

Immanuel Lutheran News

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Visit our web site at www.immanuelaltamont.org

September 2018

From Pastor Wright

You may have heard the news that my wife, Lisa, has breast cancer. "What? The pastor's wife has cancer?" Yes, it's true. She is taking chemotherapy from now until December. There's no history of cancer in her family, but it happened. This shows us that God allows all of us to suffer. God does not spare us from hardship because we preach his word, believe, or do many good works. We shouldn't wonder, "What did I do to make God mad?" If that were the case, we could find many sins in us that surely deserve punishment.

Jesus has taken our punishment on himself. This is not retribution. God is not mad at us. "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," (Romans 8:1). The forgiveness Jesus won for us in his suffering, death, and resurrection is complete. When things happen to us that we don't like, we should not think God is angry with us. It's just the opposite. He loves us. He wants us to trust him even more with the things we cannot change. We shouldn't choose to suffer and ask for hardship to come to us. But when it does, we are given the opportunity to trust him more. It seems to me that we can grow through suffering in several ways.

First, we can grow to be more like Jesus. He suffered in this life, and we bear his image as Christians, that is, followers of Christ.

Next, the devil is our enemy, and the world is harassed by him. The devil wants us to suffer, especially because we carry around in us the Word of God that gives us hope. God uses that suffering to teach us that His Word is stronger than any fear or discomfort we have, and that God's Word defeats the plans of the devil.

If you're like me, you tend to get lazy in faith if you don't have any challenges. So God allows us to be challenged by a terrible thing that we fear. He does this so we will stop thinking we can handle everything by our own power and we cry out to him in prayer continually. When things get really bad, we are driven to long for the afterlife that Jesus has promised to bring us into. We yearn for heaven.

Another reason we suffer is that we are holy. God has justified us by faith. He has taken our sins away and declared us to be holy. So when believers suffer, our suffering is holy as well. We have the Word and promises of God that He will help us hold up under

the hardship we are experiencing. Those who don't believe do not have this kind of comfort. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world," (John 16:33). This is the greatest gift, to have confidence that God is helping us. We won't be living in this world and in this life very long. But we will live again in another world without suffering. Count me in on that.

Lisa and I are very optimistic about her treatment program. But it's hard to go through, as some of you already know from your own illnesses. We appreciate your prayers and concern. Keep holding Lisa up in prayer, and thank you for your kind words of encouragement. With Jesus, we shall overcome the

world.

Pastor Wright

New Member Class will begin on Tuesday, September 18, from 6:30-8:00 on with Pastor Wright in the Conference Room by the church office. Please spread the word. These classes will continue on Tuesdays into November. We won't meet on September 25.

Life Team Training What's a Life Team? The Life Team of Immanuel Lutheran Church exists to equip our church to be Gospel-motivated voices for life. We provide information, encouragement, tools, examples, and opportunities to help people champion life in the joy of the Gospel. We're motivated, and we want our church to be motivated to champion life out of ongoing gratitude for being rescued by God through our faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We want our church and others to celebrate and care for people—especially those in deadly peril—from the beginning to the end of life. We equip our church to impact our community and the world for life. The next opportunity to be trained to be an effective team member will be Tuesday, September 4 and 11 from 6-8 pm with Pastor Wright in the Parish Hall.

Budget Meeting There will be a meeting of designated board members of the church on Monday, September 10 at 7:00 PM in the Conference Room to plan the church's budget for the coming year.

Cancelled Sunday School on September 2, Labor Day Weekend. No High School or Post High School. Yes to Pastor Wright Bible Class.

Tour of England and Scotland Join Pastor and Lisa Wright as they visit Stonehenge, Salisbury, Bristol, Bath, Stratford, the Lake District, Edinburgh, York, Oxford and two days in London. Dates are July 15-25, 2019. The tour includes airfare, first class hotels, most meals, professional tour guide and motor coach, admission fees, taxes, and local guides. Price is \$4,299. See the brochure in the parish hall lobby or talk to Pastor or Lisa and reserve a seat now.

From Pastor Ross

Dear Friends in Christ,

As those who are "in Christ," that is, those who have been united by baptism and faith to our Lord and Savior, we know that one of the most basic attributes we have as Christians is to be forgiven. It is good right and salutary that we know this: our starting point for our relationship to our Triune God is that, as sinners, we have sinned and rebelled against God, yet out of His grace, mercy, and love, we have been granted a Savior, who died on the cross to pay for our sins and rose from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:25). Through faith in Him, we receive eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. We are forgiven, plain and simple; whatever we have or have not done, even those things which we dare not speak aloud to another living soul, is forgiven in the sight of Almighty God, because Christ Himself paid for those sins when He shed His blood and died on the cross. We are forgiven, as we know, as so many of our hymns declare, and even as our Apostles' and Nicene Creeds remind us each and every Sunday.

But that forgiveness is not ours to keep – it is to be shared. Part of that sharing is the sharing of the faith, the spread of the Gospel, and telling those who do not yet believe of Jesus, that they too may be forgiven as we are (Romans 10:17); compared to the other part of sharing forgiveness, this is the easy half. The other part? **Christians are Forgiving.** As sinners in a sinful world, we know that we have hurt others, as our guilt and shame remind us, sometimes daily. But, as we well know, others have hurt us: neglectful parents, abusive or unfaithful spouses, ungrateful children, estranged siblings, back-stabbing former friends, vindictive co-workers...the list is never-ending. Were we not Christians, our *modus operandi* would be to respond to their spite with our own spite, their hateful words with our hateful words, their venom with our own. Were we to do that, who could honestly blame us?

