

# GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

## MARCH 2022



### A Little About Fasting



*"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)



Lent is coming and many Christians will fast during the forty days leading up to Easter. Lutherans may think there is no need for fasting, since we are not saved by fasting. It is true that we are saved by grace through faith alone. No work can merit forgiveness or save us from sin. Nevertheless, fasting plays an important part in the life of the Christian.

When talking about fasting it is important to realize that Jesus considered fasting necessary. First, He Himself fasted (Matthew 4). Secondly, He gave believers teachings about fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). Thirdly, Jesus said, "The days will come...when they will fast" (Matthew 9:15).

What is fasting? Fasting can be used to describe generally about giving up something which the flesh typically craves. Some people fast from sweets, meat, and other foods or drinks. Some fast from social media or TV. Others pick something else. Traditionally, Christians fasted from food, something the body has always needed and craved.

Why do we fast? We have been born again in baptism. We are united with Christ, filled with His Spirit, and saved by grace alone. Since we are united with Christ, it is expected that we grow in Christ. Through fasting and other forms of giving up or averting our eyes from the things we crave, our sinful flesh is subdued more and more. We teach our flesh that God is bigger than our bellies! We obey Him above all desires and needs. At the same time, through God's Word and Sacraments, the new man in us grows stronger and stronger by the power of the Spirit, so that we increase in faith and holiness and love. If we do not keep our flesh's cravings under control, sin can increase and hinder our love for God

and for our neighbor, and bring us back under captivity. The Apostle Paul writes, "I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27). When we fast, we teach ourselves to say "no" to our body's cravings and bring them under subjection. And, to this discipline of Lent we add giving to the poor, prayer, and works of love, so that we teach our bodies what is good and right.

How do we fast? Lutherans have always left this up to Christian freedom, lest we make a law where there is no law. Fasting, however, is expected by Christ. With regards to food, one might choose, for example, to skip lunches or refrain from eating before receiving the Sacrament or skip meals from Good Friday until Easter. You might refrain from sweets. You might replace certain filling foods like meat with fruits and vegetables. Remove yourself from a social media platform or screen time and use the extra time you have to pray. Just make a plan ahead of time as to what you will do and how you will do it. And don't call attention to it or boast about it, lest you ruin the whole purpose of fasting.

On Easter, the Lenten fast ends, and we feast and celebrate like the disciples did when Christ was with them (Matthew 9:14-15). Christ is risen and He is with us forever with His salvation! Eat, drink, and celebrate our release from the captivity of sin and burden of the law! And one day the Spirit will complete His work in us and we will be raised without sin to enjoy the feast of heaven which has no end!

May you have a blessed Lententide!

*Pastor*

**FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...**

## God's Providential Care



Everything we have and everything we are is a gift of God's providential care. We understand that we're not islands unto ourselves, that we could not exist

without those who have gone before us and are alongside us. God has given us forefathers in family, country, and faith. We are recipients of what God worked through them. We know that God provides for our well-being through these means.

He gives us farmers and ranchers of all sorts so that we can eat. But more than that God created and gave us all the things that those farmers and ranchers cultivate. He gave us the corn, the beans, the wheat, the cows for milking, the steers for grilling. He gave each of those things, properties for our nourishment and sustenance. Without God creating and instilling in those things their taste and their nutritional value, we would not exist.

He gives us doctors, surgeons, nurses, and hospitals. He gives us medicine and medical instruments. Again, he gave us all things that go into making those medicines and medical instruments. He instilled in those things the properties that can be utilized for that purpose. Without God creating and instilling those healing properties into those things, and without God creating the ability within man to find this out and press it into service of our medical needs, we would not enjoy the kind of health we do now.

