

SPRING 2016 ILC e-Journal Contents

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News and Notes

Illinois Lutheran Conference

The 2016 ILC delegate convention will be a one day event hosted by Eternal Savior Ev. Lutheran Church on June 23 and will be held at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Morris Illinois. Please make arrangements to attend so that we may encourage one another in the faith of Jesus Christ!

Lutheran Reformation Hour

Please note the current mailing address as listed on page 9.

The Lutheran Reformation Hour broadcast can be heard each Sunday morning at 7:00 A.M. central standard time online at <http://www.WWCR.com> . Simply click the “listen online” link in the menu on the left hand side of the screen and then in the “WWCR 1” box click on your preferred media player.

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church U.A.C., Midland, MI

Live services on the Web! –Cross of Christ Lutheran Church broadcasts its Sunday worship services live on the web. To view the service you must, **1)** Go to: www.crossofchristmi.com at about 10:00 A.M. **Eastern Standard Time**; note that the connection will time out if the church camera is not on; please be patient if this occurs; when the church camera is on, a “photo window” appears with a camera icon on it. **2)** When the photo window opens, click **VIEW VIDEO.** **3)** The “login” box should pop up after you click “view video”; type for user name: **crossofchristmi** and press your ENTER key; note that there is NO password required even if the space for one is present. **4)** You should quickly see the church altar appear in the window which

means you are in the live video mode and able to view the service.

Trinity Lutheran Church of Ballwin, MO

Meeting place: Worship services are currently held in a member's home. Please phone (636) 795-9512 for further information.

Eternal Savior Ev. Lutheran Church, Arbor Vitae, WI

Meeting place: Worship services are now held in the Pastor's home.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Morris, IL

Building improvements are currently underway.

Easter Sunday Sermon by Martin Luther

[Note: The following sermon is taken from volume 2, pages 238-247 of "Sermons of Martin Luther" and has been modified as follows: All Scripture quotations have been inserted from the KJV Holy Bible, and punctuation has been corrected and updated for ease of reading. M.E.L.]

Sermon Text:

Mark 16:1-8

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

I. THE STORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

1. In the first place we shall briefly examine the text of this narrative, and afterwards speak of the benefits of the resurrection of Christ, and how we should build upon it. The text reads: "And when the sabbath was past." Here we must remember Mark writes of the Sabbath according to the custom of the Hebrews, for according to the Jewish reckoning the day began in the evening and lasted until the evening of the next day, as the first chapter of Genesis says: "And the evening and the morning were the first day," "the second day," "the third day," and so forth. Thus, the first and greatest Sabbath began on the evening of the day when Christ was crucified, that is to say, at the time of sunset on the evening of Friday. Our reckoning conveys the wrong sense. Yesterday was the great Sabbath, when Christ lay in the grave; in addition to this the Jews had seven full days which they celebrated and all of which they called Sabbaths, counting them from the first holiday after the great Sabbath and calling it *prima sabbathorum* (first of the Sabbaths), and the third holiday *secundam sabbathorum* (second of the Sabbaths), and so forth. On these days they ate only wafers and unleavened bread, for which reason they are also called by the Evangelist the days of unleavened bread. From this we must conclude that Christ rose before sunrise and before the angel descended in the earthquake. Afterwards the angel only came to open the empty grave, etc., as has been clearly described by the Evangelists.

2. The question now arises: How can we say that He rose on the third day, since He lay in the grave only one day and two nights? According to the Jewish calculation it was only a day and a half; how shall we then persist in believing there were three days? To this we reply that He was in the state of death for at least a part of all three days; for He died at about two o'clock on Friday and consequently was dead for about two hours on the first day. After that night he lay in the grave all day, which is the true Sabbath. On the third day, which we commemorate now, He rose from the dead and so remained in the state of death a part of this day, just as if we say that something occurred on Easter-day, although it happens in the evening, only a portion of the day. In this sense Paul and the Evangelists say that He rose on the third day.

3. For this period and no longer Christ was to lie in the grave, so that we might suppose that His body remained naturally uncorrupted and that decomposition had not yet set in. He came forth from the grave so soon that we might presume that corruption had not yet taken place according to the course of nature; for a corpse can lie no longer than three days before it begins to decompose. Therefore Christ was to rise on the third day, before He saw corruption.