But as Christians, our starting point with God is forgiveness. What if God had responded to our hatred of Him with His hatred of us? What if God has responded to our rebellion with the lethal force that an army of angels can bring to bear? The consequences

are horrifying; thanks be to God that His response was forgiveness. Thus, God forgiving us all the awful things we have done, is what enables us, by His grace, to forgive others; we are to forgive as we have been forgiven, and are warned that to not forgive others is to not be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:32).

Is forgiveness hard? Usually, yes, sometimes even seemingly impossible. But the Lord knows the difference between "I refuse to forgive this person," and "Lord, I cannot forgive them on my own, so please help me." The former is to reject God's forgiveness, while the second is a God-pleasing prayer that He will honor. Christians are forgiven, and that means that **Christians are Forgiving.**

Yours in Christ, Pastor Ross,

Praying for the Strength to Forgive Others

Prayer Corner

- For healing of Rich Brillhart, Bessie Budde, Kenneth Budde, Jim Campbell, Tiffany Dunaway, Abbey Franzen, Wayne Franzen, Adela Goers, Dylan Graham, Gert Heiden, Mike Herboth, Jim Jones, Orina Julius, Pam Kepley, Amiee Lowry, Margaret Miller, Hildegard Moll, JR Newby, Mildred Renken, Shirley Schulze, Evelyn Shumaker, Kinley Walker, Randy Wolf, Elizabeth Weidner, Lisa Wright and 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

Lutherans for Life Planning meeting Sunday, September 9, 1PM in parish hall.

Sunday, September 30 Benefit, 11-1 in the parish hall *All You Can Eat "Burgers, Brats and Beans"* for free will donation. *Half proceeds to Immanuel debt retirement and half proceeds to help youth with travel expenses for Jan. 2019 March for Life in Washington, D.C.*

Large Print workers needed for Tues. September 4. Sign the chart in narthex or call Eloise 483-6439.

Correction: Curtis Baginski transferred to Immanuel from Immanuel LCMS, West Point, IL.

Ladies Aid Meeting September 6, 7PM. Devotion and topic by Diana Wendling. Hostesses are Loretta Pfenninger and Helen Zeigler.

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 Ministerial Alliance Food Pantry

Needed Items:

CANNED MEALS (spaghetti's, raviolio's etc).

We helped 61 people last week in the food pantry.

The Altamont Ministerial Association takes donations to help the poor with food, gas, and utilities payments in a time of great need.

Right now our funds are running out. If you can help with a cash donation, please make payable to Altamont Ministerial Association and bring it to the church. We are also planning a fundraiser in the near future. *Thanks, everyone.*

Altamont Zone LWML Fall Rally --Tuesday, September 25th hosted by Immanuel Shobonier (Augsburg) Ladies Aid. Registration begins 5:00p.m. Light dinner at 5:30p.m.

Speakers are David Reed and his wife Sharon, former members of Immanuel, Augsburg. They will share their mission work experiences with CALMS (Central American Lutheran Mission Society).

Gifts from the heart ingathering are listed on the PH bulletin board.

Each month, a **LWML-CID mission grant** will be featured. Our mission goal for 2018-2019 is \$95,000; \$71,250 for district grants, \$23,750 will be sent to LWML for national mission grant projects. Grants are paid in full in the order presented as funds become available. Updates are available at lwmlcid.org.

LWML-CID MISSION GRANT #1: Student Aid for Church Workers (\$30,000)

Given the high cost of becoming a full-time church worker, many students find it difficult to complete their schooling. This grant will provide partial funding to CID students so they may realize their dream of becoming full-time church workers. These funds will be distributed through the CID-LCMS Scholarship Committee.

What can I do? Pray that God would provide men and women willing to become church workers to spread the Gospel message. Support your church's LWML society by filling the designated large mite box.

Bells 6:15 and Choir 7:15 Wednesday

Thank you to all the volunteers, Don's Refrigeration and Thrivent in helping make the fairstand successful. Diana Wendling See you next year!

Thank you for your prayers, well wishes, cards, visits since my fall & hospitalization. Thanks also to Pastor Wright and Pastor Ross for their visits & prayers. I am doing well and currently residing at an assisted living facility. My address is Mildred M. Renken c/o Hickory Estates 1091 E 1500 N Road, Apt #33 Taylorville, IL 62568 God bless each of you, Mildred M. Renken

GriefShare Classes at Salem Lutheran

Beginning Monday, September 10, 6:30 to 8:00 Pastor Doug Meyer of Salem Lutheran Church will conduct classes known as GriefShare at the church, 1401 Hawthorn Road, Salem. This 14-week Christ-centered program is designed to help people who have lost loved ones to find healing, hope, and support as they seek to adjust to life without these precious ones around anymore. GriefShare is built around 3 components: videos on topics related to death and grief; support group which allows participants to talk through issues and feelings related to their own grief experiences; and a workbook which provides a tool to guide participants in sorting through their thoughts and emotions and in learning what the Bible says about grief-related topics. Classes are open to the public continue on Mondays 6:30-8:00pm. Please call the church office at 548-3190 for more information or if you would like to register.

Family Life Center's annual fundraising banquet

September 27, 2018 at the Keller Convention Cntr. Seating begins at 6:30 p.m. Dinner/program 7:00 p.m

KNIT TOGETHER "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love" *Colossians 2:2* Featured speaker is Heartbeat International president, Jor-El Godsey.

Reservations are required, the opportunity to contribute financially to the Family Life Center will be presented at the end of the evening.

Family Life Center is a 501c3 not-for-profit, pro-life ministry supported solely through fundraising efforts.