

# Immanuel Lutheran News

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Visit our web site at [www.immanuelaltamont.org](http://www.immanuelaltamont.org)

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## From Pastor Wright

### The Family of God

The first human beings began life as adults. That is the only time it has ever happened. The rest of us “came to the earth in the usual way,” as singer Harry Chapin penned. We began life as embryos, then were born as children and had to grow up. As children we needed parents to protect and nurture us. God designed Adam and Eve to serve as parents to their children. In doing so, the bond between parents and children became strong. Parents are God’s agents to provide for the needs of their children, and children are to honor their parents. The Catechism directs us to “love, honor, serve, and obey” those God sets over us in the role of parent.

“Family comes first” we say when we are asked to work too many hours, thereby depriving our children of our time as parents. Jesus had a different idea of family. He respected his parents and was submissive to them, even though he was the Son of God (Luke 2:51). He loved his mother deeply, commanding the Apostle John to care for her after his death (John 19:26). But blood family wasn’t the most important thing to Jesus.

One day when Jesus was teaching in a house, his mother and brothers asked him to come outside to speak to him. Jesus told the messenger, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” He stretched out his hands and said to those listening to him, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:46-50).

This was written so that we would see that Jesus loves us more than his own immediate family. Those who “do the will of the Father” are first hearers of His word. God gathers us together around his word. There he tells us that we are the most important thing to him. God the Father gives his beloved Son Jesus to die for us, so that the dividing wall of hostility can be broken down. The forgiveness of sins costs Jesus everything. He willingly gives up his very life to reconcile us to the Heavenly Father. When we receive this by faith, we are made part of God’s family. This is our true family which lasts forever.

Because this comes at such a great cost to God, it is to be of first importance to us. Jesus said “Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” “Though father and mother have forsaken me, the Lord will take me in” (Psalm 27:10).

Because each person is precious to God, everyone should be precious to us, whether they are related to us by blood or not. This begins in the congregation, the people God gathers us together with around the Word and Sacraments. We are to see the people we worship with as our true family. After all, we will be spending eternity together in the new world.

I wish everyone would remember that all the members of Immanuel congregation do not have blood family in the community to support them. When an emergency situation happens to our town, the natural thing is to check with our blood family to see if they need anything. We tend to forget about those who have no family nearby. Our first priority should be the family of faith. It should be our goal to be known as a church of which people say, “You may not be related to the members of that church, but they treat you like family.”

I hope my words here do not offend you. My goal is to lead all of you to reach outside your own household to those in need around you. They will not ask for your help, because like you they have been taught to be self-sufficient. But that doesn’t mean they don’t need your support. “Love one another as I have loved you,” said the Lord.

Here’s a secret: I am so proud of those of you who care for people you aren’t related to, inviting them to church, giving them a ride to a church function, taking them to the doctor, watching their kids when they have an appointment, and things like that. It makes me so glad to see the gospel of God has its way with you, opening your heart to those who have no one to care for them. It is the way of the Christian because it is the way of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Wright

## **Stewardship Corner**

When it comes to stewardship, a favorite Bible verse is the account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). It's a moving account. Our Lord praises the seemingly small gift of two copper coins given by a poor widow above the abundance of gifts given by the rich, saying, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them" (Luke 21:3).

And that is usually where we stop. But the text goes on. "For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4).

"She ... put in all she had to live on." She gave everything. She held nothing back. She trusted that the Lord who made her and all creatures, who gave her everything she had, who redeemed her from her own sin, from death, and the power of the devil, who called her by the Gospel and enlightened her with His gifts of Word and Sacrament, would continue to do this. He would provide her with all that she needed for this body and life because that is the character of the God she had.

But this is not why we give small gifts. Her gift, though it appeared small, was actually large. When we are tempted to give small gifts it is precisely because we want them to be small! We don't trust the Lord to provide for us.

We give small gifts because we lack faith in the One who created us, redeemed us, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. We give small gifts because we doubt that God will really give us what we need and desire. We give small gifts because we are not content with what God has already given.

We are not slaves, children of the slave woman, under the Old Covenant (Gal. 4). We are adopted sons of the free woman. And since we are sons, we are also heirs. And heirs receive the inheritance. For everything is already ours in Christ. And thus, moved by the willing spirit of adoption, we do the will of God in financial matters far beyond all that done by those under the Old Covenant who were forced by legal demands.

So what have you decided to give? How do I decide what to give? Let the Scriptures be your guide.

We are to give proportionally to what we have received from God's giving to us (Luke 12:48; 1 Cor. 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 8:12). But you have not been set free to give nothing. See that you excel in the grace of giving (2 Cor. 8:7).

We are not free to live selfishly outside the Gospel, without regard for God who gives us all

good gifts, without generosity for our neighbor who needs us and our gifts, without supporting the community of faith in which we live, without care for our spiritual fathers and those who teach and help raise our children in the faith, without resources for the poor and needy – in short, we are not free to live unto ourselves, hoarding what God has given us only for us.

