



APRIL 2021

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From the Pastor

Christ is victorious! He has conquered all things through His death on the cross. He has drawn all sin and all consequences of sin to Himself and nailed them to the tree. In death He defeated them all! And then He took every single last one of them down from the cross and laid them in the grave next to His dead body. Stone rolled in front, tomb sealed and shut. ... All of that pain and agony, suffering and despair, buried with Christ; His victory over them all. In the grave He locked them away. All their power drained out of them. All their strength withered away like dusty old bones. To the grave He even brought the power of death to be buried forever. Never to rise again. Never to see the light of day. In His death is the death of death.

And to all of these things, to sin and death and dying and suffering and the power of Satan, we do not say, "Rest in peace!" For their rest is not peaceful. They have been defeated by the Son of God, by the Son of man, by the God of creation and salvation and life, by the God who became flesh and dwelt among us, by the God who was made man and did the very things that man could not do for himself. He conquered these enemies of His, of ours, and cast them into the grave with Him. And then He burst out of it; leaving all of them to waste away in the tomb. The victory is His! Victory over everything. And today we celebrate that!

Today is a day of jubilation; not just because Jesus is risen, but because of what that resurrection means for us. In this Vale of Tears as we sit in sackcloth and ashes, as we deal with suffering, as we watch our wealth vanish in thin air; our temporal security gone in the blink of an eye; as diseases make sick and disasters strike all over the world; as we watch our loved ones waste away in hospital beds and place them in the ground; as we face the impending demise of our own fragile lives, wondering when death will come for us; amidst all of these things the grave stands empty, Jesus is risen, the victory is won!

Easter means life. When death comes knocking at the door, it does not come as a conquering enemy, but as a weak and pitiful vanquished foe. Its power is gone; locked forever in the tomb of Jesus! "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

Yes, we bury our dead. But we bury the dead only to mock the grave; not because they are dead, but because they live, because they are with Jesus, and their bodies sleep while they wait for the resurrection to come. We bury our dead because they have been sanctified and sealed for the resurrection through the risen body and blood poured out for them in Holy Communion. They go into the grave only that they might follow Jesus out of it and defeat it.

Where is the grave's victory? Where is death's sting? It is gone. Jesus lives. And Jesus, alive out of the grave, is here for us—living, risen, in His holy body and His precious blood, the seal of the new life, the forgiveness of sins, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, given to us to eat and to drink that we would never die and never suffer the endless torment of the grave.

Easter means the grave is empty and that means life for you! He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

In the name of Jesus,
Rev. Eli

What We Believe—Augsburg Confession

Article XX—Good Works (Part I)

Note: This is another key article in the Augsburg Confession. Article XX offers more details about faith and works than what was previously written. Lutherans insist on the biblical truth that our good works do not save us. So they are sometimes accused of opposing good works. This article sets forth the Bible's clear teach that good works are the fruit of faith, not the cause of our salvation. Rome continues to insist that people are saved by God's grace, but not through faith alone. This teaching dangerously encourages people to believe they are able, even in some small way, to contribute toward their salvation. This diverts their focus from Christ and His merits to their own works. It also leads to despair, doubt, and uncertainty when people come to realize the enormity of their sin and wonder if in fact they have done "enough" to merit or deserve God's favor. After setting forth the proper biblical distinction between faith and good works, the Augsburg Confession asserts very clearly that our good works are necessary, not to merit grace, but because this is God's will for our lives. God's gift of saving faith enables us to do good works. (See also Ap XX; SA III XIII; FC Ep IV and SD IV.)

Our churches are falsely accused of forbidding good works. Their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and other similar writing, bear witness that they have usefully taught about all estates and duties of life. They have taught well what is pleasing to God in every station and vocation in life. Before now, preachers taught very little about these things. They encouraged only childish and needless works, such as particular holy days, particular fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, service in honor of the saints, the use of rosaries, monasticism, and such things. Since our adversaries have been admonished about these things, they are now unlearning them. They do not preach these unhelpful works as much as the used to in the past, there was only stunning silence about faith, but now they are beginning to mention it. They do not reach that we are justified only by works. They join faith and works together, and say that we are justified by faith and works. This teaching is more tolerable than the former one. It can offer more consolation than their old teaching.

The doctrine about faith, which ought to be the chief doctrine in the Church, has remained unknown for so long. Everyone has to admit that there was the deepest silence in their sermons concerning the righteousness of faith. They only taught about works in the churches. This is why our teachers teach the churches about faith in this way.

First, they teach that our works cannot reconcile God to us or merit forgiveness of sins, grace, and justification. We obtain reconciliation only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake. He alone has been set forth as the Mediator and Atoning Sacrifice (1 Timothy 2:5), in order that the Father may be reconciled through Him. Therefore, whoever believes that he merits grace by works despises the merit and grace of Christ [Galatians 5:4]. In so doing, he is seeking a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)...

