

And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He said to them, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

—Ps. 19.1-4



Thy works, not mine, O Christ,
Speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done,
They bid my fear depart.

Thy death, not mine, O Christ,
Has paid the ransom due;
Ten thousand deaths like mine
Would have been all too few.

Thy righteousness, O Christ,
Alone can cover me;
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee.

To whom save Thee
Who canst alone for sin atone,
Lord, shall I flee?

—*Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ,*
Lutheran Service Book #565,
stzs. 1, 4-5

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Ihr aber seid das auserwählte Geschlecht, die königliche Priesterschaft, das heilige Volk, das Volk des Eigentums, dass ihr verkündigen sollt die Wohltaten dessen, der euch berufen hat von der Finsternis zu seinem wunderbaren Licht.
(Lutherbibel 1984)

You, however, are a chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy people, the people of (his) own possession, that you should proclaim the good deeds of the one who called you out of the darkness unto his wonderful light. (personal translation)

—1 Peter 2,9

The *person* of Christ goes along with the *word* of Christ, both of which go along with the *work* of Christ. When any or all of these are separated from each other (*par excellence* examples of which abound, all of which all of us are more than capable of bringing about rather effortlessly), the Gospel of Jesus Christ is mitigated against (evidence on a daily basis, without and within the Church, and given often-unbeknownst ample witness in the news sources of your choice).

Hence the risen Christ *is* still truly *present*, truly *speaks*, truly *acts*. And thus, He is still disobeyed and rejected by countless people whose end is eternal death, whose identity and character is defined by death. Thus also, solely by the sheer gift of God, still countless mortals believe on him, come unto him, are formed as God's people by way of God's mercy. And, as a result, they proclaim: they proclaim not simply a Christ in glorified, resurrection flesh Who goes about saying things; rather, they proclaim a glorified, risen, and speaking Christ Who *acts* to save—even here and even now, with ample disobedience and rejection and consequent shame, along with ample faith and confession and honor, to go around.

As Christians, let us proclaim the mighty acts of the living and speaking God, and watch rejection bring about victory.

Christ remains the mediator and we must always affirm that because of him we have a gracious God, even though we are unworthy.

—*Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, IV, 162 (Quarto)

Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 147.





Let Us Pray . . .

- In thanksgiving for the resurrection of Christ, who gives eternal hope
- For courage among lawful governments to pursue the just and right for all
- For an increase in integrity, honesty and decency in civil society
- For a greater reverence and respect for religious liberty and living in accordance with conscience
- For continued blessing upon our work in Eurasia
- For continued guidance for and blessing upon the *Lukaskirche* project



Die Lukaskirche,
Leipzig, Germany

Das Reisen, die Planung, und das Heil Gottes

March found Chris back in Prague for two Sundays, covering for our Regional Director while he was engaged in regional travel during the pastoral interim at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, as well as serving as organist in Leipzig for both Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. In between and beyond he has been steadily continuing to work on 1) strategic plans for the region, in light of present needs, current requests, and emerging possibilities, 2) the pursuit of the German permanent residence permit, 3) travel planning (including for our Home Service time this coming Summer), 4) a conference paper, and 5) adult instruction in the Christian faith with a refugee woman who, since last month, declared her intent to be baptized. While I generally enjoy what I do (despite the frustrations that can and do arise), it is the bringing of a new person into the mysteries of our Christian faith—the very activity which every other activity, in some way, supports—that brings me the greatest joy.

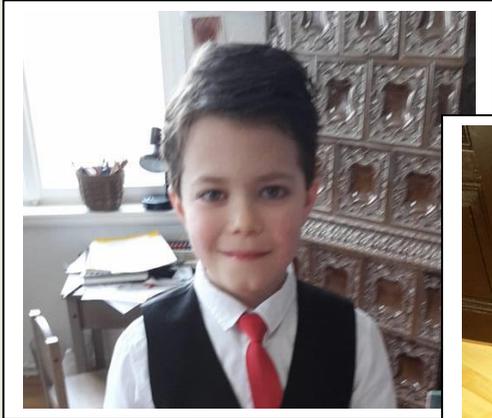
On Easter Monday, 11 of our first group of refugees received Holy Baptism, after a number of weeks of instruction in the Christian faith, for which we all give thanks. It is rather remarkable to witness people, who originate from a country ruled by a notorious anti-Christian regime, confess Jesus Christ openly (with a *gravitas* on their face that no one can rival). It is a telling testament to the power of God that stands victorious in a world that is very much hostile to God and to the things of God.

Elizabeth's Ecke

For Holy Week, I posted a reflection for each day from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday. This was a project I did two years ago (but not last year as Helene was born just before Easter. This year, it was a good exercise to write fresh reflections. Keep an eye on the LCMS Eurasia Facebook page (www.facebook.com/lcmseurasia) during the coming weeks as we will be posting the Easter Season in Song Series again from last year. These beautiful musical treats with accompanying devotion are well worth checking out again or for the first time.

On March 23, we celebrated Helene's 1st birthday. I cannot believe she is already 1! We enjoyed a low key party at home with family friends to whom we've become quite close. We are so thankful for close friendships here to support these important milestones when we cannot be with family. Helene received a dolly from Mommy and Daddy, and immediately grabbed it to hug and kiss it! Matthias has been quite taken with Helene's birthday, and has been repeatedly wishing her a happy one. He is still loving dinosaurs and is full of energy. Thomas recently sang for Palm Sunday at *Thomaskirche* which he always enjoys very much. He is a voracious reader, making his way for a second time through all of the Narnia books by C.S. Lewis since receiving them for Christmas.

We hope that your Easter has been blessed, and that it has given you the sure hope and confidence of the Resurrection for you, and all your loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord.



May God in Christ through the Spirit bless you now and forever.

Christopher & Elizabeth

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