



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

April 17, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

Easter Festival

First Lesson: [Exodus 15:1-11](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 118

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 24:1-12](#)

### What Happened?

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Did you ever go to a sporting event and get distracted by something, like you got a phone call or something, then all of a sudden you hear a roar and you wonder **what happened?** It happened to me last night. It was a sporting event. It was after we had the Vigil service and I went home. I got upstairs in the apartment and UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) was on. I stopped at the China cabinet because I had to do some stuff with the China cabinet in the apartment. You can't see the TV from the China cabinet. All of a sudden I hear Paula say "Oh my" and I hear the TV getting louder and louder as a guy delivered three upper cuts and just dropped someone. But I had to go "**What happened?**" I had to go out there and say "**What happened?** I couldn't see it." I missed it.

As we gather together this morning, this idea of **what happened**, I missed it can be seen in in the apostles, the disciples. They hear the message from the women and yet because it made no sense to them, they were left in pain and suffering that the one they had followed for three years was dead and now they think someone stole His body. They didn't know what had happened. They said they still didn't believe because the women's words seemed like nonsense to them.

If you came in this morning and the last time you were in worship was Good Friday, it looks a little different up here. You have to kind of look at it and go "**What happened?** Something had to change." Do you notice all the things that are changed? Not just the lilies and not the slimming white gown I'm wearing instead of the black one, not just the banners, not just the candle, but did you notice the Dust to Dust banner? On Ash

Wednesday we put those ashes on there and that's been hanging there this whole time as a reminder that it's our sins that caused Jesus to go through everything we prepare for in Lent and Holy Week. And you notice now the ashes are gone, because Christ rose. Something happened. Something changed things.

On the middle of all those lilies on the altar, something else changed. Do you see what else changed? The cross that is on the altar in the middle is different. From Advent through this last week, it was a crucifix, with the body of Christ on the cross. Now in the middle of all those lilies, it's a bare cross. Why? **What happened?** What has changed? It's all about Easter. It's all about this truth that Christ rose and it makes everything different—EVERYTHING! Everything is changed.

Jesus was put to death because you and I need to repent in sack cloth and ashes because we're sinners. But He was raised to life for our justification. Things have changed. The tomb is empty. The cross is empty. Things have changed. He was put to death for our sins. He was raised to life for our justification, being declared "not guilty." This is what God has done for the WHOLE WORLD!

But like the disciples that I just read to you about, there are a lot of people that are still looking around going "**What happened?**" "Where is my chocolate?" "I can't find my eggs." They still don't know the true importance of **what happened**. And you and I, as those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, you and I, as those who believe that Jesus Christ did all of this for us, you and I still at times live like these words (that Christ is risen and the tomb is empty) are nonsense. We live as though things haven't changed between us and God. We live as though what He did for us in His life and in His death and in His resurrection didn't really make that big of a difference.

Can you see the pain that those disciples must have had? The women are filled with wonder and amazement, and as it sinks in, they believe what the angel said to them. They believe the Word of God because they were pointed back to the words Jesus had spoken. They remembered and they rejoiced. They went to tell someone because it was just such good news they had to share it. Christ has risen! The disciples met it with disbelief just like today many meet Jesus' resurrection with "Meh." They still don't know **what happened**.

You and I need to always be on guard against taking it for granted. I don't want you to go through that pain or that anguish that those disciples must have continued to walk in until Jesus appeared directly to them and they believed it because they saw Him. You and I aren't going to see a lot of things about why God does what He does or who He is or the things He does in our daily lives, but if you and I know **what happened** on Easter, we can trust that the God who loved us enough to live in our place and die in our place loves us enough to be with us as we go through difficulty. If we don't look to Him, we're

going to walk around with that kind of pain in our heart. I don't know about you, but I don't want to see anyone go through that.

That's why, for those of us who know **what happened**, this is what God has called us to do. He has called us to live in it, grow in it, rejoice in it every day, and then share it with one another. Don't take it for granted! Don't take for granted that people know what Easter is about. Don't take for granted that people know that heaven is open to them. Share it. Point one another to it, because in the empty tomb, you and I find the peace of sins forgiven. In the empty tomb, you and I find purpose for daily life. In the empty tomb, we find all there is that is of the utmost importance for us. We are God's forgiven children. We might live like we aren't at times, but the empty tomb leads our God to come back to us and say "This is my body. This is my blood, for you, for the forgiveness of your sins." We might live as though we don't know **what happened** from time to time, but our God comes to us and says "This is my unfailing love. I have taken away your guilt."

When you and I focus on **what happened**, it changes us. It changes everything. When we then live in response to it, people that know us might say to us, "**What happened?** You're a little different." Then we get to tell them about the amazing love of Jesus Christ. We get to tell them about the empty tomb and the open door to heaven. I still have only one goal in life. I'm going to be in heaven because of Jesus and I want you all to be there with me. I hope you live that way also and share it with the people that don't know it. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.