

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

April-May 2024

Jesus: the Resurrection and the Life

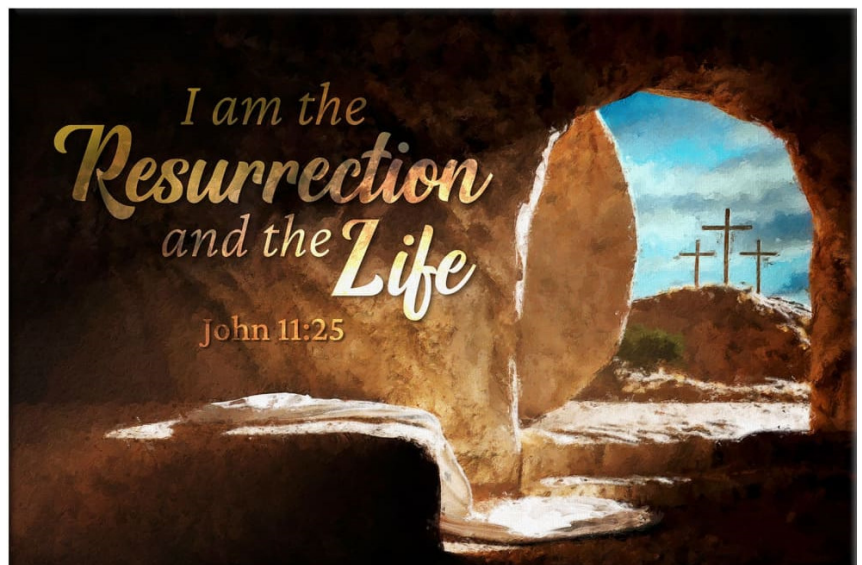
Pastor Chuck Bylkas
South Range, Michigan

Then when Jesus came, he found that he (Lazarus) had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

John 11:17-27

IN THIS BEAUTIFUL Gospel, we see the patience and tender compassion of Jesus as He addresses a grieving Martha. Jesus had heard that Lazarus was sick, and yet he delayed coming to Lazarus for two more days, because He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus finally arrives at Bethany, Martha anxiously comes out to meet Him. At first, Martha complains to Jesus, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Many of us can identify with Martha's frustration. When we experience a tragedy, such as the loss of a loved one, our first response is often to ask God "Why?" "Why did you allow this to happen? Why did this have to happen to me?"

But hidden within Martha's complaint is a glimpse of her faith. In her very words, Martha implies. "You have the power that could have prevented this from happening." Her faith is further expressed in the next phrase: *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* In other words, "It is not too late. You can still help us." Jesus patiently listens to Martha and then assures her, *Thy brother*



shall rise again. Martha already knows this. She knows of the great event that is promised on the last Day. "But what about the here and now? What can help me deal with the pain of this loss?"

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live... Jesus gives Martha the answer to all of her problems, even though she is asking the wrong questions. The question Martha should be asking is not what, when or why, but "Who?" "Who can help me in my time of need?" The Resurrection is not merely an event that will happen in the distant future. The Resurrection is embodied in the person who now stands before Martha. It is Jesus Christ Himself. He is the One who shed His Blood on Calvary's cross for the forgiveness of our sins. He is the One who swallowed up death in victory. He is the One who continues to help us in every time of need. All those who by faith embrace the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus have life, right here and right now. May God grant us grace to continue believing in the One who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Yours in Christ.

