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Beloved, all:

In an age of bitter divisions in families and widening chasms among neighbors, sometimes we've come to see the wisdom of not saying anything, of keeping the peace. We know what it means to be afraid of saying anything that could compromise the fragile relationships that bind us together.

But, that's not Easter. Resurrection with its promise of reconciliation and its irrepressible hope is news too good to keep to ourselves. In the resurrection our fears are overcome by faith - such faith, said Martin Luther, frees us without compulsion to gladly receive everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything out of love and praise of God.

Easter is a word of hope for those weary from mourning and numbed by violence: Death is not the last word, for nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Easter is a word of reconciliation for those who live in fear and feel outside of community: For God so loved the world he did not send Jesus to condemn us. We are God's beloved children, all of us; in Jesus we have the grace-filled power of salvation.



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At barriers we erect to divide us, the risen Christ meets us, turning walls of fear and distrust into tables of reconciliation and hope. The stone has been rolled back! This is our Easter witness, a story we must tell in faith; good news that cannot be silenced by our fears.

Let us flee the tomb not in fear, but by faith, with good news for all.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!



William (Bill) Gohl, Bishop
Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. - Mark 16:1-8

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