GOOD NEWS

FROM CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

APRIL 2023

FROM THE PASTOR

John 20:19–31
Jesus Appears to the Disciples

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

Jesus and Thomas

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

How does Jesus touch your life?

In this reading, for the Second Sunday of Easter, we get a look at those who were closest to Jesus. What we see is not what you might expect from those who had been with him that long. They had followed Him for the better part of three years. They had seen Him do miraculous things. They had seen Him confront the devil, and the world and win. They had seen Him cast out evil spirits, raise the dead, give hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, heal the lame, speech to the mute heal the sick, feed the hungry and much, much more. Some of them went off alone with Him to some of the heroes of the faith. They heard the Father verify who He was. They saw Him take on the leaders of the day, both religious and political. He had taught them publicly and in

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BIRTHDAYS

April

04 Sarah Deutsch
10 Matthew Arlton
11 David Wetzel
14 Sadrine Na Kirindo
14 Jay Wehking
17 Cherie Zehendner
22 Dustin Preheim
22 Ruth Meyer
23 Alia Robison
26 Jordan Brack
26 Samuel Fick
26 Victor Wedeking

ANNIVERSARIES

April

14 Phil & Monica Andreasen
19 Les & Vickie Britson
24 Melanie & Ryan Hericks

FLOWER CHART

The 2023 Flower Chart is pinned to the bulletin board in the Narthex for those who would like to provide altar flowers for a particular Sunday.

If you have any questions about providing flowers, please contact Cynthia Schilf.



Sacred Music 24/7



lutheranpublicradio.org

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR FROM LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

April 2 ~ Palm Sunday - "As you travel with Jesus through Holy Week, don't lose heart. He is your Palm Sunday King. He will always come to you and give you the best of what He has to offer because of His humble attitude and His devotion to His mission. When you see this Savior who personally cares for you, you can't help but join the believers of old to give to the Lord your best and most precious treasures of your heart and life, and then to join with all believers saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

April 9 ~ Easter Sunday - "Our true identity turns us back toward our Creator, the one who not only made us but also defines us in His Word. So, permit me to remind you of that truth once more: You are a created child of God. You are handmade by Him, loved by Him, redeemed by Him, and sustained by Him. The gifts you possess are gifts He's given you; all that is good comes from Him. Your identity and your value are, always were, and always will be, found in Him." *Michelle Bauman, Y4Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

April 16 ~ 2nd Sunday of Easter - "Today, we often find lines, divisions, and hate, but we hope to spread a little love and hope. Life is a valuable gift at all ages and all stages of life, and it should be protected." *Kambria Steinhaus, Knights 4 Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

April 23 ~ 3rd Sunday of Easter - "I encourage everyone that I meet with to check my words and teaching against God's Word. Ask questions, challenge everything by that Word. I want them to know Jesus and to have that faith which says, 'This is what Jesus says, I am forgiven! I am set free! I am serving and living as a disciple of Jesus! I will go into heaven because of Jesus! … I am part of God's family!'" *Pastor Darren Green, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

April 30 ~ 4th Sunday of Easter - "God's Word is full of stories of people who gave up, got discouraged, and quit. His response to them was words of encouragement and support, a call to courage and perseverance, a call to strengthen trembling knees and put on the armor of God." *Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M., Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*



STEWARDSHIP

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter article – April 2023

A Better Way

The most common question about stewardship is not *whether* a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, "How much should I give?" But this question really means, "Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?"

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn't necessary because it isn't expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no "Thus saith the Lord," or "should" concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn't tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won't be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians *should* tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn't specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one's income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here's another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism's Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we're not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let's answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I'm glad you're still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God's promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I'd really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we're ecstatic that you're giving, and that you're giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



HE IS RISEN INDEED

HALLELUJAH

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
March 28, 2023

	01/2023	02/2023	03/2023
Deposits:	$ 18,144.42	$ 16,344.07	$ 19,113.50
Disbursements:	$ 69,022.72	$ 15,320.93	$ 60,638.19
Deposit Breakdown:			
General Fund:	$ 15,587.42	$ 14,038.05	$ 18,824.40
Designated Funds:	$ 2,557.00	$ 2,306.02	$ 289.10
Monthly Budget Requirement:	$ 19,912.15	$ 15,929.72	$ 15,929.72
Mortgage Balance as of 03/28			$136,416.62



IN OUR PRAYERS

Erik Arlton
Mildred Corey, at home
Helen Kriz, Bethany Lutheran Home, Brandon
Lisa Johnson, health issues/wellness
Susan Powell, at home
Leslie & Constance Bartlett at home
Elva Clauson at home

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

study by Marion Lars Hendrickson Introduction
Appointed for Palm Sunday (ONE-YEAR; YEARS A, B, C) Lutheran Service Book 438

Introduction

Martin Luther declared that Isaiah 53 "is the foremost passage on the suffering and resurrection of Christ, and there is hardly another like it" (AE 17:215). The cross of Jesus is the complete exposure of human sin, our sin, in Christ's own flesh. As often as we may successfully hide our sin from others and from ourselves, there is no hiding at the cross. We are exposed.

