

# GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

## MAY 2022



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

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Trust in the  
**LORD**   
with all thine  
and lean not unto thine  
own *understanding*.  
In all thy ways  
acknowledge him,  
and he shall  
direct thy  
*paths*.  
Proverbs 3:5-6

## Cultivating a Christian Culture: Discerning Worldly Influences

Last month I introduced a series of Gazette articles called, "Cultivating a Christian Culture," in order to get us to consider how we can, in our homes and church, retain our Christian identity as a community in order to support godly faith and life in the world. For this issue, I want us to consider what influences from the outside we might limit. But first, how far does one go in abstaining from things of the world?

We don't intend to build a community that has extremely limited contact with the outside world. We are evangelical, which demands that we share the Gospel with unbelievers. We are vocational, which means God has called us into relationships within which we show God's love through our works, whether they are Christian or not. These things require we have knowledge of and regular interaction with the world. On the other hand, we know that the cares of the world can choke out faith (Matt. 13:22).

A couple principles can help guide us. First: Christian freedom. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1). That is, we are not to make up a bunch of rules for living in order to make ourselves more righteous or to judge others. We are Christians by faith in Christ alone. We are free from the burden of the law. And yet... "Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). We are not to do anything that might cause ourselves to sin. Remember, although we are saved by faith alone, what we do can cause faith to leave us. But even if it doesn't cause us to sin, we aren't to do anything that might cause our neighbor to sin or doubt their faith. Paul wrote, "If

food [sacrificed to idols] makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble" (1 Cor. 8:13).

Second: The Ten Commandments. Look at the Small Catechism's explanation of the Commandments. What aspects of the surrounding culture promote living contrary to the Commandments or hinder you from keeping them? Does a worldly idolization of sports keep you from church (3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment)? Do certain programs you watch promote adultery or cause lust (6<sup>th</sup>)? Do electronic devices and media increase laziness (4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>) or gossip (8<sup>th</sup>) or anger (5<sup>th</sup>)? What things should you moderate, regulate, or exclude in order for you and your household to continue serving Christ faithfully?

It would be helpful to consider what are the strongest means through which people are influenced today. One might think of music, the news, social media, television, schools, friends, or other things. None of these are bad in themselves and some are quite good. But one must be shrewd and discerning about how we interact with them or what content we receive from them.

A few tips for young families: Be sure to watch what your children are learning in school. Look at their books and homework. If there is something that concerns you, talk to the school or the teacher. If the children are older, have conversations with them about what they are learning. It is okay to restrict what content your kids receive. Do not take the back seat to your children's education!

Also, limit and moderate how, when, where, and what children do with tablets, gaming devices, and phones. These things

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## Cultivating a Christian Culture: Discerning Worldly Influences

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can have a profoundly negative impact on children mentally, emotionally, and spiritually when over-used or misused. Introduce them to children as late as possible, and when you do, do so with clear-cut rules and restrictions. Do not let them use apps or watch prograding until you are familiar with their content.

And parents, you do not have to let your children do any or every activity they want. Particularly if these activities or combination of activities take away from family time and dinners together or church participation. How can we cultivate a Christian culture if the family and church never gather?

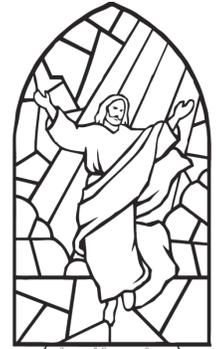
To everyone: don't assume that you are strong enough to live like the world does, endure all its influences, enjoy its idols, and keep your faith. Rather, "be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Be proactive in limiting the world's influence on you, which can happen subconsciously if you let it. Instead, set your minds on things above where Christ is (Col. 3:1-2).

*Pastor*



**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED MAKE THIS LENTEN SEASON, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER** such a special and meaningful experience for our members and visitors. There was so much extra time and effort put in by so many: Pastor Solum, our Elders, all our music people, Altar Guild, our secretary, our media people, our custodian, all those that provided midweek meals, the Easter Egg Hunt, the Easter breakfast, and the many that helped wherever needed. You are all appreciated for everything you do.