4. The great longing and love of the women for the Lord must also be particularly noted here, so that unadvised and alone they go early to the grave, not thinking of the great stone which was rolled before the tomb. They might have thought of this and taken a man with them. But they act like timid and sorrowing persons, and therefore they go on their way without even thinking of the most necessary things. They do not even think of the watchers who were clad in armor, nor of the wrath of Pilate and the Jews, but boldly they freely risk it and alone they

venture on their way. What urged these good women to hazard life and body? It was nothing but the great love they bore to the Lord, which had sunk so deeply into their hearts that for His sake they would have risked a thousand lives. Such courage they had not of themselves, but here the power of the resurrection of Christ was revealed, whose Spirit makes these women, who by nature are timid, so bold and courageous that they venture to do things which might have daunted a man.

5. These women also show us a beautiful example of a spiritual heart that undertakes an impossible task, of which the whole world would despair. Yet a heart like this stands firm and accomplishes it, not thinking the task impossible. So much we say for the present on this narrative, and now let us see what are the fruits and benefits of the resurrection of Christ.

II. THE FRUITS AND BENEFITS OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

6. St. Paul writes in Romans 4:25 as follows: “[Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Paul is indeed the man who extols Christ in a masterly manner, telling us exactly why and for what purpose He suffered and how we should conform ourselves to His sufferings, namely, that He died for our sins. This is a correct interpretation of the sufferings of Christ, by which we may profit. And as it is not sufficient to know and believe that Christ has died, so it will not suffice to know and believe that He rose with a transfigured body and is now in a state of joy and blessedness, no longer subject to mortality, for all this would profit me nothing or very little. But when I come to understand the fact that all the works God does in Christ are done for me, nay, they are bestowed upon and given to me, the effect of His resurrection being that I also will arise and live with Him; that will cause me to rejoice. This must be brought home to our hearts, and we must not merely hear it with the ears of our body nor merely confess it with our mouth.

7. You have heard in the story of the Passion how Christ is portrayed as our exemplar and helper, and that he who follows Him and clings to Him receives the Spirit, who will enable him also to suffer. But the words of Paul are more Christian and should come closer home to our hearts and comfort us more, when he says: “Christ was raised for our justification.” Here the Lamb is truly revealed, of whom John the Baptist testifies, when he says in John 1:29: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Here is fulfilled that which was spoken to the serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head” (Genesis 3:15), which means that for all those who believe in Him, hell, death, and the devil and sin have been destroyed. In the same manner the promise is fulfilled to-day which God gave to Abraham, when He said in Genesis 22:18: “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Here Christ is meant, who takes away our curse and the power of sin, death and the devil.

8. All this is done, I say, by faith. For if you believe that by this seed the serpent has been slain, then it is slain for you; and if you believe that in this seed all nations are to be blessed, then you

are also blessed. For each one individually should have crushed the serpent under foot and redeemed himself from the curse, which would have been too difficult, nay impossible for us. But now it has been done easily, namely, by Christ, who has crushed the serpent once, who alone is given as a blessing and benediction, and who has caused this Gospel to be published throughout the world, so that he who believes, accepts it and clings to it, is also in possession of it, and is assured that it is as he believes. For in the heart of such a man the Word becomes so powerful that he will conquer death, the devil, sin and all adversity, like Christ Himself did. So mighty is the Word that God himself would sooner be vanquished than that His Word should be conquered.

9. This is the meaning of the words by St. Paul: "Christ was raised for our justification." Here Paul turns my eyes away from my sins and directs them to Christ, for if I look at my sins, they will destroy me. Therefore I must look unto Christ who has taken my sins upon Himself, crushed the head of the serpent and become the blessing. Now they no longer burden my conscience, but rest upon Christ, whom they desire to destroy. Let us see how they treat Him. They hurl Him to the ground and kill Him. O God; where is now my Christ and my Saviour? But then God appears, delivers Christ and makes Him alive; and not only does He make Him alive, but He translates Him into heaven and lets Him rule over all. What has now become of sin? There it lies under His feet. If I then cling to this, I have a cheerful conscience like Christ, because I am without sin. Now I can defy death, the devil, sin and hell to do me any harm. As I am a child of Adam, they can indeed accomplish it that I must die. But since Christ has taken my sins upon Himself, has died for them, has suffered Himself to be slain on account of my sins, they can no longer harm me; for Christ is too strong for them, they cannot keep Him, He breaks forth and overpowers them, ascends into heaven (takes sin and sorrow captive, Ed. 1531), and rules there over all throughout eternity. Now I have a clear conscience, am joyful and happy and am no longer afraid of this tyrant, for Christ has taken my sins away from me and made them His own. But they cannot remain upon Him; what then becomes of them? They must disappear and be destroyed. This then is the effect of faith: he who believes that Christ has taken away our sin, is without sin, like Christ Himself, and death, the devil and hell are vanquished as far as he is concerned and they can no longer harm him.