Yet when we see the cross of Jesus for what it truly is, we no longer shy away from the truth about our sin. There is no longer any gain to hiding it. "With his wounds we are healed" (Is. 53:5). No longer must we hide in fear from the accusations of God's Law. These accusations no longer bring God's wrathful judgment upon us. Instead, at the cross, God's wrath and just judgment are fully met in Jesus Christ for us.

- Is it easy or difficult to think about your own sin? Why or why not?
- What do you think: Is it the seriousness of your own sin that teaches you the grateful joy for Christ's crucifixion, or is it the cross of Jesus that teaches you the dreadful seriousness of your own sin?

Exploring the Scriptures

Read Is. 53:1–3. Christians since the first days of the Church have interpreted the Suffering Servant in this passage to be Jesus.

- Give examples of how the descriptions in these verses fit the description of Jesus.
- If Jesus had "no beauty that we should desire him,"

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KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



Why is Confession so important to a Christian?

Confessing our sins is important! When we confess them, we see just how terribly sinful we are. We also know that sin brings nothing but eternal death and separation from God. When we confess our sins, not only do we see that we are sinful, but we admit to God that we deserve death and separation from Him forever. We are free to admit all of this to Him because we know that Jesus has already died and paid for all of our sins.

After we have confessed our sins, is there any hope?

After Confession comes Absolution, or, the forgiveness of sins! In Jesus we have the sure and true promise of forgiveness of sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Wow! Absolution is *absolutely* wonderful!

Parents: Before the service, read through the confession and explain the words that might be confusing. During the service, help direct your children to the Confession/ Absolution as it happens. Remind them that when the Pastor is speaking, it is as if God himself is speaking these words of comfort to us.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

2023

- Apr 06 Maundy Thursday Divine Service, 7pm
- Apr 07 Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 7pm
- Apr 09 Easter Sunrise Matins Service, 7am
- Apr 09 Easter Breakfast, 8am
- Apr 09 Easter Festival Divine Service, 9:30am
- May 14 Mothers' Day Breakfast
- May 18 Ascension Day Divine Service 7pm
- June 11 Voters Meeting
- July 23-27 VBS
- Sept 10 Voters Meeting
- Nov 05 Daylight Saving Time Ends, 2am
- Nov 23 Thanksgiving Day Divine Service, 9:30 am
- Dec 06, 13, 20 Advent Services, 7pm
- Dec 20 Children's Christmas Service 7pm
- December 24 Christmas Eve service, 5pm
- December 25 Christmas Day Service 9:30 am
- No New Year's Eve/Day Service



Ascension

ASCENSION DAY DIVINE SERVICE

We will have Divine Service on Ascension Day, Thursday, May 18th at 7:00 pm.

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what sort of beauty does He embody that we can sing of Him with words such as "Beautiful Savior"?

Read Is. 53:4–6. These verses get to the heart of the chapter.

- What is the purpose of Jesus' suffering and death?
- Who lays this suffering and death on Him? What does this tell us about the crucifixion of Jesus?
- Notice the use of the pronouns "we," "our" and "us." Who is also included with those pronouns?
- The substitutionary nature of Jesus' death is clearly portrayed in this text, especially in verse 5. What is the great comfort for us in these words? Do the words create discomfort in us? Why or why not?

Read Is. 53:10–12. The mood of the passage changes here.

- What phrases in these verses point to the resurrection of Jesus?
- The benefits in the completion of this sacrifice are directed toward the one who suffers, namely, Jesus. If Jesus has taken what is ours (namely, our sin), how does He give us what is His?
- Philipp Melanchthon wrote, "To know Christ is to know His benefits" (Loci Communes). What are the benefits that come to us by Jesus' death? Are these

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benefits described in these verses?

Exploring the Hymn

Background

Reading any biography of Paul Gerhardt (1607–76) quickly reveals that this Lutheran pastor and hymn writer was a "suffering servant" of the Lord. His father died while he was a boy. During his time of studies at the University of Wittenberg, the Thirty Years' War raged around him. He suffered at the hands of the governing authorities in his work in the Holy Ministry because of his faithfulness to the Lutheran Confessions. His wife and all but one of his children died before him.

Still, even at age 70, this "theologian sifted in Satan's sieve," as a portrait epitaph reads, could write about the joy that was his in serving his Lord.

