

# HE'S ALIVE!

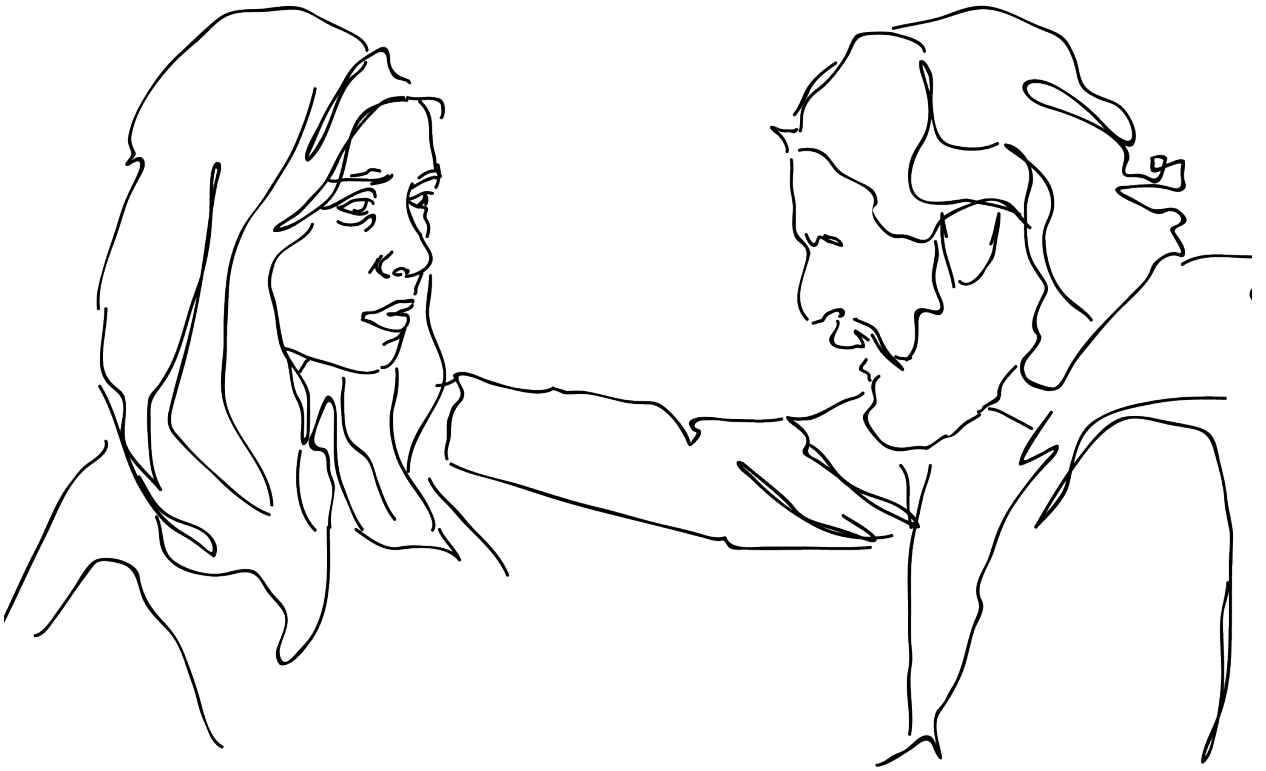


Story by Emily Morrison / Pictures by Erik Swenson

The birds were just beginning their morning music as *Mary Magdalene* and her friends walked along the road. But the women had no songs in their hearts, because their friend Jesus, the one they loved, had just died on the cross.

They were walking to the place where his body lay, a tomb made of stone. They did not notice the beautiful garden along the way or the sunlit sky.





They stayed quiet, each woman lost in her own thoughts. Mary was thinking back to the time when she felt very sick. She had been so alone and afraid. But then she met Jesus, and he healed her.

He knelt by her side and gently touched her shoulder, saying her name in such a kind voice, “Mary.”

After Jesus healed her, he said, “Come. Follow me.” And so she did.

Mary thought to herself, “I’ll never hear that beautiful voice ever again.”

For years they walked the dusty roads together. Sometimes Mary and Jesus would stay behind the other disciples, just the two of them, and they'd swap stories or she'd ask him questions about things he had said.

Occasionally he'd bend over, pick up a red poppy (her favorite) and hand it to her. As Mary tucked it behind her ear, he'd say, "Look Mary, the richest king in history didn't have clothing as beautiful as these poppies, and if God takes care of the wildflowers like that, just remember: he'll take care of you."





He could make her laugh so hard that she'd snort. If she'd try to repeat the joke to the other disciples at lunch, he'd look at her and wink.

She never got tired of watching him heal sick people, because she would think, "That was me once," and her heart would overflow.

Mary shook those happy thoughts out of her mind as they rounded the bend to Jesus' tomb. Then she stopped so suddenly, her friend Joanna bumped into her from behind. The women gasped in surprise. The giant stone that had blocked the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away, and there were two men standing there gleaming like lightning.

One of them stepped forward, "Don't be afraid," he said. "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here! He has risen just like he told you he would. Now, go quickly and tell his disciples."





The women looked at each other in confusion. What was going on? Then they turned and rushed back into town.

When Mary shared the news, Peter said, “What? That’s impossible. What are you talking about?”

“That’s nonsense,” said John.

“Come and see for yourself,” Mary said.

Peter and John took off running and Mary wasn't far behind. When they reached the tomb, they saw it was empty except for the strips of linen Jesus had been wrapped in.

"I don't understand," said Peter.

In his heart, John knew something big was happening, but he didn't know what exactly.

Peter said, "I don't know what to do, let's just go back." John agreed.







But Mary wasn't ready to leave yet. She had come that morning to anoint Jesus' body with sweet smelling spices, but she had also wanted to say one last goodbye, and now... now he was gone. She wouldn't even get to say goodbye.

She sank to the ground, and began to weep. Never had she felt this kind of sadness in her heart. She didn't know if she would ever stop crying.

When she heard a soft rustling noise behind her, she wiped her tears away with her scarf and turned around. A man was standing there. “Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?”

The sun was in Mary’s eyes as she squinted up at him. She asked, “Are you the gardener? If you’ve put Jesus’ body somewhere, please just tell me where, so I can get him.”

The man looked at her with a smile and said, “Mary.”





Her heart stopped. Oh that voice! That wonderful, beautiful, kind voice! That voice that said her name like no other voice in the world!

She threw her arms around Jesus. Then she stepped back and touched his face just to make sure. “Teacher! It’s you. It’s really you!”

Jesus laughed. “Yes, it is. But don’t hold on too long. I need you to go to the others and tell them I’m alive. I’ll be seeing them soon.”

Mary stepped back, “I will! But... I’ll see you again too, won’t I?”

Jesus smiled. “Yes. Very soon.” Then he stooped over and plucked a small red poppy from the ground, and handed it to her. “I am especially happy to see you, Mary.”





Mary tucked the flower behind her ear, and took off running to find the disciples again.

Her heart sang with the birds. “He’s alive, he’s alive, he’s alive!”

