



**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
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Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

## OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

APRIL 2018

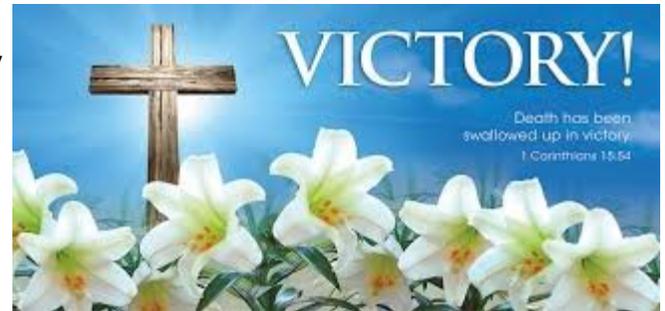
### *Not Another Easter Message!*

Easter Greetings!

Easter is such an important day in a Christian's life that our liturgical calendar actually has readings for three separate worship services: Easter Sunrise, Easter Day and Easter Evening. The Easter Evening readings can be used on Easter Monday, as the liturgical day goes from sunset to sunset.

Easter Day is the first Sunday of Easter. There are seven Sundays of Easter in the Easter Season. The season ends with Pentecost Sunday, this year May 27. While every Sunday is a celebration of Easter, the Sundays of Easter are especially focused on this chief event in human history.

As Christians, we simply cannot hear enough about Easter! Not only does it proclaim our Lord's victory over sin, death, hell, and the power of the devil, but it also proclaims our victory over the same foes because we have been united with him in his victory. What he accomplished, we accomplish vicariously. He not only suffered for us, but he rose for us. Therefore, in Easter we see a glimpse of our future resurrection. That is why Paul called Jesus the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:23).



The impact of the first Easter is enduring. Most everything we know is limited. The recent victory of the Eagles in the Super Bowl will be fleeting. Next year, unless the Eagles repeat, the zeal from their victory will be long gone. Parades surrounded the return of the troops after both World War I and World War II, but I'd guess that most Americans today do not know the date when the peace treaties that ended either war were signed (November 11, 1918 and September 2, 1945, respectively). I could name any number of other events that caused great excitement at the time, but today are nothing much more than the answer to a trivia question. Some of these events even have had long-term effects on our daily lives, like in transportation, communication, power, and the like. However, none of them have had the enduring impact of Easter.

Even if you take something like the Battle of Tours in 732, which stopped the Moslem advance in Europe and saved the continent from being completely overrun by the invaders, shaping all of western history from that point on, the impact is not as significant as Easter, nor has Tours changed more lives than Easter. At best, the impact of Tours will end with the end of the world. The impact of Easter will have only just begun and will continue for all eternity. Even if we concede that Tours means that many were not forced into the Islamic religion, it did not mean that the victors were automatically Christians, much less their descendants. Nor are we assured that Europe will remain even nominally Christian until the day Christ returns.

But we know that the message of Easter will continue to assure all who trust in Jesus that they have an eternal home

to look forward to. The message of Easter assures all who trust in Jesus that they will be raised in glorified bodies on the Last Day. The message of Easter assures all who trust in Jesus that even death, as frightening as it may seem, has lost his power. It can not hold the faithful.

So, yes, this is another Easter message. As long as I draw breath, I will rejoice in sharing the Good News that Jesus rose on Easter morning. In fact, long after I have died, and my body has turned to dust, I will be singing about our Lord's great victory, with all the saints, in heavenly glory! I pray this will be so for you, too.

