



We have arrived at the most holy time of the Church Year in which we commemorate, contemplate, and celebrate our Lord's passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. At this time, it is worth remembering that God first created man out of His deep love, desiring a humanity that would spend eternity in perfect communion with Him. Tragically, Adam ruptured this at the fall, and we are all now conceived and born in sin. And, as written in Scripture and summarized in our Lutheran Confessions, the sinful man "is not only weak and sick, but he is truly lifeless and 'dead.'"\*

Yet God loved us so much that He deeply desired life for us! He sent His Son to suffer and die the painful and shameful death that we deserve and to rise again that death itself might forever be defeated. This means that we who were once dead are, in baptism, now restored to life and to communion with Him into eternity. Yes, we still struggle and sin in this vale of tears, but God gathers us regularly so that we may confess our sins and be brought back to life through His absolution, His word, and His Son's very body (still bearing the wounds of His crucifixion) and blood. When we reach the end of our earthly lives, we die in the sure confidence that on the Last Day He will raise us again to eternal life in Him.

Everything that God has done for us, He has done for all descendants of Adam, namely for all humanity, bar no one. Yes, even for the very youngest at the very earliest one-cell stage of their lives. And even for the sickest and weakest among us. Because God has so loved everyone, so do we. Consider that our Bidding Prayer in the Chief Service on Good Friday includes petitions for *everyone*, including those who are sick and weak, those who are in authority (whether or not we like them and agree with them), and even our enemies. All human lives matter to God and matter to us as well. And, as Dr. Luther so beautifully explains in his Small Catechism, because we fear and love God, "we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body but help and support him in every physical need." Yet, at the same time, we know that sins against the sanctity of life are also sins for which our Lord died. Every sinner matters to Him! With true repentance, there is always forgiveness at the foot of the cross. Thanks be to God!

We on the English District Lifeline Team thank God for His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation and for equipping us all to be Gospel-motivated voices for life. We pray His richest blessings on us all this Holy Week, Easter Triduum, and throughout the Church Year!

Note: For a brief but powerful meditation by Johann Gerhard on our sin and Christ's Passion, see Pres. Matt Harrison's letter in the current *Lutheran Witness*, which may be accessed at [https://witness.lcms.org/2025/most-righteous-god-most-kind-father/?\\_gl=1\\*mrvdws\\*\\_ga\\*MTMzMTQxNzkwNS4xNzQzMzY2OTM2\\*\\_ga\\_Z0184DBP2L\\*MTc0NDE0ODI0Ny4xMS4wLjE3NDQxNDgyNDcuMC4wLjA](https://witness.lcms.org/2025/most-righteous-god-most-kind-father/?_gl=1*mrvdws*_ga*MTMzMTQxNzkwNS4xNzQzMzY2OTM2*_ga_Z0184DBP2L*MTc0NDE0ODI0Ny4xMS4wLjE3NDQxNDgyNDcuMC4wLjA).

\*Quote from the Formula of Concord, Article II, Paragraph 10.