



The Spirit of St. Paul's

APRIL 2024

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN
www.stpaulslutheran.ca

PASTOR'S CORNER

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

We have just celebrated the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter Day) and we are now in the season of Easter which lasts for fifty joyous days. We take this extended time to consider and meditate upon the meaning of Jesus' Resurrection for our lives today and for eternity. Jesus' Resurrection means that God's creation, including we who are created in His image, have been set free from sin and suffering and death and have the promise of life everlasting. This is the Good News, the Gospel, that is founded on the historical fact that Jesus rose from death to life leaving His tomb empty.

Isaiah prophesied that God will take away the covering of sin that is cast over all people and remove the veil of death that is spread over all nations and that the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces (Isaiah 25:7-8). This was not just some nice sounding platitude that Isaiah spoke, but is the inspired Word of God that points forward to, and prepares us for, the salvation that Christ Jesus came

into this world to bring. Easter shows us that God remained faithful to His promise to save us. "It is finished" our Lord declared from the cross just before he took His last breath—and it is.

Speaking of God's inspired Word, the author of Psalm 119 wrote, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (v. 105). Holy Scripture is God's revelation that enlightens us with His will for our lives, words of wisdom to live by, accounts of God acting in history for our salvation, and prophetic words that assure us of our victory over sin and death and our eternal future with God. God's Word is a lamp to our feet that saves us from walking the dark path of sin and death. Ultimately it does this by pointing us to the One who declares, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).



Christ's light shone most brightly at Easter when the deep darkness of the tomb gave way to the bright beams of His Resurrection. In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul taught that this is most significant when he proclaimed, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time" (1 Corinthians 15:3-5). In fact Christ has risen from the dead and He promises that we who follow Him have the light of life—now and forever. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

God's blessings,
Pastor Keith

Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.

- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.

- LWMLC mites and society offerings may be put in the offering plate in an envelope separate from your church offering, mailed to the church or given to society treasurer, Marion Hollinger. Please make any cheques payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church but mark them clearly as being for LWMLC. Indicate the amount for mites and the amount for society funds.

Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.

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STEWARDSHIP

WHOSE IS IT ANYWAY?

If you have ever bought or sold a house, you are acquainted with the concept of a “title search.” Before you can sell your house, and before anyone else will feel comfortable putting down the money to buy it, you have to prove that you really own it. So a title company looks through the public records to ensure that you bought it from the person who really owned it, who bought it from the person who really owned it before that, all the way back to the earliest records of your province.

Peak into a preschool classroom during playtime and you'll see a simplified version of this. A child starts playing with a ball, but another child says, “That's mine: I had it first.”

You can't understand the Seventh Commandment without understanding this concept of ownership or title. As the Small Catechism puts it:

You shall not steal. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbour's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

Your neighbour's possessions are *his*: you don't have a right to take them. And likewise, your possessions are yours. Ownership and property rights are foundational to any functioning society.

But there is something deeper to know about ownership, and that is the question of who has the title

and ownership *to you*? Paul says, “*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price*” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

If you yourself are owned by God, then of course everything you own, you really only possess by God's leave: all of it, at bottom, belongs to Him since *you* belong to Him. For you were bought with the blood of Christ.

This notion is the foundation of all Christian stewardship. It all belongs to God. It should all be used for things that bring honour to His name, blessings to our neighbours and the extension of His kingdom.

2023 ENDS WITH A SMALL DEFICIT

At St. Paul's we continue to be blessed by the generosity of our members who give of their time, talents and treasures throughout the year. While we ended the 2023 year with a small deficit of \$1,623, this is much better than we were at last fall, when we were projecting a possible deficit of over \$15,000. November and December offerings were very strong resulting in our improved year end results. Thanks be to God for His ongoing blessings to allow us to continue to meet our commitments, mission and ministry!

Our financial results to the end of February 2024 show a deficit of \$10,427 which compares to a

continued next page

EVANGELISM and PUBLIC RELATIONS

BELIEVING IS SEEING!

“A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me. . . Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” (John 16:16,20-22 ESV).

Jesus had spoken these and other words to His disciples so they would be prepared to see past the sorrow of His suffering, death and burial to the joy of His resurrection three days later.

Small deficit, continued

deficit at the end of February 2023 of \$7,402. Our offerings in 2024 are vitrtually the same as in 2023 at just under \$37,000, however our expenses this year are \$2,100 higher to the end of February compared to last year. We expect to make some of this shortfall up in March with five Sundays in the month as well as the extra services over Easter. We pray that God will bless you in supporting our mission and ministry again as we carry our His work of spreading the Gospel message.

Board of Stewardship

However, when they found the tomb empty, His followers were anything but joyful... until they saw Jesus!

Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene early in the morning, while she stood outside the empty tomb, weeping: *“...she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned and said to Him in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’—and that He had said these things to her”* (John 20:14b-18 ESV).

On that same day, Jesus drew near and went with two disciples who were walking along the road to the village of Emmaus and talking about the events of the



past few days. But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him as He guided them to share details of their conversation, including the fact that they were sad because they had hoped He was the one to redeem Israel. *“And He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if He were going farther, but they urged Him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’ So He went in to stay with them. When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. And He* *continued next page*

believing is seeing, continued vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?' And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:25-35 ESV).

Then, "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His

side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld" (John 20:19-23 ESV).

Of course, we can't forget Jesus' interaction with Thomas, who had not been with the other disciples when Jesus came and was not willing to believe their words, "We have seen the Lord" but insisted "Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I will never believe." (John 20:25b,c ESV). So it was that Jesus returned to the locked room eight days later when

Thomas was with them. "Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.' Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:27-29 ESV).

It is the Holy Spirit that we receive from God our Father in Jesus' name who guides us to believe the truth of God's Holy Word and to recognize Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. So it is that we are included among the multitude of believers whose hearts rejoice!

*Verla Schmirler, Board of
Evangelism and Public Relations*

EDUCATION

KIDS CORNER GROWING HEARTS OF FAITH

One Lord, One faith, One baptism (Ephesians 4:5)

Psst: KIDS CORNER
will be back next
month.