Praise the Lord, O my soul,  
I will praise the Lord all my life  
I will sing praise to my God  
as long as I live  
Psalm 146:1,2

Blessed Easter Season

Pastor



## Digging In The Nicene Creed Introduction, Part 6

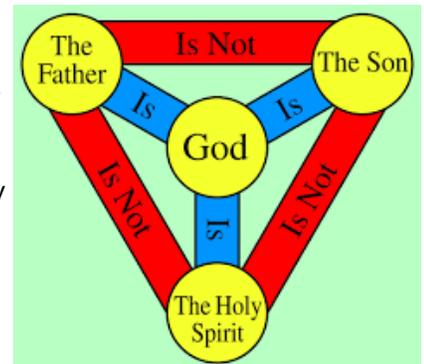
The second "ecumenical" council was held at the capital city of Constantinople in the year 381. I put the word ecumenical in quotes because, at the time this council was summoned, it was not considered an ecumenical council but a regional synod. This is why none of the western bishops, including the bishop of Rome, attended or were even invited. It is true that the pope advised the eastern bishops to convene the council to resolve issues they were facing, but that is a far cry from him, or any of the western bishops, having a voice at the council. It is now, and has been for well over a thousand years, recognized as ecumenical, because the creed it produced has been

accepted by all of Christianity as a faithful representation of our shared faith. Gregory the Great (540-604 AD) said it is one of the "undisputed General Councils," which he revered as he did the four holy Gospels.

Between the Council of Nicaea and the Council of Constantinople, the nephew of Constantine became the Roman Emperor. He restored paganism and sought to eradicate Christianity, instituting the last great Roman persecution of the Church. His name was Julian (331-363) and history remembers him as Julian the Apostate. He failed to stamp out Christianity; furthermore, his efforts to do so meant that many "confessors" were also present at the Council of Constantinople (many of whom had not been at the Council of Nicaea). Once again, their voices were very important to the bishops gathered.

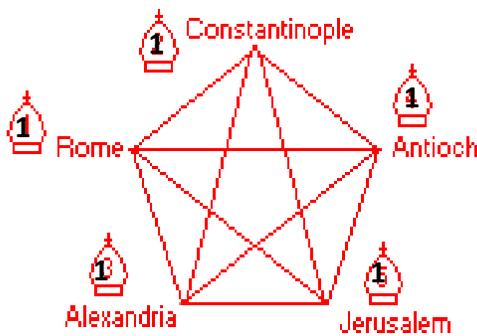
As the Council of Constantinople was an eastern council, the forces that drove it arose in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This included North Africa. As intimated in last month's article, the Nicene Council in 325 AD really didn't put the Arian controversy to bed. Instead, a new element had been introduced: the secular government. Since Constantine had called the council together, the precedence of secular authority having a role in church business was established. (This was further encouraged when, in 380, Emperor Theodosius I enacted a law establishing Catholic Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. This was a bold move in light of the fact that his capital city, Constantinople, was firmly in the hands of the Arians, and had been for about 40 years.) One of the accomplishments of the council is that a corner was turned in history, inside the empire, concerning Arianism. Indeed, it would soon almost die out in the Roman Empire but survive for many more centuries outside the empire.

The theological problems that arose between the first and second ecumenical councils revolved around a few issues. There was the question of who (or what) is the Holy Spirit, what was his relationship to the Father and the Son, and so on. Some denied that the Holy Spirit was God. Others maintained he was "god" only in a secondary sense, and not equal to either the Father or the Son. Still others thought that the Holy Spirit was simply a way God chose to manifest himself at times and was not a distinct or independent person at all. Something like I'm a husband to my wife and a father to my children, but I am really only one person. In essence, this whole group had problems with the Trinity.



The second cluster of issues revolved around Jesus and who he is. Whenever there is a controversy, like that the Ari-

ans precipitated, the response to counter it can go too far. So, some taught various ideas that basically removed all the humanity from Jesus. To counter this, others taught various ideas that basically removed all the divinity from Jesus. This entire group basically failed to comprehend the two natures (divine and human) in the one person of Jesus.



The third set of issues arose simply because the Christian faith, with imperial support, had become the faith of choice by the majority. This meant that politics entered into the church. Deciding whose church really was the most important, and other such issues, became hot topics. Also, if you could get the emperor, or even a local governor, on your side, then you could bring military support to bear on your behalf. I'd like to say that only the heretics resorted to such tactics, but that would be untrue. The relationship between Church and State continues as a muddy problem for many to this very day.

