



Summit of Peace Lutheran Church

Grow in Faith, Share the Faith, Live the Faith

To the Saints of SOP,

“Alleluia He Is Risen!” “He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!”

Yes, the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord is soon upon us and once again our church (along with Christian churches throughout the world) will ring with the familiar and traditional greeting, “Alleluia! He Is Risen!” “He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!” This Easter greeting is so “traditional” that it has proved impossible to date and some even argue that the Bible itself tells the story of its first use. (Mt. 27:64, Mt. 28:6-7, Mk. 16:6, Lk. 24:6)

However it began it’s words confess a remarkable truth and reality that go far beyond mere tradition and custom. And to be honest every Easter morning when we utter the phrase it makes me a little uneasy, a little melancholy even a little put out. And it’s not simply because I don’t like getting up so early (which I don’t) or because I’m weary of mere ritual (which I am). No, the real reason is because in all my years as a pastor preaching on Easter morning I don’t think that I have ever fully conveyed the true weight and gravitas of those words. In fact, it is usually all I can do to keep myself from running up to people grabbing them by the shoulders and shaking them while I howl in their face, “do you have any idea what you are saying!?!?!?!”

Because to this day I still believe that if you asked the “average” Christian what the resurrection of Jesus means they would answer, “It means I’ll go to heaven when I die... oh and one day be resurrected too.” And while I absolutely believe every word of that it is accurate I also know with absolute certainty that the Resurrection of Jesus means so much more!

And I don’t mean I “know it” as in “I’ve read lots of books and studied the Bible” so I know it. I mean I’ve seen it, I’ve experienced it. I’ve held it in my hands; I’ve heard it on the lips of God’s people. I’ve watched it reach out and heal people.

Because the Resurrection of Jesus doesn’t just mean that one day I’ll die and go to heaven, it means that Jesus is actually resurrected. He is alive and present in our world. He is running around doing awesome, wonderful and transcendent kinds of things. He is bringing his resurrection into this world. Healing it, restoring it, freeing it, re-creating it. The resurrected Lord is extending his liberation, reconciliation and peace. Jesus is risen, the “new earth” has begun, Jesus is risen and his kingdom is spreading, Jesus is risen and is reign is present **EVERYWHERE**.

Now don’t get me wrong. It’s not always easy to see this reality but it is in fact really there. You may watch the news or read on the Internet or hear about it on



social media and there before you is unspeakable suffering, injustice, violence, brokenness and depravity. But there you will also find the Risen Jesus; you will find him in the lives of his people who dedicate their lives fighting for restoration, justice, peace, healing and forgiveness.

I've seen it countless times in my 20 years as pastor. People dying from cancer, wasting away from the effects of sin and death in this world even as they are being drowned in the peace and compassion of those who love them. God's people who gather around the dying with the words of Jesus on their lips, his love and compassion in a hug. His life and forgiveness is his Supper.

I've seen the Risen Christ work his healing in relationships that seemed so far beyond repair that the only explanation is a miracle. I've seen the Risen Christ in the lives people who are true agents of peace and reconciliation in their workplace. I've seen the Risen Christ bring justice and healing into our local high school through the lives of his youth. I've seen the Risen Christ fight injustice and racism in our neighborhoods through the lives of widows and soccer moms alike. I've seen the Risen Christ living in the lives of his people.

1st Corinthians 15 is one of the Bible's most loved chapters on what the resurrection means. Most of us know by heart verses 56 and 57, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Yet somehow we often overlook the "so now what?" of Paul's last verse, 58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

I've seen the Risen Christ in the lives of his people as they remain steadfast, immovable and abounding in the work of the Lord. I've seen the Risen Christ heal, forgive and restore his people and I've seen the Holy Spirit alive in the lives of those people making the Risen Jesus a reality in the world around them.

And if I've seen all of that then I guess maybe God's people know exactly what they are saying when we proclaim...

"Alleluia He Is Risen!" "He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!"

Pastor Jacoby