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Holy Cross Lutheran Church
9770 S. Foothills Canyon Boulevard
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129
www.holycrosshrco.org



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

*And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground,
the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?
He is not here, but has risen ..."*
Luke 24:5-6

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Some of the most impressive structures on earth are tombs or contain tombs: the pyramids of Egypt and Mexico, India's Taj Mahal, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and London's Westminster Abbey, just to name a few. But they are all overshadowed by a much smaller rock hewn sepulcher located just outside Jerusalem. This burial place, owned by a member of the Jewish aristocracy, contained the body of another man, a homeless rabbi from Galilee who had been executed on a Friday. It was found empty the following Sunday morning, and the world has not been the same since.

Those other famous tombs for all their tons of carefully carved limestone, granite, or marble are merely mute testimonies to the power of death over fallen mankind. When grave robbers or archeologists first opened the pyramids in Egypt, they found only the bodies of dead Pharaohs. When some women went to anoint the body of their slain teacher, they found only an empty grave, because Jesus had triumphed over death. The greatest of all victories had been won.

At the tomb the women met two angels and one of them asked, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" This is a very appropriate question for us as we live out our lives in this fallen graveyard of a world surrounded by death. Often we fall into the same sinful pattern of behavior as others who do not believe in or know of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but we should and do know better. Those who live by sight and not by faith know only that they are going to die, and they live in fear of death. Their knowledge of their own mortality drives them to commit all sorts of sinful and destructive behaviors, because they desperately want to forget about death or at least avoid thinking about it as much as possible. However, those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead are empowered to live without such fear and hopelessness.

As Christians, we know that since Christ defeated death once, He can and will do it again. As His resurrection people, we can live out our lives in confidence and joy, knowing that our sins were forgiven because of His sacrificial death on Calvary and that we have died and been raised up with Him in our Baptism. We need not live out our lives under the fear of death, but with hope in the future that holds a resurrection for us and for all who believe in Him. Eternal life is ours, through faith in the One who has conquered death for us. He has risen! He has risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Skelton