Next month we will continue our introduction to the Nicene Creed. Until then, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

## A Lenten Devotion From LHM:

### "Pain Killer"

<sup>33</sup> And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, <sup>34</sup> They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. Matthew 27:33-34 (KJV)

The Roman executioners were not complete monsters. Before they nailed Jesus to the cross, they offered Him wine mixed with gall – a painkiller, probably a bitter-tasting plant like opium poppy. No doubt there was a practical purpose – it is easier to deal with a human body that is half-stupefied and can't fight very well. But there was mercy there as well.

Jesus refused it.

Why?

The LHM author's observation on pain.

I am so afraid of pain that my house is stocked with several kinds of pain killers, and I make sure I have them stashed away at work, too. I know what pain is like. But then, so did Jesus. He had just been flogged. How could He bear to say no?

And yet He did. He would not refuse the least bit of the suffering He bore to redeem us all. "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?" (John 18:11b)

It wasn't just the physical pain. Jesus would keep a clear, unclouded mind to the end – enduring the horrific pain of being forsaken by the Father as Jesus became sin for us (Psalm 22:1; Mark 15:34). Paul describes why He did it: "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is a good reminder of the price of our salvation.



## THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW



April's Arrival Brings Easter & Its Season:

This year Easter falls on April 1<sup>st</sup> and our celebration of Easter continues into May. We all know the many Gospel accounts of the Easter event when Jesus rose from death and demonstrated His victory over Satan and death, We will use Mark's account this time and Isaiah's prophesy of death's defeat and the people acknowledging God and His salvation.

As our Easter devotions continue, the emphasis is on Christ's many appearances recorded in Luke and John. The first readings shift to Acts where we read of the actions of the early church.

These continue with the Apostle's actions and the healing ministry. But we will also revisit Jesus' teaching and actions.

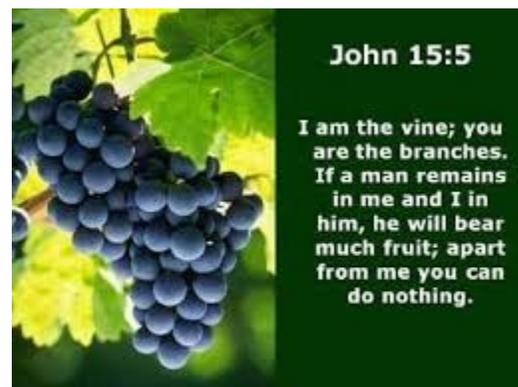
The Epistle lessons are focused on 1 John where in this letter he revisits the opening of his Gospel and reminds everyone that Jesus is the holy Son of God who was a part of the creation action and everything in the world.

His teaching continues and reminds us that we are God's own children because of God's great love for all humankind. This love is finally shown clearly in the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus on the cross in payment of our sins.

John's final appeal is that all believers use caution and test the message of others against the clear teaching of Scripture. It also includes a final appeal to show love toward others as God shows His love for all of us.

Our final Gospel appeal is the familiar words that liken believers to branches on the vine. Our very existence is supported by our attachment to the central vine, which is the Lord. As the leaves and branches get their sustenance from the vine, we get our total spiritual vitality from our Lord by the actions of the Holy Spirit in our lives through Word & sacrament.

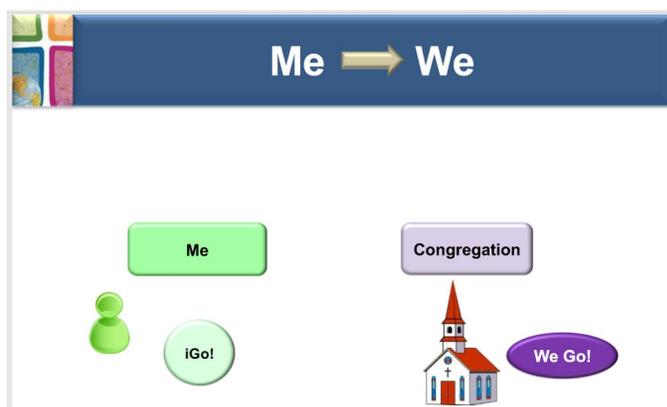
Clearly Easter season is a time to refresh, just as the Spring season refreshes our world with new life.



