

SPECIAL ISSUE Nbr. 21 – Easter Week, 2020

Born again to a living hope

On a doorstep, a pastor was talking with a woman who was holding a can of cherries. Pointing to her hand, the pastor wondered what was in that can, where those cherries came from, and where they were going. Then he asked the woman the big question: did she know those same answers concerning herself?

By inspiration, Peter told Christians who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The world figures that in the midst of life we are in death. But because of the crucified and risen Christ, in the midst of death we are in life.

See? WOW! By God’s mercy we are born again to a living hope.

This is Easter talk. Keep talking it up.

CID Facebook Page

Search for “Central Illinois District-LCMS” on Facebook. Some new features this week —

- devotions in which the Series A Epistle lesson for Easter 2 (Apr 19) will start engaging people;
- the first in a set of short video features on bereavement and loss by the CID Human Care Committee Chairman, Chaplain Jeff Harter; and
- the latest developments as kids “Tell Mr. [Trip] Rodgers a Bible Story”!

Further Steps to Take with Online Church Services

In this newsletter’s last issue, we noted that these days non-Christians are turning to the Bible and Christian teaching more than you may have thought. One way they do this is to view what our churches are putting online for our own members.

At in-person church services, you have greeters and possibly printed visitor guides to serve guests. Consider some of these ideas for your congregation to extend itself to its online visitors:

- At some point in your video, welcome those who are viewing online. Make a point of asking online visitors (maybe all online viewers!) to fill out a response form that you generate, or to register by sending a text or an e-mail message. This amounts to an electronic “Guest Book.”
- If you are live-streaming, you can have a “digital” greeter. Position a chat host to interact with online visitors, answering questions, etc.
- If you are not live-streaming, during your video invite viewer questions, say, via e-mail. These queries could be answered, as they come in, via return e-mail. Questions of general interest can be answered, if appropriate, in a sermon upcoming soon. Or you could include “answer” time during your video, perhaps following the offering or right after the service itself.
- You may find it necessary to assemble a response team to help with follow-up. For some items, responses will be required that will take more time and involve greater depth than others. These can be assigned appropriately within your team. Also a team member might be tasked to oversee the entire video operation.
- How about a “coffee hour” after church? Consider starting a Facebook Group for new people who have found your church online.

Some ideas above are from an article by Jay Kranda.



Circuit Witness and Outreach Workers

Don't forget Bible class!

What would Sunday service be like without an accompanying opportunity for Bible study? You can answer some questions in connection with your video service, as previously noted. But you can also start a Bible class on basic Christian teachings for your new online church service viewers.

You could utilize Zoom, or employ some brand of learning management software. If you are curious about such alternatives, let me know.

I've done 14 "Myth or Faith?" audio interviews which survey the basics of the faith. These parallel most adult instruction materials, and are archived at <http://issuesetc.org/myth-or-faith>

From a recent online NAME event, I got some tips from Chris Paavola for encouraging online interaction. They are applicable to online Bible classes. (Preachers may get an idea or two for sermonizing!) You can use these techniques even if you do not have "talk-back" capability. Let people "think" their answers before you proceed.

- What word or phrase stands out in this text?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 as false and 10 as totally true, how do you rate this statement: _____?
- In one word: what emotion do you feel when you think about this subject?
- Have you seen this truth played out in your life?
- Why is this such a hard thing to live out?
- When you find yourself in a similar situation, do you pray for _____, or for _____?
- In this situation, what do you do: A or B?

Regarding the last two items: By posing a couple of alternatives, you can get a group to think.

If you are capable of live interaction: look, in real time, at responses that come to you

electronically. Then you can talk about them while folks are watching/listening.

C-WOWs, how about us having a "Zoom" meeting soon? Please e-mail me and tell me days/times that are NOT good for you from Apr. 16, 2020 to Apr. 24, 2020.

Worth Considering:

The Resurrection in Gospel Proclamation

Below are summary statements from an article I wrote with the above title. It appeared in Concordia Journal 18 (January, 1992):28-39. One of its purposes was to remind preachers about many of the Gospel facets of Christ's resurrection.

1. The resurrection confirms that Christ made a full and acceptable sacrifice to God as our Substitute.
2. The resurrection assures us that the devil, sin, and death can have no power over us, since they have no power over Christ, Who bore them for us but triumphed.
3. The resurrection constituted God's absolving His Son from our sins which were imputed to Him, and thus God's absolution on us.
4. The resurrection means that Jesus lives to impute the righteousness of His obedience to us.
5. The resurrection underscores the reality of the forgiveness which Christ won for us in the atonement.
6. The resurrection enables us to have a continuing fellowship with the Christ Who made our Peace.
7. The resurrection is God's gift of life resurfacing now that Jesus has paid for the guilt of sin in the atonement.



See? **WOW!** News and Encouragement for CID **Circuit Witness & Outreach Workers**

8. The resurrection assures us that the
God-Man, our Mediator, lives as He must.

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