

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

FEBRUARY 2023



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

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A Tour of the Holy Land

Well, I just returned from the trip of a lifetime! I had always wanted to visit the Holy Land and have now walked in the land where our Lord brought about the salvation of the world. I hope to give a full presentation of my trip during Bible Study hour for a few Sundays in February and another at Simeon Square. I'll announce those dates when I have them. I have 1,100 pictures to sort through!!! Here are a few impressions from my trip:

I could not get over the layers upon layers of history in this land. In America, anything over 100 years old is ancient. In northern Europe it was more like over 400 years old. In Israel, anything over 1,000 years old was ancient. Something 500 years old is presented as "modern"! There were places with 30-40 layers of civilizations on top of one another! A knowledge of history was so important, as we looked at monuments from Canaanite, Israelite, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Crusader, Mamluk, Ottoman, British, and modern Israel periods.

Secondly, I found the geography impressive. It was much more mountainous than I imagined. I can't imagine traveling in those days on foot from town to town. In that way, though, we can pinpoint the places Jesus had to have travelled and where He probably stopped. There are often only certain ways to get from place to place, through the narrow valleys between mountains. This also made certain cities very strategic to fortify. One couldn't easily conquer, for example, Jerusalem and the southern kingdom without first conquering Megiddo. Also, many of the dwellings from the days of ancient Israel to the days of Jesus were made from caves in the mountains. Even in Nazareth, which was in a little crag

between mountains, many homes were dug into the rock.

Thirdly, you could not avoid seeing the high religious tensions in this Holy Land. Everyone recognizes this place as having profound religious significance and wants it for their own. High security walls, guards with high-powered rifles, loud chanting, eccentric religious clothing, calls to prayer, and huge ornate places of worship everywhere you look, all remind you of how contested this place continues to be. Sadly, most live in darkness, ignoring Israel's greatest significance being the place where the Son of God came down and paid for the sins of the world.

For a Christian, there are some great benefits to visiting the Holy Land. One is that it will increase your Biblical imagination. By that I mean, when you read the Scriptures, you will be able to better visualize the places where they happened. For me, as a more visual person, it helps me distinguish the different roads, cities, mountains, valleys, and streams as I read of them.

It also is a great joy to see the mountains of archeological evidence which support the narratives of Scripture I've heard and believed since I was a little child. We would not need proof of the Bible in order to believe it, but is a thrill to see it nevertheless. Again, it makes the imagination come alive and the reality that these things actually did take place, in real history, in our world.

It is also a beautiful exercise of prayer and devotion. As we visited certain locations, we would read Bible passages which pertained to them, pray, and sing hymns. To hear a narrative of Scripture while standing in the very place it happened is a breathtaking and moving experience.

(continued on pg. 2)

A Tour of the Holy Land

(continued from pg. 1)

Going to the Holy Land is not for everyone. It is a long, long journey to get there. It involves a lot of walking, rain or shine. There is a lot to take in and learn. If you don't like history or if you can't endure long days, walking uphill, and distant travel, you probably shouldn't go. But for those that can handle it, it is a wonderful pilgrimage. I hope, God willing, to lead a tour to the Holy Land in 2025 for anyone interested. I also wanted to thank you for allowing me to be gone for this trip, for your support and prayers. This was truly a gift I will never forget.

Pastor



Thanks to all who served in leadership positions for our congregation during 2022.

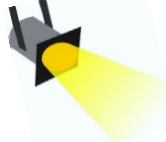
The offering you gave of your time and talents has been greatly appreciated by us all.



A LOOK AHEAD TO LENTEN SUPPERS

Lent is just around the corner! We will need six 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. Dates are: February 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE. . .



Stewardship Spotlight

Happy New Year and God's blessings! 1 Peter 4:10 tells us, "Use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." As we begin a new year, it is a good time to review the various category options on our giving envelopes. Please note that members are assigned new numbers at the beginning of each year. If you haven't picked up your giving box or need one, please check with the office.

1. Home Operating Fund: Offerings here are used to cover the expenses generated in the day-to-day operation of Immanuel Church. These include salaries, taxes, insurance, supplies, minor maintenance, utilities, etc.
2. IN District/Synod Missions: Offerings here are sent to Indiana District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We send the full amount that is given.
3. Personal Mission Support: Offerings here, unless specifically marked, are divided equally between Gloria Dei Mission, Valparaiso, IN; Ascension Lutheran Christian School in Gary, IN; and the Russian Siberian Mission Society.
4. Mortgage Fund: Offerings here go to pay down our mortgage.
5. Church Improvement: This fund is intended to be used for any big expenses arising in maintaining our building and replacing of equipment. However, if enough money is not contributed to cover our expenses in Home and Mortgage Funds, cash from this fund has been and will be used to keep Immanuel solvent. A record of the monies contributed to this fund is maintained.
6. Great Commission: This fund is to promote publicity about Immanuel and Jesus through the media. Contributions here help to support the Home Operating Fund items of Outreach and also radio and TV ministry. "By the Way" Daily Devotions on WEFM 95.9 is broadcast daily following 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. news and weekends at 6:55 a.m.
7. If the envelope is not marked specifically for any of these categories, the offering amount is split 80% to the Home Fund and 20% to the IN District/Synod.

