



NPR Muddles the Meaning of Easter

What is Easter all about? In a story published this year on Good Friday, National Public Radio included a bizarre “explanation” of Easter—that couldn’t be more wrong! This is what NPR apparently thinks Easter is all about:

“Easter—the day celebrating the idea that Jesus did not die and go to hell or purgatory or anywhere at all, but rather arose into heaven—is on Sunday.”

It is astonishing to think that strange sentence was not only written by an NPR reporter, but presumably also approved by an editor or fact-checker. Unfortunately, this gaff probably reflects an ignorance that is in fact widespread in today’s “educated” class, who more and more are actually woefully *uneducated* in the basics that make for a well-rounded education.

For, the events of Holy Week and Easter are so central to so many aspects of Western culture, such as art and music, that any person educated in the history of Western Civilization should recognize immediately the obvious errors in that statement. Sadly, however, high schools and even colleges are increasingly discarding traditional education regarding the very culture that we all share.

Let’s consider this odd, erroneous statement from NPR about the significance of Easter one assertion at a time:

“Jesus did not die . . .”

The assertion that Jesus did not die on the cross is actually an ancient heresy—that is even found in the Islamic Koran! That’s because Mohammed’s wife was originally a member of a heretical, quasi-Christian sect, and it seems he drew from her his twisted ideas about Christ and Christianity. Both Mohammed and the quasi-Christian heretics he was aping thought it too demeaning for God to *actually* die, so they concluded the Bible must be in error and Jesus’ death was really just some kind of illusion.

The death of Jesus on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins is the central teaching of Christianity. It is shocking NPR instead gives Islamic, anti-Christian heresy—and claims that is the Christian teaching!

Such heretical notions were already beginning to arise during the era of the Apostles, so the real, physical death of Jesus Christ is strongly emphasized in the New Testament:

1 Corinthians 15:3 — *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”*

Philippians 2:5-8 — *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross!”*

Romans 5:6-10 — *“Christ died for the ungodly . . . God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son.”*

Revelation 1:18 — *“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever!”*

Jesus Himself also makes clear that His death is the fulfillment of thousands of years of prophecy in the Old Testament:

Luke 18:31-33 — *“Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. On the third day, He will rise again.’”*

Luke 24:44-48 — *“He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.’ Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’”*

This Biblical truth is summed up in the familiar words of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds:

“[He] suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.”

“Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven . . . and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.”

Quite simply, the death of Jesus of Nazareth upon the cross as a sacrifice for our sins is the central teaching of Christianity. It is both extremely sad and extremely shocking that our National Public Radio service in the United States, which has the largest Christian population of any nation in the world, would publish an article that instead gives the Islamic, anti-Christian heresy—and claims that is the Christian teaching!

“Did not go to hell or purgatory or anywhere at all . . .”

The second part of this is true, since no such place as “purgatory” actually exists. This idea is not found in the Bible. It arose during the Dark Ages, when knowledge of Scripture was limited because even many ministers could not even read, and the Bible became largely a “closed book” until the Dark Ages ended with the dawn of the Renaissance and Reformation.

In contrast to these false notions of a “purgatory,” Scripture very clearly teaches that at the moment of death the soul departs the body and immediately goes either to be with Christ in Paradise, or to hell. There is no place “in between,” and no possibility of moving out of hell and into the heavenly Paradise.

Hebrews 9:27— *“Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”*

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Luke 23:39-43 — *“One of the criminals who hung there . . . said, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.’”*

Luke 16:22-26 — *“The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ But Abraham replied . . . ‘Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’”*

NPR is completely wrong when it says that Christ “did not go to hell...” Every week billions of Christians profess the exact opposite in the words of the Apostles’ Creed: “He descended into hell.”

Like the old adage “even a broken clock is right twice a day,” NPR stumbled into the truth by correctly saying that our Lord did not go to any kind of “purgatory.” He could not have, because no such place even exists.

However, the first part of this statement from NPR is completely wrong when it adds that Christ “did not go to hell . . .” As a matter of fact, every week billions of Christians around the world profess the exact opposite, in the words of the Apostles’ Creed: “He descended into hell.”

This doctrine is only referred to once or perhaps twice in the Bible. The primary reference is from St. Peter:

1 Peter 3:18-19 — *“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.”*

Putting together the Biblical testimony, it seems Christ’s descent into hell occurred sometime after His death on Good Friday, but before His bodily resurrection on Easter Sunday. In His descent into hell He went in spirit to the realm of Satan, not to suffer punishment, but to proclaim or “preach” His victory over Satan and his followers.

Martin Luther says they were having a big party in hell because they thought they had won the ultimate victory in the cosmic battle with God. But, then Christ came to hell itself and crashed their party, with the proclamation of His ultimate victory over sin, death, and the Devil.

It was customary in ancient warfare for the conqueror to go like this right into the capitol city of those he had defeated, and there to flaunt before them his triumph with a victory parade. St. Paul seems to say that is what Christ did in His descent into hell:

Colossians 2:15 — *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, celebrating in a triumphal parade His victory over them by means of the cross.”*

The Formula of Concord of the Lutheran Church comments on this doctrine: *“When and how, according to our simple Christian Creed, did Christ go to hell? . . . We should not engage in disputations concerning this article, but believe and teach it in all simplicity . . . It is enough to know that Christ went to hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and has redeemed them from the power of death, of the devil, and of the eternal damnation of the hellish jaws. How this took place is something that we should postpone until the other world, where there will be revealed to us not only this mystery, but many others as well, which our blind reason cannot comprehend in this life, but which we simply accept.”*

Finally, the NPR story makes the elementary error of confusing two important Christian holy days, Easter and Ascension, when it says that Easter is the occasion when Christ “arose into heaven.”

Acts 1:3 — *“After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, and spoke about the kingdom of God.”*

This is why the Ascension of Our Lord is on the 40th day following Easter, and therefore always falls on a Thursday. Though not widely celebrated in the United States, in many parts of the world Ascension Day is still both a major religious holy day and civic holiday, and if you check nearly any calendar it will duly note this day, which this year is May 10.

On the one hand, this bizarre statement from NPR that gets the simplest facts about Easter completely wrong illustrates a general decline in education, especially regarding the heritage of Western Civilization upon which our nation is founded. However, it also is a particular warning to us about the critical importance of Christian education for our own children.

This bungled NPR article about the basic meaning of Easter is a warning to us of the critical importance of Christian education for our own children.

Several times when I have spoken to someone about a lack of worship attendance they have replied something along the lines of, "My grandparents helped start that church," or "My parents were in church every single Sunday," or, saddest of all, "My father was a pastor, you know." My response is, "That was wonderful for them, but *their* faithfulness won't save *you*."

Knowledge of the faith is not transmitted genetically. This bungled NPR article about the basic meaning of Easter is a warning: If your children and grandchildren are not raised with regular attendance at worship, Sunday School, Confirmation Class, etc., they will end up just as ignorant about the fundamentals of the faith—and may not even learn in their hearts to trust in Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord.

As Psalm 78:3-4 declares: *"What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us, we will not hide this from our children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, His power, and the wonders He has done."*

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Thank you to all those who donated lilies to beautify our sanctuary for Easter! Thanks also to Barb Dillenbeck for arranging and caring for them.

Given By

In Memory or Honor Of

Kevin & Denise Debrick (2) Fred & Billee Lee and Lorene Debrick
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 Doris Rodewald Herman Rodewald
 Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts (2) Leroy & Ruth Vogts, Grandparents, Great-Great Grandmother Katherina Windler



Save The Date For 150th Anniversary

In order to secure Kanas District President Peter Lange as our guest speaker we have changed the date of our 150th Anniversary Celebration to November 4, 2018. This also gives us an extra week to complete our construction project!

The schedule for the day is a Communion service at 10:00am, with a building dedication ceremony immediately following the service, similar to the recent groundbreaking ceremony. Everyone is invited to a catered Anniversary Luncheon at noon.

At 2:00pm we will have a special Anniversary Service with President Lange as our guest speaker, followed by an Anniversary Reception so that the reminiscing and fellowship can continue!

Please let all your relatives and friends who may wish to attend this grand reunion know now, so that they can save the date!



Confirmation Sunday

Confirmation and First Communion will be held during our Divine Service on April 22, with the Public Examination on Friday, April 20 at 7:00pm. This year's Confirmands are Halle Schlegal and Hunter Rush.

BIRTHDAY OPEN HOUSE!

All are invited to a 70th Birthday Open House for Ella Hinman at Town Square in Paola from 2:00pm-4:00pm on Sunday, April 22. Your presence is the only present desired. *"With long life I will satisfy them, and show them My salvation"*(Psalm 91:16).



The new quarterly issue of the devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* for April thru June is available in the literature rack at church, in regular size, large print, and a new "digest" size (same size as *Reader's Digest*). A great way to keep close to the Lord!



You are invited to help Trinity provide brief worship services for nursing home residents at Country Club Estates and Vintage Park on Sunday, April 22. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length at each home. We begin at 1:30pm at Country Club Estates and then go to Vintage Park for the second service.

QUARTERLY MEETING

The quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly will be held following worship on Sunday, April 15. In order to prepare for this meeting the Church Council will meet on Tuesday, April 10 at 7:00pm.

The agenda will include an update on the building project, officer and committee reports, and setting a spring cleanup day.



Ascension Sunday Outdoor Service

On May 13 we will observe both Ascension Sunday and Mother's Day with an Outdoor Service in the Shelter House! Other Outdoor Services planned for this year are July 1 in observance of Independence Day and our annual Blocktoberfest Outdoor Service on September 16.

We may schedule additional Outdoor Services this summer as construction progresses, since the project includes new carpet and paint in the Sanctuary.



This month we begin our summer schedule of Communion on the 1st Sunday of the month. However, we will have a special, extra service of Holy Communion on April 22 due to Confirmation and First Communion.



Minna Meyer, Cate Minden, and Halle Schlegal model our new acolyte robes before the Easter service. Our thanks to the family of the late Damon Prothe for donating these robes with his memorial funds, and to Pam Peckman for the photo. The new church floor plan includes a closet for the acolyte robes on the main floor, adjacent to the Church Office. This shot also records a familiar view that no longer exists, since this former door to the Church Office has now been closed off.



We are working on putting together a new church pictorial directory for our 150th Anniversary. We will be producing the directory ourselves, and Kyle Minden and Stacey Elkinton will be taking the pictures on several Sundays before and after worship. You may also submit your own photo.

For more information contact Kyle, Stacey, Jan Minden, or Michelle Haley. Make sure you don't get missed in this historic church directory!



April

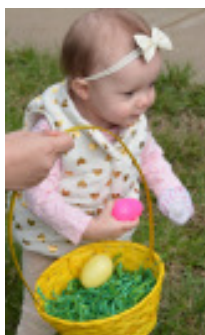
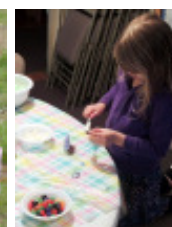
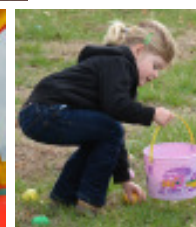
BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