But there's more. He gives us gainful employment through our employers and provides for the necessities of life through the labor of our hands: "Then Moses said to the people of Israel, 'See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan.'" (Exodus 35:30-34)

And one step back from that, He has created and given us hands. And attached to those hands are arms with strength. He created us with minds in order to make those arms and hands move to accomplish the work set before us. And He has given us reason and senses. That mind, because of the reason God has instilled in it, is able to work through difficult problems before we

press those arms and hands into labor. It allows us to grapple with concepts and run through scenarios instead of having to experience every situation personally. It allows us to learn from the mistakes as well as the accomplishments of others. This can be done for our entire body, all our skills and talents, everything that makes us ... us. So that everything we have AND everything we are is a gift from Him. This is what we confess in the First Article of the Creed when we say that we believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

But that is just the First Article of the Creed. We confess two more articles that deal with God's provision for our spiritual well-being. That He sent His son to die and be raised on the third day for our justification. That He delivers that justification through the Means of Grace (Baptism, preaching, the Word of God, and the Lord's Supper). And to give you those Means of Grace, He gives pastors and teachers, etc. Again, this could be expanded and expounded upon. So that literally everything that we have and everything that we are – in this life and the next – is an inexpressible gift from God.

And it is for this, all of this, that we give thanks. And that is what stewardship is all about – giving thanks for God's provision for us. To give thanks is more than having an attitude of gratitude, more than just a feeling in our hearts. It is an action. It begins in the heart, but it doesn't stay there. It works its way out through the mouth in praise for God's gifts and in love and charity through the hands to our neighbors in family, country, and church. "For all this is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him" (Luther's Small Catechism, 16).

So give thanks to God for His inexpressible gift – for everything we have and everything we are. Do this not in word only but also in deed.

*- LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter, March 2022*



**JOIN US FOR  
MIDWEEK  
WORSHIP SERVICES  
DURING  
THE LENTEN SEASON.**

**WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:00 PM  
BEGINNING ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2**



**Quarterly Voters Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**at 7:00 p.m.**

**All members of the congregation**  
**are encouraged to attend.**

**Mr. Roger Luekens**  
**from Ascension Lutheran**  
**Christian School in Gary**  
**will speak to Bible Classes**  
**on Sunday, March 20.**



Please join us at 8:45 a.m. that day to hear more about one of the missions we support through our Personal Missions Offerings.



**A Visit from**  
**Rev. Dr. Alexey Streltsov,**  
**Rector of Lutheran**  
**Theological Seminary,**  
**Novosibirsk, Russia**

**Join us for this rare opportunity to visit with the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Alexey Streltsov and the Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Michigan City, IN.**

- **March 15th, 5:00 p.m.** (DST) - Ladies are invited to gather with Mrs. Alexey Streltsov to make borscht. Hear about her experience of Lutheranism in Siberia.
- **March 16th, 5:00 p.m.** (DST) - All are invited to hear Dr. Streltsov speak to youth about growing up in communism and his conversion to Christianity. Then we will have a soup supper and hear Dr. Streltsov speak about the Lutheran seminary and church in Siberia. After supper, at 7:00 p.m., we will gather for an evening prayer service with Dr. Streltsov preaching.

The Rev. Dr. Alexey Streltsov is the Rector of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Russia.

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill serves as the Director for Theological Education for the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod Office of International Mission. He assisted the establishment of the Lutheran seminary in Novosibirsk. He teaches on the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne and serves as Dean of International Studies.

A thank offering for the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society will be collected.

**Please RSVP with Immanuel Lutheran Church by March 6,**  
**by phone: (219) 872-4419,**  
**by email: [immanuel Lutheran1237@gmail.com](mailto:immanuel Lutheran1237@gmail.com),**  
**or by signing up on our bulletin board\*.**

**\*When signing up please notate all the activities that you will be attending so we can plan accordingly. Thank you.**



## ANSWERED PRAYER

I know not by what methods rare,  
 But this I know - God answers prayers.

I know that He has given His Word,  
 Which tells me prayer is always heard,

And will be answered, soon or late,  
 And so I pray and calmly wait.

I know not if the blessing sought  
 Will come in just the way I thought;

But leave my prayers with Him alone,

Whose will is wiser than my own,  
 Assured that He will grant my quest,  
 Or send some answer far more blest.





## Shepherds & Lambs

### The Sunday School Newsletter March 2022

**Did your Mother or perhaps Grandmother teach you** to set the table, putting the utensils in just the right place? There was a little girl who told her mother that if she had to be one of these utensils, she'd be a spoon. "Why a spoon," her Mother asked. "Because the fork is too pointy and the knife is too scary. But the spoon just scoops things up in such a nice way" she said. What, you might ask, did this little girl teach her mom . . . and what can she teach us? Well, for starters, let's focus on what the fork, the knife, and the spoon have to say about the way we go about day-to-day living.



