***The Mission Central Meyer Minute***

The heart of the Gospel is not mission and evangelism. Not at all! The heart of the Gospel is all that Jesus has done, is doing now, and will do for you, for me through all eternity. Do some of our congregations and church members shrug off mission and evangelism? Yes, I think we would agree. I’m convinced that lack of mission zeal comes from taking for granted how desperately we ourselves need Jesus.

This Easter season is a great time to “shake off dull sloth and joyful rise,” as one hymn puts it (*Lutheran Service Book,* 868:1). Waking up to mission is waking up to what Easter means. Our future is body and soul in heaven with all the saints before our God and Savior. “Jesus lives! And now is death / But the gate of life immortal; / This shall calm my trembling breath / When I pass its gloomy portal. / Faith shall cry, as fails each sense: Jesus is my confidence!” (*Lutheran Service Book,* 490:5).

That’s not how many people see it. From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: **“Helping People to Have ‘A Good Death.’”** Subtitle: “Death doulas help St. Louisans navigate the other end of the life cycle.” Doula? It’s a midwife, not for birth but for dying. Wait a minute! Our churches are declining and lethargic, even though we have a message of confidence in the face of death because of Jesus’ resurrection?

“An ongoing joke between Suzy and Jeff Hutson of Wildwood had been that Jeff wanted his ashes flown to Scotland, his ancestral home, and scattered on the floor of a bar, ‘so he could soak up the Scotch,’ said his wife. Other than that, the couple didn’t broach the topic. After Jeff was diagnosed with cancer in 2021 – and in the ensuing year of chemotherapy, radiation, and debilitating side effects – the Hutsons never discussed what was looming.” (Post-Dispatch, October 4, 2023; A1, 6)

What an opportunity we have in our personal conversations and support for mission to let people know that “death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54; Isaiah 25:8). The church, in my opinion, tends to look back. We meditate on the saving acts God has done for us in Jesus back in Bible days. That looking back is essential, it’s how our salvation was won, but the Gospel is not a museum. Have you been to the barn at Mission Central? The barn is about telling people about the future God has for them, for us all, “the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:9). In Jesus there is life after this life. Death is “but the gate of life immortal.” Easter energy!