My friend Anna and I were talking this week about the exhaustion post-Easter. We spend an entire forty-day season in penance, squirming in our patience for the glory of Easter and then it happens and it is all shining and joy and wonder. And then...all we want to do is sleep. She asked me, “How many people have that fake grass still strewn about their yards?” Easter is over if we count it a day but like those pink and green glossy strands, we’ll be finding it everywhere we go from now on.

We’re in the season called “Eastertide,” the fifty-day period of living into our new identity as Easter people. Did you catch that? We transition from a forty-day season to a fifty-day season because it turns out, it takes longer to be filled than it takes to be emptied. Traditionally, new Christians were baptized in the wee hours of Easter morning and spent this season of Eastertide toddling their way from a nascent faith to a more embodied, lived-out faith. We, too, will honor this season by exploring what it means to be Easter People. We’ll travel through this season for seven weeks, finding our way from the empty tomb to a room filled with voices birthing the church at Pentecost, from a life that stands in wonder at the Resurrection to a life that moves in wonder of such grace.

Today’s story is one that is on our tongues and our communal life more often than most. We remember it at baptisms; those of us who grew up in the evangelical movement know it as their life’s charge. We speak the last words Jesus promised at funerals; we invoke the triune God Jesus proclaims here in liturgy and benediction and song. This text is called “The Great Commission” not because it is excellent but because it is great in size and scope. It is bigger than ourselves and does not rely on individuals. Commission literally means co-mission - together, on a mission, together, with a purpose, together, sent out. But it is great and grand and is freighted with a 1000x1000 expectations if we place our human tendencies upon it, if we think it is all up to us and our work. It sounds exhausting if we forget how Jesus ends his charge: And lo, I am with you always, until the end of the age.
The preacher Fred Craddock calls this passage the *prequel* and the life we live as church, as community from that point on as the *sequel*. “This is the way it started.”¹ What we know comes from this precise moment, when the disciples *pivoted* from what was their life as disciples at the feet of Jesus to the disciples who *were* the feet of Jesus in the world, walking around, sharing the Good News, serving the poor and oppressed and otherized, courageously living out a faith that turned everything upside down. And it is the moment that we’re called to return to again and again in our faith - *how will we - as people who have heard the Good News - go out and share it?*

Because that’s how you’re here, right? Some brave, faithful soul thought to tell you in either word or deed what the Good News was: how you were not alone; how God loved you, how Christ loved you, how the Spirit loved you.

In 1997, another preacher named Fred - Mr. Rogers comma Fred - reminded us of this in his acceptance speech at the Emmy Awards. Mr. Rogers came to the microphone a commissioned man, saying, “All of us have special ones who loved us into being. Would you just take, along with me, 10 seconds to think of the people who have helped you become who you are, those who cared about you and wanted what was best for you in life. 10 seconds, I’ll watch the time.”² I’d like us to do the same - to consider the ones who loved us into being - who reminded us that we are loved and not alone, who unabashedly and plainly made it known the Good News. I’ll watch the time.

We are here because someone loved us into **full** being, into fully realizing we are children of God - loved and forever hemmed in behind and before by our Triune God. Someone who did not let Christ’s great commission overwhelm them nor let it remain as information for their own edification and sanctification but instead, *shared it* because it isn’t Good News until it is shared.

Howard Thurman offers us this from his book *Meditations of the Heart*. Listen with me: *Are you a reservoir or are you a canal or a swamp?...The function of a canal is to channel water; it is a device by which water may move from one place to another in an orderly and direct manner. It holds*

² [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Upm9LnCBUM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Upm9LnCBUM)
water in a temporary sense only; it holds it in transit from one point to another. The function of the reservoir is to contain, to hold water. It is a large receptacle designed for the purpose...a place in which water is stored in order that it may be available when needed. In it, provisions are made for inflow and outflow.

A swamp differs from either. A swamp has an inlet but no outlet. Water flows into it but there is no provision for water to flow out. The result? The water rots and many things die....The water is alive but apt to be rotten. There is life in a swamp but it is stale.

The dominant trend of a [person's] life may take on the characteristics of a canal, a reservoir, or a swamp....There are some lives that seem ever to be channels, canals through which things flow. They are connecting links between other people, movements, purposes....They seem to be adept at relating needs to sources of help, friendlessness to friendliness. If you are a canal, what kind of things do you connect?

Or are you a reservoir? Are you a resource which may be drawn upon in time of others’ needs and your own as well? Have you developed a method for keeping your inlet and your outlet in good working order, so that the cup which you give is never empty? As a reservoir, you are a trustee of all the gifts God has shared with you. You know they are not your own.

Or are you a swamp? Are you always reaching for more and more, hoarding whatever comes your way as your special belongings? The water in a swamp has no outlet...[which threatens the health of the whole]. [So,] canal, reservoir, or swamp - which?"³

So, Eastertide people, how will we - as people who have heard the Good News - go out and share it? May the words of Christ echo from that mountaintop throughout the ages, through those who loved you into being, into your very heart, and out - out in the world, co-missioned with one another: Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the age. Thanks be to God. Amen.