

## Devotion, Week of April 5, 2026 – Easter

**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

As I ponder over Resurrection Sunday and the message we looked at from John about Mary Magdala, I think about rolling away the stone. In each of the gospels, Mary Magdala comes to the tomb and finds the stone rolled away. In some of the stories, other women are with her. And in Matthew, the women, along with guards sent from Pilate to make sure no one stole the body, witness an earthquake and an angel who comes down from heaven, rolls the stone away, and sits on it! In some stories, the women meet Jesus, and in others they run to tell the disciples. Peter goes to the tomb in Luke and John, but just goes home, wondering what happened. I always wonder what the women who go to the tomb think they are going to find. In Mark and Luke, the women bring spices to anoint the body, and in Mark they are wondering who will roll the stone away for them so they can do this. But when they get there, the stone is rolled away and a young man in a white robe is sitting inside. In Matthew and John, the text just says that they go to see the tomb.

Each story has differences – the number of angels, whether Jesus appears, and what happens next. In Mark, the women don't tell anybody because they are afraid! In Luke and John, Jesus appears several times after the resurrection, but in Matthew he only appears once, on the mountain in Galilee. In Matthew and Mark the angels tell the women to instruct the disciples to go to this mountain, because Jesus has gone ahead of them there. So why all the differences in the story?

I think it depends on who told the story that got written down. Mark's version is the oldest, and John is the last written. The details get changed over time. But in all of them, the stone is rolled away and there are witnesses to the empty tomb. That is what is important – to prove that Jesus really rose from the dead. In all the stories, the witnesses are told by an angel or angels to go and testify to this. And that is what we are to do in this season of Eastertide. We are to testify that we know that Jesus is risen. Alleluia!

*Jeanne*