

# GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

## OCTOBER 2021



### Reclaiming Halloween for the Church



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

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I thought I'd bring back and rework an article I wrote for the Gazette in October 2018:

Despite what many people think, Halloween comes from the church holiday, All Hallows' Eve, or the Eve of All Saints' Day. All Saints' Day was celebrated all the way back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and was called "All Martyrs and All Saints of the Christian Church." It was instituted to honor the saints who were otherwise not remembered on a particular day of the year, especially those who were martyred. We at Immanuel Lutheran Church celebrate this day on the first Sunday in November.

As was the case with Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, and many other holidays in the Church Year, the eve of the holiday was a time of great celebration. There were worship services, parties, parades, plays, and other festivities. In medieval times they went door to door performing little plays and songs, asking for alms for the poor. You can imagine that these celebrations led to some evening shenanigans!

Sometime in the late Reformation, though, there were certain Protestants who were afraid of and even called "pagan" anything that even appeared to be *Catholic*. Especially in America, people like the Puritans and other strict Protestants (who definitely would not like any kind of shenanigans!) shunned festivals like Halloween, which, along with statues, crucifixes, and processions, were seen to be corrupting. But other immigrants to America still brought their own traditions for this date. With all the folk traditions, the celebration of the dead combined with old superstitions, one can understand how eventually Halloween became what it is now.

Are there pagan or Satanic or immoral traditions in Halloween celebrations today? Most definitely. Just walk inside a Halloween store in Michigan City (please don't) and you would see pornographic costumes, Ouija boards, and items that glorify sin, death, and devil. At the very least this should mean that we Christians proceed with caution when celebrating Halloween. Some even may decide to refrain from the secular celebration of it in order to guard oneself from sin.

Can a Christian celebrate Halloween? Since it began as a Christian holiday, of course! Should we celebrate everything related to Halloween today? No! Fun and games, for Christians, celebrate the freedom Christ has given us from the fear of death and the devil and the oppression of sin. We can even laugh at the devil who is powerless against us and can no longer accuse us because of Christ's atoning sacrifice. But we are not ever to celebrate sin, for then we would return to the bondage of Satan. We should keep ourselves and our children from playing with the Satanic, for he remains a very real adversary. Consider the following questions to help you decide whether to celebrate or refrain from certain practices:

- Is it God-pleasing? Is it in accord with God's commandments?
- Could it scandalize those who are weaker in faith or mislead unbelievers?
- Is it a celebration of Christian freedom or does it give license to sin?
- Does it mock the devil or increase the fear of the devil?
- Does it give a good witness to Christ and His kingdom?

In the early and medieval Church, they dressed in costumes, held processions out

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## Reclaiming Halloween for the Church

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in the streets, and gave witness to their faith in their communities and invited them to join the festivities. What if we did the same today? Think of ways you can give witness to the Gospel this Halloween. Perhaps you can dress as a person or creature from the Bible or church history. You could give candy with a Bible verse and our church's information on it. You could carve religious themes into a pumpkin. Be creative! Let the light of Christ shine! The darkness cannot overwhelm it.

*Pastor*



### Thank you!

We wish to thank Hiedi Brooks and Sophie Koss for their willing response to serve as Altar Guild members. We look forward to working with you.

We also acknowledge and thank Allison Pope, Mallory Hoppe, and Grace Fulford who are learning Altar Guild duties by helping out their mothers and grandmothers. We see you as faithful future members.

Anyone who would like to serve our Lord in the work of the Altar Guild is encouraged to ask any member or attend our next meeting on January 20, 2022.

## OCTOBER IS . . .



This provides a wonderful opportunity for congregation members to recognize and encourage those whom God has called to proclaim His message and lead His people, and to commit to pray for and encourage their pastor.

*“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”*  
(1 Thess. 5:12-13)

## OCTOBER SCHEDULE CHANGE:



For the month of October, the Saturday morning *Ladies Tea & Bible Study* will meet at 8:30 a.m. on the **second and fourth** Saturdays of the month instead of the first and third Saturdays.

## LWML 39<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) welcomed 2,787 people to the LWML Convention in Lexington, Kentucky, June 24-27, 2021, under the theme "Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus." The convention theme was based on Hebrews 12:1-2.

The voting body adopted a \$2,150,000 mission goal for the 2021-2023 biennium. This goal, by the grace of God, will fund 28 mission grants as women and men respond in prayer and mites (offerings) during the next two years.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is an official women's auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.





## Shepherds & Lambs The Sunday School Newsletter October 2021



**Our Sunday School will sponsor Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child again this year.** We had a successful collection last year, and we'd like to do it again. Collection will be Nov. 15-22.

We will be packing suggested items in a shoebox that will be shipped around the world to children who perhaps will not get any Christmas gifts. Recipients will also hear the love of Jesus through trained, Christian workers teaching a discipleship program called *The Greatest Journey*.

A display showing suggested items - and items NOT to include - will be in the Gathering Place. A sign-up sheet will also be there to indicate if the box is for a boy or girl and what age group. That helps get an age-appropriate gift to the child. Items would include a WOW item (a larger gift item), toys, personal care items, school supplies, and other accessories. These items would all have to fit into a shoe box. If you'd like to start purchasing some items, there will be collection boxes available also. If you do not want to pack a complete box, you may just purchase items and put them in the large collection box and we will make a box. Or, you may donate \$9 which covers the cost of shipping and other project costs. The deadline for items is Nov. 22. Thanks for your participation!! Any questions, see Lynette Johnston-Martin.