For love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). And the sum of the law is this: Love God and love your neighbor (Matt. 22:34-40). We love because He first loved us. We give because He has given to us.

Luther once said, "Possessions belong in your hands, not in your heart" (LW 14:240). There is a reason your 10 fingers spread apart. With your hands you catch God's gifts for what you need and let the rest fall through your fingers to your neighbors – your family, your friends, your community, your church.

## **Welcome New Members**

John and Linda Baginski come to us from

Steeleville, IL. John is a retired Lutheran school principal. He plays the organ. They have an adult son named Curtis who lives with them.

Rick and Kristen Savage come from Pevely, MO.

Kristen grew up at Immanuel. They have three children, Ethan, Landon, and Owen.

Jim and Marilyn Mellendorf and their son Darrel have joined by transfer from St. John, Louisville, IL.

Dale and Linda Heinkel moved here from northern Illinois. Dale works in agribusiness.

## **Prayer Corner**

- For healing of Kenneth Budde, Jim Campbell, Tiffany Dunaway, Abbey Franzen, Wayne Franzen, Adela Goers, Linda Heinkel, Mike Herboth, Jim Jones, Orina Julius, Pam Kepley, Amiee Lowry, Margaret Miller, JR Newby, Gary Pryor, Mildred Renken, Julie Seales, Kinley Walker, Randy Wolf, Elizabeth Weidner, others.
- For our pastors, church staff, ALIS school staff.
- For Lutheran missionaries Ted Krey, Andrew Schlund, and Britt Odemba and for their families.
- For all who travel
- For peace in the world, an end to violence in the name of God, and for harmony among the nations.
- For those persecuted for their faith in Jesus.
- For police, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel, and those who serve in our military and their families

## From Pastor Ross

Dear Friends in Christ,

All who live will suffer. Those five words might be the least controversial thing that I ever write, because it's something that all human beings acknowledge to be true (once they're old enough to realize it). We suffer in our hearts, our minds, our bodies, and our spirits. In this suffering, we simply endure the trials that all humans have endured from Adam and Eve down to the present, with every single human life in-between a part of the chain. In this way, we have much in common with anyone, of any faith, from any place.

So, if all who live will suffer, then what makes it different to say **Christians suffer**? Is there a difference at all? Well, the answer is, yes, quite so! To the non-Christian world, there is nothing worse than suffering, as evident by the most popular arguments for legalized abortion and assisted suicide is – that's right – to avoid suffering. I've spoken to people who honestly believe that it is better to kill a human being (even against their will, like an unborn child) than let that person be born into a life of suffering.

Christians suffer the same ways as non-Christians – heart, mind, body, spirit – but thanks be to God, that's where the similarity ends! As Christians, we know that our suffering is not meaningless. Our suffering has a cause, a termination, and yes, even a redemption! The cause of suffering is, of course, sin: as sinners in a sinful world, we will suffer, plain and simple. But we know that our sufferings, however extreme or weighty they are, are not all they are! As Christians, our suffering is limited to this life we have now, to however many years we have, and no more; hence we can, through our tearful goodbyes at funerals, rejoice that our friends & family who die in the faith have concluded their warfare against suffering, and will never again be afflicted by the enemy.

But the greatest promise of God, is that our suffering will be redeemed: as our Lord spoke to St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you; my power is made perfect in weakness." Perfect people who never suffer don't need a Savior who suffered for them, but we are Christians precisely because we know that our Savior suffered and died for us who suffer. Through the pain and weakness of our sufferings of heart, mind, body, and spirit, we are drawn closer to our Lord, as we rely on Him for strength and deliverance, with the certain hope that our God-given faith in Him will be rewarded.

We know that we will suffer in this life, and Christ has told us to expect it (John 16:33), but as suffering draws us closer to God, we see the fullness of the story: our sufferings produce results in us that produce the hope that we have, the certain joy of all God's promises being fulfilled (Romans 5:3-5), chief among them that our present sufferings are not worth even comparing to what God has waiting for us in an eternal land without suffering (Romans 8:18-39)! It is because we know what God has waiting for us that we can even rejoice in our sufferings, because we are merely following the footsteps of our Lord (1 Peter 2:21; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18): through suffering, yes, and to the tomb, it's true, but then to life eternal!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ross, a Suffering Follower of Christ

### Drive-Through Church

No, we are not advocating a drive-through window at Immanuel. Just the opposite. Mobile banking, fast food windows, and shop at home works fine for everything else, but faith comes by hearing for yourself. Sunday school will resume soon and we encourage parents not to merely drop off their children at 9:45 AM for classes, but attend Bible class with Pastor Wright yourself. Parents will want to set a good example for their children of the value of Christian learning for a lifetime. Whatever else may happen on a Sunday morning cannot compare with the riches we receive through thoughtful study of God's Word. Come join us in the Parish Hall while your children are learning in Sunday school.

