

April 2021 Pastoral Message

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” – Romans 6:3-11

Happy Easter, beloved! I am so excited about entering into this lovely time of the church year, the season of Easter. The temperatures are warming up, the grass is a bit more green, and the rains that give life to the fields have come back. By the time you read this, we will have already celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord on Sunday the 4th of April. Depending on your congregation, you may have been a part of a sunrise service, one of the most fun and exciting worships of the year. We shouted ‘alleluia’ as we remember the tomb being empty, the god made man rising from the dead, and the ‘awes’ of the women and men who ran to witness this event.

Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb on the third day after his crucifixion. Easter is the fulfilled prophecy of the Messiah who would be persecuted, die for our sins, and rise on the third day, originally written in Isaiah 53. Remembering the resurrection of Jesus is a way to renew daily hope that we have victory over sin. According to the New Testament, Easter is three days after the death of Jesus on the cross. Easter is a very significant date within Christianity and is the crux, or foundation, of the Christian faith. Jesus, the Son of God, fulfilled prophecy and through his death, has given the gift of eternal life in heaven to those who believe in his death and resurrection.

I chose Paul’s writing found in the Book to the Roman’s as a reminder that we to are given the same promise of rising from the dead, just as Jesus did. That divine gift given to Him awaits us – we too shall rise after we leave this life and enter into the next. This gift of grace, this act of compassion, and this gift of promise comes to us from a Creator God that loves us so much that it is beyond our comprehension. We too share in this life eternal with our Lord.

As we continue as an Easter people, that is...we know the story and beauty of the Resurrection...let us also continue in raising up our faith. Though the Lenten season has passed, it does not mean that we necessarily let down our guard and return to the way we were before we honored the 40 days and 40 nights. We are still called to turn toward God, recognize the sins and self-indulgence that we have entered into, and give them away to God through repentance. Let us also share in the joy of the sacrifice of the cross and know that our sins are indeed forgiven. We have such great things to be thankful for, and Easter tells us that.

Welcome to Easter, my beloved family and friends of the Neighbors in Christ Parish. I’ll see you in worship, or at your home sharing in a hot cup of coffee with you. Bless you and enjoy the season!

In HIS name,

Rev. Erik Karlson
Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish