

# Immanuel Lutheran News

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

July 2021

*“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).*

We celebrate this month because of the freedoms and liberties our country has afforded us. We are right to do this. We should be thankful for these liberties – the freedom to gather together to worship and to live out what we believe in our daily lives.

But freedom and liberty in our age have devolved. It has become a freedom from duty instead of a freedom for it. Indeed, freedom and liberty in our age has turned into licentiousness – a license to do what we want, when we want. This license is a submission again to a yoke of slavery. For freedom as license to do what we desire when we desire it means we are slaves to our desires and slaves to our passions.

Christ died to set us free from our desires. In Holy Baptism, our Old Adam is drowned and put to death along with all sin and evil desires so that a new man may arise and live before God in righteousness and purity. In Christ, we are a new creation. We are set free from the passions of the flesh so that we are free to do our duty and bear fruits of the Spirit.

Our duty is what God calls us to do as members of a family, society, and the Church. God calls us to believe in His Word and gladly hear and learn it. He calls us to pray for all people. He calls us to live in faith toward Him and in fervent love for our neighbor. He calls us to put the gifts He gives to us in His service. God calls parents to provide for their children and raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

And God calls children to honor their parents and provide and care for them when they are no longer able to do so themselves. God calls the government to punish those who do evil and to reward those who do good. He calls citizens to pay their taxes and honor the governing officials as God’s servants. He calls pastors to preach and

teach the Gospel, repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And He calls hearers to support those who teach them with every good thing.

Christ died to set us free from the works of our selfish flesh, giving us the freedom and liberty to do our duty. Stand firm, then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

**A Word on the Equality Act** (by LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison) March 11, 2021

To the Pastors, Called Workers and Members of the 6,000 Congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The words of the apostle Peter apply to us now: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for 2/6 you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith — more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. (1 Peter 1:3–8)

The church’s task is not political. It is the proclamation of the Gospel of free salvation in the cross and resurrection of Jesus for all (1 Cor. 1:23; John 18:36). “The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered” (AC VII 1).<sup>1</sup> God rules His church by His infallible Word, the Holy Scriptures (John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15–16).

God rules the state by His eternal law, reason and reasonable laws for the common welfare. “Our churches teach that lawful civil regulations are good works of God” (AC XVI 1; see Rom. 13:1–7). The church should not meddle in government affairs, especially in matters upon which the Word of God is silent. It is also wrong when governments act against God’s eternal law, reason and the basic civil rights of all people. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution enshrines this truth. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or

abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Throughout history, governments have acted unjustly — sometimes in the name of race, atheism, communism, religion and even Christianity — and curtailed or denied the rights of conscience and the free exercise of religion. And governments continue to do so. Our Lutheran and biblical confession is that “it is necessary for Christians to be obedient to their rulers and laws. The only exception is when they are commanded to sin. Then they ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)” (AC XVI 6–7; see 1 Peter 2:13–14).

St. Paul made use of his legal right as a Roman citizen (“I appeal to Caesar” Acts 25:11). “Christ’s kingdom allows us outwardly to use legitimate political ordinances of every nation in which we live, just as it allows us to use medicine or the art of building, or food, drink, and air” (Ap XVI 54). Our Lutheran Confessions commend the seeking of public remedy for injustice. “Public remedy, made through the office of the public official, is not condemned, but is commanded and is God’s work, according to Paul (Romans 13)” (Ap XVI 59). Our God given right to act as citizens is very important, especially now.

The Equality Act is before Congress.<sup>2</sup> It sounds innocent. All Americans should enjoy equality and the protections of the U.S. Constitution. But in elevating sexual orientation to a protected class, the Equality Act will bring sweeping changes to current laws, to the great detriment of the religious and constitutional freedoms of biblically faithful churches, institutions, Christian schools and individuals.

Jesus referred to Genesis 2:24, when He stated: “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matt. 19:4–6)

In fact, those churches and institutions that are bound by the Word of God to the truth of marriage between a man and a woman, and that sex outside of that institution is contrary to the word of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:2), could be punished for simply standing on our consistent, ancient Christian beliefs.

