the women who followed Jesus and cared for him and nurtured him did only not abandon Jesus as did the Apostles. They do what they do when someone dies. They go and anoint Jesus body. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead and Martha had already anointed Jesus in John 12:3. This was the first of two anointings of Jesus, with both in the same week. Each time, a valuable jar of perfumed ointment each worth a year’s wages was used. The second anointing next took place [two days](https://bibleview.org/en/bible/easter/womananoints/) prior to the crucifixion by unknown woman depicted in Mark 14:3 (and other gospels) at Simon the Leper’s dinner. People were not too pleased such extravagance would be wasted. Here’s the thing, Mary knew that her friend Jesus was going to die on the cross, while even those around her, who were listening to Jesus. did not believe, or understand, that this was going to happen.

Yet, here again women are going to do what they do when someone dies, they bought spices to anoint Jesus. They not only nurtured Jesus during his life and ministry but are there in his death. Here they are mourning by carrying out a valuable task. Along the way they started discussing who would roll away this massive stone. Perhaps in their mourning they had not thought about this necessary task. Then-they were surprised. They were taken aback. W\They did not see this coming, a huge, heavy stone rolled away. So they entered the tomb-but there was no Jesus! Instead they found a young man dressed in white (think angel) sitting to the right. Cognitive dissidence-what they saw was not at all expected. The young man, sensing their shock lovingly tried to calm them. He stated they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified but because he has risen he was not there. Can this be true? He young man showed them where Jesus had been laid. To assure everyone he instructed them to tell Peter and the disciples he will go ahead of them in Galilee and they will see him, just like he had told them. And they fled the tomb. Just like Flip Wilsom used to say, they did not hop, skip or jump-they dashed in their competing messages of terror and amazement and because of heir fear they did not say anything to anyone.

My hope is your amazement helps to create a new and right spirit within you. It is my hope that when you realize because the tomb was found empty when we believe in Christ no matter what happens you will be ok. Death has been defeated, As a follower of Christ knowing we have eternal life gives us the freedom to help others. Of course, we show the love of Christ by devoting time and resources to the Mission House – the St Paul Pantry that feeds the hungry in the community. We take feeding the hungry as a clear, unambiguous mandate from Jesus. We also serve others in many ways but it is important to have a clear focus on how we spend our time and resources where both increasingly decrease. Thank you all who help us to carry out God’s mission to the world for the glory of God in response to the blessings, including the gift of his Son, that God has given to us.

Let us pray…