



Victory is ours! Victory is ours! Through God who loves us.

(South African Episcopal Bishop Desmond Tutu)

I am intrigued and inspired by the calendric fact that Easter is longer than Lent.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and concludes with Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). While we tend to focus on the 40 fasting days of Lent, when the Sundays along the way are included, Lent always includes exactly 46 calendar days.

Easter is not just one day, though we tend to think of it that way. It begins with Easter Sunday, of course, but it doesn't end until Pentecost Sunday, ever and always exactly 50 days later.

50 is, of course, greater than 46. In other words, Easter always wins!

Repentance and fasting are overcome by forgiving grace. Sorrow and suffering are no match for the loving presence of the wounded and risen One. Death will not have the last word. The last and longest word is God's Word proclaiming that Christ is risen and we, too, shall rise. Easter is longer than Lent...always.

The psalmist foreshadowed it:

For God's anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning [Ps 30:5].

The South African bishop Desmond Tutu sang and celebrated it:

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate. Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death. Victory is ours! Victory is ours! Through God who loves us. [ELW #721]

This is the promise born in the resurrection of Jesus and it's offered to us as a gift: Easter is longer and stronger than Lent.

I must confess that I am also intrigued by the fact that every year and in every way imaginable hundreds, perhaps thousands, of daily devotional aids are published for the 40 days of Lent and, yet, as far as I can tell, there is very little, if any, production of 50-day devotionals for Easter. It's as if we are more ready and willing to dig daily and devotionally into what we do, like sin or fasting, repentance, and confession, than we are ready and willing to dig deeply, daily, and devotionally into what God does in the death and resurrection of Christ, like rendering new, abundant, and lasting life for the world and for us.

I wonder how this Easter season might be different if we each – individually, in our families, as faith communities – spent the 50 days of Easter in daily devotional reflection on questions like these:

- What differences does the resurrection of Jesus make in my life or in the life and ministry of the faith community of which I am a part?
- What differences does the resurrection of Jesus make in the world around us, especially in those places where new, abundant, or lasting life seems elusive, withheld, or resisted?

Continued ...

Victory is ours! *(cont.)*

- How can I/we lean into the promise of resurrection ourselves and offer it more energetically, prophetically, or pastorally for others?

I suspect that, over these 50 days and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we just might grow even more deeply into our participation in what Walter Brueggemann calls in this Easter prayer “the movement of life”:

You summon us to life in the midst of death, peace in the midst of violence, praise in the midst of despair. Filled once again with your unruly Spirit, may we answer your summons and be part of the movement of life. Amen. [A Way Other Than Our Own]
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

+Bishop Bill Gafkjen

I-K Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017 *Formed, Reformed, Transformed* Covington, Kentucky

This year's Synod Assembly will be held at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, One West RiverCenter Blvd., Covington, KY.

Registration Fees & Other Information

- The registration fee is \$170.00 (which includes the Thursday banquet evening meal, Friday plated lunch, refreshment breaks, and all materials) per voting member.
- Fee for registered visitors is also \$170.00, which includes the Thursday banquet evening meal, Friday plated lunch, refreshment breaks, and materials.
- By action of the IN-KY Synod Council (SC/2017/7), retired professional leaders on the roster of this synod pay a reduced fee to attend the assembly – \$85.00.
- Fees for interim pastors are to be paid by the congregation(s) being served.
- Any congregation or voting member needing assistance with the registration fee must notify the IN-KY Synod Council Executive Committee of that need in writing by April 15, 2017, (mail to the synod office address, attention: IN-KY Synod Council Exec.

Comm. or email the IN-KY Synod Council Secretary, Judy Bush: jatully@sbcglobal.net

Registration Discount

- Congregations are strongly encouraged to select their voting members early. Registration rates increase to \$200.00 after the **early bird registration deadline, Friday, March 31, 2017.**
- Registration rates increase to \$100.00 for Retired Rostered Ministers after March 31, 2017.

Hotel Reservations

Hotel reservations are in addition to and separate from your synod assembly registration. A block of rooms has been reserved at two downtown Covington hotels: The Cincinnati Marriott RiverCenter, 10 West RiverCenter Blvd. and The Embassy Suites Cincinnati RiverCenter, 10 East River Center Blvd. To make a reservation online, go to <https://aws.passkey.com/e/48988760>

Bring Your Family This Year!

Child-care arrangements are being organized by a local volunteer. A minimal fee is requested to help compensate the individuals who will provide the child care at synod assembly. Covington, KY is just across the river from Cincinnati, and this area offers many activities and things for families to do. Check out the Northern Kentucky CVB's website for places your family can visit, shop and eat. <https://www.meetnky.com/>

A Call to Prayer from the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“As the Conference of Bishops, we call our worshiping communities to pray for raising up leaders for this church. We ask that the petitions of every worship service include a plea that new lay leaders, deacons and pastors be identified, invited, encouraged and supported in responding to God's call to ministry.” [adopted March 4, 2017]

Please read this special appeal from Bishop Gafkjen in its entirety at the homepage of our website: www.iksynod.org

