



WELS
Canada

Communique

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He Is Risen!

As I wind down my duties as president of WELS-Canada and chairman of the Canadian Mission Board, I suppose it's natural that I would be struck with a little introspection, a little reminiscing. I look back at where we were twenty two years ago when I came to serve the saints in Ottawa, and how far we have come. . . oh my, what blessings the Lord has showed upon our Canadian congregations! We have our own Canadian based called worker salary schedule, removing our called workers from the fluctuating exchange rates that can cause financial hardship for our pastors. We have a Canadian based pension system for our called workers, a supplementary health care plan, generous scholarship bursaries for our students pursuing the ministry as a vocation, and a generous moving assistance to bring a new pastor into Canada. All of these are exceptional blessings that allow our Canadian congregations to carry out gospel ministry without unnecessary burdens. The Lord has certainly blessed us abundantly!

And I keep reminiscing, about the number of souls that I have baptized with the water of life, the number of souls that I have presided over their funerals and spoken the words of life for the comfort and strengthening of their family, the number of souls that I have counselled during their dark days. The number of souls that I have held their hand after hard words of diagnosis from their doctor, and reminded them, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Dt. 31:6).

As a young husband I was blessed to have an absolutely amazing pastor who was always very open and available for chatting. If you came to him with a problem or a challenge he would patiently listen, absorb your message, and his first reply would always be, "He is risen!" Of course he would elaborate a bit more, but what a great perspective to put a person's problem into, the resurrection of Jesus.

So, what do all of my musings have in common? Every challenge, every trouble, every dark diagnosis, every problem. . . every tear, every pain, every heartache. . . every fault, every foible, every sin has been nailed to Jesus' Good Friday cross, swallowed up by Jesus' Good Friday tomb, and gloriously pronounced to the world on Sunday morning "You are forgiven in Christ!" All because Jesus lives; He is risen!



St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ottawa

The resurrection of Jesus is the power to save from death, the power to guide when lost, the power to lift up when you don't even know which direction up is. And in case you think this all to be too much over-blown hyperbole, the resurrection of Jesus is the power to raise your mortal body from the grave, reunite your soul and give you eternal life where you will gaze upon the beatific vision of the lamb at the centre of the throne and praise Him endlessly for the great gift that He has given you. If Jesus can do this, He can do anything for the preservation of His people.

And so, with a strengthened faith in the certainty of what the resurrection means for us, we move forward to carry out the blessed work that He has entrusted to us, to make disciples of all nations. Tough days ahead? Guaranteed. Days of dark news ahead? No doubt. More tears, and sorrows, and pain? I'm sorry, this is life on this side of heaven. BUT! He is risen!

HE IS RISEN!

HE IS RISEN INDEED!

And that makes all the difference for the Christian. He made you the promise, "He will never leave you nor forsake you." Because He lives, He is able to keep His promise to you.

This little farewell Easter greeting started out with the thought from John's gospel, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus' resurrection gives us this confidence, this joy, this certainty. Jesus' resurrection gives us His peace, peace with God in the forgiveness of our sins, now and forever. So may this peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus!

In the joy of serving Him who saved us,

Pastor Harland H. Goetzinger
President, WELS-Canada