The Fruits and Benefits of the Resurrection of Christ

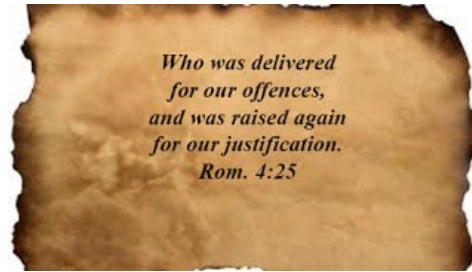
Martin Luther

ST. PAUL WRITES in Romans 4:25 as follows: "Christ was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." Paul is indeed the man who extols Christ in a masterly manner, telling us exactly why and for what purpose He suffered and how we should conform ourselves to His sufferings, namely, that He died for our sins. This is a correct interpretation of the sufferings of Christ, by which we may profit. And as it is not sufficient to know and believe that Christ has died, so it will not suffice to know and believe that He rose with a transfigured body and is now in a state of joy and blessedness, no longer subject to mortality, for all this would profit me nothing or very little. But when I come to understand the fact that all the works God does in Christ are done for me, nay, they are bestowed upon and given to me, the effect of His resurrection being that I also will arise and live with Him; that will cause me to rejoice. This must be brought home to our hearts, and we must not merely hear it with the ears of our body nor merely confess it with our mouth.

You have heard in the story of the Passion how Christ is portrayed as our exemplar and helper, and that he who follows Him and clings to Him receives the Spirit, who will enable him also to suffer. But the words of Paul are more Christian and should come closer home to our hearts and comfort us more, when he says: "Christ was raised for our justification." Here the Lamb is truly revealed, of whom John the Baptist testifies, when he says in John 1: 29: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Here is fulfilled that which was spoken to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head," which means that for all those who believe in Him, hell, death, and the devil and sin have been destroyed. In the same manner the promise is fulfilled today which God gave to Abraham, when He said in Gen 22:18: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here Christ is meant, who takes away our curse and the power of sin, death and the devil.

All this is done, I say, by faith. For if you believe that by this Seed the serpent has been slain, then it is slain for you; and if you believe that in this Seed all nations are to be blessed, then you are also blessed. For each one individually should have crushed the serpent under foot and redeemed himself from the curse, which would have been too difficult, nay impossible for us. But now it has been done easily, namely, by Christ, who has crushed the serpent once, who alone is given as a blessing and benediction, and who has

caused this Gospel to be published throughout the world, so that he who believes, accepts it and clings to it, is also in possession of it, and is assured that it is as he believes. For in the heart of such a man the Word becomes so powerful that he will conquer death, the devil, sin and all adversity, like Christ Himself did. So mighty is the Word that God Himself would sooner be vanquished than that His Word should be conquered.



This is the meaning of the words by St. Paul: "Christ was raised for our justification." Here Paul turns my eyes away from my sins

and directs them to Christ, for if I look at my sins, they will destroy me. Therefore I must look unto Christ who has taken my sins upon Himself, crushed the head of the serpent and become the blessing. Now they no longer burden my conscience, but rest upon Christ, whom they desire to destroy. Let us see how they treat Him. They hurl Him to the ground and kill Him. O God; where is now my Christ and my Saviour? But then God appears, delivers Christ and makes Him alive; and not only does He make Him alive, but He translates Him into heaven and lets Him rule over all. What has now become of sin? There it lies under His feet. If I then cling to this, I have a cheerful conscience like Christ, because I am without sin. Now I can defy death, the devil, sin and hell to do me any harm. As I am a child of Adam, they can indeed accomplish it that I must die. But since Christ has taken my sins upon Himself, has died for them, has suffered Himself to be slain on account of my sins, they can no longer harm me, for Christ is too strong for them. They cannot keep Him; He breaks forth and overpowers them, ascends into heaven (takes sin and sorrow captive), and rules there over all throughout eternity. Now I have a clear conscience, am joyful and happy and am no longer afraid of this tyrant, for Christ has taken my sins away from me and made them His own. But they cannot remain upon Him; what then becomes of them? They must disappear and be destroyed. This then is the effect of faith. He who believes that Christ has taken away our sin, is without sin, like Christ Himself, and death, the devil and hell are vanquished as far as he is concerned and they can no longer harm him. ~

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:22-24

Christ is again manifest. He has been, and He still is, the despised and rejected of men. But He is the foundation on which His Church rests, and the ornament of the beautiful fabric. It was a glorious day when, rising from the dead, He was displayed as the Son of God. It is indeed to each believer a glorious day when He shines in their hearts as all their salvation.

