



First Hearts April 2020

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From the Vacancy Pastor

Sometimes it's just the little words. They can make all the difference in the world, catching us up short and turning everything we "thought we knew" on its head. Just little words, but mighty, nonetheless.

Like the word, "but". It occurs several times in the resurrection account of Luke's gospel (24:1-11). $\delta\epsilon$ is the way it looks in the original Greek language, and although there are other words for the word, "but," this is the one that occurs here.

But. "**But** on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, **but** when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord

Jesus...

You can't help but notice that Luke begins his entire resurrection account with that little word. It sets the tone and sets us up for the next, "but," in verses 2 and 3. Those are the two that halt us in our tracks just as surely as it stopped those well-intentioned women come to finish their funeral duties.

"But." Something was amiss. In fact, plenty was out-of-place! But...this was just the beginning...

Later on, Peter picked up that little word in telling this story with a surprising unexpected particle: *"They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree; **but** God raised Him on the third day..."* Indeed, this is God's wedge word driven between the woman's offspring and Satan's offspring, between eternal life and eternal death. It's a little word—to be sure—for a big deal, a very big deal.

St. Paul's grand announcement to the sad Corinthians who were afraid their hope in Christ would last no longer than this life and be snuffed out in death: *"**But** in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep."*

You see, that one little word changes everything! Try that little word on as you deal with your heartaches and losses, your disappointments and even death itself. The story always comes to THE END...until...God says, "**But**."

In His great mercy, God answers, "**BUT**." *"**But** God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, **but** have everlasting life."*

*"**But** Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them...'"*

*"**But** now is Christ risen..."*

*"**But** the righteous shall go into eternal life..."*

So if you are looking for one word to tell the awesome news of Easter, ALLELUIA might be a good one, or RISEN, too. Even LIFE or VICTORY would be great. There's one word, however—one little word—that would surely stand apart from all the rest. It's the word, "**but**."

Can you imagine that little word on your tombstone, engraved right below your name and the birth and death dates. Right there in the center of that grey granite. Just this one little word: BUT.

Doesn't that just say it all?

Pastor Rockemann

**Weekly Events**

Sunday School 9:15 am

Divine Service 10:30 am

Board Happenings

4/7 - Planning Council 6:30 pm

4/14 - School Board 6:00 pm

4/14 - Elders Meeting 6:30 pm

4/18 - Trustee Workday 9:00am

4/28 - Planning Council 6:30 pm

Other Church Events

4/1 - Wednesday Lenten Service 6:30 pm (online)

4/9 - Maunday Thursday Service 6:30 pm (online)

4/10 - Good Friday Service 6:30 pm (online)

4/14 and 4/28 - Quilter's Group 9:30am

4/23 and 4/30 - New Testament Bible Study with Pastor Schulz 6:00pm

Monthly Readings:

HOLY WEEK	Apr. 5	Palm Sunday, <i>Sunday of the Passion</i>	Is. 50:4–9a	Psalms 118:19–29 or 31:9–16	Phil. 2:5–11	John 12:12–19 (Palm Sunday Procession) and Matt. 26:1–27:66 or Matt. 27:11–66 or John 12:20–43
	Apr. 9	Holy (Maundy) Thursday	Ex. 24:3–11 or Exodus 12:1–14	Psalms 116:12–19	Heb. 9:11–22 or 1 Cor. 11:23–32	Matt. 26:17–30 or John 13:1–17, 31b–35
	Apr. 10	Good Friday	Is. 52:13–53:12	Psalms 22 or Psalm 31	Heb. 4:14–16; 5:7–9	John 18:1–19:42 or John 19:17–30
EASTER	Apr. 12	The Resurrection of Our Lord – <i>Easter Sunrise</i>	Ex. 14:10–15:1	Psalms 118:15–29 or The Song of Moses and Israel	1 Cor. 15:1–11	John 20:1–18
	Apr. 12	The Resurrection of Our Lord – <i>Easter Day</i>	Acts 10:34–43 or Jer. 31:1–6	Psalms 16	Col. 3:1–4	Matt. 28:1–10
	Apr. 19	Second S. of Easter	Acts 5:29–42	Psalms 148	1 Peter 1:3–9	John 20:19–31
	Apr. 26	Third S. of Easter	Acts 2:14a, 36–41	Psalms 116:1–14	1 Peter 1:17–25	Luke 24:13–35



In Other News

Pastor Ed Maanum Introduction Letter

Dear Saints of First Lutheran,

March 29th, I announced my decision to accept your Call to serve as Pastor. So I'm writing this little note to give you some information about myself and family.

For starters I'm of Norwegian and German background from the south suburbs of Chicago, Lansing to be exact. This means I'm a Bears fan and a White Sox fan, not Cubs. As a kid, I was convinced I was going to be the next Walter Payton. There were a few problems with this: I was slow, short, not physically gifted in any discernible way, and I was overweight. Also, I didn't play football. Just a few things were standing in my way. As you can guess, I didn't become

the next anything sports-related.

Partway through my first year at Concordia River Forest, I was diagnosed with a rare kidney disease called Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis (FSGS). Essentially, my kidneys scarred over and wouldn't filter my blood. So I wound up doing dialysis for six months before a transplant was provided by my cousin. Three months later the kidney rejected and the disease eventually spread.

The transplant lasted long enough for Jen and me to get married and go through about half a year of school at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Halfway through that year, I began dialysis again from home, until I developed an infection my final year and did in-center dialysis from then through my second year of ministry. I did around six years of dialysis. In May 2010 I received a second transplant which continues to work well.

Now on to Jen. She's from Bremen, Indiana. She also attended Concordia River Forest as a secondary education major with a focus on mathematics. She taught one year of math in Reseda, CA and then during our years in St. Louis she put her math degree to good use by teaching religion, science, and literature at Zion Lutheran in Harvester, MO.

