Gerard Manley Hopkins has a wonderful poem, where he uses the phrase “Let him Easter in us.” In this phrase, he uses the noun Easter as a verb. Hopkins writes, “Let him Easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us. Let him Easter in us.”

It is the most beautiful and powerful phrase and rings as loudly in my heart as the sound of our clanging bells tonight! Let him Easter in each one of us.

We have been on a journey this week, we have travelled through his last Supper, we have watched with him in the garden and experienced the brutal starkness of the cross. We have thought about the things that Jesus has carried for us and now we stand in the empty tomb, where in the darkness the embers of resurrection begin to glow until the whole church, the whole world is being filled with light.

Let him Easter in us! I think this is an amazing way for us to look at the transformational reality of Easter. Let Easter get into us. Let Easter come and live where we live. Breathe where we breathe. Let Easter permeate our souls. Let him Easter in us, and be a dayspring to the dimness of us.

I know this is what I desire most, in this moment, on this night. Not Easter as a noun, about a long-ago event. But Easter as a verb, as something that transforms our present lives, as something that gives us new life now, as something that gives us hope and meaning and courage. That is what all our hearts long for. Let him Easter in us!

The great Easter truth is not that we are to live newly after death, that we have to wait until we pass from this life into the next to receive his risen life - but that we are to be new here and now because of the power of the resurrection. Because of the embers in this tomb. Because of the light that shines in the darkness, that shines from our paschal candle this evening and ricochets around our church.

The women who arrived at the tomb early on that first Easter morning experienced Easter as a verb. We can’t see it at first because of how Mark tells it in this passage, but we know that it happens, because we wouldn’t be here today if it hadn’t.

He tells us, that the women came to the tomb thinking that the story had ended, that it was all over between them, the disciples and Jesus. They had gone to attend to his body, to anoint him, to wrap him carefully in linen, to give him a proper burial, and to mourn their teacher and friend.

What they get when they arrive is not what they expected but an empty tomb and the breathtaking announcement that God has raised Jesus from the dead and that he has gone ahead of them to Galilee where they will see him. They went out and fled, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Perhaps in that moment the reality of the event was so overwhelming that they were momentarily speechless, I know I certainly would have been struck dumb if I were to come face to face with an angel proclaiming something like that. In that moment for them Easter was a noun, because they said nothing. But the noun was to turn into a verb…

Our other gospels and the fact that we are here today, tell us that the women did experience Easter as a verb, because they ran and told the other disciples that Christ had been raised from the dead.

He Eastered in them and they were transformed from a group of terrified people, who were frightened and fearful, to apostles, to people who boldly went forth from the tomb and proclaimed the good news that because Christ is risen, life is stronger than death, love is stronger than hate, and God’s peace is more powerful than human violence.

Let him Easter in us and the whole world and be a dayspring to the dimness of us and creation. Easter is a verb. It is something that happens to us as we go on this journey. Easter is true when it lives where we live, breathes where we breathe and permeates our souls, even in the darkest of places.

NT Wright puts it this way: The resurrection stories in the Gospels do not say Jesus is raised, therefore we are going to heaven or therefore we are going to be raised. The Gospels say Jesus is raised, therefore, God’s new creation has begun and we’ve got a job to do.

Easter is something that happens in us. Easter is a verb. God has raised Christ from the dead and we can claim this new life and through the power of the Spirit, we can make it our own both individually and corporately as his body. A cosmic change has begun and we get to join in.

Right now, in this moment, we can let go of past hurts and mistakes, and start over. Right now, in this moment, we can overcome our fear of death and trust in the Lord of life and love. Right now, in this moment, wherever we are, we can claim new life in our families, in our jobs, in our relationships, in our churches, in this broken but beautiful world. (As Natalie’s talks throughout the week have told us) He has carried it all to the cross. We can be new here and now because the power of the resurrection. Because Jesus lives.

God’s new creation has begun, and we can joyfully participate, with light and bells and songs of praise. We can let Easter get into us; let Easter come and live where we live; breathe where we breathe, let Easter permeate our souls and lead us on.

May he Easter in us, and be a dayspring to the dimness of us.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!