Sunday School Teacher Meeting is set for Sunday, August 12 after the 11:00 Service. More Sunday School teachers are needed, contact Lindsey Pruemmer at 618-553-7692 to volunteer.

FIRST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL is Sunday, August 19 at 9:45 a.m. Preschool 3 and 4 year olds meet in the lower level of the Parish Hall. Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade meet at ALIS.

Public School Confirmation Classes are Wednesdays from 3:30-4:45PM. The first class will be August 22.

*You like living stones are built up as a Spiritual House to be a holy priesthood. 1 Peter 2:5*

### **After School Care**

Enrollment Packets are available at the Immanuel Church Parish Hall lobby, at A.L.I.S and the Altamont Grade School.

Completed "Enrollment forms" must be turned in at the Altamont Lutheran School office by Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Altamont Grade School office by Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. Families from either school may also submit Enrollment forms to the Immanuel Church office. Any students enrolling beyond the maximum allowable numbers or submitting enrollment forms after the August 10<sup>th</sup> deadline will be informed if they are on a "waiting list" and will be contacted when openings occur.

First days of school:

There will be No ASC on Thurs., August 16 for ALIS due to 11:05 dismissal.

ASC will be available for AGS on Thursday due to full day dismissal time. After School Care participants will be bussed from AGS to After School Care as usual.

**Parents of college students** (especially first year college students leaving home 😊) are asked to give their child's college address to the church office as soon as it becomes available. The church would like to keep in contact with your child.

**Effingham Co. Fair** runs July 28 to August 4. Check the fairstand schedule in this newsletter for your work schedule for the Immanuel Fair Stand or check bulletin boards at church. Call Diana Wendling 618-335-0067 to volunteer.

**Large Print** workers needed for Tuesday, August 7. Sign the chart in the narthex or call Eloise 483-6439.

**No** Ladies Aid Meeting in August.

**Lutherans for Life** August 12, 1PM.

**Take advantage of our Electronic Giving:** Make your donations to the church automatically. Your offering will be marked with your envelope number. If interested, contact Barb Busby 618-694-5499.

**Tax Savings** Take advantage of this tax law allowing IRA distributions to go to a Qualified Charity. Consider donating your IRA Required Minimum Distribution to the Church and pay no tax on the amount distributed.

**Offering Envelopes** – To save money on envelopes, we will be renumbering 2019 offering envelopes.

**Altamont Food Pantry** Items of the week: *PEANUT BUTTER, JELLY, KETCHUP & MUSTARD*  
*We helped 48 people last week.*

**A special thanks** to all who remembered us with cards, calls and prayers on our 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. We have been truly blessed.

Gene & Bernadine Bloemer

**The family of** Dorothy Heiser wishes to thank Rev. Dr. James Wright and Rev. Bernard Ross for all their prayers, visits and words of kindness for Dorothy over the years.

We also wish to thank the Ladies Aid for their love and support shown to her over the years and assisting with the dinner.

We also want to thank all of her church family for the fellowship and kindnesses and all those who assisted her in any way.

May God bless all of you for your kindness.

**We want to extend** a heartfelt thank you to the members of our church family due to the recent storm damage on the Beccue home. Words can't express our gratitude for all the love that has been extended. Thank you to Pastor Ross and Pastor Wright for your visits and calls, The Ramsey family for being so gracious, Kenny Mercier, members who picked up yard debris, brought food, newspapers, and or visited with words of comfort. The list would be numerous of all the people that we need to acknowledge our thankfulness towards for their help. You'll never know how much it truly meant to us and we are so appreciative of all of you as we work through this situation.

Sincerely,

Melvin and Freda Beccue

Darren Beccue

Mark and Cindy Vail and Family

**Altamont Zone LWML Fall Rally --Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>** hosted by Immanuel Ladies Aid, Shobonier (Augsburg). Registration beginning at 5:00 p.m. Mark your calendar now.

This year the district has given us the opportunity to pick our own speaker... David Reed and his wife Sharon were baptized, confirmed and married at Immanuel, Augsburg. They are anxious to share their mission work experiences with CALMS (Central American Lutheran Mission Society).

**FACE Trivia Night at the Movies** – August 3, 7PM. Call 217-240-4487 or [sara.brinker.face@gmail.com](mailto:sara.brinker.face@gmail.com) for more information or see posters on boards.

**Calling All Quilters** A John Deere quilt is in the frame ready for stitching! Goal is to have it completely done to be auctioned off Sat. night with proceeds to St. Jude's. Come to quilt 9AM to 8PM Aug.9 –Aug.11 at Mill Road Threshermans Show at the Effingham Co. Fairgrounds. Cost: \$5 at Gate. Contact Kathy Schroeder 217-821-1422; Crystal Habing 217-821-1793; or [www.millroadthresherman.org](http://www.millroadthresherman.org) or FB.