

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

APRIL 2022



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

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Cultivating a Christian Culture

The church has always had a concern for retaining its members and catechizing its youth so that they do not fall away. The urgent calls for watchfulness and strong warnings against apostasy in the letters of Paul and in the Book of Hebrews testify that this has long been a problem. We are in no new struggle to live in the world but not be of the world. How many Christian grandparents and parents are praying for the next generation, that they would not fall away or that they would return to church? It is disheartening that after confirmation, a majority of them do not remain with us. It is not that the Gospel failed, but the seeds of unbelief were sown long before catechism – in home or school or by friends or media – so that by the time they reach middle school, it is clear that many of them have had more worldly instruction than Christian instruction; they show more desire to live like the unbelieving world than to serve God.

How do we reverse this trend? Is it impossible today to not be of the world? Do we just surrender to the culture of the day? Do we just smile and shrug that teenagers will be teenagers? Or do we see this as a battle between life and death, heaven and hell?

I'd like us to have more conversations about *cultivating a Christian culture*. What I mean by that is: how can we encourage and support a Christian worldview and lifestyle which is different from the world, which even stands out from the world, and provides fertile soil for growth and perseverance in God's Word and a wall of defense against temptation?

I was intrigued by a recent interview on Issues Etc., a Lutheran podcast, of Uwe Siemon-Netto, a German journalist and confessional Lutheran theologian, who was

raised in Leipzig during the Nazification of every bit of German culture: the music and art, parades, schools, churches, children's clubs, and most aspects of social life. How did Uwe remain a Lutheran? Uwe was taught by his grandmother Luther's Small Catechism. His parents did their very best to protect him from Nazi influence and teach him the evils of the day. He did not join the Hitler youth. He did not attend Christian churches which used their pulpits for propaganda. They did not fly the Nazi flag from their home. He attended a Church, when he was able, which preached the Gospel. This, of course, was all very dangerous for their family to do. But there are some things worth dying for. The family was far from perfect (you can read his story in *Urchin at War: The tale of a Leipzig rascal and his Lutheran granny under bombs in Nazi Germany*, 1517 Publishing), but there are lessons we can learn.

The Christian life must involve more than once-a-week church attendance, Sunday School, and catechism class. Our culture has too strong an influence upon us the rest of the week. If we become idle and lazy with regards to the Christian life, if we are not watchful for devil's lies, we will easily be led away from Christ.

Christianity is a lifestyle. We are born again to a new way of thinking, speaking, and doing, following Christ and His commands. It must be cultivated in the home. It must be counter-cultural. It must engage the world and serve the world but shun worldly ways. And it must be fed continuously by God's Word and Sacrament.

I know this hits home with many of us, who have friends, relatives, or children who have wandered from the fold.

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Cultivating a Christian Culture

(continued from pg.1)

Sometimes despite our best intentions and efforts people, by their own sinful flesh, are led astray. Sometimes we know there were things we could've done better. Let Christ's Absolution give you comfort. Your sins are forgiven. And Christ will continue to call for His lost sheep to return to Him.

I would like to commit several Gazette articles this year to this topic and continue the conversation in Bible classes and in other ways. As Biblical Christianity moves more and more to the fringes of societal acceptance, we need to contemplate how to live in society while keeping our Christian identity. God grant your households perseverance and zeal for a living and active faith! Amen!

Pastor

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES



PALM/PASSION WEEKEND

Saturday, April 9, Worship at 6:00 PM

Sunday, April 10, Worship at 10:00 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 14, Worship at 7:00 PM

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 15, Worship at 7:00 PM

EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, April 16, Vigil of Easter Service at 6:00 PM

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD - EASTER DAY

Sunday, April 17

Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM

Easter Breakfast at 8:00 AM

Sunday School at 8:45 AM

Easter Festival Service at 10:00 AM



FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE. . .

Blessed Shall You Be

"Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out." (Deuteronomy 28:3-6)

This is God's promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make their fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground, their wombs, their flocks, or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there's a catch. He would do this for Israel only "if you obey the voice of the LORD your God." (Deut. 28:2b) If they did that, He would cause that "all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you." (Deut. 28:2a) If they didn't obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn't keep the commandments of the Lord and "walk in his ways" (Deut. 28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh and fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit. By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon His work, not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, and His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and it thereby becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.