**PLAN TO JOIN US  
FOR  
THE ASCENSION DAY  
WORSHIP SERVICE  
THURSDAY, MAY 26  
7:00 PM**



### **YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE!**



**American  
RedCross**

**The need is constant.  
The gratification is instant.  
Give blood.**

**BLOOD DRIVE - Thursday, May 5  
3 p.m. – 7 p.m.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church - Fellowship Hall  
1237 E. Coolspring Ave. – Michigan City

The American Red Cross is struggling to keep hospital blood bank shelves full and hospitals are being forced to make difficult decisions every day about who should receive a transfusion. Every unit collected is critical!

**Please register online at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) to make an appointment.**

**Note:** Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control to protect our partners, donors, and staff. All individuals at blood drives must wear a face mask regardless of vaccination status.



**TRIVIA NIGHT IS BACK!! JUST IN TIME FOR SUMMER VACATION.** Bring out the kids before they forget what they learned in school. It will be held **Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>** in Fellowship Hall. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and the contest will start at 7 p.m. Cost is \$10 per player, and we are encouraging teams to be six players per team. You can bring your own food and drinks. Proceeds will go to the Youth Outing at Valparaiso University. See Mark Kline for additional information.

**FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...****Living Sacrifices**

Stewardship is not just about giving money to the church. It includes this, to be sure, but it is not limited to it. Stewardship involves our whole life – everything we have and everything we are.

Let us not, though, fall into the trap of thinking that because we give of ourselves in one area then we can neglect giving in another. Stewardship is not stealing from Peter to pay Paul. It is not a game that we play whereby we justify ourselves in not giving a tenth of our income because we have given in some other way.

This is why our Lord warns: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” (Matthew 23:23) We are given to do both – tithe of ourselves and what we have.

And so it is that St. Paul makes his appeal to us: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. We are not to have the mind of the world, where we

exchange equal weight of this for an equal weight of that and think that we have done what God has required. Our whole life is given over for service in and for the Church of God. This is to be done in thanksgiving for what God in Christ has accomplished for us. This is our spiritual worship, the reasonable response to what He has done for us. Not one for the other but all in all.

But what does this look like? St. Paul never lays down a general principle without also giving us some practical application of what shape that principle is to take concretely. He gives the general principle that our bodies are to be living sacrifices to God. And, after admonishing those who have been given particular gifts of grace to serve the church, St. Paul then speaks generally of what is expected of all. He says:

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.” (Romans 12:9-13)

This is what it looks like to present your bodies as living sacrifices. This is how we live out the grace of God here in time.

Let us then heed the apostle’s teaching. Let us present our bodies – everything that we have and everything that we are – as living sacrifices to God, our reasonable response to what God in Christ Jesus accomplished for us by His death and resurrection. Through this, we have forgiveness of sins, a new life in Christ, and eternal salvation. And through this worship, the grace of God is made manifest in His saints – for the church and the world.

- LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter, May 2022



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
**JULY 18-22**  
**8:30 – 11:30 AM**  
**For children ages 4-11**  
**(or just finished 5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

***Zoomerang: Returning to the Value of Life***

*G'day, Mate!* Join the trip of a lifetime as we zoom off to the land down under.

At *Zoomerang*, from Answers VBS, you'll marvel at the unforgettable wildlife, culture, and beauty of Australia while exploring the wonder and value of life, from the lives of preborn babies to eternal life in the kingdom of God. You will discover that life is valuable. From the tiniest to the oldest, each person is made in the image of God—wonderfully designed to know Him and live for Him!

**Register Today!** – You can use the registration form on page 5 or register online at [immanuelmc.com](http://immanuelmc.com) and click on the VBS box. One form is needed for EACH child.