Arlen D. Besel – Worship

### Our Neighborhood – iGo & We Go!

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Colossians 3:17



We are witnesses for Christ, in all we say and do; it's just that simple! It is our joyous duty to tell people that Jesus loves them so much that He died for them, and that He wants them to live with Him forever in heaven. We do this where we live, work and play. As participants in the family of God here at Our Redeemer, we can, and will, do this together – We Go! – into our neighborhood.

At our Open Meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup>, we discussed how our lives witness to our love in Christ; it effects how we grow our relationships, how we tend our families, how we nurture our faith in Word and Sacrament.

Those in attendance discussed many possibilities for outreach into our community; there were many good ideas. We decided that we would choose one thing and do that one thing well. The "one thing" we decided to do was to support CHECA, our neighborhood homeowners' association. They meet in our church building throughout the year, so

this gives us an easy vehicle to tap into the needs, wishes, concerns and activities of our neighbors.

The next CHECA meeting is scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.; please come and show your support of our neighbors; get to know them; let them see our faces and see that we care about them.

CHECA has scheduled a community yard sale for Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Our Redeemer will be participating! We will be giving out free water, along with a tract on Jesus, the Water of Life. We will also have a bake sale. Everyone is encouraged to come out for this event and get to know our neighbors. You should have received an email regarding this event; if you have any questions, please contact Robin Billy @rlbilly@gmail.com, or talk to her at church!

More opportunities will come to meet, greet, engage, and pray for our neighbors as we partner with CHECA over the next couple of years. Be an active participant in reaching out to our neighbors with the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair



## BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

<b>Sundays</b>	<b>8:45 a.m.</b>	<b>"Be filled with the Spirit"</b>
<b>Tuesdays</b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Book of Revelation</b>
<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Hymn Study: context, theology &amp; history</b>

### **Bulletin & Newsletter Information Date**

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!



We are partnering with CHECA, supporting their events and getting to know our neighbors. One of the opportunities we have is their annual Spring Yard Sale. This year's yard sale will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 8 am until 2 pm.

ORLC will have tables available for anyone who wishes to sell their own things; there will also be tables for baked goods to sell. Interested in baking? Want a table to sell you stuff? Willing to help set up & take down? Let Robin Billy know by the end of April so that we have everything in place in time for the May 19<sup>th</sup> sale!

As part of our outreach to our neighbors, we will be giving out free water, along with a tract about Jesus, the Water of Life. This provides us a great opportunity to share God's love for them in Jesus in a simple, caring, non-threatening way; with respect.

Even if you aren't interested in selling anything, come and give away water and an invitation to know Jesus with us. These are the people God has put on our doorstep; let us get to know them, that they may be able to get to know Him!

### BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Dan Cooley
- 12 Sharon Henkel Roberts
- 14 Brian Kruelle
- 15 Larry Landolt
- 21 George Petik, Jr.
- 21 Andrew Steltz
- 26 Lois Schneider



If your birthday or anniversary is missing from this list, please email your information to me at: secretary.orldcde@outlook.com.



#### Easter Sunday Breakfast April 1, 2018 9:00 AM

Come and enjoy our Easter breakfast and children's Easter egg hunt.

This will be held before the Sunday morning service (10:30 a.m.).

We will have a variety of casseroles and breakfast foods available.

Please plan to attend with family and friends to celebrate and rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you would like to participate a sign-up sheet will be available for food and attendance.

All our welcome! Please contact me if you have any questions at (302) -737-3234 or e-mail (wbesteder@aol.com).

God's blessings to all,

Congregational Life

Lina Besteder

Would you like to experience a Sight & Sound show? Now playing is "Jesus" and it runs till the end of the year. If you are interested in going as a group sometime between now and December, please speak with Ruth Hewlett.

