

# GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

## APRIL 2019

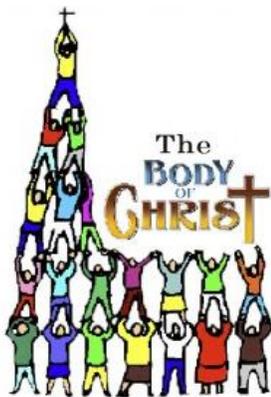


*"Loving, Sharing, Serving  
Jesus with you."*

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
1237 E. Coolspring Ave.  
Michigan City, IN 46360  
(219) 872-4419

Email:  
[immanuel.lutheran1237@  
gmail.com](mailto:immanuel.lutheran1237@gmail.com)

Website:  
[www.immanuelmc.com](http://www.immanuelmc.com)



## Life in the Body of Christ

As Immanuel continues to face the same kind of problems most churches are facing across our country – declining attendance and giving – it leaves those who are left in church struggling for answers. What has happened? What can we do?

If we only find new ways to raise funds to pay our bills and make cuts to the ministry (which would mean less giving to the poor, helping missions, serving our community, and Gospel fellowship for our members – God forbid any of these lessen!), then we are just putting a band-aid on a severed limb. We will hold out for a while, maybe for another generation, and then close our doors like so many churches already have.

We need to have a complete change in our mindset. We need to change our way of thinking about the world around us and about the way we live. This will not be easy, but with the Holy Spirit's regeneration in us through the Word, it is very possible. Christ can turn all things around for good and make us stronger as a church than ever before. If I didn't believe that, then I shouldn't be a pastor.

First, we need to change the way we see the culture in which we live in the United States. We do not currently live in a Christian country. "Wait Pastor, didn't a 2015 poll say that 75% of Americans identify as Christians?" you might ask. My response: this statistic does not say 75% of Americans *are* Christians. If 75% were actually Christians, then churches in this country would be thriving like we've never seen before (yes, even better than the good old days). "Well, they are Christian, they just don't see church as relevant or don't have time for it anymore," you might respond. I answer: Then are they actually Christian? How can the hand say that it

doesn't need the rest of the body? If a hand has severed itself, it ceases to be a part of the body. If you separate yourself from the body of Christ, you separate yourself from Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12). Or, put another way, if you want Christ without His church, then you want a severed head. But Christ will not be separated from His body.

Furthermore, if Americans were a Christian majority, then there wouldn't be such a divide between rich and poor, prisons wouldn't be bursting at the seams, white nationalism wouldn't exist, broken families wouldn't predominate, adultery and sexual immorality wouldn't be rampant, television wouldn't be so pornographic, we wouldn't be redefining marriage, and states wouldn't be expanding laws to kill infants in the womb. These things wouldn't be an issue at all.

"Christianity" is just a word. Anyone is free to use it. But not everyone is *freed* to live it. Many people call themselves Christians and, at the same time, choose to live in bondage to sin and against Christ's Word. Sadly, not everyone who says "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21).

What can we do about this? We could learn from the early Christian Church. (*Take a look at the March 2019 Lutheran Witness to read a lot more about this topic*). The early Christian Church was not usually persecuted just because they worshipped Jesus Christ. It was because they lived lives which were different from the dominate culture around them and that made them suspect. They were outsiders. They wouldn't take part in everyday Roman life: attending gladiator contests

*(continued on pg.2)*

# Life in the Body of Christ

*(continued from pg.1)*

and theater (which included graphic and pornographic content), honoring the emperor like a god, sexual conquests, drunkenness, gambling, and other parts of Roman culture. Had they simply called themselves "Christian" and added Christ to the average Roman way of life, they would have been accepted. Did that mean they separated themselves from the world like monks in the desert? Not in early Christianity. They kept their homes and jobs and families. Were they big rabble rousers, making a lot of noise to show how different they were? No. They lived quiet, peaceable lives. But out of love for Christ and love for their neighbor – to show Christ to the world – they did not blend in to the culture. They devoted themselves to the worship of Christ and followed His commandments, even when it made them social outsiders. And they were willing to suffer all to keep this life which Christ had given them.

I believe now more than ever, we need to consciously live and raise our kids and grandkids to be cultural outsiders and uniquely Christian. I'm not saying that we live in a bubble or ignorant about the world around us. We need to know the culture, but not live it. We need to interact with the world, but not be of it. We should be known by the world for our devotion to Christ's commandments and His Church, generosity toward the needy, compassion for sinners, purity of life, chastity, and our separation from all that is wrong in the culture.

Guess what? That countercultural attitude of the early church was popular! The church grew by leaps and bounds, even though the world rejected it. People were attracted by their devoted, loving lives and unique message. You can see this countercultural attitude still working in Africa, where Christianity thrives amid pagans and Muslims, even though it is persecuted. Millions and millions of Christians there walk for miles, past their unbelieving neighbors, singing songs joyfully on their way to church every week.

