



2020 Easter Message to Congregations

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name Christ our Saviour.

Dear people of MNO Synod, this is going to be a different type of Easter than we have ever celebrated. Following the guidance of our national and provincial governments, we are distancing from each other, unable to meet in person as congregations and as friends.

There are obvious challenges to this.

However, despite the distance between us, our pastors, deacons, and leaders, and congregation members are finding innovative and new ways to ensure that we can celebrate the gift of life and hope that we know through the cross.

Our gospel for this Easter morning from Matthew tells us a story that is very different from our 'normal' Easter celebration. The two women named Mary approach a tomb in quiet, lonely longing. They do not expect to find an empty tomb or a message of resurrection. They do not expect to hear about new life in the face of death.

How familiar are those feelings for us right now? Isn't this a message that speaks even more clearly to us this Easter?

In the face of uncertainty, doubt, isolation, and longing, Christ leaves the grave to give us grace, hope, and life in unexpected ways. Christ meets us where we are to bring us peace and salvation. And Christ sends us into the world to share that message, bringing others with us to continue the ministry that is ours through baptism.

What a hopeful message for us and for the church in this time.

As Easter dawns this year, there will be signs of resurrection all around us. We will be able to see how God speaks to us and through us in new and surprising ways. I hope that in that mystery, you are able to grow in faith and see Christ clearly in your life.

Blessings to you as we celebrate Easter this year, putting our hope in trust in the one who's death defeated death, and whose life brings new life to all.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Rev. Jason Zinko
Bishop
Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada