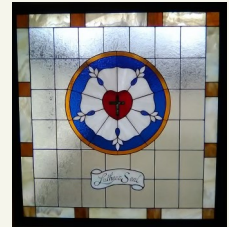


NEWSLETTER



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Grace Lutheran Church

Birthdays

- 5/03: Joe Lynn
- 5/04: Diane Heisner
- 5/29: Ken Lampe
- 5/31: Titus Granderson

Anniversaries

- 5/07: Stan & Sharon Crandall
- 5/24: Jim & Alice Troyke

Jesus is Risen... (Part 1)



There are lots of things that have changed at Grace in the last few weeks. The change of the paraments to the color white for Easter; the appearance of Easter lilies; the return of the Hymn of Praise; and the return of the word "Alleluia" to our services. All of these minor changes are there to point us to the joy that Jesus is risen from the dead (He is risen indeed! Alleluia!).

But there's one more change – a change to how I open the sermon. Prior to Easter, I would open every sermon with the words, "Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loved you with His life. Amen." But now, I open every sermon with these words:

"Jesus is risen. That means your sins are forgiven. That means that death cannot hold you anymore. And Jesus is coming back soon for you."

This brief introduction is a summary of the second article of the Apostle's Creed – the heart of Christianity; it is a summary of what we believe about Jesus, who is risen, and what His death and resurrection *mean* for us. So, why am I now starting my sermons with this summary of Christianity? Well, there's really two reasons.

First, I say it so that the resurrection of Jesus might be at the forefront of our minds; so that we might see His death and resurrection as the work He has done *for you*. I say it so that when you feel the weight of your sin, you can say to yourself: "Jesus is risen, which means my sin is forgiven." I say it so that when death encompasses you, you can say to yourself, "Jesus is risen, which means death cannot hold me." I say it so that when you lament in this life and long for Christ's return, you can remember that "Jesus is risen, which means He will come back to bring me to Himself soon." I say this so that you may be encouraged by the resurrection of Jesus.

Second, I say it to give you and me something simple to say to our families, friends, neighbors, and so forth. Oftentimes one of the reasons we do not talk to people about Jesus is because we don't have the words to say. These four sentences give us simple words to say to someone who needs to hear the Gospel. If you have these four sentences memorized, then when you want to tell someone what you believe, it's rather easy: "I believe that Jesus is risen. That means that my sin is forgiven. It means that death cannot hold me anymore. And it means that He will come back soon for me."

Saying this to someone will certainly open up a wide variety of conversations. In the coming months, our newsletter articles will seek to go deeper into how we might be able to use this summary in our daily lives as we talk to others about Jesus.

In Christ's Service, Pastor Heitshusen

