

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

DECEMBER 2021



Keeping the MASS in ChristMAS

The source of the Christian's joyful celebration of Christmas is wrapped up in the manger. On that first Christmas day God gave His greatest possible gift to mankind: Himself. The Maker of Heaven and earth, the Lord of the heavenly Host, our Mighty God, took on frail human flesh. He joined Himself forever with humanity in order to take away our sins and give us eternal life. Our joy is in our reunion with God, delivery from the curse, and the everlasting peace which it brings.

We express the joy of Christmas in a number of ways: through gift giving, decorating, parties, and feasting. We cannot help but shine with Christmas joy to all our family, friends, and neighbors. But the greatest expression of thanks to God is shown when we confess, praise, and call upon His name. For even unbelievers put up trees and lights, give gifts, and have fancy dinners, but only believers praise God for what He has done.

Yet this praise for God's gifts would be shallow and empty if we did not care to receive the gifts He came to give. God became man for the sole purpose of giving His flesh and blood for the life of the world. Only God can take away sins, but only a man can give flesh and blood. Thus, the Son of God was born of Mary. What would it say about our faith if we chose to celebrate Christmas without caring to hear His Word and receive Holy Communion? This is the reason we call it ChristMAS. The Mass (we Lutherans usually call it the Divine Service) is the worship service which gives us Christ's Word and Supper. The MASS is *how* we keep the CHRIST in CHRISTmas. In the Divine Service Christ, who was born for us in the flesh, speaks to us His Gospel and gives us His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Holy Communion brings Christmas to its climax. Like the lowly shepherds we bow before our Lord in humble fear, singing our Kyries ("Lord, have mercy"). But the angels in their Gloria song ("Glory be to God on high") remind us of the peace Christ came to give all the world and bid us come and see the Christ child. As the Bethlehem star led the wise men to Christ, the light of the Gospel draws us to Christ by faith. We respond by confessing the Creed. Like the shepherds who spoke with Mary and Joseph all they had been told, we repeat the message spoken to us so that together we would find unity in our hope. By faith alone we are worthy to enter heaven, so after the Creed, heaven comes down to us in the Sanctus ("Holy, Holy, Holy"), the song of the angels around the throne of God as the prophet Isaiah witnessed it. The saints and angels in glory join our praise, bidding us to feast with them upon the Lamb of our salvation. We sing the Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God") right before we approach the altar, recognizing Jesus Christ's mercy given us because of His innocent, holy sacrifice on the cross. Then we gather with heaven to adore the Christ child, whose precious body and blood are swaddled in the elements of bread and wine. Finally, we leave in peace like the shepherds did, spreading the Good News of Christ's birth to our families, friends, and neighbors.

Keep the MASS in ChristMAS with us! All our Christmas services have different hymns and messages which go from anticipation and hope (Christmas Eve) to fulfilment (Christmas Day and following). Join us as we welcome Jesus Christ who comes to earth in His Word and Sacraments, bringing the gifts of heaven!

Pastor



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

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

Email:
[immanuel.lutheran.1237@
gmail.com](mailto:immanuel.lutheran.1237@gmail.com)

Website:
www.immanuelmc.com





Advent Midweek Services

Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 1 & 8

Come early for supper at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 15

7:00 p.m. Sunday School Christmas Service

Christmas Week Services



Saturday, December 18

6:00 p.m. Worship Service with Communion

Sunday, December 19

10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion

Friday, December 24

6:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service

11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
with Communion

Saturday, December 25

9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service
with Communion

Sunday, December 26

10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion

Friday, December 31

6:00 p.m. New Year's Eve Service
with Communion

Saturday, January 1

6:00 p.m. Worship Service with Communion

Sunday, January 2

10:00 a.m. Worship Service with Communion



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH is seeking a new secretary.

We have an opening to fill a part-time position as office secretary (approx.. 25 hrs./week,

with additional hours needed for holidays and special services). Enjoy working in a caring, Christian environment. Must be proficient in computers (Microsoft Office products), have office management and people skills. We are looking for a person with strong Christian values and able to handle confidentialities. If you are interested in this position please submit in writing your name and resume to Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Avenue, Michigan City, IN 46360. Questions? Call 219-872-4419.



Come one and all!
"Soup & Song"

Christmas Caroling

to our shut-ins
& older members.

Sunday, Dec. 12

Meet at church at 3:00 p.m. We will return to church for soup and cocoa when we are finished caroling.



CHRISTMAS TRIVIA NIGHT

FRIDAY, DEC. 3RD



in Fellowship Hall

Doors Open @ 6PM

Trivia Starts @ 7PM

Cost - \$10/Player ~ Bring a team!

