

## Are You Celebrating the Really Important Events with Your Family?

Looking ahead into April, we have a lot of joyous events to celebrate at St. Paul Lutheran Church, such as hosting the LWML Spring Rally, junior confirmation, and special Easter services at our church as well as family gatherings at home.

On top of this list, of course, is the Resurrection of Our Lord. Nothing is more important than His Easter Victory over sin, death, and the grave. In his beautiful resurrection chapter, St. Paul writes: “For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:16–23, ESV).

Easter comes to us a little later this year and will fall on April 21. But lest we forget, every Sunday is a little Easter for us. It is a celebration of Jesus’ Easter victory over sin, death, the grave, and the power of the devil. During the Lenten season, the Sundays are designated by the Church as Sundays *in* Lent, which reminds us to celebrate our Lord’s resurrection, even as we remember His approaching cross.

Friend, are you celebrating the really important events with your family?

I am sad to say that many of us have taken the weekly celebration of our Lord’s Easter victory over sin and death for granted. We have allowed other things (and here I am not thinking about the snowy and icy weather) to keep us from God’s House.

We have fallen into a nasty habit of neglecting the assembly of the saints and found ourselves failing to worship our Easter Savior at church. We have given unbelievers a reason to mock our Christian faith by failing to celebrate the weekly “little Easter” with our family and by negligently teaching our children that it is okay to put Jesus on the back burner of life. Who has bewitched us and taken our eyes off Jesus?

Have we forgotten the Lord’s resurrection from the dead changes everything in life? It assures us of our heavenly home with the Father. It tells us that Jesus’ words and promises are true. It impacts our children as we share Jesus’ story and celebrate the good news of His death and His resurrection with them. It also comforts us as we walk to God’s sacred acre to bury a loved one who falls asleep in Jesus.

I should not have to say this, but your wife, children, teens, extended family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers should notice in you what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to live as a forgiven sinner in Christ Jesus. One additional plaque for serving on a business organization, one more trophy for winning a sporting tournament, or another advancement at work will mean nothing if we live apart from Christ and neglect His lifelines of love (Word and sacraments) in our daily lives.



By inspiration, St. Paul writes: “I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed ... Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:50–52, 58, ESV).

Jesus feeds us and our faith by Word and Sacrament (those special lifelines of His love) which distribute to us the gifts of His life, suffering, death, and resurrection. Celebrate these gifts with your family. Let them see you celebrating the really important things with them and learn by your example that “God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* [New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958], 39).

– Pastor Cliff Adair