Henry Law

Let Us Pray

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

IT SEEMS ALMOST unfathomable that we can talk to the Creator of the universe. In Psalm 8, King David ponders this great mystery: *O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?* (Psalm 8:1-4) When we look at the vastness of creation, and consider the incredible number of people on Earth, each one of us seems to fade into absolute insignificance. When secular thinkers have considered this, their conclusion has been exactly that... that each of us is truly insignificant in the grand scheme of things. They tell us that the only things that matter are the things that matter to us. That nothing that we say or do will ultimately have any significance in the universe.

Yet the Bible tells that that each of us actually is significant. That we are created in God's image, that He loves us, and that He created us to be in a relationship with Him. And this relationship is an intimate one. Truth be told, we need to be trained to overcome our innate belief that God neither hears us, nor will answer when we pray. Because this



is true, one old Christian prayer begins like this: "Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve..."

The reason that we can have confidence that God both hears and answers our prayers is because He has reconciled Himself to us in Christ Jesus. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* (2 Corinthians 5:17-19) Where our sin separated us from Him, God has provided the remedy through Jesus' work of redemption on the cross so that, "to all who did receive [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..." (John 1:12).

Your gracious Heavenly Father wants you to pray to Him in all circumstances. Approach Him with your worries, fears, doubts, complaints, thanksgiving, and praise. The Apostle Paul puts it so wonderfully in *1 Thessalonians 5:17-18: Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* So regardless of whether things are going well or poorly for us, let us pray. ~



The Baptism of Jesus

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:13-17

John preached: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. So when Jesus walks up to John, He looks like a guy that has something to repent of. John assumes this too, this is why he attempts to forbid Him. *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* It's like he is saying "Lord, I'm the sinner, I need to repent. You're the savior, You're the one who brings forgiveness. You have this backwards." Jesus' response is telling. He says, *Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.*

Jesus is telling John that He has come to be baptized in order to take part in the baptism that these penitent sinners are undertaking, to join Himself to them. This act reflects so perfectly with how Jesus will save His people from their sins. In this, He takes the place of sinful Adam and God is pleased with Him. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

It's no coincidence that after this, Jesus goes and confronts the devil, and defeats him. Where Adam and Eve fell, Christ is victorious. Where sinful Israel turned away, Jesus is obedient. Where you and I sin, He does not. It is here that Jesus steps into our shoes, joins Himself with sinful humanity, and begins to fulfill the law for us. The amazing thing is that in joining Himself to us, God's pleasure isn't only directed at Jesus. It's directed to the race that Jesus has joined. God says this to each and every one of us in our baptism. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

God's peace.
Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

Every Day Is Easter

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

HELLO ONCE AGAIN to each of you. I pray you are well and that your day is going well. In December we celebrated and heard about Jesus' birth. It is now Easter time when we remember Jesus' death and the great price He paid to redeem our souls and save us, and one day bless us with eternal life and protect us from eternal punishment. It's hard to grasp this great act of love and forgiveness. But, dear reader, know that it is very real and it is meant for you and each person who loves and serves God and His Son. Jesus, who was innocent of any wrong, had to die for you and me. He was God's Son and was willing to do His Father's perfect will.

I found a poem that I would like to share with you.

Every Day Is Easter
"Easter comes but once a year,"
So many people say,
But, to a person saved from sin,
It's Easter every day!

A man, when saved or "born again"
His life, to Christ, will give,
And, as a new-born babe in Christ,
He's just begun to live.

"I am the resurrection, life,"
The Savior, one day, said:
"And he, believing in my Word,
Shall live, though he be dead."

And that well known Apostle, Paul,
In Philippi made plain:
"For me to live is Jesus Christ,
For me to die is gain."

