

HAPPY
Easter



Easter Message to the Congregations and Leaders of the MNO Synod

April 5, 2026

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you this Easter season.

Every year, Easter invites us to stand again in that early morning light with the women at the tomb—still carrying the weight of grief, still unsure of what comes next, and suddenly confronted with a hope they never imagined. The stone is rolled away. The body they came to care for is gone. And into all their confusion comes a message that changes everything: **“He is not here. He is risen.”**

This year, that message feels especially needed.

We are living in a world that feels heavy. Wars and violence continue to uproot families and communities and wreak havoc on global systems. Economic pressures are stretching households and congregations alike. Climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent and more frightening. Many of our churches are discerning their futures with a mix of courage and uncertainty. And across society, polarization seems to be pulling people further apart just when we most need one another.

Into all of this, Easter speaks a word that does not ignore these realities but is instead deeply, even stubbornly, hopeful. The resurrection tells us that God’s love is stronger than every force that deals in fear, division, or despair. It tells us that new life can emerge even when we cannot yet see the way forward. It tells us that God is already at work in the places we worry are beyond repair.

As the MNO Synod, we are walking through a time of change, but also a time of possibility. I continue to see signs of resurrection everywhere: congregations trying new forms of ministry, leaders supporting one another with honesty and grace, communities welcoming newcomers, young people raising their voices for justice, and faithful people showing up—week after week—to pray, serve, sing, witness, and hope together.

That togetherness is important. It reminds us that we are not alone.

One of the most powerful parts of the Easter story is how quickly the disciples are drawn back together. They don’t all understand what has happened. They don’t all respond the same way. They don’t even seem to have a plan for what to do next. But the risen Christ meets them—scattered,



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confused, hopeful, doubtful—and gathers them into a new kind of community. A community shaped not by certainty, but by trust. Not by sameness, but by shared purpose. Not by fear, but by love.

That continues to be our calling.

I am grateful for the many ways that this calling is already being lived out in our congregations, communities, and in the lives of our members. Through the grace of God, we not only proclaim that Christ is risen, but that the resurrected Christ continues to be present and active in the ministry we do together.

My prayer this Easter is that the promise of the empty tomb will fill you with peace and joy, and strengthen your courage. May you feel Christ's presence in your questions as much as in your confidence. May you sense the Spirit's nudging in your experiments as much as in your traditions. And may the hope of the resurrection draw us closer to one another across the MNO Synod as we seek to be Christ's people in a world that longs for healing.

Christ is risen. Christ is with us. Christ is making all things new.

Blessings to each of you in this season of life and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Zinko', with a cross symbol to the left.

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