Is this possible among us? Sure it is! God has called you to be His peculiar people in baptism. You have been called into the body of Christ and have access to His gifts of forgiveness and new life. Repent, start anew, and witness the work of the Holy Spirit in your lives! You cannot be a dead, severed limb when you are connected to Christ's Word and Sacraments. You will be part of the powerful, eternal, life-giving body of Christ. Together in Christ, we can thrive!

*Pastor*



JOIN US FOR  
MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICES  
DURING THE LENTEN SEASON.  
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:00 PM  
Come early for supper at 5:30 PM

## SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES



### **PALM/PASSION WEEKEND**

Saturday, April 13, Worship at 6:00 PM

Sunday, April 14, Worship at 10:00 AM

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

Thursday, April 18, Worship at 7:00 PM

### **GOOD FRIDAY**

Friday, April 19, Worship at 7:00 PM

### **EASTER VIGIL**

Saturday, April 20, Vigil of Easter Service  
at 6:00 PM

### **THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD**

#### **- EASTER DAY**

Sunday, April 21

Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM

Easter Breakfast at 8:00 AM

Sunday School & Bible Classes at 8:45 AM

Easter Festival Service at 10:00 AM



**DID YOU KNOW THAT WE COLLECT RECYCLABLE ITEMS LIKE:** aluminum cans (pop cans, tuna cans, etc.), vehicle batteries (cars, trucks), copper, aluminum scrap, brass and other recyclable materials? ALL PROCEEDS stay at Immanuel to help support our church.



Please see Noel Schlegelmilch for more information. Any recyclable donations can be placed in the shed door on the west side of the parking lot.

## **FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE . . .**

"Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out" (Deut 28:3-6).

This is God's promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make their fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground or their wombs, their flocks or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there's a catch. He would do this for Israel only "if you obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Deut 28:2b). If they did that, He would cause that "all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you" (Deut 28:2a).

If they didn't obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn't keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in His ways (Deut 28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh, fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit; died for us – in our place and for our benefit; and is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit.

By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon His work and not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and thereby it becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.

For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is not in order to receive blessings but because in Christ we already have.

It is with this in mind that we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).

- LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter, April 2019



## **Prayers in Times of Grief**

The power of prayer is undeniable to those who pray on a regular basis. Prayers are especially important in times of grief. The loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult things to endure. Everyone handles their grief differently, but one thing all grieving people have in common is their need for support through our love and prayers. Without God and encouragement, a loss can be even more difficult and painful to endure. Never underestimate what our prayers can do for those who are grieving.

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelations 21:4)

Let us also remember to pray for the precious ones on our weekly and on-going prayer lists who are especially in need of His comfort and/or intervention, and still wait for their prayers to be fully answered. We include their caregivers and families, as the suffering of each individual affects many. Please contact Jaime Caldwell at [jaimecaldwell127@gmail.com](mailto:jaimecaldwell127@gmail.com) or (219) 229-4590, or the church office at [immanuelutheran1237@gmail.com](mailto:immanuelutheran1237@gmail.com) or 872-4419 for updates or suggestions, or to join the prayer chain. Let us pray for others as we would like them to pray for us when we are in need.

**--Jaime Caldwell for the Prayer Chain**

## **MEMBER OF THE MONTH** **Presented by** **the Assimilation Committee**



Each month in the *Gabriel's Gazette*, the Assimilation Committee will feature families of our congregation. Featured will be new and established Immanuel families who will share general information about themselves. We hope that this will give you the opportunity for fellowship and allow new friendships to develop along with new growth.

**However**, in order to be able to share these articles with you, we need to receive the information from the members! If you have received a *Member of the Month* questionnaire, please complete it and return it to the Assimilation Committee. If you would like to receive a questionnaire or need a replacement form, please contact Lori Dobkins or Anita Henn.



## Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School

Newsletter

April 2019

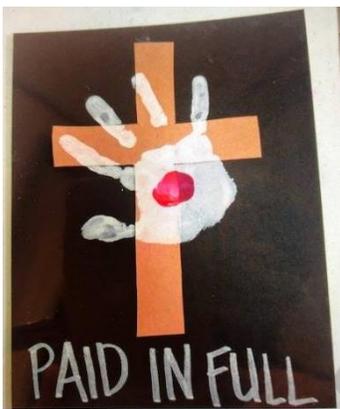
**THE WAY OF THE CROSS** will be presented on Palm Sunday, April 14. Plan to have your children in Sunday School that day for sure! It will be a memorable presentation of the last week in the life of Jesus!