**Congratulations to our yearly attendance awards students.** Seven students received Highest Honors and three received High Honors. Students received their awards on Rally Day!

### **Last month we introduced different ways to bond with your child or grandchild.**

Here are a few more suggestions. I hope you had a chance to use at least several of the ones from last month. See if you can try a few more!!!



11. Comment on something they've done right.
12. Have them choose what the family eats for dinner.
13. Draw a pen tattoo on their arm.
14. Ask if there is something they would like you to pray with them about.
15. Wink at them from across the room
16. Give them their favorite treat unexpectedly.
17. Wish them a good morning before giving them instructions for the day.
18. Say yes to something when you'd normally say no to it.
19. Touch them on the shoulder and give it a loving squeeze.
20. Buy them their favorite treat and leave it on their bed with a thank you note that says, "Thanks for being my kid."
21. Pray with your child thanking God for him/her.

**We want to congratulate our four Confirmation students.** We pray that you will walk in the way of Jesus throughout your life. Remember that God has sent His Son just for YOU! Embrace His love and share that love with others. May God continue to bless you and show you His love in many ways.



**HAPPY FALL 'YA ALL!!**

Lynette Johnston-Martin  
Superintendent



**FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE . . .**

Why do we give? Is it simply because God commands us to? Or is there more to it? To be sure, the Word and instruction of God in the Bible says we should give, and this is sufficient to encourage us to give (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 6:6).

But there's more to it than just obligation. We're not just trying to fulfill a work of the law. We are bearing fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Father in heaven through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we're not just doing what our Father said, we're also doing what He did.

Children emulate their parents. When they grow up, they often carry many of the same mannerisms and characteristics as their parents. But there is more to it than that. Children copy their parents even on a more mundane level. They watch how their parents cross their legs, how they fold their hands, how they stand and sit and walk, and how they do and say most everything. Then children try to copy it.

This can be quite humorous when caught in the act. They do this even when parents don't want them to. Everyone has been in the uncomfortable – and embarrassing – situation where a child does or says something one of their parents have done or said that is less than polite. Sitcoms thrive on these. It only works because of the truth that children emulate their parents, and they do it because they want to be like them.

We are the children of God – by grace through faith. In Holy Baptism, God the Father declares of us what He declared of Jesus at His Baptism in the Jordan, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God the Father claims us as His own. He takes away all our sins. In exchange, He gives us His righteousness, His purity, His holiness, and His Spirit – by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."

We are born again – born from above, born of water and the Spirit – to a new life in Christ as His children. We are sons of God in Christ through Baptism. Since we are sons, we are heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace, mercy, and generosity in sending His Son in time to save us for all eternity.

This is why we give generously of our income to the work of the church. We want to be like our heavenly Father. We want to emulate His generosity by being generous ourselves. We give to the work of the church because we

have witnessed the generous giving of our Father in heaven.

More than that, we are recipients of it. It is because we have received our Father's gifts that we desire to give ourselves. His gifts are not just spiritual. They are temporal and earthly as well. As Luther's Small Catechism teaches in the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

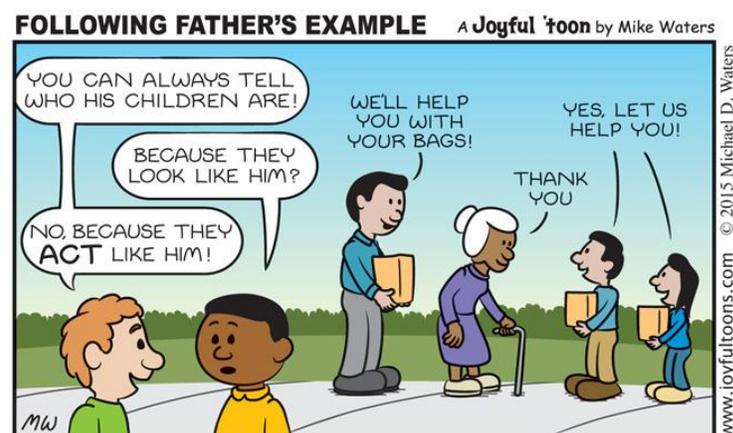
*What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

In other words, He gives us everything that we need for the care of both body and soul. His generosity knows no bounds.

Therefore, we sit down at the beginning of the year, the beginning of the month, or the beginning of the week and set aside a generous portion of God's daily bread for His work in the church. This is not done because He has commanded us so to do but rather because we, as His children by grace, want to emulate His generosity in our own lives. He is our Father; we are His children. And children want to be like their parents.

-- **LCMS Stewardship Ministry, October 2021**



Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.  
EPHESIANS 5:1-2 NIV

# Confirmed in Christ



This year, we have four confirmands to be confirmed. In October, Pastor Solum will meet with each confirmand and their family for their examination in preparation for their Confirmation. Then, on Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> at 8:45 a.m., the congregation is invited to join them in the sanctuary to pray for them and listen to them recite selections from the Small Catechism. They will be confirmed at the 10:00 a.m. Divine Service the same day.

You are invited to be there on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> to witness the confession of faith given by these young people, renew your own confession of faith with them, and give them the benefit of your blessing and prayers that our Loving Lord will always keep them strong in the Faith they will profess! Encourage them as they continue to grow in this Faith and live out God’s plan for their lives!

Printed below are some brief introductions that our confirmands have written about themselves, with the hope that you will get to know them better and celebrate this achievement with them!

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**PLEASE NOTE:** The deadline to submit items for the November *Gazette* is **Monday, October 4.**