**Consider the fork:** Simply put, we use it for jabbing. We jab at the morsels of food on our plates to make it possible to pick them up. Lots of people go about life in a similar way. They look at things they think they need. They consider the blessings God has given other people. And then they assume that if only they had more of this or that, life would taste so much sweeter. So they go around jabbing at the "stuff" of life, hoping to gather more and more and more . . . but often overlooking everything our heavenly Father has already heaped on their plate of blessings!

**Consider the knife:** All things considered, the sharper the better! We design knives precisely and exclusively for cutting. Lots of people go about life using their words and actions to cut others down to size. Their cutting remarks hurt others' feelings. We can all remember the times we've been dissatisfied with God's wonderful blessings in our lives. We've chosen sharp words in our impatience and exasperation. We can be so glad that at these times we can confess our sins and know that Christ has heaped our sins onto Himself on Calvary restoring us to a right relationship with God—and with other people.

**So now, consider the spoon:** By design, the spoon does not prick, point, jab, or cut. As it scoops food from your plate, it's almost as if it embraces it. Because of what Christ did for us through his death and resurrection, we can now embrace his gift of forgiveness. We can scoop up and enjoy the many blessings he heaps upon us day by day. And we can serve others in thankfulness and kindness.

Read and discuss this story with your children. On Ash Wednesday, decorate an empty soup can with construction paper decorated with crosses, flowers, or items of their choice. Stuff the can with a little tissue paper and stand up a fork, knife, and spoon in the can. Cut out 2 heart shapes, colored red, and glue to the spoon and fork. Make and cut out a cross and glue to the knife. Display the can on your kitchen table. During Lent, discuss with your children some of our different kind of sins and the wonderful hope we have in our salvation because of Jesus' death and resurrection. On Easter, lay an open plastic Easter egg in the can to remind us of the empty tomb.



### **Our Parish Education Board has distributed a Lenten activities calendar**

to each of our Sunday School families and to the families of those who attended our VBS this past summer. This calendar has things to focus on each day during Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday. This is a good outreach to our children and to those who are not members of our church. Times of our Easter season services were also included.

-- Lynette Johnston-Martin  
Superintendent



### **Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 13.**

So, mark the date and remember to change your clocks on the right day. You won't want to miss out on a minute of the worship services, Sunday School, and Bible classes.

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2022 !!**



While we are still working on selecting a VBS program, we HAVE set a date for this year's VBS! Mark your calendars for **July 18-22**. Watch the bulletin and next month's *Gabriel's Gazette* for more information, but make plans now to attend!



**Indiana Lutheran Laymen's League**

Are you a blessing to your neighbors—neighborhood?

Join us at the Indiana LLL Convention on Saturday, March 26th at St. James Lutheran Church, 1206 N. Miller Ave., Marion, IN. The Convention will include:

- Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour® as Guest Speaker
- Learn about the Better Together: Discovering the Gifts of Your Neighborhood
- Break out Sessions:
  - Listening to Our Community
  - Engaging the Online Community
  - Understanding the Contemporary Community

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. with the convention beginning at 10:00 a.m. and concluding with a worship service at 5:00 p.m. There will be a Banquet after the Worship Service at 6:00 p.m. to close the day.

Register today. Registration is \$40.00 per person that includes both a lunch meal and the banquet dinner. If you want to participate in the banquet only, it is \$25.00 per person.

See Roger Potratz for more information and to register for the event.

**LENTEN WORD SEARCH PUZZLE**

Find these words having to do with the liturgical season of Lent in the puzzle below. Words can go horizontally, vertically, or diagonally in all directions.



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|---------------|----------------|
| alms giving   | lent           |
| ashes         | meditation     |
| Ash Wednesday | penance        |
| cross         | prayer         |
| crucifixion   | prepare        |
| Easter        | reconciliation |
| fasting       | sacrifice      |
| forgiveness   | sorrow         |
| Holy Week     | spring         |



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