Other: In addition to the printed boxes, miscellaneous specially marked offerings and memorials are recorded under those particular areas.

Thought for the day: Stewardship begins with our gifts from God and continues through our service to others. Don't forget the Great Commission is to tell others about our Lord and Savior. Go and share the Good News with others and let your light shine in the darkness.

YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE!



**American
RedCross**

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

BLOOD DRIVE - Thursday, Feb. 9 2 p.m. – 6 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
to make an appointment.**

For each unit donated, three lives can be saved!
See Pat Potratz for more information.



Celebrating New Members and Baptisms!

On **Sunday, February 19**, following the worship service, we will have a potluck meal to welcome our newer members and celebrate the baptisms of the past year.

This is an opportunity for our Immanuel family to come together and celebrate these important milestones, so please make plans to attend. Please bring your own table service and a side dish or two to share. Meat and beverages will be provided.



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

**WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:00 PM
BEGINNING ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 22**

Come early for supper at 5:30



Have you begun the new year with Bible Study?

It's never too late to begin! Immanuel offers the following classes. All are invited to attend and are always welcome at any of these sessions.

Sunday mornings 8:45 a.m.

Pastor's class meets in Fellowship Hall.

A women's class meets in the Office Conference Room.

Tuesday evenings 6:00 p.m.

Pastor leads a class at Simeon Square.

Monthly classes

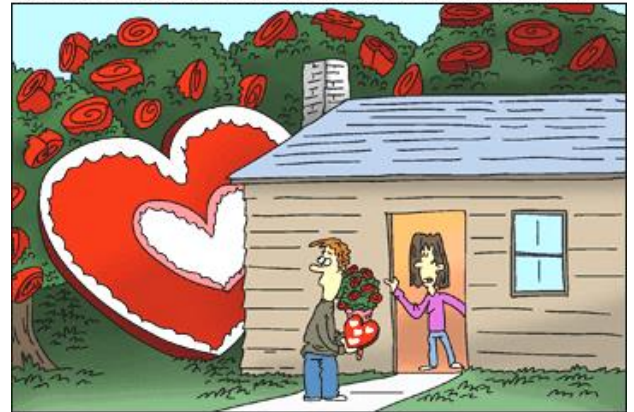
1st Saturday of each month, 8:00 AM

The Men's Network meets in the Fellowship Hall.

1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month, 8:30 AM

Ladies Bible Study & Tea meets in Fellowship Hall.

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JESUS STOPPED BY AND NOBODY LOVES
MORE THAN HIM, BUT BEFORE YOU GET
JEALOUS OR ANYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
THAT IT IS FOR YOU TOO

02-15-2013



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter

February 2023



Happy Valentines Day!!

SPREAD THIS LOVE OF GOD TO OTHERS!!

-- Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent

February, the "Love month." Much is said this month about love. But in the Bible, 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because He first loved us." What an overwhelming feeling of comfort to know God loved us first, before anything else. The following is a special song, here are the lyrics. That tells it all! God loves us from before we were born to when we join Him in Heaven. Read these and I hope you feel the sense of comfort in these words that I did.

God Knew Your Name

Words and music by Jim Likens © 1997 Jim Likens

Before the light of day, shined on your little face
God knew your name.
When no one else could see how precious you would be,
God knew your name.
And He held you so close in His loving hand
And He wanted all to see, that
Before the light of day, shined on your little face,
God knew your name.

