On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. (Luke24:1–12)

Most of us revisit the same story of Jesus’s death and resurrection year after year. In some years, the story may seem fresh and new, while in other years we may simply go through the motions. The late Rev. Louis Weil commented that the path of Holy Week is not a circle but a spiral; the story is the same, but we change over each passing year.

The metaphor of the path of Holy Week as a spiral rings true to me. Two years ago, as a postdoc in environmental engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, my wife and I prepared for Easter in the isolation of the pandemic and the expectation of the birth of our son, Aidan, later that year. Last year, we prepared for Easter in the long nights of interrupted sleep caring for our six-month-old son and the expectation of accepting an academic job offer. This year, we prepare for Easter amidst the sadness of war and the hopefulness of building a new community in Morgantown, West Virginia. The expectation and waiting of pregnancy and the amazement of seeing my son for the first time granted me a fresh perspective for how the apostles felt upon learning of the empty tomb and Jesus’s resurrection.

1. What physical or spiritual distance have you traveled in the past one to two years?
2. How do you view the same stories of Holy Week in a different way this year?

Lord, please enter my mind and heart and renew them through your Holy Spirit. Thank you for your work on the cross. I praise you for your love and wisdom, which you offer me in all circumstances. Thank you for walking beside me on my journey through life. May I walk the path of Holy Week with fresh eyes this year. In your name we pray, Amen.
 ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Kevin Orner is an assistant professor in Environmental Engineering at West Virginia University. His research focuses on improving human and environmental health locally and globally through the safe and sustainable recovery of nutrients, energy, and water from waste streams. Kevin obtained his BS at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and his MS and PhD from the University of South Florida. He served for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Panama and was awarded a Fulbright Research Grant to study resource recovery in Costa Rica. The mentorship of ASA members, including Terry Morrison, Peter Bosscher, and Cal DeWitt, was formational in his experience viewing science and faith as complementary and not mutually exclusive. In his spare time, Kevin enjoys spending time outside with his wife, Sarah, and son, Aidan.