

Devotions – April 16-22, 2017

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Sunday, April 16, 2017 – Easter Sunday

LUTHERANISM 101, a publication of *The Lutheran*, is written by Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Master in Carol Stream, Illinois. She includes several core Lutheran themes including the “Theology of the Cross.” She writes, “The theology of the cross refers not just to the events of Good Friday. It also refers to a cross-centered approach to theology that stands in opposition to a ‘theology of Glory,’ which says God is in Heaven and all is well with the world.” She goes on to add, “a theology of the cross says ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to God.’”

Let us pray: *We thank you, our God, that you became incarnate and were made man in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ, and that he lived, died and rose again so that we might live in eternity with Him in heaven. Christ has risen! Alleluia! Amen.*



Monday, April 17, 2017

Another of Kleinhan’s core Lutheran themes is “Means of Grace.” She writes, “The Augsburg Confession describes word and sacrament as the ‘means of grace’. The word ‘means’ refers to how things happen.” In other words, grace happens when we are baptized, and when we receive Holy Communion.

We Lutherans believe we are saved by grace through faith. We serve God and neighbor, not to be saved, but because Christ saved us. In thankfulness to God, let us seek ways we can be His presence to others.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, we thank you for saving us from our sinful ways. Show us your perfect will and help us to live accordingly. Christ has risen! Alleluia! Amen.*



Tuesday, April 18, 2017

Text: John 20: 16

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” which means teacher.

Please close your eyes for a few seconds and pretend it is you who has just seen the risen Lord. How would you react? What would you say? What would you do?

She did as Jesus asked her to do. “Go and tell my brothers I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Mary went and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” She went and told them all that he had said to her.

Have you seen Jesus, the living Savior? Of course you have or you would not be reading this meditation. So, what will you do? How will you react to this good news? Jesus is asking us to go and tell the good news.

Let us pray: *Lord Jesus, empower us to deliver the message of your love and sacrifice for all people. Help us to model our faith in you by our witness to you. Alleluia! He is risen indeed!*



Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Text: John 20:21

Again Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”

Pastor Amanda Kossow, in a recent sermon at Messiah Lutheran Church, told of the “Johnny Jump-Ups,” – some flowers which her family planted in their yard. The next spring, the flowers grew and expanded and the whole yard was filled with purple flowers. She then encouraged us to go out into our community and become like the “Johnny Jump-Ups.”

What would happen in our communities and our congregations if we would take on the characteristics of those flowers? The love of Christ would be spread to our families, our congregation, our work places and the places we play.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, help us to respond as Mary did to the voice of Jesus and go out into our world and tell the Good News. He is risen! He has risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.*



Thursday, April 20, 2017

“*Because He Lives*” is a song written by William J. Gaither in 1971. It was included as a part of the memorial card given to attendees at a funeral I recently attended. It tells the story of the resurrection in a simple and memorable way:

“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living
Just because He lives.”

The most beautiful gift ever received is the gift of eternal life given to us through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let us pray: *We thank you, our Triune God, for this gift of life everlasting with you in Heaven. He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.*



Friday, April 21, 2017

Text: Luke 24:51

While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven.”

“The beginning of life” is the heading of a section of chapter 31 in “Bonhoeffer,” a biography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Eric Metaxes. Bonhoeffer lived his life and faced his death in a manner which demonstrated his belief in Heaven. Metaxes writes, “...he thought of death as the last stop on the road to freedom” (page 531). Today, we might call it the last exit off the freeway to Heaven.

Is it too farfetched to think of the cross as the second to last stop on Jesus’ road to our salvation? The resurrection, then, would be the final step. It would be the beginning of life for all believers.

Jesus lived, died and rose from the grave to save us from our sins. His last act with the disciples was to bless them as He left them and entered His new life.

Let us pray: *Dear God our Father, thank you for Jesus’ willingness to suffer and die to pave the way to our last stop on our road to freedom. Alleluia! He is risen indeed! Amen.*



Saturday, April 22, 2017

Text: Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

How seriously do we take this command? When was the last time you prayed about and invited a friend to join you in worship? For many, the answer is never. Jesus’ command is clear. Yet, we are reluctant to share the good news with others. Let’s pray that we can come to a place where it is as common for us to invite a friend to come to know Jesus as it is to invite them for coffee or lunch.

Let us pray: *Thank you, Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that you were willing to step far out of your comfort zone to take our sins to the cross and pay the bill for our salvation. YOU HAVE RISEN! WE BELIEVE, HELP OUR UNBELIEF. ALLELUIA! CHRIST HAS RISEN! Amen*