During our years in Pueblo, CO we were given the joy of five children. Ephraim (short e) is our oldest at nearly eleven years old and our only boy. Tabi is the eldest girl at nine. JoJo is eight years old. Fae is six and Jules, the baby, is three. They keep us busy and our home full of joyful chaos.

We look forward to being with you and serving God's Kingdom in Knoxville, TN with you.

Peace of Christ,

Rev. Ed Maanum, Jenna, Ephraim, Tabi, JoJo, Fae, and Jules

Stewardship

On the topic of stewardship, one of the most common questions a person might ask is *not* whether a Christian should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Of course, Christians should give to their church.

The most common question: "How much should I give?" But what they really mean is this: "Should Christians give a tithe of their income to their local congregation?" So, let's look at why you should or should not tithe.

Following are some reasons often offered for why Christians *shouldn't* give a tithe to their church.

Some say you shouldn't tithe because it isn't expressly commanded in the New Testament. Lacking that command, there is no "Thus saith the Lord" and no "should" for giving a tithe to your congregation.

Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these, together with treasures (money), add up to more than a tithe.

Still others say they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church.

And there are those who think Christians shouldn't tithe because of fear. If they tithe, they are afraid their gift will be misused, and they are afraid they won't have enough to get the things they use, want, or need.

Following are some reasons for why Christians *should* give a tithe to their church.

Even though the New Testament doesn't specifically command Christians to give a tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to tithe and did. On top of this, St. Paul often describes the giving Christians are to do in similar

terms as a tithe: a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of their income (1 Cor. 6:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here's another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? The reason for the Old Testament tithe was to support the full ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry.

What does it say in the New Testament? "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther put in the *Small Catechism's* Table of Duties to cover what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we're not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let's answer this by asking a different question about something entirely different. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? There, is after all, no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest we have, and it states simply for Christians to not neglect gathering together. Even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments. It is the goal.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? I'd expect that conversation would be something like this: "I'm glad you're still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God's promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and to receive His gifts in the Word and the Sacraments. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I'd really like you to try to attain it."

This same conversation is how we should approach the topic of the tithe. It's not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, the church is ecstatic that you're giving when you're giving in all these ways – time, talents, and treasures.

55 Alive is CANCELLED for the month of April. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and school not being in session, 55 Alive will be cancelled for the month of April.

Online Services: Please visit the church website www.firstknoxville.org to view our worship services and to participate in worship at your home. There are also links for Bible study and other resources.

Facebook Page: Follow First Lutheran on Facebook for all the latest updates:
<https://www.facebook.com/KnoxFirstLutheran/>

News from First Lutheran School

Wow what a whirlwind. In the span of one week, we went from a normal school year to providing distance learning for every student from 1 year old to 8th grade. Our teachers worked around the clock to put together packets and learn how to utilize new online platforms like Zoom and Google Classroom. I cannot say enough regarding how proud I am of our staff and their tireless efforts to meet the needs of our students spiritually, emotionally and academically. Even from a distance, we are working hard to maintain the relationships we have with our students and families.

It has been a blessing to see God at work even in this time of uncertainty. Teachers are having devotions with their students over Zoom and students are writing in their prayer journals. Families are spending time together, and the First Lutheran community is stronger than ever.

Over the past week, I watched as our teachers, who care so deeply about the students, struggled and prayed. They would much rather be with their students teaching them in person, greeting them with hugs and high-fives, and just enjoying time with them. Despite these challenges, no amount of social distancing can diminish their love for and their commitment to our students. This is what makes First Lutheran special.

Sometimes, especially in times of uncertainty and fear, it can feel like God is far away, but just like the teacher who still cares even from a distance, our God always loves and cares for us. We need to remember that no matter our earthly struggles, He is with us always, closer than we can even imagine. He is never far away. His loving arms surround us with His grace and mercy

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” Psalm 145:18

Joy and Many Blessings,
Jessie Irwin, Principal



April

Anniversaries:

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1: Steve and Shellia Byrd | 15: Barry and Melissa Lyke |
| 2: Harold and Katherine Whitaker | 24: Doug and Wendy Slifka |
| 5: Carlyle and Dolly Roth | 29: David and Susan Rodenbeck |

Birthdays:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2: Christopher Dalton | 19: Mary Acuff Croes, Judy Testerman, |
| 5: Becky Hodson | Brandy Warwick, Rebekah Parrott |
| 7: Louise Hodson, Mike Anderson | 22: Kelsie Reed |
| 8: Steve Keyes | 23: Alexander Blais, Stephanie McKenzie |
| 9: Carolyn Milligan | 25: Larry Farris |

10: Chuck Baum, Jackson Killia
12: Ingrid Capparelli
14: McKenzie Day, Gerene Jones
15: Ed Niedens
16: Jennifer Hodson
18: Tonya Knopps, Mary McKenzie

26: Jeff McKenzie
28: Isaac Davis, Shannon Milbourn
30: Lois Blais, Jeremiah Davis,
Brittany Johnson, Kamden Kreger

*March Anniversary and Birthday Corrections

March **Anniversaries:**

2: Rick and Michelle Breeden, Benny and Marion Samuel

15: Mike and Shawna Anderson

25: Roger and Melanie Bartholomay

Birthdays:

1: Kris Weaver	20: Christian Eimmerman
2: Lily Varner	21: Doug Rodenbeck
6: Michelle Breeden	22: AnnMarie Bissell
7: John Hofman	23: Matt Kaiser
10: John Schulz, Jr., David Varner	27: Marion Samuel
12: Shelbie Bender, Carolyn Weaver	28: Jean Chambers
18: Sharon Lee	30: John Milligan
19: Beth Crockett	31: Jon Eimmerman
