

8 April 2023
Great Vigil of Easter

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

Jesu Juva

“Our Hope and Joy This Night”

All good things must come to an end. That’s what they say anyway. And there’s a reason that’s what they say. It’s what we see. It’s what we experience. It’s life in this world, because we live in a sinful world, and sin brings all good things to an end. You know it. Good things in your life have ended, and if they haven’t yet, you know they will. Sometimes one good thing ends and we move onto something else good. But sometimes a good thing ends and nothing replaces it; or, something not good does. Good health ends with disease. A good marriage is ended by death. A good friendship ends in division. A good life ends in death. Those are moments we dread, even as we know they’re coming.

That’s the dread those women felt as they went to the tomb very early in the morning, on the first day of the week. A good life had ended in death. Their hopes had ended. A young man, an angel, robed in white told them otherwise, but how could they believe that? They know what they saw. They knew *all good things must come to an end.*

But actually . . . that morning, and that empty tomb, say *not so fast!* For with Jesus’ resurrection, there is now a life that will never come to an end. A life that had come to an end, broke the end! That there be no end. The sin that had brought a good and perfect creation to an end, plunging it into sin, had been atoned for. The death that robs us of life has come to its end with Jesus’ resurrection to life. And the dominion of the devil and hell which want to bring all good things, all the things of God, to an end, is itself brought to an end. There is one good thing that will not and cannot come to an end - Jesus! But that one thing, one person, one victory, *is all we need.*

So as we heard tonight . . .

A world created good will be re-created and be good again, in Jesus.

A world flooded by sin is washed in the flood of Jesus’ blood to be good again.

The son of Abraham not named Isaac, but named Jesus, would be sacrificed for us, that God’s promise live on and not die.

We who are slaves to sin are brought out of our slavery to freedom through the waters of Baptism, in Jesus.

This goodness and salvation is offered freely and abundantly to all people, in Jesus.

This goodness and forgiveness is for all, even the worst of the worst, in Jesus.

And not even the fiery furnace of hell can bring to an end those in Christ Jesus.

And as baptized children of God, as we remembered tonight, all that is yours. All good

things do not come to an end, in Jesus. That is our hope this night. That is our joy this night. Thanks be to God!