

Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey
Weekly Witness | April 18, 2017

It has been symbolic tradition (at least in our state) that as we celebrate the new life in Jesus Christ on Easter, new life is springing up around us. Newly bloomed flowers adorn crosses in our churches. [Mother animals](#) birth new offspring and eggs begin to hatch chirping birds outside our windows. Sunrise services held in outdoor chapels allow parishioners to sing of the “green blade rising” amidst the green grasses and fragrant scents of spring.

It is easy to believe in the power of the resurrection and the goodness of God in these settings. When the sun shines and creation springs anew, we more easily feel the radiance of the Easter season. We can joyfully and unabashedly join our voices with the sounds of Creation in praising a life-giving Lord.

But what happens to our triumphant praise when our environment looks more like Christ’s wounds than a celebratory array of hope? When our blue skies are clouded with smog, will we still feel God’s rays of light? Will we all feel afraid like the disciples in our upcoming Gospel lesson--anxious of what’s to come and fearful of our own guilt of the past?

Scientists assure us that our environment is changing in the now, not in a distant future. You can see the effects in the damaged water in our state’s cities, the increased destruction from natural disasters on our coast, and the threatened biodiversity in our public lands.

And yet, though this is imminent change with local and global consequences, there is still Easter hope to be found. Jesus finds us in the midst of despair and brings a word of peace. In the Gospel lesson from John, he shares this greeting of peace three times, an invitation for the disciples to come out from hiding and share in the grace of the resurrection. Through Jesus’s [wounded body](#) and his words of peace, the disciples are brought to new life.

We, too, cannot hide from the changing nature of the world. We must commit to collective confession and restoration in order to cultivate new life on Earth.

You can start by reading the joint Lutheran and Episcopal commitment to “[Sustaining hope in the face of climate change](#)” and discussing ways your local congregation and community can participate in sustaining Easter hope.

By putting feet to pavement, people from all over the nation are joining together on April 29 for the “[People’s Climate March](#).” To join the faithful delegation from New Jersey, contact Eleanor Dill of the St. Mark Lutheran Church, Oaklyn, Green Team at 856-858-1844. Any other Lutheran or Episcopalians participating in this event? Please let us know!