

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE



Mission Siberia

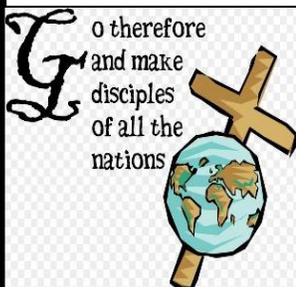


*"Loving, Sharing, Serving
Jesus with you."*

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In the December voters' meeting, our congregation chose to give regular financial support to the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society, a mission organization based in Fort Wayne which provides aid to the seminary and church in Siberia. I am very pleased with this choice and overjoyed that we will be helping the church in a very poor and challenging part of the world.

The Lutheran church in Russia is as old as the Reformation. German immigrants settled in western Russia and lived there for hundreds of years and formed a strong Lutheran church until the Soviet revolution, when all church buildings were confiscated and all pastors were sent to die in Siberian work camps. Those of German descent were relocated by Stalin to Siberia because of the Nazi invasion. There, only in small circles and in secret, the Lutheran faith was passed down for many decades.

After the fall of the Communism, some leaders of the LCMS from our seminary in Fort Wayne decided it was important for us to help rebuild the Lutheran church in the former Soviet lands, including Siberia. They were warmly received by a small group of Christians in Siberia who would together help form the seminary in Novosibirsk, Russia in 1997. Today the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest geographical Lutheran Church in the world, stretching from the Ural Mountains to the farthest eastern peninsula of Kamchatka, through nearly impassible terrain. Congregations are often small, poor, and spread out over hundreds of miles from each other. Many pastors must travel very long distances to visit their parishioners. This means that pastors cannot receive their sole income from their parishes, nor can their church support its own seminary without financial support from elsewhere.

Our support of the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society will do just that. Where the Lord has given much, He expects much. We often forget how mercifully blessed we are by God to have such an abundance of wealth compared to the rest of the world. Just look at our Immanuel building and grounds – not to mention Simeon Square! What a beautiful space we have for Christian service, study of the Scriptures, and Word and Sacrament worship! Thanks be to God! Considering we owe God our very lives, how graciously God has blessed us!

Please consider regularly supporting this mission. To do so, you may check the personal mission box on your envelope. All personal missions will be divided between Gloria Dei the Hispanic Lutheran congregation in Valparaiso, Ascension Lutheran School in Gary, and the Siberian mission. If you wish to give only to one of these, you may write that on your envelope.

I am also excited to announce that the Rev. Dr. Alexey Strelstov, Rector of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Russia, and the Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill, who has been with the Siberian mission from its founding, will be visiting us Wednesday, March 16, during our regularly scheduled Lenten supper and evening service. Dr. Strelstov will begin his presentation at 5:00 p.m. We will enjoy a soup supper as we learn more about the Siberian church and seminary. Afterward, Dr. Strelstov will preach for our Evening Prayer service at 7:00 p.m. Put this on your calendars and invite your family and friends to this special event!

Pastor

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...



God in Man Made Manifest

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, signs, and wonders of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is

the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking enactment of God's Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts but also to trust in God in word and deed. As James wrote: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22), and again, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:14, 17-18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith:

Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It

kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them.

He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace.

And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God's power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor – in church, in the family, and society – with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship
Newsletter Article – February 2022



Thanks to all who served in leadership positions for our congregation during 2021. The offering you gave of your time and talents has been greatly appreciated by us all.

TODDLIN' TO JESUS IS COMING BACK!!

Talk to all the families you know with little ones.

Toddlin' To JESUS

FREE Music Class
Birth to 3 years old

Toddlin' to Jesus is a FREE music class for kids and their parents. Come learn new songs and make new friends. We teach about God's love and grace through stories, songs, and movement.

Please call (219) 872-4419
for more information and to sign up!

Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. at
Immanuel Lutheran Church
1237 E. Coolspring Ave.
Michigan City, IN 46360

Next class begins on February 1st



HIGHER THINGS YOUTH CONFERENCE

Youth who are confirmed and 18 or under are invited to attend Higher Things, a conference for Lutheran youth being held this year at Valparaiso University **July 26-29, 2022**. Join hundreds of youth in worship, prayer, Bible study, and many fun games and activities. Visit higherthings.org/events/conferences or talk to Pastor for more information. Please sign up on our bulletin board to **RSVP by February 6**. I hope you can come!



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter

February 2022

I recently saw a picture with a Grandpa walking hand in hand with his grandson.

It was a heart-warming picture with the caption "Spend time with your elders. Not everything can be found on Google." Humm! Something to think about, only reversing it to "Spend time with your younger family members" and build a positive, Christian foundation for them.



When I was raising my children, I used as a parenting guide several books written by psychologist, Dr. James Dobson. However, so much has changed in our culture since Dr. Dobson started his parenting helps in 1977, but one thing remains the same: building a family legacy will not just "happen" automatically. It takes intentionality, wisdom, and willingness to take a stand for biblical values. The Scripture challenges us, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Oh! How our children are influenced by Hollywood, the internet and social media that works against building faith-based children and families. "Culture flows like a powerful river," Dr. Dobson points out, "and it is extremely difficult to prevent your kids from being swept downstream into unknown waters... you must not become distracted from your ultimate priority, which is to raise healthy children and introduce them to Jesus Christ." This goes for those who are parents of little ones now to grandparents and great grandparents. We must set a Christian example for them to follow. We must not give up the fight. We will be leaving a legacy that will last for generations to come.

May it also be said of us, when one day we are with the Lord, that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are carrying on from the basic, Christian foundation and example we helped establish for them. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,"

We had a very good participation for our Sunday School children's Christmas service, *MIRACLE IN A MANGER*.



The children did a fantastic job, speaking their parts and knowing the songs. We're very proud of them! The plate offering for the service was \$69 which we sent to our local Keys to Hope organization. Hats, gloves, scarves and toiletry items were also given to Keys to Hope. Mittens and hats for children were distributed to several schools locally to give to children who come to school without them. A thank you to the congregation for their donations. Also thank you to Mark Kline who gave us \$300 from the Christmas Trivia night for the Keys to Hope project. We also purchased a new Christian flag for the Teen Room which is where we have our openings (we really needed a new one!). Thanks to all!

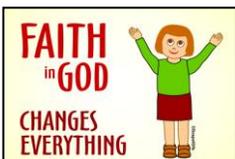


A Blessed New Year to All!

Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent



"GO ON, GO ON . . . AFTER JONAH SWALLOWED THIS WHALE AND WALKED OVER THE WATER TO JOIN SAMSON ON THE ARK, THEN WHAT HAPPENED?"



We dare not sit passively by as our culture shapes the next generation. What will your legacy be?



2022 PLANNING CONFERENCE

On Saturday morning, **February 26, 9:00-12:00**, we will have our annual planning meeting for all boards and committees. Both incoming and outgoing officers are asked to attend, elected and those not elected. The purpose of this meeting is to assess our work last year, make goals for the coming year, and to have a smooth transition for the new officers.



We are in the process of preparing the new 2022 Membership Directory.

If you have:

- changed your address,
- no longer have a land line,
- are only using your cell phone,
- changed your email etc.,
- had any life changing events like a new baby/grandbaby marriage divorce etc.,

please call the office and update us! Also, if you prefer to have your phone, cell, or email unlisted please let the office know as soon as possible. Otherwise, this information will be made public in the next directory.

A LOOK AHEAD TO LENTEN SUPPERS



Lent is just around the corner! We will need five groups who are willing to serve our Lenten Suppers. Please call the office at (219) 872-4419 and let us know which date your group would like to provide supper for. Dates are: March 2, 9, 23, 30; April 6.



PLEASE NOTE: The deadline for submitting items for the March *Gazette* is **Monday, Feb. 7.**

