Introduction to
The Stations of the Resurrection

The images and text you see installed on the posts throughout the front courtyard of the church are a temporary exhibit of the Stations of the Resurrection designed by the Adult Formation Team from St. John’s. They will be on display throughout the Great 50 Days of Easter, from Easter Day (April 4) to Pentecost (May 23).

The central figure in Christianity, Jesus, was crucified in Jerusalem in what is now the state of Israel in the first century of the Common Era, and the site of his death became a pilgrimage site for Christians. Pilgrims still travel to Jerusalem to walk a path called the Via Dolorosa (Latin for ‘Way of Sorrows’), believed to be the path that Jesus walked on the way to his execution. In the 15th and 16th centuries, churches in Europe developed the Stations of the Cross, designed to replicate the Via Dolorosa for those unable to travel to Jerusalem and walk the actual route.

Most Stations of the Cross stop with Jesus’s body being placed in the tomb. But the story of Jesus doesn’t end at the tomb. Jesus was raised from the dead, changing the story for all time, giving us hope that death does not have to be the end of the story. We believe that in our baptism (the ritual by which we become Christians), we are united with Jesus in his death and in his resurrection from the dead. The 20th century Roman Catholic priest who proposed creating Stations of the Resurrection to complement the Stations of the Cross wanted to emphasize the hope and joy of the Christian faith. Thus, the Stations of the Resurrection are also known as the Via Lucis (Latin for ‘Way of Light’).

In this year of pandemic, when death has been such a close companion for all of us, St. John’s offers this exhibit of the Stations of the Resurrection as a source of hope and comfort. Death has been overcome through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Abundant, joyful life in him is available to every one of us. We invite you to walk the Via Lucis, the Way of Light, and reflect on the story of Jesus’s resurrection as foreshadowed by the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and recorded in the Gospels in the Christian New Testament.

The Art: We purposely chose images from various centuries including contemporary work. Each is an attempt to give a nuanced voice to the great mystery of the resurrection in the style of its era. The images and symbols we portray and carry in reverence are foundational to our faith in Christ and the Trinity. Notice your response to each image and what understanding it is offering you, even across centuries.
Station 1: The Stone is Rolled Away

The stone

that Jacob placed to honor the Lord where they wrestled  (Gen. 28.10-22)
that can be the house of God (Gen. 28.22)
that is a witness and a watch post (Gen. 31.44-48, Josh. 24.27)
that is not left on another when the Temple is destroyed (Mt. 24.2)
that the builders rejected  (Ps. 118.22, Mt. 21.42, Mk. 12.10, 1 Pet. 2.4-8)
that angels would not let Jesus dash his foot against  (Ps. 91.12, Mk. 4.6, Lk. 4.9-11)

is rolled away.

An earthquake and an angel roll away the stone.  (Mt. 28.2)
It is already rolled away when the women arrive.  (Lk. 24.2-3, Mk. 16.3-4)

Prayer: Lord, let this stone be a witness to us. Let us not reject the chief cornerstone. May we cry out so that stones won’t have to. May we, instead of casting stones, turn them to bread.
Station 2: Women Are the First Witnesses

Women whom it is shame to be killed by (Judg. 9.54)
whose pain in childbirth is the most severe pain (Ps. 48.6, Is. 13.8, 21.3, 26.17, Jer. 4.31, 6.24, 13.21-23, 30.6, 31.8, 48.41, 49.22&24, 50.43)
whose hearts are a snare and whose hands are fetters (Ecc. 7.26)
who anoint Jesus for burial (Mt. 26.6-13, Mk. 14.3-9, Lk. 7.44-48, Jn. 12.3-8)
who reflect men (1 Cor. 11.7)
who receive the dead by resurrection (Heb. 11.35)
who should learn to keep silent (1 Cor. 14.34, 1 Tim. 2.11-14+)

are the first to come to Jesus’ tomb.

An angel greets the women, says not to be afraid and to tell the disciples Jesus is risen. (Mt. 28.5-8)

A young man dressed in white greets the women, says not to be alarmed, Jesus is risen, go tell the disciples. (Mk. 16.5-8)

Two men in dazzling clothes greet the women and ask, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is risen.” The women tell the disciples, who don’t believe them. (Lk. 24.4-10)

Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and tells Simon Peter, who goes to see for himself. (Jn. 20.2)

Prayer: Lord, let us honor women whose faith is great, and listen when they speak. Let us be encompassed by faithful women.
Station 3: Jesus Appears at the Tomb

Jesus
who is arrested
who is scourged
who wears a crown of thorns
who is mocked
who carries a cross to Golgotha
whose hands and feet are nailed to the wood
whose side is pierced with a sword
who dies and is laid in a tomb *(various gospels)*

appears, alive. Jesus greets the women. *(Mt. 28.9-10)*

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, who thinks he is the gardener. He asks why she weeps. When he says her name, she knows him. He says,” Tell the disciples.” *(Mk. 16.9, Jn. 20. 14-18)*

“Tell them to go to Galilee”, he says to the women. But the disciples don’t believe them. To the disciples, it seems an idle tale. *(Mk. 16.11, Lk. 24.10-11)*

Prayer: Let us honor the Lord’s suffering. Let us see him when he calls our names. Let us worship him whenever he appears. May we affirm he is risen, even when we are not believed.
Station 4: The Disciples Believe

The disciples
who leave their jobs
who work on the sabbath
who eat the bread he breaks
who eat with anyone
who help feed the five thousand
who quarrel among themselves
who listen when he speaks
who fall asleep
who deny him
who mourn him (various gospels)

finally believe.

On the mountain in Galilee the eleven see Jesus. Some worship him, some doubt. (Mt. 28.16-17)

Peter and John see the empty shroud and believe. (Jn. 20.3-10)
Two see him in the country but are not believed. (Mk. 16.12-14)

Jesus appears to the eleven, chides them for lack of faith, for stubbornness. He stands among them and says, Peace be with you. He bids Thomas touch his hands and side, and Thomas believes. “Blessed are those,” Jesus says, “who have not seen and yet believe.” (Jn. 20.24-29)

Prayer: With all whom we meet, let us eat the bread the Lord breaks. When we doubt, may he carry us back to him. May all who have not yet seen, believe.
Station 5: Jesus Appears Beyond the Tomb

Jesus

who is born in a barn
who is baptized
who is a perch for a dove
who wanders with friends
who eats with anyone
who walks on water
who weeps
who rebukes the devil
who heals the sick
who raises the dead
who talks of paradise

keeps appearing.

Jesus walks with two followers going to Emmaus, blesses bread and breaks it. Then they know him, and he vanishes. (Lk. 24.13-30)

He stands among the eleven like a ghost, eats broiled fish. (Lk. 24.36-43)

He enters through locked doors, says, Peace be with you, and they rejoice (Jn. 20.19-20)

By the Sea of Galilee, he tells Peter where to cast his nets, then cooks a breakfast of bread and fish. (Jn. 21.1-14)

Prayer: May we, as disciples, enter through the locked doors of hearts. May we be a perch for the dove of peace. Let us care for our neighbors, that they may believe.
Station 6: Jesus Commissions the Disciples

Jesus
who blesses the poor in spirit,
the mourners,
the merciful,
the pure in heart,
the peacemakers,
the persecuted,
and those who yearn to be good
who drives out sellers and moneychangers
who brings not peace but a sword (various gospels)
tells his disciples what to do next.

He says, “All authority that is mine is yours. Go teach to all what I have taught you. Proclaim it to all creation.” (Mt. 28:18-19)

He breathes on them and says, “Forgive sins, retain sins.” (Jn. 20:21-23)

He says to Simon Peter, “Feed my sheep.” (Jn. 21:15-17)

He says, “Remember, I am with you always.” (Mt. 28:20)

Prayer: May we be people of salt and light. Let us teach forgiveness. When we think of money, may we only think of what good it can do others. May the Holy Spirit live with us. Let us feed the Lord’s sheep.
Station 7: Jesus Ascends

Jesus
who says, “Love God, love your neighbor”
returns home.
He lifts up his hands and blesses us and withdraws, (Lk. 24:50-51)
is taken up into heaven,
and sits down at the right hand of God. (Mk. 16:19)

Prayer: May we love God and our neighbors as God loves us.
Station 8: The Holy Spirit Descends

The Holy Spirit
who swept over the face of the waters (Gen. 1.2)
who resides in all prophets (Ge. 41.38, Nu. 24.2, Dt. 34.9, 1 Sa. 10.10, Jb. 27.3, 1 Pe. 1.11)
who inspires and bids us enjoy our work (Ex. 35.31, Ec. 3.21)
who can drive out evil spirits (Mk. 5.13, Lk. 7.21)
who when our spirits are broken with sorrow and our bones dried up can lift us like the wind (Ps. 51.17, Pr. 15.13, Pr. 17.22, Am. 4.13, Jn. 3.5-8)
who gives us new hearts and new spirits (Ez. 11.19, 11.24, 18.31, 36.-26)
who is willing even when the flesh is weak (Mt. 26.41)
who is joy, who is love and peace (Ga. 5.22)
who is wisdom and revelation (Ep. 1.17)
who came forth from the stump of Jesse (Is. 11.2)

descends on the disciples.

They speak in faraway tongues, and the crowd thinks they are drunk. Peter says the disciples are only filled with the Holy Spirit. He tells the crowd that Jesus, “who was crucified,” has returned to life, and has freed us all from death. (Acts 2.1-24)

Prayer: When the flesh is weak, let us call on the Holy Spirit, who can create in us new hearts, who can cast out evil spirits. Though we may be thought to have tasted new wine, let the Holy Spirit breathe in us the joy and peace of life in the love of Christ. With sorrow mended and bones revived, may the Holy Spirit lift us like the wind.