10. Here we also refer to the passage in Hosea 13:14, which Paul quotes in reference to the victory that Christ has won by His resurrection and by which He has conquered sin, death, hell and all our enemies. Paul says that death is swallowed up in this victory, and he defies death with these words: "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55), just as if Paul would say: O death, where are thy teeth? Come, bite off one of my fingers. Thou formerly hadst a spear, what has become of it now? Christ has taken it from thee. Death, where is now thy spear, etc.? Sin, where is now the edge of thy sword and thy power? Paul says that the power of sin is the law. ["The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1

Corinthians 15:56-57)] The more clearly we understand the law, the more sin oppresses and stings us. For this reason Paul says that Christ has completely destroyed and annihilated the spear and whetstone of death. Now, this Gospel He has not taken with Him into heaven, but He caused it to be preached throughout the world, so that for him who believes in Christ, spear and whetstone, nay, sin and death, should be destroyed. This is the true Gospel, which bestows life, strength, power and marrow, and of which all the passages of Scripture speak.

11. Therefore seek and learn to know Christ aright, for the whole Scriptures confer upon us the righteousness of the true knowledge of Christ. But this must be brought about by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore pray God that His Gospel may prosper, that we all may truly learn to know Christ and thus rise with Him and be honored by God as He was honored.

12. The question now arises: If Christ has taken away death and our sins by His resurrection and has justified us, why do we then still feel death and sin within us? For our sins torment us still, we are stung by our conscience, and this evil conscience creates the fear of hell.

13. To this I reply: I have often said before that feeling and faith are two different things. It is the nature of faith not to feel, to lay aside reason and close the eyes, to submit absolutely to the Word, and follow it in life and death. Feeling however does not extend beyond that which may be apprehended by reason and the senses, which may be heard, seen, felt and known by the outward senses; for this cause feeling is opposed to faith and faith is opposed to feeling. Therefore the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes of faith, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), for if we would see Christ visibly in heaven, like the visible sun, we would not need to believe it. But since Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification, we cannot see it nor feel it, neither can we comprehend it with our reason. Therefore we must disregard our feeling and accept only the Word, write it into our heart and cling to it, even though it seems as if my sins were not taken from me, and even though I still feel them within me. Our feelings must not be considered, but we must constantly insist that death, sin and hell have been conquered, although I feel that I am still under the power of death, sin and hell. For although we feel that sin is still in us, it is only permitted that our faith may be developed and strengthened, that in spite of all our feelings we accept the Word, and that we unite our hearts and consciences more and more to Christ. Thus, faith leads us quietly, contrary to all feeling and comprehension of reason, through sin, through death and through hell. Then we shall see salvation before our eyes, and then we shall know perfectly what we have believed, namely, that death and all sorrow have been conquered.

14. Take as an illustration the fish in the water. When they are caught in the net, you lead it quietly along, so that they imagine they are still in the water; but when you draw them to the shore, they are exposed and begin to struggle, and then they first feel they are caught. Thus, it also happens with souls that are caught with the Gospel, which Christ compares with a net, Matthew 13:47, ["Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea,

and gathered of every kind]. When the heart has been conquered, the Word unites this poor heart to Christ and leads it gently and quietly from hell and from sin, although the soul still feels sin and imagines itself to be still under its power. Then a conflict begins, the feelings struggling against the Spirit and faith, and the Spirit and faith against our feelings; and the more faith increases, the more our feelings diminish, and vice versa. We still have sins within us, as for instance pride, avarice, anger and so forth, but only in order to lead us to faith, so that faith may increase from day to day, and the man become finally a thorough Christian and keep the true Sabbath, consecrating himself to Christ entirely. Then the conscience must become calm and satisfied and all the surging waves of sin subside. For as upon the sea one billow follows and buffets the other, as though they would destroy the shore, yet they must disappear and destroy themselves, so also our sins strive against us and would fain bring us to despair, but finally they must desist, grow weary and disappear.