So when the blood of Christ, our Lord,
Redeems a soul from sin,
Every day is Easter,
For Jesus lives within!

Carolyn Orr

The Bible says: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (St. John 3:16)*

Also, *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. (St. John 14:19)*

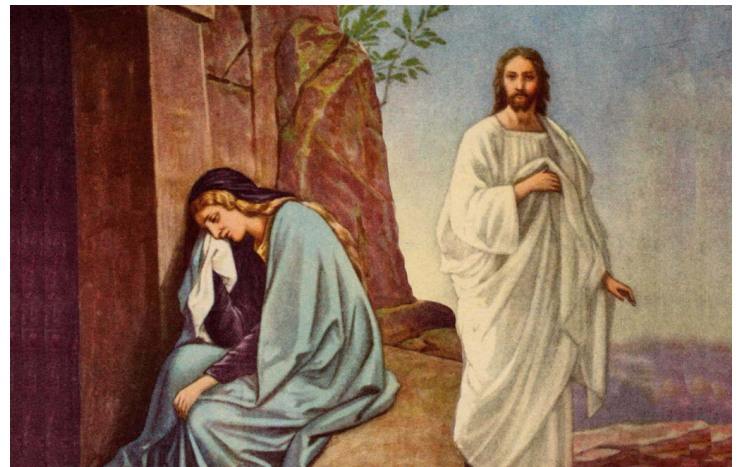
I pray that Easter will hold special meaning for you and that you will keep the knowledge of what Jesus did for YOU, safely tucked away in your heart. You are a precious chosen child of God and what a treasure that is. One day when Jesus comes, He will take all those who believe in Him up to that beautiful home He has prepared for us in heaven. It will be a forever home of life forever. A home where we will live again and for always.

It's not easy for us to grasp the concept, but we can pray to have faith to believe it and let God finish what He has planned.

Keep looking up, one day at a time; that is sufficient. If we think too far ahead it can be overwhelming. God knows what we need for each day.

I pray you have a blessed Easter.

God's peace.



The Day of Resurrection

The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
The passover of gladness, The passover of God.
From death to life eternal, From earth unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over, With hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil, That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal Of resurrection light;
And listening to his accents, May hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing, May raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful! Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph, And all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen Their notes in gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord hath risen, Our joy that hath no end.

Christian Poetry by John of Damascus; Translation by John Mason Neale

Lord, Revive Us Again

Andrew Mickelsen, March 1962 CM

Submitted by Gary Bertram; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

THE PSALMIST CRIES OUT in *Psalm 85:6-7*: *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.*

At the beginning of this psalm, he tells what God has done for His people: brought them back from captivity, forgave their evil doings, and turned away His anger from them. But looking at the state and the prospects of the people of God, the Psalmist observes that a revival is needed; therefore, he asks, *Wilt thou not revive us again?*

How is it with you, dear brother and sister, you whom God has released from the captivity of the devil, forgiven you your iniquity and turned His anger away from you? By examining yourself and the church in general, do you feel that a revival is needed? Are you satisfied with the condition of your heart and spiritual life? I shall not ask you if you are satisfied with the condition of your fellow-believer, because it is much easier to see faults in others than in yourself.

What are the signs that should indicate to all that we need to be revived? Let me attempt to enumerate some of them. 1. When there is a lack of brotherly love and Christian confidence. 2. When there are dissensions and jealousies, and evil speaking among the believers. 3. When there is a worldly spirit prevalent among the members of the church. 4. When confessors fall into gross sins. 5. When Christians become careless and drowsy, not caring whether unbelievers all around them are bound for destruction. 6. When excuses are sought after and found, why Christians need not give up luxuries, that more might be given for God's work. 7. When Christians do not hunger and thirst after righteousness that their own souls might be fed and refreshed by the Word and that sinners might be saved, but go to church only when it is convenient for them to do so or if, perhaps, there are not better matters to attend to, and then, too, if the speaker be of their choice.