The Equality Act effectively outlaws the words of Christ, the sublime doctrine of Creation, the First Article of the Creed, and our “free exercise of religion” based upon the Bible and Apostles’ Creed. The biblical teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman is to be labeled forever a mere “sex-based stereotype.”<sup>3</sup> The Equality Act expands the definition of “public accommodation” and puts an ultimatum to individuals, religious non-profits, food banks, schools, charities, adoption agencies and others: “Change your faith-based practices or face government punishment.”<sup>4</sup>

Religious schools (K-12 and universities) are a prime target of the Equality Act, which will make it difficult to maintain standards for admission and codes of Christian conduct for students, faculty and staff.<sup>5</sup> The Equality Act will forbid college students from using federal tuition assistance at schools that maintain standards of conduct on the basis of the Bible regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

Sex-specific facilities and female-only spaces could be eliminated. Biological males will have the right to participate in female sports, unjustly denying female athletes at our schools a fair competition and the due rewards of accomplishment.<sup>6</sup>

The Equality Act will eliminate the significant protections of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, passed by Congress and signed into law in 1993.<sup>7</sup> This law has provided strong protections for “free exercise of religion” in the face of overzealous officials.

The Equality Act contains no conscience protections for medical staff who choose not to perform abortions, even if they have religious objections. Because of its broad definition of “health” services, the Equality Act threatens the Hyde Amendment, which limits public funding for abortion. It also threatens Christian hospitals with elimination of funding for not performing “health” services, including abortion or genital mutilation. 3 4 5 6 7 4/6

The Equality Act was recently passed by the House and is currently pending in the Senate. The margin is razor thin. If it does not become law now, we can be assured that it will be pressed again. We encourage all LCMS people to:

1. Treat all people with kindness and respect (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” Mark 12:31), while holding firmly to “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).
2. Become informed about the Equality Act and the issues of gender dysphoria. (See “Additional Resources” below.)
3. Consider your role as Christian citizens and make your voice known to your elected officials, particularly in the U.S. House ([house.gov/representatives](http://house.gov/representatives)) and Senate ([senate.gov/senators/index.htm](http://senate.gov/senators/index.htm)).
4. Pray for our officials, government and the church in these challenging days.

Martin Luther once said, “Christ dwells only in sinners.” We recognize ourselves as sinners constantly in need of Christ’s forgiveness. We recognize the truth of the apostle Peter’s words, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17). We know that Jesus’ opponents grumbled against Him by saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them” (Luke 15:2). This comforting verse applies to us sinners, and we welcome all others to join us at the feet of Jesus, the sole Savior of all (John 3:16). As Christians, we believe that God has created all people, and all are infinitely valuable and accountable to Him. As Christian citizens, we recognize and demand basic God-given civil rights

for all people, even as we insist on the First Amendment rights of Christians.

No matter the course of this or any legislation, Christ will sustain His church. Our hope is not in laws, Congress or courts. Our hope is Christ. "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:8–9, 13–17) 5/6

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison  
President The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Endnotes

1. Citations from the Augsburg Confession (AC) and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Ap) are from Paul T. McCain et al., eds., Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).
2. [congress.gov/bills/117th-congress/house-bills/5/text](https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/house-bills/5/text).
3. Equality Act, Section 2. Findings and Purpose: (1) Discrimination can occur on the basis of the sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ...as well as because of sex-based stereotypes.
4. [adfflegal.org/blog/president-biden-has-promised-pass-equality-act-heres-how-threatens-your-freedoms](https://adfflegal.org/blog/president-biden-has-promised-pass-equality-act-heres-how-threatens-your-freedoms). See the Equality Act, Section. 2, Findings and Purpose: (11) Individuals who are LGBTQ, or are perceived to be LGBTQ, have been subjected to a history... of discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation and gender identity by both private sector and Federal, State, and local government actors, including in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance.... An explicit and comprehensive national solution is needed to address this discrimination."
5. LCMS schools serve many who in some way identify with the LGBTQ community. However, our schools have standards of conduct and the expectation of respect for our biblical teachings.

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**Immanuel Mission Festival** Rev. Ted Krey and family will be with us on June 26-27 for a mission festival. Krey will preach at all services and give a presentation at 9:45 AM on Sunday. A noon potluck dinner is being planned. Meat, drink and table service will be furnished. Consider giving a special gift to support our missionary. **Sign the sheet** in the narthex –or- in the Parish Hall lobby for the potluck meal.

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**Information from Andy and the LYF**

**Car Wash Fundraiser** benefiting the LYF  
Servant Trip this summer. June 27, Noon- 2pm in the North Parking Lot. Free will donation.