15. In the second place, death is still at our elbow. It also is to exercise the faith of him who believes that death has been killed and all his power taken away. Now, reason feels that death is still at our elbow and is continually troubling us. He who follows his feelings will perish, but he who clings to the Word with his heart will be delivered. Now, if the heart clings to the Word, reason will also follow; but if reason follows, everything will follow, desire and love and all that is in man. Yea, we desire that all may come to the point when they may consider death to be dead and powerless. But this cannot come to pass until the old man, that is the old Adam, be entirely destroyed, and meanwhile that process has been going on of which Christ speaks in Matthew 13:33, where he compares the "kingdom of heaven" "like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal," for even if the kneading has begun, the meal is not yet thoroughly leavened. So it is here. Although the heart clings to the belief that death and hell are destroyed, yet the leaven has not yet worked through it entirely. For it must penetrate and impregnate all the members of the body, until everything becomes leavened and pure, and there remains nothing but a pure faith. This will not be brought about before the old man is entirely destroyed; then all that is in man is Christ-like from center to circumference.

16. These two things, sin and death, therefore remain with us to the end that we might cultivate and exercise our faith, in order that it may become more perfect in our heart from day to day and finally break forth, and all that we are, body and soul, become more Christ-like. For when the heart clings to the Word, feelings and reasoning must fail. Then in the course of time the will also clings to the Word, and with the will everything else, our desire and love, till we surrender ourselves entirely to the Gospel, are renewed and leave the old sin behind. Then there comes a different light, different feelings, different seeing, different hearing, acting and speaking, and also a different outflow of good works. Now, our scholastics and papists have taught an external piety; they would command the eyes not to see, and the ears not to hear, and would put piety into our hearts from the outside. Ah, how far this is from the truth! But it comes in this way: When the heart and conscience cling to the Word in faith, they overflow in

works, so that, when the heart is holy, all the members become holy, and good works follow naturally.

17. This is signified by the Sabbath that was to be hallowed and on which the Lord lay quietly in the grave. It signifies that we should rest from all our works, should not stir, nay, should not allow any sin to stir within us, but we should firmly believe that death, hell, sin and the devil are destroyed by the death of Christ, and we are righteous, pious, holy and therefore contented, experiencing no longer any sin. Then all the members are calm and quiet, being convinced that sin and death are vanquished and prostrated. But this cannot be brought about, as I have said, until this impotent, wretched body and the old Adam are destroyed. Therefore it is indeed necessary that we are required to keep this Sabbath. For as Christ lies in the grave on the Sabbath, never feels nor moves, so it must be with us, as we have heard: Our feelings and actions must cease. And I say again that this cannot be accomplished before the old Adam is annihilated. Nevertheless, we still experience sin and death within us, wrestle with them and fight against them. You may tie a hog ever so well, but you cannot prevent it from grunting (until it is strangled and killed Ed. 1530). Thus it is with the sins in our flesh. As they are not yet entirely conquered and killed, they are still active, but when death comes, they must also die, and then we are perfect Christians and pure, but not before. This is the reason why we must die, namely, that we may be entirely freed from sin and death. These words on the fruits of the resurrection of Christ may suffice for the present, and with them we will close. Let us pray God for grace that we may understand them and learn to know Christ aright. [Amen.]

Convention reminder

The 2016 ILC delegate convention will be a one day event hosted by Eternal Savior Ev. Lutheran Church on June 23 and will be held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Morris Illinois. Please make arrangements to attend so that we may encourage one another in the faith of Jesus Christ!

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

**“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”
(Revelation 2:10)**

Lutheran Reformation Hour Stations
All broadcasts on Sunday.

City	Station	Start Time
West Point, Nebraska	KTIC 840 AM	7:30 a.m.
London, England>		1:00 p.m.
Paris, France>		2:00 p.m.
Berlin, Germany>		2:00 p.m.
Warsaw, Poland>	WWCR-1	2:00 p.m.
Prague, Czechoslovakia>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	2:00 p.m.
Ukraine>	15.825	3:00 p.m.
Moscow, Russia (zone 2)>		4:00 p.m.
U.S.A. (central time)>		7:00 a.m.

“...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)

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The Lutheran Reformation Hour

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