

“Now the green blade riseth / from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth / many days has lain;
love lives again / that with the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.”

+ + +

I will bless the Lord at all times / his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

I sought the Lord and he answered me /
and delivered me out of all my fears.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

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We gather tonight for the new fire of Easter,
our proclamation that Christ is Risen,
that even death bows before the power of God.

But lest you think all we are doing is telling old tales...
or even if you think we are only talking about a single event,
remember that resurrection life - this is just what God does!

This is what God has always done, what God is doing right now,
and what God will always do.

This is what God does! This is who God is!

God is Love, we sing, and so God is.

But God is also LIFE.

God is life, and the life was the light of all people.

The Life is the light that shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not, does not, will not EVER overcome it.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

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Over and over and over in our lives it can feel like this is the end,
like this is the time when God gave up on me, forgot me,
the time when it turned out Death
is actually more powerful than God.

And didn't it feel like that when Adam and Eve
defied God and were cast out of the Garden?
But what came next?

Not idyllic, garden life, for sure,
but messy, creative, world-exploring,
knowledge-of-good-and-evil...Life.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

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And didn't it feel like God had turned his back on Abraham,
as he trudged up that mountain - filled with dread,
resigned to the idea that this God
really did want him to kill his son,
that this God demanded blood,
just like all those other false gods?

But then the angel came and stopped him, came and showed him the truth,
and Abraham learned that this God is not just powerful.
This God is Good! This God is True!

I will bless the Lord at all times.

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“What have you done to us?” they cried out to Moses,
“Were there not enough graves in Egypt?
Is that why you drug us out here to die in the wilderness?”

But neither the Red Sea nor the Wilderness were the end for God’s people;
they were a new beginning.

And yes, it was hard and messy and strange.

But it was Life. New life in the face of death.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

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Over and over and over we are reminded that God is the God of life.

Sometimes it’s when you feel like a stranger in a strange land,
feeling cold and alone when God comes up and gives you a new heart,
a heart full of life and love and hope again.

Sometimes it’s when you find yourself sifting through
the ruins of your old home, your old life.

Always the temptation to give up, to give in - to despair, surrender, death.
“Everything I had, everything I built, is gone.”

But then God’s Spirit begins to blow.

God looks at the bones of your old life and says,
“Mortal, can these bones live?”

And God says, “Listen up! I am about to do a new thing.
Do you not perceive it?”

And sometimes God even sends an angel to roll back the one stone
you thought could never be moved,
and the angel just sits there on top of it, smiling,
and says, "Look at God!"

And no, this new life never seems to look like you think it will.
It rarely works out neatly like you want it to.
It certainly never means going back to the way things were.

That's because God is not the God of the Good Ol' Days.
God is the God of LIFE!
Hard, messy, weird, creative, beautiful, unexpected new life!

And as it was in ancient days,
so it is today - in this nation, in this state, in this little parish -
and so it is in your home, and in your heart.

Changes, awful, heartbreaking, changes will rain on us /
but we will not be afraid.

Because every night we hope /
every night we pray for a new day to arise /
and every morning when the sun shows up /
it's still a surprise.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

+ + +

"When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain /
thy touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green."