



FIRST AND TRADE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES

## HE TOUCHED ME

### THE CASE OF THE EMPTY TOMB

**SCRIPTURE:** Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" and she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:18 (RSV)

Do you like mystery stories? When I was a kid, I loved to read mystery books. My favorites were the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. I especially liked "The Mystery of the Flying Express" and "The Yellow Feather Mystery." Kids today might prefer some of the Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen mystery books such "The Case of the Cheerleading Camp Mystery" or "The Case of the Weird Science Mystery."

Today we are going to hear the most exciting mystery story ever told. I call it "The Case of the Empty Tomb."

The story begins very early in the morning on the first day of the week. Jesus had just been crucified and buried. Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' followers, went to the tomb where Jesus was buried. When she got there, she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Peter and John and said to them, "They have taken the Lord's body from the tomb and I don't know where they have put him."

Peter and John raced to the tomb. John got there first. He looked in the tomb and saw the linen wrappings lying there. Then Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linens that John had seen lying there. As he investigated further, he saw the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was also folded and lying apart from the other wrappings. After Peter looked around for a few minutes, John joined him inside. When they were sure that the tomb was empty, they left and went home.

Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she looked inside the tomb and saw two angels sitting there. One of them was sitting at the head and the other at the foot where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Why are you crying?" the angels asked.

"Because they have taken my Lord and I don't know where they have put him," she answered.

Then Mary turned and was about to leave when she saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her.

Mary, thinking that he was a gardener said, "Sir, if you have taken my master away, tell me where he is so that I can go to him."

"Mary!" Jesus said.

When Jesus spoke her name, Mary knew who he was. She turned to him and cried out, "Teacher!"

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I have not yet ascended to my Father. "Go and tell my brothers that you have seen me and that I am going to return to my Father and your Father, my God and your God."

Mary found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord." Then she gave them the message that Jesus had told her to tell them.

And that solves "The Case of the Empty Tomb." The tomb is empty because Jesus is not dead, he is alive! He is risen just as he said!

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, the empty tomb is no mystery to us. He is risen! We rejoice in his name. Amen



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# INHERIT THE MIRTH

