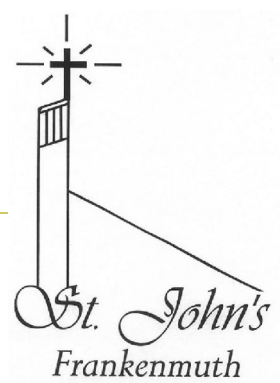


# THE VICTORY



**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newsletter**

**April 2021**

## **Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!**

Melito of Sardis—Sardis was an ancient city in modern-day western Turkey—was a Christian bishop and pastor born less than 100 years after Christ died and rose. He wrote a sermon, or homily, called *On the Pasch* (*Pasch* = Passover/Easter). This sermon explains how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection fit into the history of God's people. It's a powerful piece, rich in imagery and allusions to other parts of the Bible. I include excerpts here for your devotional use during Holy Week and the Easter season. Over thousands of years, the power of Christ's work for our salvation remains the same, drawing us into the truths of our sin and God's grace. Blessings to you this Easter. Celebrate the victory. Share the victory!

In the beginning, when God made heaven and earth, and everything in them through his word, he himself formed man from the earth and shared with that form his own breath, he himself placed him in paradise, which was eastward in Eden, and there they lived most luxuriously. Then by way of command God gave them this law: For your food you may eat from any tree, but you are not to eat from the tree of the one who knows good and evil. For on the day you eat from it, you most certainly will die.

But man, who is by nature capable of receiving good and evil as soil of the earth is capable of receiving seeds from both sides, welcomed the hostile and greedy counselor, and by having touched that tree transgressed the command, and disobeyed God. As a consequence, he was cast out into this world as a condemned man is cast into prison.

And when he had fathered many children, and had grown very old, and had returned to the earth through having tasted of the tree, an inheritance was left behind by him for his children. Indeed, he left his children an inheritance—not of chastity but of unchastity, not of immortality but of corruptibility, not of honor but of dishonor, not of freedom but of slavery, not of sovereignty but of tyranny, not of life but of death, not of salvation but of destruction.

Therefore, all flesh fell under the power of sin, and every body under the dominion of death, for every soul was driven out from its house of flesh. Indeed, that which had been taken from the earth was dissolved again into earth, and that which had been given from God was locked up in Hades. And that beautiful ordered arrangement was dissolved, when the beautiful body was separated (from the soul).

Yes, man was divided up into parts by death. Yes, an extraordinary misfortune and captivity enveloped him: he was dragged away captive under the shadow of death, and the image of the Father remained there desolate. For this reason, therefore, the mystery of the Passover has been completed in the body of the Lord.

Indeed, the Lord prearranged his own sufferings in the patriarchs, and in the prophets, and in the whole people of God, giving his sanction to them through the law and the prophets. For that which was to exist in a new and grandiose fashion was pre-planned long in advance, in order that when it should come into existence one might attain to faith, just because it had been predicted long in advance.

(Continued on page 2)

**Worship Service**  
**Sunday at 10 a.m.**

**Bible Class**  
**Sunday 9 a.m.**

**Sunday School**  
**Sunday 9 a.m.**

**Service Broadcast**

♦ **Sunday 8 a.m.**  
**Radio WKCQ**  
**98.1 FM**

♦ **Monday 7 p.m.**  
**Charter Cable**  
**TV**  
**channel 191**

**Church Office**  
**Hours :**  
**Monday—Thursday**  
**10 a.m.—4:30p.m.**

**Office Phone:**  
**(989) 652-6201**

**Pastor Patrick Ernst**

(Continued from page 1)

Accordingly, if you desire to see the mystery of the Lord, pay close attention to Abel who likewise was put to death, to Isaac who likewise was bound hand and foot, to Joseph who likewise was sold, to Moses who likewise was exposed, to David who likewise was hunted down, to the prophets who likewise suffered because they were the Lord's anointed.

Pay close attention also to the one who was sacrificed as a sheep in the land of Egypt, to the one who smote Egypt and who saved Israel by his blood.

When this one came from heaven to earth for the sake of the one who suffers, and had clothed himself with that very one through the womb of a virgin, and having come forth as man, he accepted the sufferings of the sufferer through his body which was capable of suffering. And he destroyed those human sufferings by his spirit which was incapable of dying. He killed death which had put man to death.

For this one, who was led away as a lamb, and who was sacrificed as a sheep, by himself delivered us from servitude to the world as from the land of Egypt, and released us from bondage to the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh, and sealed our souls by his own spirit and the members of our bodies by his own blood.

This one is the Passover of our salvation. ... This is the one who was murdered in Abel, and bound as a sacrifice in Isaac, and exiled in Jacob, and sold in Joseph, and exposed in Moses, and sacrificed in the lamb, and hunted down in David, and dishonored in the prophets.

This is the one who came to you, the one who healed your suffering ones and who resurrected your dead. This is the one whom you sinned against. This is the one whom you wronged. This is the one whom you killed.

But he arose from the dead and mounted up to the heights of heaven. When the Lord had clothed himself with humanity, and had suffered for the sake of the sufferer, and had been bound for the sake of the imprisoned, and had been judged for the sake of the condemned, and buried for the sake of the one who was buried,

He rose up from the dead, and cried aloud with this voice: Who is he who contends with me? Let him stand in opposition to me. I set the condemned man free; I gave the dead man life; I raised up the one who had been entombed.

