

 **The Bethel Pulpit**

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 312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison WI 53703

Text: John 13:31-35 and Rev. 21:1-6

In our Easter celebration and in our lessons for today two extraordinary statements are made. In the Gospel Jesus says right after sending Judas out from the Last Supper with the disciples to go and betray him, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him.” And earlier we heard from our Revelation passage that the one sitting on the Throne say, “Behold I make all things new!” In the midst of the crucifixion we are hearing “now God is glorified”, and “behold I make all things new.”

Is a new beginning, a glorification if you will, a new day, a plan B possible for you and me? Can God be glorified in the act of betrayal, can things actually become new again?

So often I look with eyes that have seen too many accidents, too much violence, too much hatred and I want to say “No”, but then—

EASTER HAPPENS! Now the Green Blade Rises

Is “new” really possible?

So often I listen with ears that have heard too many lies, too many broken promises, too many harsh words of criticism, too many words of doom and destruction and I want to say “No” but then—

EASTER HAPPENS! Now the Green Blade Rises

Can my world, can our world have a Plan B? Can we start over again in the Garden of Hope and healing?

So often when I tune in to my heart, it has been broken by how nations treat nations, how those without power or access to power are ruled by those in authority, how even in family relationships being right wins over being loved, how often I would rather turn away than turn towards people around me, and my heart wants to say “No” a Plan b won’t work, we are unable to make changes and are destined to repeat past faults, and then—

EASTER HAPPENS! Now the Green Blade Rises

What does Easter look like? What does “new” look like? What might being glorified look like?

A bird flies into a window and falls down bewildered and dazed, struggling to regain equilibrium and, hopefully flight.

Is that Easter? Is getting up and trying again the first sign of the green blade breaking the soil in search of the warmth of the sun?

A father says “Son, I love you”, the son accepts and reciprocates after many years of separation though physically living close to one another.

Is that Easter? Is that a sign of a tomb that is empty—the remains of a life it was supposed to be holding now breaking out in a new relationship—like a green blade pushing for its very life?

Those blessed giving to those in need, those with courage speaking for and with those without voice, those with the conviction of a better way linking arms with ones overwhelmed and overcome with fear.

Is that Easter? Is that what “new” in the sight of God looks like? Is that a sign that cold and frozen conditions and relationships can be thawed back to life with love, support, and forgiveness, that the weight of ground holding life captive can be pushed and prodded aside making place and space for a green blade rising?

Where is Easter today? Where can we see God’s glory? Where can we observe “new”?

Is it seen in the addicted reaching out and gaining respect for self and other?

Is it in a caregiver giving respect without being rewarded with even a smile?

Is Easter’s sign the arms of a baby reaching up and out to be held and cuddled?

Is it in the older arms reaching down to meet those arms?

Is Easter today a smile shared which encourages the receiver to unknit his brow and loosen her facial muscles to return the sign?

Is that a green blade pushing up and out in the cracks between cement slabs, or from under clumps of hard, dry ground?

Is that EASTER today?

Remember the first ones who went to the tomb early in the morning? They went tentatively to the tomb and found what they were not looking for.

Is that a sign of Easter—finding what we are not looking for?

The women heard words spoken to them that they could not understand—“not here”, “changed”, “risen”, and then they did remember what had been told them.

Is that Easter? Remembering what we have been told in the past?

They ran and told others?

Is that Easter? Is God’s glory seen in our sharing? Is that where “new” happens? Is nurturing and cultivating the green blade to rise where God is living in us?

The other disciples ran too, and were blown away by finding nothing—no fear, no mutilated body, no death.

Is that Easter—the opposite of fear, hurt, and sorrow? Can the green blade heal, restore hope, and give new life?

Where is Easter today?

It’s in the green blade waving to each of us in the field we call our life.

It’s the green blade bending toward our needs and then pulling us along to our hope.

Is a new beginning, a new day, a Plan B possible for our lives?

EASTER says “Yes”; now, in your life and in mine, now the green blade’s rising!!!

Amen.