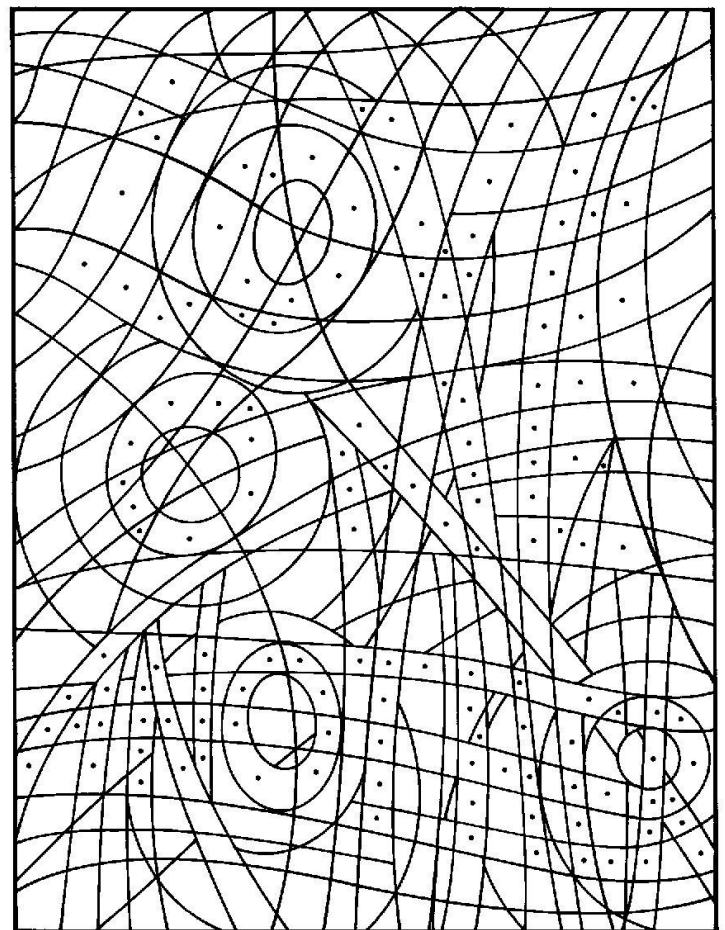
Before you walked around, before you first fell down,
God knew your name.
Before you rode your trike, and then that first red bike,
God knew your name.
He was with you everyday, right there by your side
Even when you made mistakes. And
Before the light of day shined on your little face,
God knew your name.

Before those wedding bells range their story well,
God knew your name.
Before that first new home and children of your own
God knew your name.
And through all times, both the good and bad,
He held you in His hand, and
Before the light of day, shined on your little face,
God knew your name.

As you gracefully grew old you know you had been told
God knew your name.
And one day when you died and your friends and family cried
God knew your name.
And my angels carried your soul to me
And I said "Welcome home!"
You were one of mine, I loved you for all time, for
I knew your name.
You were one of mine, I loved you for all time, for
I knew your name.

The Book of 2 John for children

Color in all spaces with a • .





Beyond Reasonable Doubt

2023 HIGHER THINGS CONFERENCE

“AND IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED, OUR PREACHING IS USELESS AND SO IS YOUR FAITH.”

(1 CORINTHIANS 15:14)

Doubt. We confess to being poor miserable sinners every week but it can be hard to confess to wondering if there's even a God who exists to listen at all. Doubt crept into the apostles' hearts, but we're afraid of what it means if we find it in our own. The devil sets a trap to leave you feeling alone, cut off from the Christians around you who don't seem to struggle like you. What if it's not real?

Jesus isn't just some guy. He died and then didn't stay dead. That's our hope. You can even prove it. God gives us verifiable scripture that can be traced and upheld through history. You just can't by your own reason or strength believe it. So He speaks to us, doubting hearts and minds that can't quite help but question.

The same thing is the core of our hope and our worldview: the resurrection. Because it's real. The gospel proclaimed by the Spirit to our hearts is something God dares us to question with our minds. If Christ has not been raised from the dead, we are above all to be pitied. So test it. There is evidence. This is the defense of the faith that defends you. It's called "apologetics." Your hope is rooted in a historic event, not in your own reason and strength.

O Ye of little faith, why did you doubt? It isn't a challenge. It's a call to be the one Jesus pulls from sinking waters. Like Peter. This is where you start to find your identity and belonging. You're not cut off from Christ in this doubt...If you must doubt, doubt boldly.

In the summer of 2023, we'll tackle a faith that isn't a fairytale, and we'll prove it. Beyond Reasonable Doubt.

Who: All youth, 8th grade and up
What: Higher Things Conference 2023
When: July 18-21, 2023
Where: University of Illinois in Carbondale, IL.
Why: FUN!
Cost: \$50 for members, \$100 for non-members

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.



EASTER EGG HUNT

Do you or your children love the Easter Egg Hunt? Would you be willing to plan and organize this year's hunt? If so, please call the office for more details.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS !

The dates have been set for this year's Vacation Bible School:

June 26-30



Program details will be shared as they develop, but mark it on your calendar now and save the dates. You won't want to miss it!



PLEASE NOTE: The deadline for submitting items for the *March Gazette* is **Monday, Feb. 6.**

You shall know they are Christians by their Love

