

# GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

## FEBRUARY 2021



*"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)



## Living in the Balance

Have you ever noticed that whenever you drive, everyone else is either going too fast or too slow? And no matter how fast you are going, everyone else is an idiot!

Or have you ever noticed that you (and perhaps a few of your friends who agree with you) are one of the only people politically in the center? All others are either right or left-wing extremists!

And perhaps you've noticed that you are one of the few people who has just the right amount of reason and caution during the pandemic? Everyone else is either careless or living in fear!

Ah...to be in the middle! It is such a comfortable place. You can never be wrong or corrected. You are never off balance. And you are in the perfect place to judge everyone else.

That is the point, isn't it? How easily we justify ourselves and judge others! We adjust the scale so that we are always in balance and everyone else is too light or heavy. That way we can be without sin. But God knows our hearts. He knows we are not in balance with His law. A far cry from the perfect middle, we deserve God's wrath.

"I will not live in fear!" you say. But sometimes that is an excuse to not care about offending your neighbors or protecting their health. "This is my freedom!" you say. Remember that you may be free, but you are also called by God to serve your neighbors and look after them. "I'm just being careful because I love my neighbor!" you say.

But this can easily be a coverup for living in fear. Everyone has certain tendencies, either to bravery or to caution, and we need both kinds of people in this world. But we should be awake to the reality that the devil knows our personalities too, and will tempt us to sin one way or another. There is a very fine line between living without fear and living foolishly, just as there is a fine line between living with care and being fearful. And from any position we can be terribly prideful and judgmental of others.

That's why we need each other as the church, to lovingly bring us back when we are falling more to one side or another. We need people with different personalities and tendencies to correct us and cause us to repent. You do not want everyone driving the exact same speed! That would cause more traffic problems. In the Church, we need people to be patient and understanding, quick to listen, and humble enough to be taught. Together we can help one another in love and show what unity is like to the world. Unity doesn't mean being the same; it means walking together with our different personalities and gifts and perspectives, but with the same faith in Christ Jesus.

For in Christ Jesus alone are you justified. You are made right by His blood and all wrongs are washed away. Let Christ alone be your righteousness and let His Spirit pull you away from sin and help you to show love and understanding toward your neighbor.

*Pastor*

**FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE . . .**



"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: "But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its

spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service. Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

*- LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter, February 2021*



**JOIN US FOR  
MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICES  
DURING THE LENTEN SEASON.  
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:00 PM  
BEGINNING ON ASH WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 17.**



*Thanks to all who served in leadership positions for our congregation during 2020. The offering you gave of your time and talents has been greatly appreciated by us all.*





# Shepherds & Lambs

## The Sunday School Newsletter

### February 2021

#### We hope you had a blessed Christmas!

We were disappointed not to have presented our Sunday School Christmas program. We hope that you had a chance to view our 4 past Christmas programs on YouTube with the links we have posted in our bulletins.



#### We were busy with helping others during this Christmas season.

The congregation participated with us in making shoe box Christmas gifts with Samaritan's Purse-Operation Christmas Child.

We had a great participation collecting personal items, school supplies, and a special toy or stuffed animal to send to children around the world. Thank You! Thank You!

We also had a needy family we sponsored, with the congregation's help. We outfitted 6 family members with clothing items, plus some household items. We thank you all for helping make this family's Christmas special!

#### We will continue with the 4<sup>th</sup> segment of the *Curbing Bad Kid Behaviors: Aggressive Behaviors.*

Intervene as soon as possible to prevent other children or animals from being hurt. There are many reasons for a child exhibiting aggressive behavior. It is important to find out the reason by observing and listening. Many times it is a coping mechanism in dealing with stress or feelings of insecurity. If the behavior is allowed or reinforced, it will continue. It is best to stop it immediately when it happens, remain calm, listen to the child, and enforce consistent non-physical consequences.



#### Mark on your calendar, ASH WEDNESDAY, February 17.

The Lenten season is a great time for your family to focus these 6 weeks before Holy Week on the gift of salvation God provided for us with the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Keep an eye out because we will be sending home with your children an activity to help them walk through and learn during these 6 weeks.

#### Deb Topolski will lead our Sunday School

in the winter absence of Superintendent, Lynette Johnston-Martin. Thanks, Deb.



#### Happy Valentine's Day!



-- Lynette Johnston-Martin  
Superintendent



#### PLEASE NOTE:

The deadline for submitting items for the March Gazette is **Monday, Feb. 1.**

Ash  
Wednesday  
February 17