

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

AUGUST 2020



Gathering in Christ



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

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I've been thinking a lot about the benefits of in-person gathering, especially with regard to the weekly Divine Service. I've had the bizarre experience conducting the Divine Service in which the vast majority of those "present" I couldn't see or hear. And recently I've experienced the other side of things, when my family worshipped through a streamed service.

Here are a few thoughts I have about it:

On the positive side, we should be very grateful for such a resource which gives us God's Word when we must be at home. And we can acknowledge that wherever God's Word is preached, there is the Holy Spirit strengthening faith in us. Thanks be to God! God isn't bound by sanctuary walls and knows how to infiltrate hearts with the Gospel wherever they are.

But there are also some serious drawbacks. The first is the convenience of it. Now, you'd think that would be a positive thing. Isn't it good that we can have God's Word whenever we want it and even in the comfort of our own homes? Yes and no. It's always good to have God's Word, but we mustn't treat it with such little honor that we only have it when and how we want it. Attending the Divine Service in person requires planning, effort, and dedication. You have to put everything else aside, rest from your work, sacrifice the things you would rather do or what you think you need to do. You have to set your alarms, wake your families, get dressed, and go. This routine trains you to love God above all things. Sitting on the couch in PJs with your coffee in one hand and watching a service on TV will hardly teach you what Christ meant by "Take up your cross and follow me."

Nowadays, attending also takes a new kind of dedication, one that acknowledges

there is some risk even to one's health in attending. In attending, one has to overcome one's fear of sickness and death, recognizing that God's gifts in the Divine Service are our salvation from death. This is something with which we've had no experience, though in other countries, people risk their lives every week to attend worship. One has to acknowledge that the gifts of Christ are worth more than one's own life, hence, "take up your cross."

I am not saying that in every circumstance one must attend the weekly Divine Service in person, but the reason for not attending should be one of love and not selfishness. For example, we still need law enforcement and medical workers to serve us on Sundays. Or, a person who is sick should stay home in order to prevent the spread of disease. Or, you might keep a loved one home who is undergoing chemotherapy and is severely compromised in health. But we must weigh the risk carefully with the benefits of attending.

Another challenge in worshipping via streamed service is the difficulty of having the same kind of reverence and solemnity which one has in the sanctuary of a church. God is still present, but how much do our hearts really acknowledge it? It's hard to fear the Lord while in the cushy, casual setting of our living rooms. You can wear whatever you want, have unrelated conversations, and push pause when you want a break. The Divine Service can easily become something to observe, almost entertainment, rather than a participation with the body of Christ in receiving the gifts of God's salvation.

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Gathering in Christ

(continued from pg. 1)

For the sake of brevity, I will stop here and share some more thoughts in next month's article, but here are a few tips for those still unable to attend our services in person:

- Set a weekly dedicated time for watching the service and prioritize it above anything else that comes up.
- Dress appropriately like you are going to church.
- Stand and sit with the congregation.
- Sing and speak all the congregational parts. You can still pick up a bulletin at church Saturdays between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. and we can help you purchase a hymnal if you need one.
- Silence your phones and remove any distractions.
- Make an appointment with me once a month to bring communion to you.

May God give you the wisdom, strength, and comfort of His Spirit to navigate these difficult times.

Pastor

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07-20-2015

FIRST OFF, I'M HAPPY TO SEE THAT SO MANY OF YOU ARE ENJOYING THE NEW STREAMING OF OUR SERVICES ONLINE ...

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE ...



Winston Churchill reportedly said, "we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." According to Churchill then, our lives are defined less by what we have gotten and more by what we give away.

Our Lord's life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God's Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserve because of sin. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. So it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got us for Himself, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the worries of this world and making a living. For when we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get.

That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives – our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking "How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?" to "What have they done for me lately?" We become more selfish instead of selfless.

But, when we give, we do not have less, and we do not become less. We have more and become more. Because when we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus, we are participating in the divine nature. As Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

- LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter Article / August 2020



Shepherds & Lambs The Sunday School Newsletter August 2020

School is fast approaching! Things may be a little different this year for your children. Our Summer Sunday School has been different also. We have finished two months of on-line lessons and now for August, we would like to try a different approach. Last month, I outlined the plan for August lessons. We will start a Family Bible Study from 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. on Sunday. Families will choose a table where they can sit together.



This gives us some safety in social distancing at family tables. Our Sunday School teachers will present the lesson for about 15 minutes to the children and adults. Then after the lesson, children will finish their workbook and/or additional paperwork supplied with the lesson. While the children are finishing their work, Pastor will lead an adult discussion on the same lesson that the children had. We think it will be a GREAT introduction to getting back to a somewhat more normal Sunday School looking toward September. We hope to see you ALL there August 2.



A Rally Back to Sunday School and Adult Bible Class Day will be August 30. Children will receive their recognition awards during the Sunday School hour. Our two 3rd grade students

will be presented their own Bibles during the 10 AM service. After the service, we'll have a congregational, social-distance meal together. We also would like to include the celebration of the completion of the Courtyard. Put the date on your calendar! More details will be in the bulletin and the September Gazette.

