



### **Grain**

“By coming to know Christ crucified, we participate in his resurrection. By pouring ourselves out, we gain our lives.” Joyce Hollyday

**Submitted by Peter Bakken, Madison, WI**

### **Field**

“5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” Mark 16:5-8

### **Thoughts**

I’ve been to my share of surprise parties. One that I helped to organize for a friend in college stands out to me because I still remember the look on her face. She thought we were driving out of town for the day to go shopping and when we returned to my apartment, where I said I had forgotten something, there were my co-conspirators ready to shout, “Surprise!” Her eyes altered. She looked shocked, almost afraid, before her broad smile appeared. The wedding shower we threw was out of sync for her, turning plans for the day upside down.

What is wonderful can take us off guard. Something shifts in a relationship; God helps to lift us out of the muck but the muck was familiar. An oppressive public policy we’ve worked to change is dismantled just when cynicism was becoming our friend. Adults accustomed to bemoaning younger generations’ apathy are suddenly overwhelmed with a surge of youthful prophetic voices crying out for just laws. Youth who have lost hope in older people, witness 1,000’s of adults following them.

We are entering a profound time in our church year, one that defines who we are - people who embrace death and resurrection. The joy of resurrection can also inspire fear. Mark’s Gospel ends with Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome “seized with terror and amazement.” Jesus said he’d be back, but really? The body gone? They ran. It was great news Jesus didn’t die with the oppression that seemed to have the last word for so long winning out, but things were out of whack. Maybe a nice, tidy summary would help, something we don’t get in Mark. He doesn’t end with the neatness of a contemporary novelist or self-help expert. Mark’s account offers no post-resurrection roadmap, just this last surprise - a new, wide horizon that is disturbing, undefined, and beautiful. Everything is changed by God’s love.

### **Prayer**

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy