

“PD’s Pickings”

It’s hard to believe Easter Sunday is upon us once again. A year ago, we were mere weeks into the throes of lockdown, and for perhaps the first time ever in this church’s history our sanctuary was empty on Easter Sunday. That seems like a lifetime ago to me. Maybe you too. And here we are a year afterward, hopeful for the future as we finally, slowly, emerge from this pandemic. We’re finally feeling like we’re coming back to life.

The theme of New Life has a New Twist for us now: On the one hand, we’re more acutely aware as a whole society of the fragility of life and inevitability of death. On the other hand, we are more tuned into the sacredness of *living*. When we speak of “New Life,” it includes the daily business of relationships and work and going about life itself. “New Life” now has, perhaps, a much more present-tense and concrete connotation for us than it did a year ago. It’s not a term reserved only for the big things like a birth or a baptism, nor for mainly metaphysical or theological discourse. “New Life” now includes “I can hug my grandkids again!” and “I can go to church again!”

Jesus’ Resurrection is a truth and a fact that speaks to all the connotations of New Life. It is the one truth that makes everything else make sense. Even the cross makes no sense without it. If Jesus had not arisen from the grave, how would we know sin and death had been conquered? How would we know the price paid at the cross really dealt with our sin once and for all?

Without the resurrection, Jesus’ life and ministry would have been nothing more than that of yet another prophet in Israel, not of God the Son in human form. In fact, for the rest of religions throughout the world, this is exactly the issue. If they know who Jesus is at all, he is regarded as just another human being. Perhaps a very unique human being, perhaps even a good teacher or prophet on par with Moses or Elijah. But only human. And still dead.

The resurrection of Jesus does not leave open to us the category of “wow, what a profound teacher and wonderful human.” The problem with the “good teacher, significant human being” view, as C. S. Lewis points out, is that Jesus unambiguously claimed to be God—many times. If that’s the case, then either he is who he claimed to be, or he isn’t. If he is, he’s far more than a mere human being. If he’s not, then he is either a crazed lunatic or a lying psychopath. But merely a good, moral, significant human being? Jesus does not leave that option available to us. And if Jesus did rise from the dead as we believe he did, there’s only one possible option remaining between liar, lunatic, or Lord.

The resurrection puts to us the same question Jesus put to Simon Peter: “Who do you say that I am?” If this did really happen, it is proof that Jesus truly is who he said he is—God in human form— and that he really has accomplished what the scriptures have foretold for millennia—our salvation. If the resurrection really happened, we really *can* say with certainty “sin has lost its power, death has lost its sting!” If it didn’t... then Paul says “We are to be pitied above all people” for believing such foolishness while still being lost in our sins.

And that brings us to the most personal aspect of why the resurrection is so crucial to our faith. Because Jesus has arisen, we too share in the hope of the resurrection. The Apostle Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 15 that the frail bodies we occupy now are analogous to a kernel of corn; but what is to come is like the whole, glorious corn plant. It corresponds to the seed. But it is way, WAY better... and in our case, imperishable: free from everything that brings decay and death.

Not just resuscitated. RESURRECTED.

The resurrection is the central thread of our whole faith. Pull on that thread, and the entire tapestry unravels. We believe it to be a historical fact, not a metaphorical theological construct. Its impact ripples throughout history. It is not a basis for escapist theology that looks only to the next life, but *the* one reason this life actually does matter.

This Easter we again proclaim “He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!” Let us live like it. Let us live *in* it. Let us share that hope, the one thing that makes everything else matter.

“He is RISEN!” “*He is Risen Indeed!*”

Shalom,




TREASURER'S REPORT

General Fund:	<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>TO DATE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
Matching Challenge		\$ 49,725.04	
Balance Forward		\$ 14,541.23	
Monthly Income	\$ 11,833.60	\$ 76,099.87	
Monthly Expenditures	\$ 13,205.07	<u>\$ 62,894.80</u>	
Balance:			\$ 77,471.34
Special Fund Balance:			\$ 22,221.80
In-and-Out Fund Balance:			\$ 32,571.28
Memorial Fund:			
Undesignated:		\$ 5,775.00	
Designated:		<u>\$ 13,029.20</u>	
Balance:			\$ 18,804.20
Synod Savings Account			
Youth Reserve		\$ 1,087.25	
Manse Fund		\$ 62.48	
Julia Sturtevant Fund		<u>\$ 5,451.36</u>	
Balance:			\$ 48,083.55

