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EASTER SUNDAY YouTube message  
April 12, 2020

Easter feels a bit different this year.

Spring has sprung but people remain hidden.

Daily life is still isolated. Put away. Out of sight, hopefully not out of mind.

Last week our spring grass was hidden under a thick blanket of April snow.

Easter usually means warmer weather and wearing new clothes and spending time with family out and about.

This year its more of a hidden Easter.

A quieter Easter.

Almost, tomb like, cooped up in our homes abiding by social distancing.

Which is good for us to do. Its helping. It's loving ourselves, our families and our neighbours enough to cease from usual routines for the good health of all.

COVID 19 makes us look at life differently,

At our faith life differently,

At our loved ones different.

With new eyes.

With new respect.

With new insight.

We can take nothing for granted.

We can only be filled with love, compassion and mercy.

Each person in our home and social media life and those we encounter as essential services are people created by God. Loved by God, protected by God...there to be served by us as we have been served by our God.

Now we as Christ-centred, Easter people, look for new ways to spread Easter's new life around.

This Easter provides us an opportunity.

Of showing the miracle of Easter IN OUR LIVES.

As places we'd like to go and visit are closed.

But our isolation doesn't mean we're alone.

We are ever closer to God than we think.

He never leaves His people, even though His only Son died and was buried.

We can trust in God more than ever.

Trust in the communion of saints we say in the creeds week after week.

Communion of saints isn't just a phrase. It's the Lord's Church in heaven and on earth.

Now it comes to life. As you sit and hear this today in your homes.

Although, this concern over too much isolation is reassuring to me.

I thought for the last 10 years people were OK with just talking in artificial social media, that speaking with people was a thing of the past.

Its good to see a desire to meet together in person and hear a human voice. To look forward to a human touch again,

Maybe the virus reawakens our need for each other again?

And how to embrace people without physically embracing?

How to welcome people as they are so that they can share in the cleansing we receive from our Lord. To encounter the living God as we do.

Easter always means new life.

New life — 2 words holding endless possibilities.

New life is a change from the daily reports of more COVID 19 patients and even more who succumb to death.

Life is the breath God blew unto the lungs of His created human beings,  
Adam and Eve.

Life is divine, holy, precious.

Life is what flowed out of our Lord's body on the cross and into our  
baptism fonts and into communion cups and into our hearts with the Holy  
Spirit.

Life is sacred.

Life ended for Jesus' inner circle of followers when they watched Him die.  
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go with sadness to Jesus' tomb.

He's not there.

The angel of the Lord is there.

The angel of the Lord appeared to these women in the midst of such quiet,  
heavy anxiety.

The angel of the Lord appeared to ancient Father Abraham to stop his  
raised hand from stabbing his only son Isaac on the altar.

A way was provided. A way for salvation and life.

The angel of the Lord never left His people. And now when His people have  
hearts torn in sorrow over Jesus' death, he appears with good news.

Jesus the crucified one is not in the tomb.

He's raised from the dead!

He lives! Tell His brother disciples.

Life is sacred. Jesus' life was sacred.

Sacred enough to be offered in our place. Offering to DIE. To save us all  
who're tied to death.

Now death is done. Empty. A hollow threat. A portal from this life into the  
next - in Christ...

Because He lives.

Now the women's living is filled with life.

The disciples.

The church.

The world.

New life.

Overflowing life.

The familiar Psalm 23 cup runneth over kind of life.

More than just breathing.

More than daily living.

More than the amount of stuff we accumulate.

This has a whole new meaning when COVID 19 symptoms involve breathing trouble and shortness of breath.

What a suffering patient wouldn't give for breath and life.

Whether anyone is healthy or sick, the God's breath of life flows within.

We have this new life within our own breath we can't see or feel.

We have the living Christ.

We have new hope.

We have new trust.

We don't have to go it alone.

Our life is hidden with Christ in God.

Our future is constructed in the Heavenly city.

COVID 19 in a tragic way makes us prioritize.

We've lived so many decades as thoughtless consumers.

We only care about what we see and know. What we can have and be. We don't act like we cherish life.

Life is more than just that face we see in the mirror. Its who we live with. Who we see in the street. In the next town. The next province. The next country. Regardless of age or gender or financial plan.

And we can no longer just be satisfied with our same old sinful ways as if they're ok. They're not. Jesus shed His blood to cleanse them away.

COVID 19 in a sad way forces us to face our own sin and frailness and death and embrace Jesus' life.

To live as if Jesus' life IS in ours. Because IT IS!

We can live the words from the angel that Easter morning....go...tell....

Be the Easter message.

Don't worry, you are. You are filled with life and light and a message!

You are the ESSENTIAL SERVICE our community desperately needs.

And not just what's offered in here, the Sacraments of our Lord.

You are a living sacrament of grace and comfort to the world.

It kinda upsets me when I hear Lutherans lament that our government doesn't view pastors and churches as essential services in a pandemic like this.

That's on us isn't it?

Maybe for too long we've not made people see the essential service we have. Maybe we've only cared about what's inside these 4 walls and not what's out there. Or who's out there.

Love God, love your neighbour as yourself.

Go and tell the others that Jesus lives. He's risen. That's the message.

So the women go and tell. They're the 1st Easter proclaimers!

We do go and tell because our faith moves us.

As we greet our neighbours from a safe distance now.

As we cook and clean and talk and read and share our presence with our family.

Even as we stay home out of the public sight for love of those more vulnerable in health than us.

We are full of life and new hope.

And though this Easter we can't come here to Eat the Bread of Life, may His presence comfort us enough when we eat the daily bread He gives us at our meal tables.

Until we can dine at His table.

Yes. Easter feels different.

But maybe for the 1st time in many, many years, our Easter is like the very 1st Easter.

Alone but full of promise.

Jesus lives.

You live.

We go and tell.

We are Jesus' Essential Easter Service.

Amen.