

Immanuel Lutheran News

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Visit our web site at www.immanuelaltamont.org

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Sometimes people don't like it when pastors talk about stewardship. For some, it hits too close to home. It is easier to talk about bad people in Washington, in history, or wherever than it is to think about what our daily life in Christ is supposed to look like and how we are supposed to love our neighbor.

The fact that we don't like it certainly means we ought to face it. So, here are a few simple and practical realities.

God calls us to first-fruits, sacrificial giving. That means that we should give off the top. We should set a percentage of our income as a deliberate gift for the work of the Church and then give that first. We write the check to the Lord's work in the Church before we pay the mortgage or pay for our medicine or pay for anything else. We don't pay for all the stuff we need – and stuff we think we need – and then give from what is left over. That is the first-fruits idea. It is hard because we think we need all sorts of other things first. But that is the point of "sacrificial."

Next, how could the starting point for Christian generosity and sacrifice really be anything less than a tithe – 10%? The ceremonial law of the Old Testament was never arbitrary. In the Old Testament, the Levites received this tithe so that they could be full-time ministers.

Does the New Testament have a ministry that is larger or smaller? It is far larger: "Make disciples of *all nations*" (Matt. 28:19). And we are still to have a full-time ministry: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). So if 10% is what it took in the Old Testament, and we have a bigger mission need in the New Testament, how can we expect the Lord's work to be done on less than a tithe?

By first-fruits, sacrificial, and generous giving – that's how. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking that we've outgiven God's goodness or that we've given plenty. We might be tempted to think that way, but consider that no one in the Church has given plenty because no one has

given all. No one has died for his sins. Only the sinless Son of God did that.

St. Paul brought the Good News of Jesus into the discussion of our giving to support the Lord's work in the Church when he wrote: "I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:8-9).

As you can see, what the Bible commands about our stewardship can sting. It's Law, and the Law shows our sins. It calls us to repentance. The Law is meant to expose and accuse for the sake of showing us Christ and His fulfillment of the Law. So if first-fruits, sacrificial giving has you squirming, that's the point.

In Mark's account of the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus took the disciples' seven loaves and blessed them. It was nothing among so many, but, of course, it was plenty. Jesus makes something from nothing. Mark doesn't say that all the disciples gave Jesus all the bread they had. It is quite possible that some of them held something back. But even if they did, that didn't stop Jesus from blessing them. Jesus makes something out of nothing. He, who fed His people in the desert with Manna every morning, doesn't need their bread.

But they need to give it. And what they give – however little it might be and however grudgingly they do so – He blesses. He not only blesses those whom He feeds with it, but He blesses them – the givers. He blesses the givers not just in that they wind up with a basketful for each loaf, but they are blessed by learning to trust and rejoice in Him.

The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. The Lord gives abundantly, or He asks us to fast. We do not know what will happen. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. He does all things well, and He works all things together for good. The disciples don't give their bread to Jesus because

it is a good investment. They give it because He is good, because they love Him, and because they trust Him. Let us go and do likewise.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

Our members have the opportunity to make a personal, private commitment of financial support to the church. **Sunday, November 21** all member households are invited to complete the **Pledge of Commitment** form in this newsletter and return it in a self-addressed envelope during the service or anytime afterward. We at the church do not open and read these. This is between you and your Lord. The envelope will be sent back to you unopened next fall in remembrance of your commitment to the Lord's work at Immanuel. If you can't give 10% at this point in your life, set a percentage goal and raise that each year until you can give a true biblical tithe.

You also have the opportunity to make regular, automatic payments to the church by contacting your bank for an electronic fund transfer on a set schedule, or use the link to Vanco Plus on our website at immanuelaltamont.org. You can also download the Vanco Giving app to your phone for Apple or Android.

God has given everything for us. Let us all consider how we can be a blessing to one another and the world through the ministry of Immanuel.

In service to you,

*Pastor James Wright
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Altamont, Illinois*

Thanksgiving Worship Service will be 9:00 AM on Thursday, November 25. Everyone is invited to offer thanks and praise to God for all his benefits.

