

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobonier, Illinois
Easter 2A
April 12, 2026
1 Peter 1:3-9; 2:2-3

Like Newborn Infants

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation- 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Peter 2:2-3 ESV)

Dearly Beloved in Christ, the only Savior of the world:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia.

The antiphon for today's Introit sounds the theme for the day, "Like newborn infants." It's fitting since this would have been the first Sunday a pastor would be speaking to the new Christians who had just been baptized and brought into the church at Easter. In the old days, catechumens would have received intense instruction during the time leading up to Easter. At the Vigil on Easter Eve they would be baptized, and on Easter morning they would partake of the Lord's Supper for the first time. In that context, it was quite appropriate for them to hear these words the next Sunday: "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good."

The new Christians are encouraged to grow up in their salvation. They have just been given the new birth in baptism. They have just tasted for the first time the goodness of the Lord at His Table. Now they are encouraged to grow – like the newborn Christians they are – to long for the pure milk of God's Word, and so grow up in Christ.

Indeed, the entire epistle of 1 Peter reads like a pastoral letter to the newly baptized. In fact, some think that may well have been its original purpose: an encouragement to grow for those who have been given the new birth in Holy Baptism. To be sure, the Epistle reading for today, sounds that note: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

"God has caused us to be born again." "Like newborn infants." This is certainly baptismal language. After all, Jesus speaks this way to Nicodemus: "unless one is born again he cannot see

the kingdom of God. . . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5). Paul, writing to Titus, says that God saved us “by the washing of regeneration [or rebirth] and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” (Titus 3:5). Baptism is that new birth, the washing of water with the Word done by the Holy Spirit. Baptism washes away our sins. It gives us new life, the always-being-renewed life the Spirit works through the Word. It makes us children of the heavenly Father and joins us to the life of Christ.

Peter says all this at the start of his epistle. “According to his great mercy” God has given us new birth. We didn’t earn it. We didn’t deserve it. God gave it, as a gift. As little as a baby decides to be born, so little do we decide to be born again. It’s all God’s work.

And this new birth is “to a living hope.” Before we had no hope. Our lives were hopeless. We had no future to look forward to, only death and the grave. Our sins had wiped out any hope for the future. All that remained was the grim prospect of an eternity spent under God’s judgment.

But now we have been given a new birth, and it is a birth into hope. A living hope. A life of hope. The hope of the life to come. An always-alive hope, never flickering out. A lively hope, enlivening our days, quickening our steps, lifting our hearts. This is the living hope we have.

And note that this living hope is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Easter hope. Resurrection hope. Jesus hope. Our new birth into hope is through the resurrection of Christ. If Christ had not been raised, we would have no hope. But now has Christ arisen. He is risen from the dead. Proof that God has accepted His death as the sacrifice for our sins. Proof that all has been paid for by His death on the cross, in our place. Sin has been atoned for. Death has been defeated, once and for all. Christ is risen, and He is the sure hope of our resurrection. Because He lives, we shall live also.

Our baptism joined us to Jesus in His death and resurrection. Baptism is our tomb and our womb. “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4). Sin and death—buried with Christ in that watery tomb. Life and hope emerge from the waters, now that we’re connected to Christ. That’s what you’ve been given in baptism. Thus, we are Easter people, new-life people, living-hope people. We Christians crave the pure spiritual milk of God’s Word, and we receive the life of Christ in the sacraments.

God has given us new birth to a living hope and “to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” There is no probate court where this

inheritance will come into dispute. Your inheritance cannot be challenged. There is no death tax or estate tax on this inheritance. It's being kept safe for you, in heaven.

And even more, you are being kept safe in preparation for that day – you, “who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” You have this inheritance waiting for you. You all are co-heirs with Christ. His inheritance is yours. You have God as your Father. You have the rights of sons. You will inherit the riches of heaven. All this is yours, baptized believers in Christ.

This is the new birth you have been given. New birth to a living hope. New birth to an inheritance in heaven. Now, Peter tells us, as newborn infants in Christ, “long for the pure spiritual milk.”

But what is this milk? It’s the pure milk appropriate for newborns. And, since we were born again through the Word of God, that is the milk that’s suitable for us – God’s Word. His gospel Word, which not only gave us birth, is also the milk that nourishes us. The Word of God is that “pure spiritual milk.” And so preaching, teaching, and the sacraments are the means, this is the milk, we need in order to live and flourish. The good news of the mercy of our God is the refreshing milk that builds us up in the faith, growing us into strong Christians.

Some years ago, the milk industry ran ads on TV that would open with a kid, maybe 10 or 12 years old, saying, “Now I may be short and scrawny, but I’m drinking my milk, and in a few short years. . . .” Then you would see the same kid at about the age of 18 or 20, tall and strong and healthy. And the tag-line at the end would say, “Milk: It Does a Body Good.”

Well, the milk of God’s Word will certainly do your body good, as well as your soul. With this milk, your soul will grow strong in the faith, and your body will receive the one thing it needs to have eternal health and salvation. And that is very good indeed.

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” The milk of God’s Word is what we need to grow up as strong and healthy Christians. Not that we will ever grow out of longing for it. No, we always will have that eager desire. But with that milk, constantly being nourished on God’s Word, we will grow strong and healthy in our faith. Our lives as Christians will be enriched and strengthened in every way.

Oh, how we need the Word and the sacraments – constantly, regularly – to keep us alive and healthy in our Christian faith and life! So, beloved, long for the milk! Long for God’s Word!

Eagerly desire it, and earnestly crave the pure milk of God's Word. Don't let anything stop you. Run after it. Seek it out. Your pastor is here to give it to you. Go for it! Go to Bible class! Go to the services of God's house! Discover the riches in the liturgy. Listen carefully to the sermons. Take God's Word to heart, and let it reshape your life. Run to this altar! Be refreshed here in the Lord's Supper, and taste that the Lord is good. Be strengthened in faith toward God and in fervent love toward one another. This kind of hunger and thirst is the healthiest craving you will ever have. So yes, milk does do a body good. The pure milk of God's word will do this body, this congregation, more good than anything else you can imagine.

God grant that we all crave the pure milk of His Word and come to His House as often as we can so that we will indeed grow up into Christ and receive our inheritance.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener