The Lord is Risen! The Lord is Risen Indeed!
The Rt. Rev. John S. Smylie

I love the front cover of this issue of “The Spirit of Wyoming.” I find so much symbolism within that photograph that Jill took several years ago during one of our visits to Lander. It’s a photograph of “The Sinks and Rises.” In it I see the waters of baptism where our Lord first heard deep words of affirmation from his Father in heaven, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” The red tones found in the bushes remind me of the blood shed by our Lord in his crucifixion; they also remind me of the burning bush that Moses encountered a place of God’s presence. The cave in the photograph suggests to me the glory of the empty tomb and the green pine in the picture is a symbol of new life, new hope, resurrection!

The first time I visited “The Sinks and Rises” was with John Kerns, a former Air Force pilot and faithful member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Casper. Among other things, John is a geologist and he explained to me some of the mystery of the site. Though it’s just several yards from where the river goes underground to where it emerges again, it takes more than an hour for the water to reappear out of the depths. Theologians have often pondered where did Christ go after his death. Was he gone completely from existence? Did he visit with the dead who were in Hades? There is that peculiar gap between his horrifying death upon the cross on Good Friday and the glorious discovery of his missing, now risen body on Easter Sunday. Was he actively engaged in some mysterious soulful gathering or was he merely gone? Mysteries are a wonderful opportunity for the imagination and the mystery of the time between our Lord’s death and resurrection, in a much more profound way, elicits the same kind of question as the mystery of where the water goes between “the Sinks and Rises.” Where did the water go, where did Jesus go? Sometimes we simply need to have faith when confronted with a mystery, faith that announces and proclaims words that express a truth that confounds logic, powerful words like, “Christ has Died, Christ is Risen, Christ will Come Again.”

Recently thousands and thousands of watchers excitedly waited for a giraffe to be born in New York. They tuned in day after day awaiting the birth of this little one. On March 1 the media exploded with surprising news of a baby with long legs and a long neck quietly making his appearance in Colorado. The interest in these events reminds me of the hunger for an opportunity to witness something perceived as unique. The birth of a giraffe is a commonplace occurrence, though it’s not something most of us get to witness. Every birth of every creature points to hope, new life, and pain leading to joy.

Resurrection on the other hand -- our Lord’s resurrection is a unique event that also points to hope, new life, and joy emerging from pain. Our Lord Jesus Christ became like us so we might become like him in all ways, and in everything. And that means we share in his resurrection, not simply theoretically, but in actuality. Resurrection invites us to a way of life during our time on this fragile earth. Resurrection is also our destiny when it’s our time to die. Because of His resurrection we are destined to rise with Christ to new life, to ever increasing joy, to a nearer presence with God. Praise God!

The Lord is Risen!
The Lord is Risen Indeed!

By grace we shall rise with Him.

May you have a blessed Easter with lots of Alleluias!

Blessings, God’s blessings upon you always!

Warmly, John