Reformation Rally October 31 at 5 PM. Speaker is Rev. Dr. Rick Marrs, professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. His area of specialty is pastoral and marriage counseling and reconciliation. Give an offering to support the ALIS professional church worker scholarship fund.

Lutherans For Life of Altamont has given \$1,000 to National Lutherans For Life, \$1,000 to Illinois Lutherans For Life, and \$1,000 to help establish two homes for pregnant women, one in Northern Illinois and another in Southern Illinois. We will have a pork burger drive through sale in the church parking lot on Saturday, November 6, 10:30-1:00. Thank-you for supporting women with children in the effort to fight the lie that abortion is a safe option that hurts no one.

Christmas Cantata practices are on Wednesday evenings at 7:30. All singers are welcome to join in. The music will be performed on Saturday, December 18 at 6:00 PM and Sunday, December 19 at 9:00. There will be no other services that weekend.

Ladies Aid Meeting Thurs. November 4, 7p.m. Devotion by Lisa Wright; topic by Pastor Wright. Hostesses are Lisa Wright, Diana Wendling, Roxana Wendling.

Thank you for the cards, visits and well wishes from our church family for our 60th Wedding Anniversary. Your thoughtfulness meant a lot to us. May God bless you all.

Dave & Elda Stuemke

Thank You! We would like to thank Pastor Wright for his visits, prayers and words of encouragement. Also, Ladies Aid for preparing lunch after the funeral. Special thanks to Wednesday Morning Bible Class for their prayers and support. Thanks to all of you that brought food, prayed, sent cards, called us and showed us your love. The support from our church and community was overwhelming.

Bill Laatsch and Family

Immanuel Lutheran Church Members,
May God bless you for your \$1,400.00 donation to the Ministerial Alliance in Altamont.
May your blessings be many,
G. Landsberger, Treasurer

God's Creation 2022 Calendar Sale to benefit After School Care. \$7 each.

Prayer Corner

- For healing: Carl Becker, Debi Bernahl, Bernadine Bloemer, Barb Busby, Tiffany Dunaway, Darren Feldkamp, Gloria Fortkamp, Abbey Franzen, Keith Green, Cheri Hammer, Pam Kepley, JR Newby, Ruth Ann Owens, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Wayne Willenburg, Lynn Winter, Lilly Wright and others.
- Comfort to the family and friends of Carol Laatsch
- Church staff, ALIS school staff and families.
- For Lutheran missionary Ted Krey & Family
- For our government for protection of unborn children and elderly
- For peace in the world, For Afghanistan, 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

To contact your assigned Elder: the list is on the back of the birthday/anniversary calendar and also, last week's bulletin.

Information from Andy and the LYF

Bake & Rake- November 7th. Fall is upon us and the leaves will quickly begin to fall. LYF would like to rake your yard and bake cookies for you as one of our service events! We are telling you this now so you have advanced warning and if you are wanting/need your yard raked and can hold off a little longer we will gladly rake your yard for FREE on November 7th. If you are interested in this please call the office and let Anita know. (You can also let us know if you would only like cookies/ only like your yard raked, or both!).

Altamont Area LYF Groups to Host Trunk-or-Treat for Altamont Community

The Lutheran Youth Fellowship groups of Bethlehem, Immanuel, St. Paul—Blue Point and Zion are again coming together to host a Trunk-Or-Treat experience for the Altamont community! This year's event will be held on Saturday,

October 30, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m in the north parking lot of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Children are invited to wear costumes or masks as they parade around the church parking lot, trunk-or-treating for goodies dispersed from the trunks of the youth and church parishioners.

Host a Trunk – All parishioners are invited to participate by decorating a trunk and distributing treats at the event. Contests will be held for best youth decorated trunk and best other decorated trunk. Sign up at any of the church entrances or on our website.

Youth Pizza & Costume Party – There will be a Pizza & Costume Party for all area LYF members in the Immanuel parish hall lower level, 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm with prizes awarded for best costumes.

Thrivent Action Team Cards Needed for Advent Dinners

If you or someone you know has Thrivent, and would like to help the youth group by creating a Thrivent Action Team for our Advent dinners, please talk to Andy. This would help fund the dinners so that the youth can raise funds for the Gathering and other activities. Please talk to Andy beforehand so that she knows who is getting us a card so that I can accurately plan and so that we don't have too many. THANKS!