How many of these signs are visible among us today? How many of these signs do you see in yourself? Is there a lack of brotherly love in your heart, and have you lost confidence in other Christians? If so, what is the reason? Is the fault in them or in you? If in them, have you gone to them, with brotherly love, and told them your reason, or have you gone about speaking evil about them behind their backs to stir up dissensions among the flock of Christians? Has the spirit of the world found room in your heart, which things—such as worldly friends, amusements, clothing and adornments, honor and esteem of the world, worldly possessions, car, home, money, wife, children, or any other thing or combination of things—seemed uppermost in your heart and mind, so that your thoughts, and conversation, were and are more on them than on the things of God? *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* (Colossians 3:2)

Have you fallen into any gross sins which have not been confessed and forgiven? Have you become careless in your speech, deportment and appearance before unbelievers, to the detriment of Christians and a stumbling-block in Christianity? These are signs of drowsiness, because Christians speak louder with their actions than with their words. Have you denied yourself any luxuries so that you

could give more abundantly to the work of God, or do you give only a tiny portion of your abundance? Let us remember what Jesus said of the widow's mite.

Do you feel such an inward need to attend services and Bible Study that you will put all other things aside as less important, though you have to drive a few miles and make some small sacrifice to attend, because you do not want to miss? Do you pray to God that He would bless His servant in the pulpit and that your heart might be receptive to His grace and truth? Do you enter God's house in the spirit of prayer?

Placing ourselves like this before the all-knowing God with these many questions, are we able to give an unreserved answer: yes? To how many of these questions do we have to add some reservation, or admit that we are all guilty in God's presence?

Perhaps now we can observe with the Psalmist that we are in need of a revival, and join with him in praying, *Wilt thou not revive us again?*

Many of us can recall times when our hearts burned with love toward God and our fellow man, that it was a pleasure for us to speak to others about what God had done for us. It seemed natural for us to seek Christian companionship, that together we could sing and talk, read and pray, thus remaining faithful that others might be saved. It was natural for us to have confidence in one another, both the young and the old, to be of one heart and mind, blessing and forgiving one another, without a thought of speaking evil or unkindly, or being envious, of anyone. The love of God was so abundantly shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that there was no room for the love of this world. Even in the middle of our work our thoughts were on what spiritual things we could do and enjoy when our material duties ended. Our fervent prayers were for our unbelieving loved ones and friends, that they would be saved, and our hearts rejoiced when we heard that somebody had been converted. The more we heard of God's Word, His truth and grace, the more we wanted to hear. It seemed as though we never got enough. The time spent around the Word of God never seemed too long; it always ended too soon, and distances were shortened by the anticipation and hope of sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear what He had to say to us.

Why does all of this seem odd and childish to us now? Have we increased in stature and wisdom, and outgrown such childish things? Yes, we may have become older in years, matured in experience, and learned in the doctrine of Christ, but that is not the reason. Has our Christianity, the doctrine of Christ, or the preaching of the Word of God changed, causing this? No. That is not so, although those who cannot see any fault in themselves may say so and attempt to place blame on some thing, or someone else.

Let each of us search ourselves in the light of the Spirit of God. Have we examined ourselves, are we aware of these faults in ourselves and tried to correct them without much success? Even though we pray, "O God, help me to be more spiritually minded and fervent about Thy business! Give me a burden for the salvation of the lost, that I must go out and speak to them of Thy love, grace and truth. Kindle within me the fire of love, that the last sparks in my cold heart go not

out. Help me to be more gracious and not so critical of my brothers and sisters in faith. Restore within me a right mind and a humble spirit that the world, the devil and my own corrupt nature detract me not from the need of drawing close to Thee through Thy Word and Thy Spirit.”

