



# TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*on the Branford Green*

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

## ***Jesus the Gardener***

***By The Rev. Sharon Gracen***

**Easter Day, April 5, 2015**

There's a marvelous but telling little moment that comes in this beautiful Easter Gospel that I don't think I'd ever pondered before. Mary is so distressed, for so many reasons. The one that she loved had been cruelly executed. There had been nothing that she could do to stop it. All she could do now was to tend to his body, as their tradition prescribed. And so with heavy feet and heavier heart, she makes her way to the tomb in which he had been laid on Friday. But things were not as she had left them. The stone was rolled away and his body was not there. After Peter and the other disciple came and saw for themselves that he was not there, they left, equally disturbed. Alone once again, Mary is startled by the presence of two divine messengers sitting where Jesus had lain. "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answers them "someone must have taken him; I don't know where to find him!" And turning to look for some clue she sees a man and runs to ask if he knows... she thinks he is the gardener. And that's the moment. It is Jesus risen from the dead but she thinks he's the gardener.

Jesus resurrection has happened and the world cannot be the same. All that had gone wrong can now be set right. The divine will here is to return humanity to its intended condition, life in the garden. And the gardener will show us the way. The human was made in the image of God, to live in God's beautiful creation. Adam was made to be the gardener, the steward of all that God had made, to know and name the creatures, to tend the trees and the fields and the rivers. Mary doesn't recognize Jesus until he says her name. He knows her and she knows the sound of his voice.

There's another clue in this reading from John. It says that Mary went to the tomb on the first day of the week. In Genesis, on the first day of the week, the Idea of God, the Logos, the Word, was spoken and it all began. First light, then the dome and the waters, the dry land, and then the stars and the sun and the moon. And as John says in the opening lines of the Gospel, Christ was there from the beginning of creation. And now, Christ is risen to be there for the first day of the world made new.

As I pondered this portrayal of Jesus, the gardener, I did my usual poking around on the internet, so see what others had written of this moment. You know how when you do a Google search now, you get ads that relate to your search. It's a mildly creepy reminder that of how surveyed we are on line but I had to laugh because when the search results for "Jesus the gardener" came up on the screen, there was an ad...for Miracle-Gro!

Easter is the renewal of life - not just the resurrection of one man, but the insistent, faithful intention of God that life should be good, it is meant to be filled with blessing and beauty and companionship. Eve was made because God is found in community and

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companions. She was designed to be the one who helped the he to reveal the complete image of God. And now Mary, is present to witness and to help with that good news, to carry the best news - "I have seen him!" He is alive again. The tragic events of Friday, the hatred and the fear, were not powerful enough to kill love. Jesus is risen and death is shown to be one more thing that is just not what it seems. It is not the end; it is not the victor. There is hope for the world to be renewed and born again as God's garden, filled with leaves of forgiveness, trees of compassion, and blossoms of joy. Alleluia!

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