

IK Lutheran

A Newsletter of the Indiana-Kentucky Mission Territory

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Where God is Doing a New Thing

*If Christ has not been raised,
then our proclamation has been in vain
and your faith has been in vain.
(1 Corinthians 15:14)*



For the apostle Paul, the resurrection of Christ stands at the center of Christian faith. Of course, the resurrection rises from the crucifixion. Having gathered all our failure and fear, sickness and sin, despair and death into God's grace, Jesus was raised from the dead to render resurrection, new, abundant, and lasting life, now and in the life to come. If Christ has not been raised, our faith is in vain.

At a conference in 2009, Christian prophet and provocateur Peter Rollins said, "Without equivocation or hesitation I fully and completely admit that I deny the resurrection of Christ. This is something that anyone who knows me could tell you, and I am not afraid to say it publicly, no matter what some people may think." After a brief pause he went on to say:

I deny the resurrection of Christ every time I do not serve at the feet of the oppressed, each day that I turn my back on the poor; I deny the resurrection of Christ when I close my ears to the cries of the downtrodden and lend my support to an unjust and corrupt system. However, there are moments when I affirm that resurrection, few and far between as they are. I affirm it when I stand up for those who are forced to live on their knees, when I speak for those who have had their tongues torn out, when I cry for those who have no more tears left to shed.¹

Rollins' bold confession moves me this Easter season to wonder how I, too, deny the resurrection of Christ. In what ways do I live as if Jesus was not raised from the dead and the promise of new, abundant, and lasting life for the world, for my neighbor, and for me is a sham? And how, by the grace of God, do I affirm, trust, and live into resurrection each day as I love my family, engage ministry with the body of Christ, and serve every neighbor that crosses my path? How does my life announce and embody that world changing news that Jesus is risen?

Early in his career as a pastor, Eugene Peterson tried to sort through the various and sundry aspects of congregational life to find its core, its most crucial rhythm. He eventually realized that, put simply, "together we were learning to believe in Jesus and practice the life of resurrection together."² That's it. Trust Jesus. Practice resurrection. This sounds to me like the basic rhythm of Christian life established in baptism:

“In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.”
[*Holy Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 227].

Borrowing again from Peterson:

*Resurrection does not have to do exclusively with what happens after we are buried or cremated. It does have to do with that, but first of all it has to do with the way we live right now. But as Karl Barth, quoting Nietzsche, pithily reminds us: “Only where graves are is there resurrection.” We practice our death by giving up our will to live on our own terms. Only in that relinquishment or renunciation are we able to practice resurrection.*³

In our life together as the body of Christ in the shadow of the cross we confess that we deny resurrection, and our self-justification, self-centeredness, self-preservation, and self-reliance are put to death. By the power of the Spirit, we are raised to new, abundant, and lasting life rooted in forgiveness, blooming with healing and hope, and bearing the fruit of service to our neighbor, as we affirm and entrust ourselves and our world to the sure and certain promise of resurrection that sprang from that ancient empty tomb.

Gracious Holy Spirit, forgive, free, and transform us in the resurrection of Jesus. Send us into our everyday worlds to say with our lips and proclaim with our lives: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

+Bishop Bill Gafkjen

¹ <http://peterrollins.net/2011/07/sample-video-post/>

² Peterson, Eugene H. *The Pastor: A Memoir*. © 2011. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition. Page 139.

³ *The Pastor: A Memoir*, p. 290.

Spirit Filled. Spirit Sent.

Registration is now open for the 29th Annual Assembly of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Assembly will be held Thursday, June 9, through Saturday, June 11, 2016, at the Century Center in South Bend, Indiana. The official Call to Assembly has been mailed to all congregations and rostered leaders. Each congregation shall elect two lay voting members (one male, one female) and may elect additional members as follows:



Congregation's baptized membership	Additional Lay Voting Members
351 - 700	1 (male or female)
701 - 1,000	1 male and 1 female
1,001 - 1,500	3 (male/female, balanced representation)
More than 1,500	2 male and 2 female

Congregations may also send one additional voting member who is a person of color or whose primary language is other than English; and may send an additional voting member who is a youth (confirmed but not yet 18 years of age) or a young adult (between 18 and 30 years of age).

For more information about the Assembly please visit the Assembly Web Page at:
<http://www.iksvnod.org/2016assembly.html>.