



April 9, 2023

## Christ the Lord is risen!!! He lives!! What about you?

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Today, as on every Sunday, in 150 congregations around the Conference, we celebrate the resurrection. Today, as on every Sunday, we claim the promise of eternal life and we do it in the face of senseless death—the kind of death we try to come to terms with on Good Friday. Our Easters still happen in the face of senseless death-- gun violence death, natural disaster death, war in Ukraine death.

We do not know what resurrection will mean for us in the end but *there is resurrection*. We cannot know how it will feel or work or look. But we do have evidence it is so. God has woven resurrection into our daily lives so that we can learn the shape of it and perhaps learn to trust the strength of it when our own times come.

I am thinking of a friend of mine, a factory worker, who was fired from his job six months short of his retirement after twenty-five years. It was a nasty piece of work on the part of his superiors. They wanted to punish him for challenging them, and to make him an example for anyone else thinking about trying the same thing. They called it early retirement and gave him a party he suffered through. “I've been to my own funeral,” he said weeks later, recounting the pain of it. “I lost my livelihood, my pride and what little legacy I could have offered the world through my work. But you know what? There really is life after death. I'm doing things I always wanted to do but never had time. I'm spending time with my wife. I'm finding energy I thought I had lost forever. Getting fired turned out better than I thought.”

I am thinking about the young man I met several months ago who was four months into recovery after a lifetime of addiction and seeing the world as though he had just woken up after an endless nightmare terrified that he might fall back to sleep and praying to God to hang onto a new birth freedom.

I am thinking about a conversation many Sundays ago with lay leaders at one of our congregations who said, “We were a dying church but we’ve come alive again.”

These are not resurrection stories. Nobody really knows about that but God and Jesus. And yet they are true stories about the raising of the dead—people who are laid low and by all rights should never rise again who suddenly sit up in their ashes, brush themselves off, and go on to live more than they ever lived before.

It is entirely unnatural. And that is how God works—not by protecting us from death but by bringing us back to life again—because life, not death, is God's will for us. Every moment of our lives carries the seeds of that truth. Those who miss it have to be pitied. And those who believe? Our hope never dies. Thanks be God!!

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- Rev. William P. Worley,  
PSE Conference Minister



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**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference  
of the United Church of Christ**



**Friday, June 2—Saturday, June 3**  
**@ West Chester University**  
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