



Last year, we were not able to gather for worship and Easter Services. This year, we look forward to celebrating our Lord's Resurrection in worship as God serves us with His good gifts in the Sacrament of The Altar instituted by Christ! Yet, while we were absent from The Lord's House during the shut-down last year, The Lord was not absent from us. Jesus said to His disciples **"I am with you always to the end of the age"** St. Matthew 28:20b.

Though we endure turbulent times in our world, Jesus has promised to be with us to the end of the age as we **"make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in The Name of The Father and of the Son and of The Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"** St. Matthew 28:19-20a. Even though there are "shut-downs" and other hardships for the church, the work Christ has given continues as we administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, baptizing and teaching from God's Word that others are brought into His Kingdom and nurtured in The Word.

While we baptize our infants in accordance with God's Word as they are included in the words "all nations", we continue to teach those who have been baptized through catechetical instruction for all ages. Yes, even in Bible Class, we continue to receive catechetical instruction/learning for we are catechumens (learners) all throughout life. Luther said, that even though he was a Doctor of Theology, there was always something to be learned in his daily study of the Scripture and the Catechism.

Confirmation in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is not a graduation from learning the Catechism but the beginning of a life of study in The Scriptures and Catechism ever growing and being nurtured in our faith. This message is not just for those recently confirmed (within a few years) or those to be confirmed this year but for all who have been confirmed as people who were taught the faith into which they were baptized. Baptism is the delivering of God's grace through Christ from His cross making the Baptized, God's own child and a member of His Family, The Church. Catechumens receive instruction in the faith into which they were baptized. Therefore, confirmation is not a "giving of The Holy Spirit", that was done by God's Word in Holy Baptism.

Q. 14 What is Confirmation? *Confirmation is a public rite of the church preceded by a period of instruction in which baptized Christians learn about the confession, life, and mission of the Christian Church. Note: Prior to admission to the Lord's Supper, it is necessary to be instructed in the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 11:28) The Rite of Confirmation provides an opportunity for the individual Christian, relying on God's promise given in Holy Baptism, to make a personal public confession of the faith and a lifelong pledge of fidelity to Christ.* (Luther's Small Catechism, CPH 2017).

As we pray for our catechumens this year and for those in the future, may we all continue throughout life to hear God's Word, being faithful students of the Scriptures learning the precious truth of God's love for us in Christ. Pray that the world around us, that desperately needs its Savior, would have opportunity to hear of God's great love for them in sending Christ. Pray that we use our opportunities to reach them in the love of Christ our Savior that the Gospel would flourish to the glory of His Name!

Confirmation teaches the faith, the very center of the Scripture that Christ is The Savior who died on the cross and rose again The Third Day and conquered sin, death, and the devil forever! Confirmation, as with all learning and study of The Word, teaches The Resurrection of Our

Lord; God's Divine Grace for us delivered through Christ. The "Treasury of Daily Prayer" describes beautifully what Easter means for all who believe as we teach the faith to generations to come.

Easter is the oldest and highest of all Christian festivals – the festival of festivals, the feast of feasts! On this day, when Christ first stepped triumphantly from the ranks of the dead, all our waiting is declared to be a waiting that is already completed; Christ's triumph makes all the waiting that follows in our lives of faith a building anchored on the foundation that was laid when He whom the builders rejected became the Cornerstone.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!
(Treasury of Daily Prayer; CPH, 2008, p. 185)

God's blessings to all of you this April as we celebrate The Resurrection of Our Lord, teaching the faith to all!

In Christ's Service, Pastor Ahrendt