

# Big News

## March 27, 2016

### Easter Sunday

We Christians should be the world's most adventuresome people. **In Jesus' Resurrection, God is making all things NEW!**

The popular image of Easter is no news at all. Don't get me wrong. I like chocolate eggs and fluffy chicks and bunnies. The problem lies deeper. People think see Easter as a happy ending after the horror of Good Friday. But that's not enough.

The real NEWS is that God is putting the whole world right. God is making all things NEW! That's about this world—not just somewhere called 'heaven.' The resurrection of Jesus begins that great work.

**In Jesus' Resurrection, God is making all things NEW!**

That includes...YOU! Out of the greatest failure in the universe—the crucifixion—God raises newness of life. We are baptized into that same cross so we too can walk in newness of life. "*Do you not know,*" Paul writes in Romans, chapter six, "*that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*" We forget that all of the time.

Since we forget that, we miss out on the best part of Easter, "*Therefore,*" Paul continues, "*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.*"

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We have died the one death that matters. If you can't kill me, you can't control me. Dying and rising with Jesus is the only true freedom. The one true declaration of independence is found in Romans 8:38-39: "*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

"Newness of life" is how we walk in this world! We should not restrict that thinking to funerals and some faraway future. Instead, we Christians should be the great experimenters, the great innovators, for the sake of the world.

In a real sense, the church is to be the world's "test kitchen" for faith, hope and love. The church is to be the place where we experiment with the New Life and then share what we have discovered. To do otherwise is to risk working against God.

Remember, **in Jesus' Resurrection, God is making all things NEW!**

Here's the problem. We keep acting as if Easter hasn't happened! We can forgive the world for such blockheadedness. But how can we shout on Sunday, "Christ is risen!" and grumble on Monday, "Nothing has changed"? In Romans 6, verse eleven, Paul puts it another way. "*So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" That's what Easter Sunday looks like on Easter Monday.

But we continue to live the same way even though everything has changed. We can skate along for a while as if nothing has happened. But when we face mortality and meaninglessness, mere human capacity fails us. When common sense produces bad solutions, it's time for something new.

### **In Jesus' Resurrection, God is making all things NEW!**

We are always so worried about how we will get to the future. But on Easter, God's future has come to us. Nobody saw this one coming. God's future is here. His name is Jesus. Christ is risen!

So a good pointer to God's work is when something NEW is happening. A good pointer away from God's work is when things stay the same. Jesus does not promise us lives that are stable, safe and secure. But he does promise us lives that are *interesting*.

Our theme in this Easter season is "The Gift of New Life." One way we will explore that gift is to collect the most interesting ideas in the world—or at least the most interesting ideas here at Emanuel Lutheran Church. In the Fellowship Hall, you will find a poster. On that poster you will find a pad of sticky notes. You can use those sticky notes to post the most interesting ideas in the world.

Write down what you think will be the most interesting ideas for life and mission and service here at Emanuel Lutheran Church. Sign the notes if you wish or leave them anonymous.

There will be just a few ground rules. Critiques of the present are not new ideas for the future. If you have complaints, just talk to me directly. We're looking for God's NEWNESS. You can add to ideas that you see on the poster, but don't judge or critique those ideas either. And try to write your ideas in ways that we can try. We are God's test kitchen. So we're looking for new recipes to test.

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The women were scared stiff when they found the tomb empty. The disciples thought their story was just idle talk. You are going to hear voices whispering, either in your head or from people not far away, telling you much the same thing: don't be silly, it can't be true, and if it was it would be so scary it would hurt. Well, yes, it is scary, but it isn't an idle tale. It's the sober, daytime truth. Don't look for the living among the dead. Jesus is risen; he's on the move; and he's calling you to join him in making God's new creation happen, right here and right now.

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Let's pray...

Pastor Lowell Hennigs