- From what you know of the Gospel of Christ, what is the source of Gerhardt's joy?
- Luther wrote, "[The Gospel] teaches us, not how to get rid of evil and to enjoy peace but how to live with it and yet conquer it." What does he mean?

Text

Stanza 1 captures the silence and the innocence with which Jesus goes to His sacrificial death. The Gospels also record Jesus' silence in the face of His accusers and tormenters.

- What is the significance of this silence? Does divine silence imply judgment? Why or why not?

The stanza ends with the words "All this I gladly suffer."

- How is this response of joy revealed in Jesus' own words and actions?
- How does this phrase express Gerhardt's own view of his call to suffer for the sake of Christ?
- How about you?

Stanza 1 also alludes to the Passover, to the sacrificial lamb without blemish. Read Ex. 12:5. As the Lamb of God (John 1:29), Jesus embodies all the sacrifices of ancient Israel.

- What words does the hymn text use to emphasize the singularity of Jesus' self-offering?

Stanzas 2 and 3 focus on the relation between the divine Father and Son. Yet, the hymn text language also reaches out to include others.

- Find phrases in these two stanzas that draw us in as the blessed recipients of Christ's sacrificial death.
- Gerhardt writes, "O wondrous Love, what have You done!" and "O Love, how strong You are to save!" How does Jesus' crucifixion define love in a profound way?

With the final stanza, the hymn text gives voice to the believer's joy in sharing all the benefits of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross and His glorious resurrection.

- Find as many of these benefits as you can in the text of this final stanza.
- What is the ultimate hope expressed by the words "Lord, when Your glory I shall see / And taste Your kingdom's pleasure"?
- Is this hope only in heaven? Where may we see "glory" and taste "pleasure" even now in suffering?

Martin Luther wrote about a "joyous exchange" for the Christian because of what Jesus Christ has done. As in a marriage, the property of the one becomes the property of the other, and the property of both together. In this, there is great joy.

- What evidence of Luther's "joyous exchange" can you find in the text of this final stanza?

Making the Connection

Indeed, what Jesus did for us on the cross is beyond comprehension. His resurrection surpasses the ability of our finite minds to grasp it. What is more, it all happened so long ago, so how can we know for sure?

St. Paul wrote, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

St. Paul also wrote, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16).

- What does it mean that Christ's work on the cross is given to us in the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and

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the Lord's Supper?

- Where, then, can you know the joy of Christ's glory in cross and resurrection to be your own in the midst of "crosses"?

In Closing

"Your blood my royal robe shall be … Your right-eousness shall be my crown; / With these I need not hide me" (st. 4). The events of Holy Week reveal that there is no need for us to hide, for we are no longer naked in our sin. We are clothed in the finest possible apparel to celebrate the feast of Easter, both now and forever.

- Sing or read aloud together LSB 438.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience, and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for Sunday of the Passion).

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private. He told them what was ahead, and He taught them the Old Testament.

What we see is a group of people who are scared and afraid. They are not sure what to make of the past week or how to move forward to the future. If ever there was a group that should have been bold and confident, you would think this would be it. But no, they show themselves to be "real" people with all the fears and insecurities, scared and hiding.

For me that is a blessing to you and me. If these followers were this fragile, then what can be expected from those of us who are separated by some two thousand years from the time our Lord walked this planet? What are your fears and insecurities? Are they wrapped up in your relationships with others? Do you fear that you might not be enough to take care of or keep those you love? Are you afraid that your shortcomings and hidden sins might become public and embarrass you or worse? Are you afraid that the way things are going, you might not have enough money to survive in the manner you want? Are afraid that others will see some of the things you have done to build and keep your nest egg. Are you nervous that others in the church might see that your faith isn't what you want them to think? Or that they might not understand why you're not involved in or supportive of your church if it requires anything of you?

How do you try to cover your fears and insecurities? Do you lock yourself away, so no one will see? Do you make statements that without physical proof…? Do you try to convince others how strong, knowledgeable, faithful, good you are, or they aren't? Do you try to spread more fear and doubt because misery loves company.

The reality is that you have had no fear, doubt or insecurity that the disciple themselves didn't have and Jesus has the same message for you. Jesus tells you, "Peace be with you.". This peace that comes from Jesus is something the world can not give. It is a peace that takes away fear, doubt and insecurities. If you doubt that read the last section of the reading. You have all of scripture and God's gifts of Baptism and The Lord's Supper to giving the Holy Spirit ample opportunity to give you that faith that looks to the cross, where you find peace where He suffered to pay you debt of sin. Now that is true peace, knowing that your sins are forgiven and you have the promise of eternal life. No longer do you need to live in fear, doubt and insecurity. For you are a forgiven child of God.

Have a blessed Easter.

In Christ,
Pastor Nix

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