I recently witnessed a family with young children of various ages that were misbehaving and the parent didn't seem to have much control. Having had 5 children myself, and I'm sure that at times I fit into that category, I really wanted to offer my Grandmotherly two cents. But I didn't! I have in the past relayed parenting articles that I thought would help you through some of these tough parenting times, so I won't repeat those. BUT, I did see an article that if handled early, some out-of-control events need not happen. Setting boundaries with even very young children, letting

the children know what to expect from their behavior, can help with successful parenting. So in the next couple of months, I'll address *5 Bad Kid Behavior Issues That You Need to Break Early!*

Kids can develop bad habits early. Engaging those habits with consistent correction and guidance can be tiring. It can take thought and energy that can wear parents out.

However, if left unchecked, they can grow into major problems down the line. It is important to engage the problem now in order to save them and us from more intense pain in the future. Here is the first bad kid behavioral issue that you need to break early.

1. **LYING:** This leads to a life of secrecy. Growth and maturity come when we deal honestly with our mistakes and shortcomings. We learn responsibility by owning it. Others see us as dependable, faithful and authentic. Trust is built leading to healthy relationships. Lying has the opposite effect. Distrust and immaturity take root. In your house, this offense should have the steepest consequence because it, more than anything, causes relational separation in the family.

These very helpful parenting articles come from a web site called ALLPRODAD.COM and IMOM.COM. The Parent site is FAMILY FIRST which is a Christian-based company, so your articles will be based on their view of Biblical parenting. Materials are free and you're not bombarded with lots of e-mails. It's great to save the ones I think would help for a time when I need them. Check them out and sign up! Every little bit helps you become a better parent or even grandparent!! I hope you find these helpful!!

So, put August 2 on your calendars for our first Family Bible Study. We hope to see you all there! We have plenty of tables, so let's fill them up!! See you then!



Enjoy the rest of the summer!

**Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent**

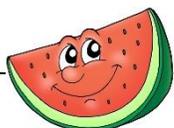
Courtyard Dedication *Sunday, August 30*

Immanuel's Memorial Courtyard is nearing completion! We are grateful for the many hands that have helped along the way, but a very special thanks to Jeff Johnston for our beautiful paver cross and to Bob Solum and Chris Ibbetson for building the deck upon which we hope to have many social gatherings. And a big thanks to all who donated toward the cost of materials through memorial funds, gifts, and engraved bricks.

There are more spaces for engraved bricks, which are \$40 apiece. We will continue to collect new orders for more bricks, and we will place new orders periodically. Please use the order form, available at the office or from Janet Solum, and write a check to Immanuel specifying "courtyard bricks" on your check.

Remember, a garden is never "finished." It is planted and nurtured and evolves over time. Help will always be needed to weed and water and mow, and contributions are always welcome for adding new things. For example, we would like to invest in some permanent outdoor tables and chairs. Donations are always gratefully accepted.

After the worship service on Sunday, August 30, in conjunction with Rally Day, we will be dedicating our new courtyard. It will be a special time to give thanks to God, gather in our beautiful courtyard, and find our loved ones' names on the many bricks that edge the cross. We have a little artistic surprise to install at that time which will put the finishing touch on the cross. We will have hot dogs/hamburgers and drinks for lunch, but due to the pandemic, no side dishes or desserts, so bring your own if desired.



PLEASE NOTE: The deadline to submit items for the September *Gazette* is Monday, August 3.

Donation Guidelines

Immanuel has received many donations from our generous church members, but some have needed to be repaired or were unusable. We welcome donations but feel that some guidelines might be helpful.

1. Please speak to a trustee about donating any large item to see if it is needed before bringing it to the church.
2. Please make sure that the item you are donating is in working condition. This year several snow blowers and 2 lawn mowers appeared at church, none of which was operational.
3. There will not likely be any "garage sales" in the near future at Immanuel, so please do not store these kinds of items at the church.
4. When donating any fabric for our quilters, check with one of ladies involved to make sure the type of material you are donating can be used for that purpose.
5. When donating food for our pantry, please check the expiration date and do not leave food that is past that date.
6. When donating aluminum cans or scrap metal to the shed in the parking lot, please do not leave a bag of trash for someone else to sort through. Also, do not leave other kinds of donated items, such as clothes or household goods. This collection area is only for aluminum cans.
7. Please do not leave toy donations in the nursery. There are many toys there already, and multiples of the same kinds of things. It makes a lot to tidy up when the kids leave!

Thank you! We appreciate your generosity and also your help in following these guidelines.

--Bob Solum,
Trustee

The Provider

*At dawning, Christ is with me
As I begin my day.
Through all life's trials He'll lead me
However rough the way.
At midday, He is present,
No matter where I am,
He's the kind Shepherd, watching
Over His straying lamb.
And in the hush of twilight
When blooms and leaves are still,
When birds, to nest have taken
And the sun's beyond the hill,
I walk the garden pathways
As drowsy night draws nigh;
Alone, it seems to others,
Yet not alone am I.
For with me walks the Savior,
I feel His presence near,
Assuring with His promise
To free my heart from fear.
No human friend or loved one,
However close they be,
Provides the peace and solace
That Jesus does for me.*

--Alice J. Christianson

from *He Will Light the Way*
A Salesian Missions Publication

"I call to God most high, to God who provides for me."

--Psalm 57:3

YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE!



**American
RedCross**

**The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.**

**** Discover Your Antibody Test Status
When You Give Blood ****

For a limited time, the American Red Cross will test all blood, platelet, and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies as an additional health service to our donors.

BLOOD DRIVE

Thursday, August 13

3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

By appointment ONLY!
(*Walk-ins will be turned away.*)

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
1237 E. Coolspring Ave. – Michigan City

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS or go to
redcrossblood.org to schedule your
blood donation appointment.

