

The Promise of Easter

Denominational News

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A monthly column for the church-at-large by The Reverend Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). **The Promise of Easter March 2008** This is a good year for Easter to come early! The date of Easter this year, March 23, is the earliest it has been for almost 200 years. With all of the pain and suffering in the world, the conflict in our church, and the deep yearning for the good news that can only be answered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an early Easter is just what the world needs.

In my years of working in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the church around the world, I have been struck by how the Easter message brings life, hope, and salvation to people in so many different contexts and finds expression in so many different ways. The ultimate triumph of the love of God in the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, brings incredible hope and joy to people who, like Jesus, face tremendous obstacles to fullness of life. For those suffering from the guilt of sin, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the good news of forgiveness and newness of life. For those facing death, the resurrection is the promise that death is swallowed up in victory and we are invited to share with Christ in life eternal. For those feeling deserted or overwhelmed by life's circumstances, the resurrection is the promise that no suffering is so great that it cannot be overcome by the love of God through Christ. For those struggling for justice against great odds, the resurrection is the demonstration that God's righteousness will ultimately triumph in this world. For all of us, the resurrection is the assurance that "nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). Easter is the church's finest hour and God's greatest blessing to each and every one of us. As you celebrate new life again this Easter, may your heart be filled with the love of Christ and the joy of being part of a community of resurrection people. Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!