Immanuel Youth Group is starting to prepare for the 2022 LCMS Gathering in Houston, TX. The theme for this Gathering is In All Things based on Colossians 1:15-20. Every month until the Gathering, I hope to dive into a bit of what we are learning as we prepare and what we will learn while we are at the Gathering. Colossians 1:4-6 says, " Since we heard of our faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing- as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it..." Before verse four, Paul says that he is praying for the people of Colossae because he has heard of their faith. Why has he heard about their faith? Because they show it through their love for

others! And why do they love others? "Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven." You see, Paul did not know most of the Colossians, but he was writing to them because of what he had heard. He had heard of their faith, and more specifically, their actions through their faith. The Colossians had this great hope of heaven. They knew the promise God had for them. More than that, they knew the importance and the necessity that the gospel has, not just for themselves but for everyone!

Paul also talks about how the gospel is bearing fruit and growing, not just among the people of Colossae but also around the world. Our faith has to start somewhere. It begins when we hear the word of the truth, and it grows and bears fruit more and more throughout our lives as we learn about it and understand it better. Do we understand the grace of God right away? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. But God's gospel is at its fullest when we understand, as best we can, the grace of God in truth. That grace of God is the fact that Christ alone saves us. Christ alone sustains us. Christ In All Things has allowed us to receive His mercy.

You see, our faith should produce good works. Our faith should create a desire to learn more. Our faith should bring Christ Into All areas of our lives. But our world is full of distractions; it is full of "good works" apart from Christ. The world tells us that if we are a good person, donate to charity, or volunteer, we will be worth more. It is full of a facade of humility through actions that inwardly make us think we are better than others. Christians today need to be reminded of faith and hope through Christ alone. We need to reset our minds to remember that the MOST important thing is the gospel. The gospel brings hope to a world headed straight to hell. The gospel is the most important thing we could ever share because it tells of the love of God! Youth at the LCMS Gathering will learn this. They will be challenged with this, and I want you to be challenged as well. Christ is not only in our lives at church or with our Christian friends. Christ In All Things should guide our actions and conversations. Christ In All Things should drive lives.

Through Christ In All Things,

Andy Wendling, Director of Youth and Family

To find out more about the LCMS Gathering, please look at September's Newsletter or talk to one of the youth or Andy.

What fundraisers are happening now? Our first Gathering fundraiser is called the Houston Contribution Envelope Fundraiser and started on September 26th. How it works: In the Narthex there is a wall of envelopes numbered sequentially from 1 to 144. This fundraiser will allow you to contribute to our trip to Houston by filling an envelope with the dollar value corresponding to the number on the envelope: \$1 goes in the envelope marked 1, \$50 goes into the envelope marked 50 and so on, all the way up to 144. You can pick whatever number you want, fill the envelope, and return it to the bucket by the envelope wall or in the offering! Our youth participants will be by the wall to answer questions you have about the Gathering, such as, why they decided to go and what they are hoping to get out of their trip!

CEFS Meal Delivery schedules for Immanuel were emailed and extra copies are on the small table in the Parish Hall lobby. This time runs from November 1-12 with the exception of Veterans Day. No delivery on Thursday, November 11.

Family Life Center "Baby Shower"

The Family Life Center has a continual need for baby supplies and clothing for new mothers who need assistance. The Ladies Aid will sponsor a Baby Shower for the Family Life Center in December. Members of Immanuel can help by contributing new items for the shower.

In December, there will be a basket in the narthex to place items that will be delivered to the center. To plan ahead, here is a list of items on their list:

Diapers, size 4, 5, or 6, baby wipes, swaddling blankets, tag blankets, car seat covers, hooded baby towels, soft fleece blankets, wash cloths, bibs/burp cloths, baby lotion/wash/shampoo, booties, shoes, socks, outfits (boys & girls), onesies, sleepers, (all in sizes newborn to 18 months), sippy cups, stuffed animals. They request new items only.

As you shop for Christmas, remember the needs of the Family Life Center. Thank you.