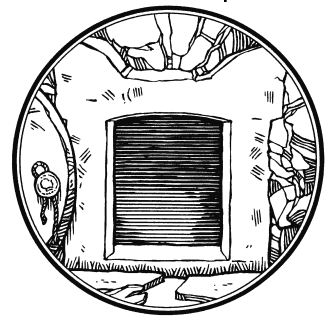


APRIL 2023

On that first Easter morning, the angel declared to the women who had made their way to the tomb where our Lord was placed, "You seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said." (Matt. 28:5-6). In this small brief statement, we have the most wonderful news to which all hope should cling. By announcing that Jesus was crucified, we are brought to learn that the Son of God bears our very flesh and blood. He was crucified for our transgressions and upon Him was laid the punishment we deserve. The Son of God died and the witnesses saw that and even held His dead body and placed it into the tomb. There is no doubt that the One whom John the Baptist pointed at and called the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) had done just that: taken the sins of the world upon Himself and died for them upon the cross. And so it is that the women go to the tomb looking to find the dead, human body of Jesus.

But there is more to the angel announcement than just that Jesus was crucified. Behold, the tomb no longer holds Him for He is risen, the angel declares. He is alive. Out of death and into life. Not as a spirit or ghost, but still bearing the flesh and blood that was crucified. He who died for the sins of the world has defeated death and lives - He's not in the tomb! This means that the payment of Jesus' life offered up to the Father on the cross in your place is fulfilled and accepted. This means that death doesn't win the day but Jesus does because He lives. This means that you who are joined to Him baptismally as the Apostle Paul says, pass through death and into life with Him through the very same bodily resurrection and death no longer has dominion to make you fear its consequences (see Romans 6:8-11 and Hebrews 2:14-15).



Yes, Jesus was crucified but He is risen. Yes, He died but He lives. These two things go together better than peanut butter and jelly and the angel at the tomb proclaims the wonderful Christian message. Sins are paid for and life is given - both by our Lord Jesus who went into the grave and came out alive! The Church's proclamation is a repeating of the angel on that first Easter morning. We seek the crucified and risen Jesus because He is our only hope and He will never disappoint. He let the grave have its way with Him for a time, in our place, but springs up alive as the giver of eternal life.

We have hushed proclaiming our Alleluias for a time during Lent, but Easter changes everything. Let death and the devil hear the victorious call of the angel and let all hearts be glad: Jesus is risen and we who are joined to Him shall live, too! He has laid down His life and taken it back up and our hope is made secure.

Jesus lives! Alleluia!
Pastor Suggitt

On March 4, despite the threat of a great snowstorm, the Thumb area Lutheran churches conducted a Youth Rally with the theme *Being A Christian In A Non-Christian World*. The event was held at Good Shepherd, Cass City and featured as the main speaker the Rev. Peter Ill from Illinois. With over 25 youth attending, they enjoyed learning, worship (including a closing Divine Service), many games, and plenty of food. Breakout speakers included Rev. Steve Stolarczyk, Rev. Thom Garrison, and Pastor Suggitt who taught a session on *Being A Christian In A World Of Fake News*.



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