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**Youth Servant Trip-** Andy and Pastor will be taking seven youth to Henning, MN, for a servant trip this July. They will assist Lutheran Island Camp with improving and refreshing its facilities. Softball, soccer, archery, and disc golf areas on the Island will be the primary focus of service through repair, painting, and cleaning. Lutheran Island Camp pursues the Glory of God through worship, ministry, giving, and education. They strive to connect with Jesus Christ and to each other to magnify His name.

The youth of Immanuel share in the mission to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to treat our neighbors as we wish to be treated ourselves. Through this servant trip, the youth will be able to share God's love with all the children, volunteers, and staff that are connected to the camp. Our youth are excited about spending a week working to serve the Lord in this way.

Our group has done a great job of fundraising to serve in this way, but we still have a ways to go until they are fully funded. If you would like to help, you can donate to the youth servant trip or look for fundraisers to take part in throughout the summer. We would also appreciate your prayers as we prepare for our trip!

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**Little Caesars Fundraiser**

LYF will be having an online Little Caesars Fundraiser from July 26-Aug 25. How it works is there will be a special link (on the website and posted on the church's facebook page). Click on the link and order what you'd like. Pizza Kits will be delivered directly to your home by FedEx, so send the link to your out of state family and friends, too! We appreciate your support!!!

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## **Prayer Corner**

- For healing: Carl Becker, Debi Bernahl, John Bushue, Tiffany Dunaway, Gloria Fortkamp, Abbey Franzen, Gerald Holste, Sonia Hyde, Pam Kepley, JR Newby, Judy Oldham, Deb Pagel, Cheryl Ragan, Samuel Shelton, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Irene Spilker, Lynn Winter, Craig Wolff, Lilly Wright and others.
- Church staff, ALIS school staff and their families.
- For Lutheran missionaries Ted Krey and Britt Odemba and for their families
- For our government for protection of unborn children and elderly.
- For peace in the world, an end to violence in the name of God, and for harmony among 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.

**Pie Making** - Help is needed to make pies for the Effingham County Fair on Thursday, July 1, 6pm in Immanuel Parish Hall kitchen  
Accepting donations of ingredients for the pies: flour, sugar, Crisco® and fresh, frozen or canned fruit.

**Large Print Workers** needed for Tuesday, July 6  
Call Eloise at 483-6439 to volunteer.

**Church Attendance** The Immanuel attendance policy for ALIS families from our congregation will resume beginning July 1. The congregation expects all members, especially enrolled students and parents, to attend a minimum of 7 of 13 weeks during a school quarter. If you are unable to attend services, contact the Immanuel appeals committee.

**Check the Fairstand Schedule** in the narthex for your chance to work at the Immanuel Fairstand. Mark a 'Y' in front of your name if you plan to work the same schedule as 2019.

**CEFS Meal Deliveries for Immanuel** June 28-July 9. No delivery on Monday July 5 due to 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.

**Ramsey+** The Stewardship Board would like to share some information about the Ramsey Plus program. The program is part of a grant from the Central Illinois District that allows us to offer a free 1 year membership to the Ramsey+ program for each family in the congregation. The cost of this would normally be \$129 per family, if you signed up on your own. You can see that this is a huge investment to be able to offer this program for free to the congregation! The activation code will be published by the end of June.

Return **Baby Bottles** for Family Life Center into baskets at each of the church entrances.  
(Make checks payable to Family Life Center.)

**Usher Schedules** for July –September are on the ushers' table in the narthex.

## **Lutherans for Life Donations**

If you use Lutherans for Life offering envelope, donation will go to *National* Lutherans for Life. If you want a donation to go to *local chapter*, use a Designated envelope and mark "Immanuel Lutherans for Life".

Or you can send gifts and offerings to:  
Lutherans For Life, 1101 5th Street, Nevada, IA 50201-1816

Questions regarding LFL or its programs can be directed to the national office at 888.364.LIFE(5433) [info@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org).

**Altamont Food Pantry** hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3PM. Food Pantry at the Methodist Church.

**Auction Items** are being accepted for Camp CILCA Labor Day annual chicken dinner and live auction. To donate something for the auction, contact Amy Weseloh 309-696-3782 or [weselohamy@yahoo.com](mailto:weselohamy@yahoo.com). She will make arrangements to pick it up or you can drop it off at the Camp CILCA office. *Suggested is a basket from each CID congregation.*

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