

LutherFacts #12



Martin Luther and his namesake college in Iowa share the fact that each has embraced the Easter egg hunt. Luther College, located in Decorah, hosts a Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt. Students gather at 9:00 PM and, using flashlights, seek out the colored and decorated eggs—an unusual twist on an otherwise common event. Back in the 16th century, Luther himself was equally enthusiastic about looking for Easter eggs. According to Lizette Larson-Miller, a professor at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, the custom of sponsoring such events among Protestants grew during the Reformation period: "We know that Martin Luther had Easter egg hunts where the men hid the eggs for the women and children, and it probably has this connection back to this idea of eggs being the [empty] tomb." Medieval Christianity had strict fasting rules during Lent. As a result, there was usually an abundance of eggs by Easter Morn. Their ready availability along with colorful dyes led to the ritual in which finding the eggs simulated opening the tomb to discover the "good news" of the risen Christ. As a parent himself, Luther worked to expand this old tradition.