

**A Sermon for Easter Sunday
April 5, 2026**



Come to New Life!

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John 20:1-18

New Life Among Us

This morning we will welcome a new member into our community. Little Everett Theodore Dale, about two months old now, will be the newest Christian among us. We will be enlarged by one new Christian! We will joyfully greet him as the newest among us.

Baptism is an ancient rite of initiation. It is not important what the age of the candidate is, or how much water is used. Our candidate will be initiated with sprinkles of water on his tiny head. Water is an ancient symbol encompassing cleanliness – Everett will receive a symbolic bath! And he will be joining centuries of the faithful who saw water as a way of liberation, of freedom. The Israelites walked safely through the dry water channel of the Red Sea, fleeing oppression. Early Christians walked through a large pool of water, immersing themselves and symbolically dying to their old lives, and arising anew to their new lives in Christ. They are reborn in water and the Spirit. This is no ordinary bath!

We will give Everett his Christian name, Everett Theodore, and seal him with the sign of the cross, marking him as Christ's own forever. It is significant that this is Easter morning: there is new life for Everett, and for all of us!

This is a New Thing, reflecting God's action in the world. I watched the enthronement of our new Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Elizabeth Mullaly, last week, which happened on March 25, the commemoration of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. The Gospel tells of the angel Gabriel visiting Mary and telling her that she will bear God's son. She questions the angel, because this is a strange thing: a child conceived by a virgin. Gabriel agrees that it is indeed strange, but nothing is impossible with God! Archbishop Sarah said, "God was doing a New Thing!" Yes, and God was doing a new thing by enthroning the first woman Archbishop of Canterbury on that day too. Even her name reflects the oddity of God's work: Sarah and Elizabeth, two barren women in the Old and New Testament stories, both become fruitful and bear sons. These are new things. And this morning, when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we shout for joy: wow, yes, this is really a new thing!

I have thought a lot about the two Marys – Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, Jesus' disciple and apostle. Both of the Marys had strange encounters that announced new and almost unbelievable things. Mary, Jesus' mother, could barely comprehend what the angel Gabriel was telling her, but she took it all on faith and agreed to bear the Son of God. Jesus' life got off to an auspicious start, heralded by angels, Maji, protected by Mary and Joseph, fleeing into Egypt for safe harbor.

We pick up Jesus' story 33 years later, and this time the political authorities were successful in killing him. Mary Magdalene followed him to the end of his earthly life, and she showed up at his tomb, wanting to care for his body. Instead, she found him alive, risen from the dead. Like the first Mary, she could hardly comprehend this new situation, this new thing. God did a new thing that Easter morning. Nothing is impossible with God.

Christ is risen! And because he is risen, so are we! This is our Easter story. This tiny baby, new life among us, joins our community and enlarges us all. This is a new thing! Bring forth this baby boy!