# Shepherds & Lambs

## The Sunday School Newsletter

### May 2022

**Promises**—Car, appliance, self-help books all make promises. We hope we can get the answer, we can avoid trouble, or have wondrous answers to our quandaries! Individuals make promises too. Every day, we say things like these to one another: “We’ll get together over lunch next week—it’s a promise.” “I’ll call you tomorrow—guaranteed!” “I’ll make it to your game next week.” Promises are only good if they are kept.



Speaking of our children—if only they came with an instruction book! Sometimes we seek out parenting books looking for their promises to help with our parenting difficulties. Are all these promises kept? Of course not!

In contrast, the promises of our God stand forever. When our Lord makes a promise, we can be sure He will keep it. He does what he says He will do. It’s that simple. Changing circumstances don’t take Him by surprise. Yet, our Lord’s promises will carry us through when our courage and wisdom falter. It’s so important to keep Jesus’ promises in our hearts as we parent. These promises stir up confidence in our hearts and bring comfort and forgiveness for today and hope for tomorrow. These promises will carry us through when parenting grows difficult, and they will stimulate our joy when things go well.

- “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).
- “[God’s] hand will guide me” (Psalm 139:10).
- “Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31).

*Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of family—for gifts of parents and children. Comfort and encourage all parents in the confidence that your every promise is “yes” in Jesus and His cross. Help us cling more tightly to your Word, relying on it in our every need. When our grip on you fails, remind us that you always hold on to us—in unrelenting love and compassion. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

You have the unique opportunity to share the love of Jesus with your children!!

## HAPPY MOTHER’S AND FATHER’S DAY!!



**Thanks to Deb Topolski** for filling in while I was gone this winter. I appreciated knowing that I left the Sunday School in capable hands!

**Have you noticed** that our Alleluia banner is “out of the tomb” and hung in Fellowship Hall!



**We are finishing the last quarter** of a 3-year series of the *Enduring Faith* curriculum. This will finish in August when we start the *TREE OF LIFE-GOD’S PROMISE OF SALVATION* series with the congregation and Adult Bible class. More information will be in the June Gazette.



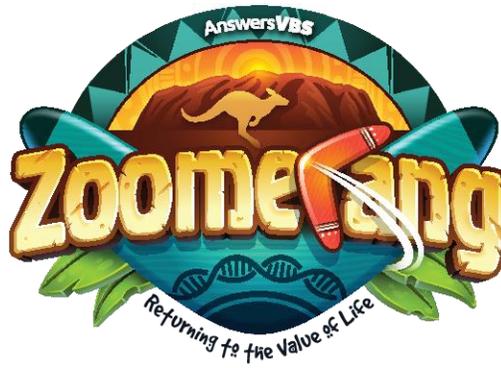
### Alleluia!! He’s risen! He’s risen indeed! Alleluia!!

Lynette Johnston-Martin  
Superintendent



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL  
JULY 18-22, 2022  
8:30-11:30 a.m.

For Ages 4 – 11  
(or just completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade)



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1237 E. COOLSPRING AVE.  
MICHIGAN CITY, IN 46360  
(219) 872-4419



### Registration Form

(one form for each child, please)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade just completed \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Siblings Attending VBS \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Church Home \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Food Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Allergies or Conditions \_\_\_\_\_

People who may pick up the child \_\_\_\_\_

I permit my child's name and food allergy to be posted for VBS staff to see. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ NA \_\_\_

VBS leaders have permission to photograph/film the minor(s) designated above in any manner or form for any lawful purpose associated with this VBS program. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

By signing, I agree that my child has my permission to attend and participate in the Zoomerang VBS program, July 18-22, 2022.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

You can also register online at [immanuelmc.com](http://immanuelmc.com) and click on the VBS box.

**PLEASE SUBMIT REGISTRATION FORM BY MONDAY, JULY 11.**



**PLEASE NOTE:** The deadline to submit items for the June *Gazette* is **Monday, May 2**. There will **not** be July or August issues of *Gabriel's Gazette*, so be sure to get all your summer news in now.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS: WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE PARK 2022 – Sunday, July 17, 10:00 a.m.**  
**at Creek Ridge County Park, 7943 W. 400 N. in Michigan City.**