**Eleven students had Perfect Attendance in February.**  
*Great Job, students!*

### SHARE THE GOSPEL STORY!

I have an Easter idea for a family-sharing-your-faith project. We all know someone or some family that does not go to church or doesn't know about Jesus. On a piece of construction paper or a sheet of any kind of paper, have your child cut out about 2"-wide paper strips in the shape of a cross. Glue them onto a different color paper. Then paint your child's hand with an acrylic paint and have them put their hand print over the center of the cross (to represent Jesus' hand). When the handprint is dry, paint (or use a red marker) a red nail mark in the center of the painted palm print. At the bottom, use a



marker and write "PAID IN FULL". "JESUS DIED FOR YOU! HAPPY EASTER!". Then, give this to the family or person you have chosen, or put this in a bag and attach it to someone's door handle. In fact, why not make more than one.

For those children who have finished this Gospel-sharing project, and during our Sunday School opening share with us how you distributed the message, we will put your name in for a drawing for a special gift!! This must be finished by April 28.

**BLESSED EASTER!**

-- **Lynette Johnston-Martin**  
**Superintendent**



## Easter Egg Hunt

is

**Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**at 9:30 a.m.**

at Creek Ridge County Park  
on County Road 400 North

**For ages 0 – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
Bring your friends!

***Come out and enjoy the  
fellowship and fun!***



Our annual **EASTER BREAKFAST** will be served immediately following the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 21, and will end at 9:45 a.m. All the food for this meal, the set-up, and the clean-up are provided by you, the congregation. So, please let us know how you can help this year.

Items needed: egg casseroles (*already baked*), fruit platters (*washed, cut, and ready to serve*), sweet breads and muffins (*sliced and ready to serve*), colored hard-boiled eggs, cash donations, juice/milk, kitchen help, set-up before, and clean-up after.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, contact the church office, or Lori Dobkins. Thank you for your help again this year in making our Easter Breakfast possible.





**LWML ZONE RALLY**  
**April 30, 5:30**

*Hosted by LWML, here at Immanuel,  
Light supper provided*

**All ladies from Immanuel are invited** to join us in this special event to support Ascension Lutheran Christian School in Gary. Pastor Albers, Principal, will be speaking about this fledgling outreach to the community of Gary. To support this ministry, we will be collecting the following supplies for the school:

**Classroom/lunchroom supplies:**

tissues, napkins, plastic ware, straws, stiff paper plates, puzzles & games for indoor play & any learning games, cute stickers, religious stickers.  
Ages Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**DOJO Rewards:**

Kids receive rewards for behavior, work, etc. and redeem them for prizes such as light up glitter balls, soft baseballs, coloring books/crayons, color pencils, small cars, planes, trucks, backpacks, pencil boxes, paint by number craft, flashlights, puzzles, games, small plush animals, dolls, etc.  
Ages Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Office supplies:**

paper (letter-size copy), clear tape, masking tape, staples, paper clips, pencils, pens.

**Many of these items can be purchased at the Dollar Store.**

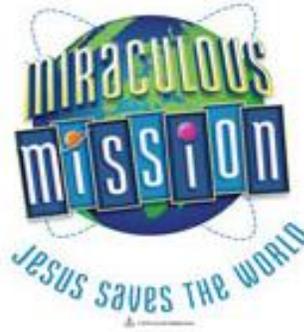


**ZONE 6 OF THE INDIANA LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE** is

sponsoring a **MAYFEST** on

**Saturday, May 4, 2019, 2-5 p.m.** at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Knox, IN. Planned activities include a puppet show, musicians, food & craft booths (items for purchase), a "pastor's corner" where visitors can ask questions of a pastor, and an information table for Zone 6 LLL group activities. The afternoon will conclude with outdoor worship at 5:00 led by Pastor Eric Gawura of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. Admission for the *MayFest* is an item of non-perishable food for Our Redeemer's food bank.

*Ladies Aid is looking for crafts to sell at this event. Please see any member of Ladies Aid if you can supply crafts!*



**IMMANUEL'S VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
**JULY 8 - 12**

**Lift off for an intergalactic adventure at**

**MIRACULOUS MISSION:  
JESUS SAVES THE WORLD**

Students learn about God's plan of salvation from creation to cross and how the stars have been an ever-present part of the salvation story.

Registration will begin in May for children ages 4-11 (or just finished 5<sup>th</sup> grade).



There will be a **VBS General Information Meeting on Thurs., April 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**, for all

those interested in finding out where their time and talents can best be used to assist Immanuel's Vacation Bible School ministry – during the planning stages, during VBS week, or during the follow-up time after it's over.

Stop by the VBS table in the Gathering Place for more information.



**PLEASE NOTE:**

The deadline to submit items for the May Gazette is Monday, April 1. *(No fooling!)*

