

## **An Easter Sunday Reflection—Transformed Together**

**April 5, 2026 at Centennial United Church**

by Jennifer Irving

Yesterday, my parents moved. After living for pretty much all of Neelah's life in a three bedroom double wide trailer at Maple Grove, they decided it was time to move into a two bedroom apartment in Shelburne. Closer to all the activities they love to do, a little more manageable, a LOT smaller. You can imagine, I'm sure, what that meant. But what struck me most was how many hands were needed to make it so we could leave them last night with everything they really needed, unpacked and in their new, rightful places. The most amazing moment of the move for me was when we decided that before we left we had to get their office in order (it had been the room we told the two guys and a truck to put everything in if we weren't sure where it went during the move). In a matter of minutes, two parents, two daughters and two granddaughters had moved out all the boxes. A few minutes more and we had rearranged all the furniture in there (and there was a lot—including a chest freezer) into places where said furniture could actually be used. A few more minutes and Neelah had unpacked several more boxes into a book shelf and the rest of the boxes had been restacked in the room but out of the way to be unpacked another day. Then we all demolished my dad's birthday cake before coming home for the night.

And the thing that struck me most was how long it would have taken my parents to do that move on their own. How long that office transformation might have taken – if it would even have been possible at all.

I've always loved the old adage "many hands make light work". I try to tell Olyndra and Neelah all the time that if they just help me things would get done so much faster! To which they reply—then buy more snow shovels mum!

But seriously, there isn't much that isn't made easier in life with the companionship and help of a friend or two.

In our gospel lesson from Matthew today, the women go together to anoint Jesus' body. And I know it isn't just because it'll go faster – it's because emotionally, it will be easier when they have each other to lean on and to cry with. They were going to do something that was going to be unbelievably hard and they needed each other to do it.

And I can only imagine how much sweeter the message from the angel and the encounter with Jesus was when they could exchange shocked looks and joyful, awed smiles with. When they had someone to go over it with as they headed back to the rest of Jesus' followers. "Did you notice the glow around the angel?", "Didn't Jesus look just like he always did?", "What do you think this all means?" Wouldn't they have been bouncing ideas off one another as they bounced along? Their joy growing into something tangible, something that transformed them both.

I don't know exactly what happened that first Easter morning but I know something did. Something that changed everything.

Lots of times, I get discouraged. In fact, at our Lenten Discussion group this week I said that I was beginning to doubt the words of wisdom from Margaret Mead “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” I was doubting. Don't we need a lot of people to save the planet from our greenhouse gas emissions? One church trying to lower its carbon footprint isn't going to make enough of a difference. Not even close.

And yet, a couple of women ran back to a locked upper room from that empty tomb...

A couple of disciples walked the road to Emmaus with a stranger...

A small group of followers met their risen saviour in an upper room...

And here we are, living in a changed world. Maybe, just maybe, Easter is the time when our hope can be resurrected. When we can believe again in what we can accomplish together—here's a sign of it right here—just look at what we did to this bare and lonely cross in just a matter of minutes!

And here's what gives me even more hope—we are a part of an entire denomination—the United Church of Canada all leaning on one another as we live out our Easter Faith! So this morning, I thought I would add to the hope of my message by playing our Moderator's Easter message for us “From Heartbreak to Hope”.

*<https://youtu.be/cqQEiGHRllw>*

May we celebrate the transformation we find here, together, this Easter and always, and may we transform the world!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!!