Who is my opponent? I, he says, am the Christ. I am the one who destroyed death, and triumphed over the enemy, and trampled Hades under foot, and bound the strong one, and carried off man to the heights of heaven, I, he says, am the Christ.

Therefore, come, all families of men, you who have been befouled with sins, and receive forgiveness for your sins. I am your forgiveness, I am the Passover of your salvation, I am the lamb which was sacrificed for you, I am your ransom, I am your light, I am your savior, I am your resurrection, I am your king, I am leading you up to the heights of heaven, I will show you the eternal Father, I will raise you up by my right hand.

This is the alpha and the omega. This is the beginning and the end—an indescribable beginning and an incomprehensible end. This is the Christ. This is the king. This is Jesus. This is the general. This is the Lord. This is the one who rose up from the dead. This is the one who sits at the right hand of the Father. He bears the Father and is borne by the Father, to whom be the glory and the power forever. Amen.

~Pastor Patrick Ernst

## *Christ is Risen*

### Clips of 1544 Easter Day sermon

*"Death has been swallowed up in victory" "Where, O death, is your victory?" "Where O death, is your sting?"*

*.... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-55,57)*

What a strange message, such as reason cannot comprehend. It must be accepted in faith; Christ is alive, yet dead, and dead in such a way that in him death itself has had to die and lose all its power.

For in his own person he is pure and just; but because he takes upon himself the sin of others, he becomes a sinner.

But there, hidden under the sin of others, his holiness is so great that death cannot overcome him. This great victory is what we celebrate on Easter Sunday.

Martin Luther ~ Day by Day We Magnify You, Daily Readings for the Entire Year



# The Beauty of Our Church Series

## *A glorious stained glass window—St. John 17:9, 17, 21*



In summary—One common thread throughout St. John's verses displayed on the window is the need for unity. Here's a paraphrase on all three verses ~

I pray for them—I ask on their behalf, those of whom You have given Me, to set them apart and make holy, those who walk with me and make them one.

### Life Application

Of the many blessings one can have in life, what would be the greatest blessing? How do you experience growing close to God?

## *Our Heritage Chapel*

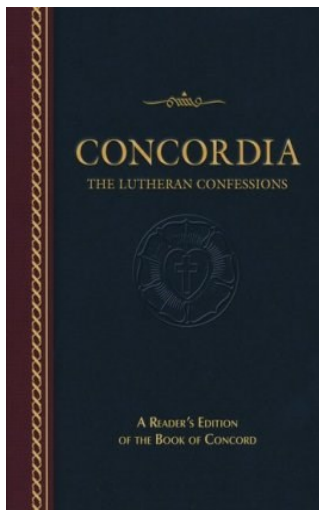
If you don't sit on the right side pews as you enter the church, you may forget this beautiful chapel which bears many relics from our old church that was destroyed in Frankenmuth's 1996 tornado. Whether it's the small altar, pulpit, the pews, or a stained glass window you remember, please stop over and visit the chapel. Are there other items or memories you have from our W. Tuscola location?



Postcard ~ St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parish Center,

Frankenmuth, MI

## Introduction



"I have to confess something." If your friend, your sibling, your spouse says that to you, what do you expect to hear next? The idea of "confessing" something can be very casual ("I have to confess that I love

chocolate") or very serious ("I have to confess I just committed a crime"). In church, we confess our sins, which is very serious, indeed, laying out our faults before God and saying we're sorry for them.

This new column of *The Victory* is talking about just as serious a kind of confessing, although it's different than confessing sins. Our church constitution says on the first page, "This congregation accepts and **confesses** all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 **as true statements of scriptural doctrine.**" That Book of Concord is also called the Lutheran Confessions, and they are statements of what we Lutherans believe to be true. As our constitution rightly says, these statements aren't important because Lutherans wrote or accept them. They are important because they help us understand what the Bible is saying. It's a mistake to think our religion would be purer if we didn't worry about denominations or creeds or statements of belief. Even "non-denominational" churches or "Bible" churches have denominations. Bible churches and non-denominational churches become denominations them-

## Confessions Corner

selves and are often a traditional denomination (Baptist, Methodist) that took the denomination out of the name. Even if they don't write them down or use them often, all churches have creeds and statements of belief apart from the Bible to clarify what they believe the Bible says. For religion to be pure and genuine and clear, important questions about the Bible need to be answered, and answering those questions is what the Lutheran Confessions do. The Confessions are pastors and teachers from long ago saying to us, "I have to confess something to you because it's the most important message you'll ever hear: this is the truth the Bible teaches."

One part of the Confessions that many of us have interacted with is Luther's Small Catechism. In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther laid out the basics of the Christian faith in six sections: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Absolution of Sins, and the Lord's Supper. He connects them to Scripture, explains what they mean, and applies them to our Christian lives. A lesser-known fact is that Luther also wrote a Large Catechism, which has the same sections as the Small Catechism but explains each part in greater detail.

As an introduction to the Lutheran Confessions, each month we will be including portions of the Small and Large Catechisms. They are not only to help you grow in your faith, but also to help you find the words to tell others, "I have to confess something to you: this Bible is true, and here's what it means for you."

~Pastor Patrick Ernst



## PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: *He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.*

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: *I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?*

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: *I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.*

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: *His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.*

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: *In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.*

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: *I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."*

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: *I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.*

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

This guide to preparation for holy communion can be found on page 156 in the front of the hymnal.

# Let Us Rejoice