In such a prayer we acknowledge ourselves lacking in these things and desire to correct them but have been unable to do so. Why this inability? St. Paul answers that question for us in *Romans 7:19-20, 24-25: For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

Here is the means that enables us to correct ourselves from faults and sins: Jesus Christ our Lord! This is why we should fervently pray, *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?* When God revives us we receive strength to cast aside every weight and sin. Our hearts will begin to burn with love so fervently that its fire will burn away all lack of confidence, dissensions, jealousies, evil back talk, worldliness, sinful desires, carelessness, drowsiness, avarice, greed, indifference, to hear anew the Word of God. That which before seemed impossible now becomes possible.

When the people of God become sufficiently convicted of these sins and faults and become convinced that they are unable to correct them themselves and fervently cry to God for a revival, believing that God will hear and answer their prayers, they shall receive it.

Jesus meant it when He said, *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22) And again, Ask, and it shall be given you... If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall*

your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matthew 7:7, 11) St. James says, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering... (James 1:5-6) ...ye have not, because ye ask not. (James 4:2)

What has happened to the spirit of prayer? Has Satan convinced the believer that praying leads to self-righteousness? At the beginning of the great awakening and revival in northern Europe, we read of saints whose knees were calloused from praying. It is far better that calluses grow on our knees than on our hearts and consciences. No wonder God answered their prayers with such a forceful revival that whole communities were converted. If we would only search the Bible we would see for ourselves what wonders have been wrought by prayer because *...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16)* The devil knows this; therefore, he tries to hinder us from praying effectually by bringing in other thoughts to make our minds wander. He knows full well that God wants us to pray for one thing at a time, and if we but concentrate to pray for a revival and that God would first begin it in us, then He could use us in reviving others. I am sure we would have such a revival that it would reach out to the unsaved world, to the glory of God and the salvation of many souls.

Do not let the devil convince you that this is not God’s time for a revival. God is always willing to revive us if we are willing to clear our hearts and consciences from all obstacles which obstruct our prayers from being heard. Let us all unite in earnestly and fervently asking the Lord, *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?* And let us believe that God will hear us and answer our prayer.

With brotherly love.

Meeting Notice

The 116th Annual Meeting of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America will be hosted by the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Hockinson, WA and will be held on June 27th, 2024, at the Firm Foundation Christian School at 1919 SW 25th Way, Battle Ground, WA 98604.

In accordance with the By-Laws, the Annual Reports will be read; the members of the Central Board, the Eastern Mission Board, the Western Mission Board, and the Southern Mission Board will be elected. All matters will be considered and acted upon. Congregations are requested to send their delegates to this meeting.

The schedule of meetings and services are as follows. (PLEASE NOTE: Our meeting schedules have changed this year.)

Wednesday, June 26th	Ministers Meeting	9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Hockinson ALC 16108 NE 192nd Ave, Brush Prairie, WA 98606
	Eastern Mission Meeting	Immediately following Ministers Meeting at HALC
	Opening Service	7:00 PM at the Hockinson ALC 16108 NE 192nd Ave, Brush Prairie, WA 98606
Thursday, June 27th	Annual Business Meeting	9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Firm Foundation Christian School, 1919 SW 25th Way, Battle Ground, WA 98604
	Foreign Mission Business Meeting	Immediately following Annual Meeting at Firm Foundation
	National Sunday School Meeting	Immediately following the Foreign Mission Meeting at the Firm Foundation School

Devotional services will be held 10:00 AM, 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM beginning on Thursday, June 27th through Sunday, June 30th, 2024 at the Hockinson Apostolic Lutheran Church, 16108 NE 192nd Ave, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. Ministers, members, and the general public are invited to participate in these services.

*On behalf of the Central Board of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America,
David Myllymaki, Chairman
John Isaacson, Secretary*

He Will Hold Me Fast

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

SOME TIME BEFORE my husband Al passed away in September 2023, we learned a new hymn in church called, “He Will Hold Me Fast,” by Keith and Kristyn Getty. Here are the lyrics:

*When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast.
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold Through life's fearful path,
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.
Refrain: He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast,
For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast.
Those He saves are His delight; Christ will hold me fast.
Precious in His holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last.
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.
For my life He bled and died; Christ will hold me fast.
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life; He will hold me fast,
'Til our faith is turned to sight When He comes at last!*

This hymn brought me and my family much comfort during the loss of my husband, our children's father, and our grandkids' beloved Grumpy. We sang it at Al's funeral, and I rested in the refrain that Jesus loves me. He cares, and He will carry me through this and every difficult circumstance in my life.

Now, only a few short months later, I have a health crisis of my own. I was diagnosed with a glioblastoma, an aggressive, cancerous brain tumor. I had surgery to remove the tumor on February 29th and spent two weeks in the hospital, which is why there was no individual April edition of the Christian Monthly. I will be undergoing radiation and oral chemotherapy for 6 weeks or so, along with some alternative natural immune supports and cancer fighters. My family and I covet your prayers for my healing here on earth, as we know that Jesus the Great Physician is the One who gives healing, both through miraculous means and through modern medicine.

One night early in my hospital stay, another hymn was running through my head, which is based on Isaiah 26:3-4: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.* I was praying to the Lord about my inability to “stay my mind” on Him, because my mind hops all over the place so quickly. I prayed that our dear Lord would Himself “stay my mind” on Him, keep my

focus on Him, and keep me in perfect peace. And He has given His perfect peace throughout this entire season. During this entire process, from the first minute the emergency room doctor said that they found a mass in my brain, Christ has held me fast.

What exactly brings “perfect peace” to our hearts? It is nothing other than the forgiveness of our sins through faith in the blood of Jesus which was shed on the cross on that Good Friday long ago, and in the resurrection of our victorious Christ which we recently celebrated on Easter Sunday. The Apostle Paul writes:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:1-5)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:28-39)

God be praised for His faithfulness in holding us fast through every storm in our lives! ~

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Send articles for publication to:
Lois Matson, Editor
Email: cm@apostoliclutheran.org
Phone: (360) 904-6951
Postal Mail to:
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY
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Address subscriptions, payments,
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Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers
Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org
NEW Phone: 360-601-5117
THE BOOK CONCERN
PO Box 104
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Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

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We Celebrate the Resurrection Every Day

Pastor Jay Weidner
Laurium, Michigan

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

1 Corinthians 15:42-29

Easter is celebrated a little early this year, coming on the last day of March. We realize that with St. Paul, we celebrate the resurrection every day. According to Romans:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:3-11)

Through Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection, we have been given the victory over sin, death and the devil. We live in full fellowship with Him who is risen from the dead through the Holy Spirit, and we wait expectantly for the return of our Lord when the completed vision of His work will be revealed and the resurrection will be fully realized. Until that time, even in the midst of difficulty we rejoice knowing that our Redeemer lives and we live together with Him!

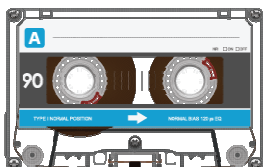
May all the joys of the blessed resurrection of our Lord be yours in this glorious season and may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus! Thank you for blessing us with your prayers and support.

Happy Easter and God's peace!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the holy anthem rise,
And the choirs of heaven chant it In the temple of the skies;
Let the mountains skip with gladness And the joyful valleys ring,
With Hosannas in the highest To our Savior and our King.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Like the sun from out the wave,
He has risen up in triumph From the darkness of the grave,
He's the splendor of the nations, He's the lamp of endless day;
He's the very Lord of glory Who is risen up today.

Edward Caswall



Request for Old Sermon Tapes

Do you have cassette tapes of old sermons? If so, you may be wondering what to do with them. Dave Impola has put in a request, and he would love to have them. You can contact him at davyimpola@hotmail.com and he will arrange to get them from you. Thank you for your help!