- April 1 Lori Schlegel
- April 1 Elaine Stewart
- April 3 Brigitte Rodewald
- April 4 Joy Hinds
- April 4 Kristina Jenkins
- April 5 Shamron Ferrell
- April 5 Tyler Hieber
- April 5 Wesley Medlen
- April 5 Joe Mueller
- April 6 Kelsey Debrick
- April 5 Dennis Johns
- April 5 Bill Koelsch
- April 8 Leslie Prothe
- April 8 Ella Durham
- April 9 Emma Haley
- April 10 Karlie McMullin
- April 11 James Fanning
- April 13 Suzanne Peckman
- April 14 Matt Oberheide
- April 14 Venita Prothe
- April 14 Layla Schlegel
- April 14 Dana Simonson
- April 15 Lois Holtz
- April 16 Erika Hall
- April 17 Gavin Kaiser
- April 17 Kevin Vogts
- April 18 Melissa Richardson
- April 19 Katie Taylor
- April 20 Loren Herrs
- April 21 Ashley Debrick
- April 22 Chloe Maisch
- April 22 Lori Richardson
- April 22 Nicholas Minden
- April 23 Eric Ritch
- April 24 Bridget Medlin
- April 26 John Gerken
- April 26 Austin Reyelts
- April 26 Tyler Reyelts
- April 29 Krista Munzer
- April 29 Abigail Koelsch
- April 29 Erin Meyer
- April 30 Ellen Pinneo



Our thanks to Twin Valley 4H for again sponsoring the annual Easter Egg Hunt on our church grounds on March 31. Lots more pictures are in the Photo Gallery on our church web site at www.trinitylcms.org/photos.



- April 5 George & Pam Holtz (28)
- April 5 ... Burl & Shemene Peckman (32)
- April 13 ... Alan & Jeanne Hutchison (27)
- April 20 .. Max & Jennifer Boydston (33)
- April 25 Harold & Ann Peckman (70)

- April 26 Dan & Cathy Hieber (31)
- April 26 Kenny & Vera Kaiser (73)
- April 26 Keith & Laura Prothe (38)
- April 27 Kevin & Marla Prothe (27)
- April 28 Chris & Denna Jones (17)



As construction gets underway, Steve Debrick excavates for our Building Addition and Modernization Project. Initial work the first week of April included: demolishing the existing restrooms and beginning to rebuild and replumb the new restrooms; removing the ceiling tile from the lobby and basement; beginning excavation for the basement level and foundation of the addition; supplies are being stockpiled in the church yard; and the Interior Design Committee selected the carpet, flooring, and paint. After worship on April 8 we are removing and storing in other places in the building the furnishings and other items from the space that will become our new Gathering Room (the current overflow and cry room), so that demolition of those rooms can proceed. We are also covering the organ pipes and sealing the pipe chamber, to prevent dust from damaging the pipes and mechanism, and during construction will be using an electronic organ for services. Please use the first floor single restroom, which will remain operational until the new restrooms are useable, or the basement restroom. Thank you to everyone for your patience and understanding during construction!

Missionaries of the Month



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

April 1

Kristin Lange
Germany

April 8

Rev. Jerry & Patty Lawson
Russia

April 15

Rev. Ronald & Mary Anne Rall
Papua New Guinea

April 22

Rev. Douglas & Angela Thompson
Sierra Leone

April 29

Andrew & Noel Schaff
Taiwan



After Church Snacks

Could you—individual, family, or group—serve snacks sometime after worship? All remaining Sundays in April are still open! The sign-up sheet for 2018 is on the table with the snacks.

Our Generations group generously provides and prepares coffee and juice each week, so those signing up are only asked to provide some treat. Consider signing up for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries. Thanks to all providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

April 1

Easter Breakfast

April 8

Michelle Haley

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April 15, 22, 29

Need Volunteers



God's GRACE IN COLOSSIANS

Adult Bible Study

Our current study in Adult Bible Class is *God's Grace in Colossians*.

One of the Apostle Paul's shorter letters, Colossians is especially rich with descriptions of Christ, His work, and the blessings He bestows on us. Though written nearly 2,000 years ago, this Biblical book still speaks to our lives today in a surprisingly fresh and relevant way.

Join in Sundays at 9:00am to learn more about *God's Grace in Colossians*.