

## An Advent Lutheran Church Jubilee 2026 Celebration Devotion

### *EASTER—Transformation \* Resurrection ... Always Being Made New*

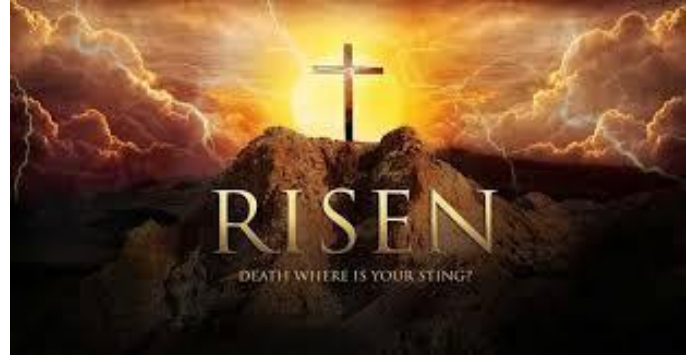
*“There is a tension at the center of every life between what we are and what we are becoming.” ~ Rivers in the Ocean*

**By Pastor Debra Loudin-McCann**

*(Former Director of Music Ministries at Advent and ministerial daughter of the congregation.)*

### **Happy Easter! Jesus Has Risen, ALLELUIA! And that changes *EVERYTHING***

This is the final act in the great drama of the season of Lent – Easter, the glorious celebration of Jesus’ overcoming the Enemy Death by accepting Death on Good Friday and then rising in New Life three days later on Easter Sunday. This scandalous event is the centerpiece of the Christian Faith. And while there are many differing understandings of this Resurrection story, the core meaning is universal and cosmic in nature – Death and all the powers of Evil that confront us in this life do not get the last word. God is victorious! Love Wins!

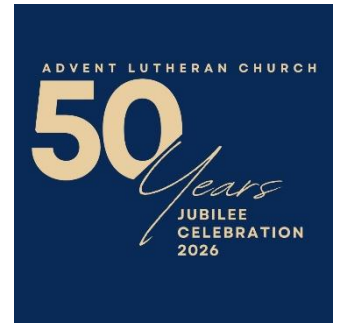


There can be no doubt that The Gospel of Jesus Christ changed the world. The Jesus story in all its iterations and interpretations has influenced human history in ways we continue to process and try to understand. One of the persistent questions so often asked is “WHY?” Why did Jesus have to die? Why did God require this of Him? Couldn’t there have been another way? I have struggled with that question most all my life, and I still don’t have THE answer. Honestly? I don’t think anyone does. An army of theologians and religious scholars have done battle with one another throughout history to try and explain exactly what God did and why. But in the end, there is no consensus, except this – *Things Had to Change.*

It seems to me that real change, dramatic and ground-shaking change only ever comes through some kind of death. You probably have heard the old maxim that Change never happens until the pain of remaining the same overcomes the fear of something new. It’s true, isn’t it? We seldom change until we must, or until we are forced to. Sometimes change is forced upon us. Sometimes we finally become convinced we need to change, and we choose to learn and adapt to new things – new places, a new job, a new way of relationship, a new habit, a new perspective that may lead to a new way of thinking, a new way of understanding. Whichever way the change comes, it involves some kind of death, dying to old ways of thinking, to old priorities, biases, grudges, attachments, false idols and comfortable defense strategies of avoidance and denial. This is the natural way of things. There is truth in Darwin’s proposal underlying the Theory of Evolution that life on earth is a matter of “*Change or Die.*”



Change is the nature of the Cosmos. The universe is always expanding. And growth happens with or without our acceptance and participation. All of Creation is *always being made new*. Nature teaches us that. As Lutherans we know this from our own church's history. The Reformation was one of the most epic world-changing movements in history. It changed everything regarding the progression of religion, politics, and economics. It wasn't just ECCLESIA Semper Reformanda (the CHURCH is always changing) it turned out to be MUNDO Semper Reformanda! (the WORLD is always changing) and it all began with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone knows the beginning and end of Time. God alone knows the scope and the arc of the timeline for Creation. God's timing is often a mystery to us, so we live by Faith. But this we believe and profess - God's purpose for the world has always been rooted in God's Love for the world, and most especially for US. Remember, "*For God so loved the World that God gave the only Son ...*" (John 3:16)



Because of Jesus' Resurrection, Death no longer needs to hold us captive to fear. All the endings of this earthly life do not have to be forever endings. What the Resurrection promises is that God's Love for us is so powerful that there is always hope for Transformation, even unto Eternal Life. Therefore, do not allow fear to rule the day. It may feel like Good Friday in the world now, but Easter is coming! EASTER IS HERE! And it comes not just for the chosen few. Resurrection will come for all The Children of God because God's ultimate purpose for all Creation is to Love us into *always being made new*. Those things that feel like death, whether they be systems of global oppression and injustice or the attacks of mortality in disease, broken relationships, pain of loss and grief, times of insecurity – these will not win the war. The world is birthing a New Thing. Change WILL come! As it must. We can either choose to prepare for it, participate in it, and celebrate it, or we can withdraw and wait to die. Each of us must choose our own path through chaos. As for me ... I claim The Resurrection of Jesus and the eternal Truth it represents.

*"This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it. The process is not finished, but it is going on. This is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified."* ~ Martin Luther

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*excerpt from a poem by my friend Rev. Donna Knutson*

*There is no waiting for someone to shout ALLELUIA!  
After the heart has Awakened and the Soul dances Free.  
Every day is a chance to breathe To say what has been revealed  
For stones to be rolled and miracles to be real.  
What you hear when you pray, what you know without a doubt  
Doesn't fade when the day is done or because there is doubt.  
What you know in the depth, to the bottom of your heart  
is the Kingdom has a gift to give and a song that you alone can sing.*