For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is not in order to receive the blessings but because in Christ we already have. With this in mind, we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).



Shepherds & Lambs The Sunday School Newsletter April 2022

The Sunday School Alleluia banner was displayed a few weeks prior to Ash Wednesday. This banner has names of our Sunday School children during the past 20 years. Each time we have a new student, we add their names to the banner. The children took the banner down and buried it during a ceremony on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. On Easter morning, the banner will be brought out of its "tomb" and displayed again in Fellowship Hall signifying the resurrection of Jesus. This year we included the Adult Bible Class in the burial ceremony.



**The Sunday School children
will sing on
Palm Sunday.**

Impress on your children the true meaning of Easter. The Easter bunny didn't rise from the dead. **Jesus did!**

COME WITH US TO JERUSALEM

COME WITH US TO JERUSALEM,
WHERE THE MASTER COMES,
COME WITH US TO JERUSALEM.
HOSANNA TO OUR KING!

HE RIDES UP ON A DONKEY,
THE LOWIEST OF BEASTS,
WHERE YEARS AGO HIS MOTHER,
WHO WEARY RODE TO REST.

HE WEARS NO KINGLY CROWN,
HIS ROBE IS VERY PLAIN,
YET WE KNOW HE'S OUR SAVIOR,
WHO FOR US WILL BE SLAIN.

HE WALKED UPON THE EARTH,
AND DOING GOOD FOR MEN,
HE MADE THE BLIND TO SEE,
AND LEPERS, THERE WERE TEN.

THE PEOPLE THEY WERE GATHERED
TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HIM.
THEY THREW DOWN THEIR CLOTHING,
AND PALMS WERE WAVED BY THEM.

GLORY BE TO JESUS,
WHO FROM THE REALMS ON HIGH,
CAME DOWN TO EARTH TO SAVE US.
HOSANNA IS OUR CRY!

Written by Lynette Johnston

We owed a debt we couldn't pay
and He paid a debt He didn't owe!

A BLESSED EASTER TO YOUR FAMILY!



Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent



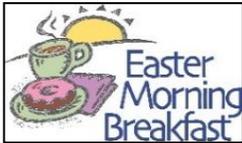
Our Annual
Easter Egg Hunt
is

Saturday, April 16th
at 9:30 a.m.

at Creek Ridge County Park
on County Road 400 North

For ages 0 – 4th Grade
Bring your friends!

***Come out and enjoy the
fellowship and fun!***



Our annual EASTER BREAKFAST will be served immediately following the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 17, and will end at 9:45 a.m.

All the food for this meal, the set-up, and the clean-up are provided by you, the congregation. So, please let us know how you can help this year.

Items needed: egg casseroles (*already baked*), fruit platters (*washed, cut, and ready to serve*), sweet breads and muffins (*sliced and ready to serve*), colored hard-boiled eggs, cash donations, juice/milk, kitchen help, set-up before, and clean-up after.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, contact the church office, or Lori Dobkins.

Thank you for your help again this year in making our Easter Breakfast possible.

THE 2022 MEN'S GATHERING is happening April 22-24th at Lake View Villages in Seymour, IN.

Join us to hear Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz speak on *Tyranny and Resistance*. Visit www.mensgathering.us for more information and to register. If we have enough guys interested, we can reserve a few cabins together. Text or call Luke Vandercar at 219-221-1543 if you are interested in attending this unforgettable weekend.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 18-22
8:30-11:30 a.m.

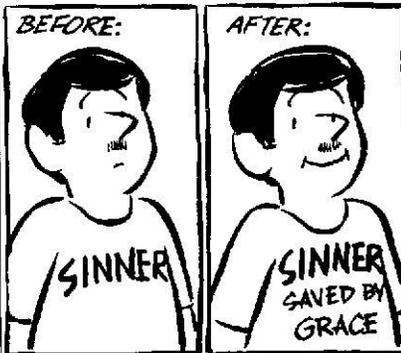


Watch for registration information in the May issue of Gabriel's Gazette!



There will be a **VBS General Information Meeting on Wed., April 27, 6:30-7:30 PM**, for all those interested in finding out where

their time and talents can best be used to assist Immanuel's Vacation Bible School ministry – during the planning stages, during VBS week, or during the follow-up time after it's over. Plan to attend for more information, or contact Peggy Elser.



Saved by Grace

God loves us the way we are— but he cares too much to leave us that way.

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