For Further Personal Study

(Thy Kingdom Come: Lent and Easter Sermons by David H. Petersen—Sermon for Easter Monday. Be sure to read Luke 24:13-35 first.)

They had thought Him the One. They had thought He would save them, that He would redeem Israel. And now, they thought Him dead. The third day had come. The women had announced strange things. But they were troubled, afraid to believe. They didn't want to get their hopes up again.

And how does our Lord respond to their hedging hope, their carefully pessimistic belief? What does He say to their defense mechanisms that make them slow of heart to believe? He takes them through the Scriptures. Their hearts burn within them. Smoldering faith is rekindled in love, both by a rebuke—"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe," which is also a call to repentance—and by the uncovering of the promise. The prophets reveal to them who the Messiah is and what His office is. Our Lord uses the Scriptures to show the unchanging description of the suffering sacrifice of the Messiah to make men free and alive. This is not a new idea, a change of plan. Then He takes the bread, gives thanks, blesses it, and gives it to them. Their eyes are opened. They recognize the One crucified and raised, the One who has made atonement for them, the One who has loved them to the end and who feeds them with Himself in the bread, the One foretold and promised in Holy Writ. He disappears from the sight of their eyes. They know Him now by faith, faith that is born and lives in Word and in Sacrament.

It is the same for us. Do not be afraid to believe in the resurrection and all that implies for this dying life in which we still suffer. Be confident that God loves you, that He hears your prayers and answers them. Find comfort in the sure and certain Word of God, in the presence of the risen Savior in bread and wine. For He who gave His life for you on the cross gives His life to you, here and now, in His body and blood. These are the blessings, the forgiveness, the joy He pours out upon His children—then, and now, and forever.

He is risen!

(Thy Kingdom Come: Lent and Easter Sermons by David H. Petersen—Sermon for Easter Monday)





PARISH PLANNING COMMITTEE NEWS

The Parish Planning Council appointed the following church members to our nominating committee for the June election: Pastor Eli, Brian DeLaet, Ray Bickner, and Lucy Simons. The committee will actively elicit candidates for board positions and officers and interested members may also contact the committee members before May 30th. The next voters meeting will be held on April 18th, 2021 at 12:30.



God's Gardeners



The Property Board is searching for all of you with "green thumbs" to join the newly created properties group, God's Gardeners! Budget for needed tools and materials is provided by the property board. Please contact Larry Mathews to help you all get started. No background check required. The tulips in the patio gardens are starting to wake up from their winter nap!



Welcome to all women of the congregation!

*Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10*

Easter joy is an amazing feeling. Out of the darkness and gloom on Good Friday comes new life and hope on Resurrection Sunday. The events of those three days bring us the greatest gift ever given: everlasting life. With hearts filled with joy we sing, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives!" Thank God for giving His Son to suffer, die and rise again so we might live forever.

Through our MITES we give the hope of salvation and the love of Jesus to those who have never heard the Good News. When you give you don't just make a donation - You make a difference! Your offerings and prayers bring the love and hope of Jesus to those in our neighborhoods and around the world. In April you may add your prayers of thanksgiving as you place your offerings in your MITE BOX and bring to church on **MITE SUNDAY, April 18th. Thank You For Your Continued Support!**



MISSION of the MONTH

Christ for You, Anytime, Anywhere - KFUE Radio - \$60,000

In the last century, technology advanced at an unprecedented rate. In this century, it continues to develop each new year. By incorporating the newest communication methods into KFUE's ministry, they can more effectively reach today's younger generation, as well as the generations to come, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Throughout the world, our nation's military can listen, no matter where they are stationed. This mission grant will assist KFUE in sharing the Gospel and staying current in the digital age.

North Central Zone Spring Event

Saturday, April 17th - Registration and Tea Social (bring your own cup and saucer) will begin at 9:30 am

Bible Study, by Pastor Eli Lietzau, begins at 10:00 am

Craft project at the conclusion. Bring a second cup and saucer to plant a flower and take back to a shut-in at your church.

Contact Carol Mathews if you need additional information and to RSVP.

**LWML is the place where each woman
Is welcomed and encouraged
To use her unique God-given gifts
As she supports global missions
And serves the Lord with gladness.**

Happy Birthday

- 2 – Emi Ito-Morsch
- 4 – John Cleveland
- 7 – Eady Broscheit
- 8 – Henry Simons
- 11 – John Hendricks
- 17 – Daniel Glynn
- 18 – Errol McGlaughlin
- 26 – Larry Dyslin
- 26 – Janet Jenson
- 28 – Lindsey Eman



Happy Anniversary

14 – Larry & Carol Mathews



Baptism Birthdays

- Caleb DeLaet
- Sherry DuValle
- Diane Echtenkamp
- Michael Eman
- Lindsey Eman
- Jon Hendricks
- Judy Kugler
- Ariana Martinez
- Pat Proell
- Margaret Richardson
- George Simons
- Marilyn Werner
- Edith Wing