Pizza & Drinks Provided

**** Bring Your Own Snacks ****

Proceeds to Benefit One or More of the Church's Christmas Projects.

COME JOIN US !!!



FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE. . .

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath

(Luke 14:1-6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3).

But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches ... the more eagerly he desires them" (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us to not to be consumed by money. "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, "If I just had this much then I would be happy."

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy, either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our

money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things.

In essence, He says, "Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!" And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? "By no means!" St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward us is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

– *LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter, December 2021*

FALL GROUNDS MAINTENANCE



Come and
Join Us!

The Trustees have scheduled a Fall Clean-up Day on **Saturday, Dec. 4, beginning at 9 a.m.**

They are looking for helping hands to do a general Fall Clean-up of the grounds. Please bring your own gloves, rakes, leaf blowers, or whatever you like to use. We will need some younger people to come help too! Please see Trustee Bob Solum for more information.

VOTE  **CONGREGATIONAL QUARTERLY
VOTERS MEETING**
TUESDAY, DEC.14, 7:00 PM

This is an important voters meeting for all members. We will be electing new officers for 2022 and voting upon the budget for the coming year.



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter

December 2021

Jesus performed many miracles during His earthly life.

The best miracle we know is the miraculous birth of Jesus, God's son! This year our children's Christmas service is entitled *MIRACLE IN A MANGER*. The service will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15. Children need to be at the church no later than 6:30 p.m. Our first practice is on Saturday, Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. The practice on Dec. 11 will be 10 a.m.-12 p.m. followed by a party from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided and we will have activities for the afternoon. Children need to be at all practices if possible. Please bring your speaking scripts to practice.



Children will receive a stocking filled with candy after the children's Christmas service. If you are able to help by donating candy, please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Items will have to be at the church Sunday School office by Sunday, Dec. 12. Thanks for helping our Sunday School students!!

We will be overseeing the collection of hats, mittens, & scarves for our folks in need.

These items can be for adults or children. They will be distributed to local homeless shelters in need of these items. Just put them on or under the Christmas tree in the Gathering Place. Thank you!



Making memories at Christmas time is always special and your children will remember them for a long time. Here are a couple of new family activities you may choose from to do this year!!



- ✦ Go Christmas caroling. Our church family will do that on Sunday, Dec. 12. Join us!!
- ✦ Make cards and surprise your mailman, sanitation truck drivers, etc. with homemade Christmas cards accompanied by cookies or a tip!
- ✦ Bless your server with a generous tip.
- ✦ Go St. Nicholas Day Visiting. Think of a family who needs a little Christmas love. Sneak over to their house and decorate their front lawn with wrapped candy canes poked into the lawn. Then leave a gift certificate at the door, ring the doorbell and sprint out of sight.
- ✦ Complete a Christmas puzzle together.
- ✦ Have a Christmas movie night. Perhaps inviting grandparents, get cozy and share a large bowl of popcorn with the movie!
- ✦ Sleep by the tree—Have a family slumber party by the Christmas tree.
- ✦ Make a construction paper Advent Christmas chain. Remove a chain-link each day until Christmas.
- ✦ Hide a special ornament in the tree on Christmas Eve. Maybe it would be a baby Jesus figure. The person who finds it Christmas morning, is the first to open their presents.
- ✦ Listen to and sing Christmas carols together.



A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL YOUR FAMILIES!!

Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent





O HOLY NIGHT

A D N H P W P J Q B T G F F S Q V
 Y D M Q M I A A S T A R R L G F R
 F X F A G R D O N K E Y A S Q L J
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 H H E A X W I X H Z I E K J A C B
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 M P H I N Y R O A E H H N U G L B
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 K R H I M Z W F M E P S N P D N S
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 V A N F Q F A T G F T G I A Z T X
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ANGEL
 ANIMALS
 BABY
 BETHLEHEM
 DONKEY
 FRANKINCENSE

GIFTS
 GOLD
 JESUS
 JOSEPH
 MANGER
 MARY

MYRRH
 PEACE
 SAVIOR
 SHEPHERD
 STAR
 WISE MEN



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Sunday, **Jan. 2** – Installation of new officers of the congregation
 Monday, **Jan. 3** – Deadline for submitting news for the February *Gazette*
 Tuesday, **Jan. 4** – First Council Meeting of the New Year



PLEASE NOTE: There will not be a January edition of *Gabriel's Gazette*. Watch your mailboxes and weekly bulletin for information about January activities.

