

Immanuel Lutheran News

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From Pastor Wright

The Salutary Gift

We give thanks to you, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift.... So we pray after receiving the Lord's Supper. What is a salutary gift? It means, *wholesome, healthful, promoting health*. Did you ever think that the Lord's Supper could give you good health? This Lent as we receive the Sacrament on Ash Wednesday, every Sunday, on Maundy Thursday and on Easter, we should think of it as improving our health. Because it is the body and blood of Christ given to us under bread and wine, and it is given with the promise of forgiving the sins of those who receive it rightly, we should certainly know that it is good for our soul. It is also good for the body, for though the body may be afflicted with injury, disease, and sickness, after death our bodies will be resurrected by the power of Jesus, restored and perfected. So the Lord's Supper is good for your soul and your body. It is truly "salutary," that is, it gives you good health.

For something that is so good for us, I am puzzled why we do not receive it more often. Why do we only have it every other week? Is there a danger in receiving it too often? Is that just the tradition we were given with no explanation? We should consider these things so that we know why we do things a the way we do.

As your pastor in Christ, I think it would be good for us to receive the Lord's Supper more frequently than we do. Here are some reasons why:

The custom of frequent Communion in the Bible and the early Christian Church

In the documents we have from the early centuries of Christianity, we see that those people received Holy Communion each week when they gathered. In the first days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the Book of Acts 2:42) describes the earliest services, "They

continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching, in the fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." The breaking of bread, or Communion as we call it, was a common part of the normal Christian services. Another reference to weekly services with the Lord's Supper is found in Acts 20:7 where Luke writes, "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread." Then it goes on to describe a worship service with preaching and the breaking of bread.

I Corinthians is similar. Chapter 11 verse 20 says, "When you come together," and describes how they are misusing the Lord's Supper by unrepentance. The people in Corinth had a meal called "the love feast" before the church service. Some had nothing to eat, and others ate and drank too much. Paul corrects these abuses tells them how their services should be done. He says,

I hear that when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat....I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, he broke it....etc. (1 Corinthians 11:18-24).

The literature of the first two centuries of Christianity show that Word and Sacrament were both universal practices on Sundays. One of the earliest Christian writings besides the Bible is called the Didache. It was written around the year 100 AD. Here the people are directed to, "Assemble in common on the Lord's own day to

break bread and offer thanks; but first confess your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure."

Another writing from about 150 AD comes from Justin Martyr. He wrote: "On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country come together in one place and the writings of the apostles and prophets are read. Then the leader instructs the people to imitate these good things. Then we rise together and pray, and bread and wine are brought and distributed to each."

Communion in Reformation Times

During the time of Martin Luther communion was a weekly event in the church service. The reformers changed many things that were wrong and were concerned that the people knew the meaning of the faith through good teaching. Things in the worship service that taught good works over the grace of God for salvation were removed. One thing that Luther and the early Lutherans never considered was to drop the celebration of the sacrament from the Sunday morning service. The Lutheran Confessions state, "Among us many use the Lord's Supper *every Lord's Day*. They do so after they have been first instructed, examined, and absolved." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XV:40). And again at Article XXIV:1 the reformers state, "We do not abolish the Mass, but religiously keep and defend it. Masses are celebrated among us *every Lord's Day* and on the other festivals. The Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other such things." (Note that "Mass" was their term for a Sunday service when debating with Roman Catholics authorities.)

The Disappearance of Weekly Communion

So what happened between the Reformation and today? Why do churches not offer Communion every Sunday? By the early twentieth century most Lutheran churches only offered Communion once a month. One reason why this happened is Pietism, which stressed personal preparation for communion. This is good, but they went too far. People began to be

afraid of communion, as if they could never believe enough to receive it rightly.

Sometimes I hear this sentiment today when people say if we had communion too often, it would cease to remain "special." It's not the Lord's Supper because we say it's special and feel a certain way about it. It's the Lord's Supper because Jesus gives it to us for the forgiveness of sins. How often do we need the Lord's forgiveness? All the time, I say. So we have a great need to receive it, whether we feel it or not. We prepare for it by admitting we are guilty of our sins, confess them to God, and receive his forgiveness.

A second reason Lutherans gave up weekly Communion is even worse. Rationalism was a counter influence to Pietism. Leading rationalist rejected the belief that people are sinful. They denied the great events of the Bible. The Lord's Supper was deemphasized. They turned churches into lecture halls where you might hear a sermon about proper crop rotation, proper education for your children, or and how to avoid influenza. The Lutheran Church in Germany in the 1800's was infected with this problem and brought it to America.

A third reason was the anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States in the 1800's and early 1900's. No Lutheran wanted to be confused with being a Roman Catholic. They didn't mind if they were confused with Presbyterians and Methodists. Since Roman Catholics had Communion every Sunday, Lutherans were happy to avoid association by doing the same thing. Other Protestant denominations called "Reformed Churches" denied the real presence of Christ in Communion and didn't celebrate it often. Lutherans fell into the same practice.

Why We Should Offer Communion More Frequently

Realizing our history, honoring our heritage and treasuring the grace in it, Lutherans today have begun to teach the importance of offering the Lord's Supper every Sunday when the people come together. In 1995 the National Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod passed a resolution stating that the Scriptures place the Lord's Supper at the center of worship and encouraged its pastors and

congregation to study the issue and offer communion at every Sunday service.

We sin a lot! We need to receive God's forgiveness in Word and Sacrament often. We should prepare each week to meet God at church by examining our lives, confessing our sins, and receiving God's full forgiveness.

Many people travel, especially during the summer. Others of us are forced to work on some Sundays and miss church services. We should be offering more opportunities to people to receive the Lord's Supper, not less opportunities.

No one should feel forced to receive Communion more often than they want it. But we should have it available for those who do want it. I ask all of you members to study this issue, to discuss it, and to consider our church offering the Lord's Supper each week at our church at least in one of our three services, if not all services on a weekend.

Will it take more work by the altar guild? Yes, but we can all pitch in and help them. Will it require you to examine yourself and confess your sins more often? Yes, but that is a good thing we should all be doing daily. Will it feel less special if you receive it each week? Maybe, but that is no reason not to celebrate the "salutary gift" that gives health to your body and your soul. So let's consider why we are limiting ourselves to an occasional gift that gives us so much benefit. If you really believe what the Bible says about Holy Communion, it will be special to you and you will not want to go without it.

--Pastor Wright

Lent At Immanuel

Services will be held each Wednesday during Lent at 6:30 PM beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 2. The Imposition of Ashes will be offered as a sign of repentance at the beginning of the service. Meals will be held after services beginning on March 9 through April 6. The theme for Lent is "The Salutary Gift," a series on the meaning and the benefit of Holy Communion. The passion story will be read during Wednesday services.

Confirmation Sunday for 8th grade students will be Sunday, April 24, in a special service at 10:00 AM. There will also be an 8:30 am service that Sunday. The examination of catechumens will be Saturday, April 23 at 5:00 pm, followed by the regular 6:00 pm service.

Adult Catechumens are meeting weekly with the pastor and will be received and confirmed when the class is finished. Pray for our catechumens Amber Kull, Beau Morrison, Deb Shamhart, Shelby Wolff, Morgan Wolff, and as they learn God's Word with us. Mitchell Wolff has also been received by transfer of membership.

Do Lutherans Celebrate Saint Patrick's Day?

Yes! Patrick was a missionary to Ireland. He wasn't the first Christian to go there, but he did much work to organize the faith and teach the people. Most of the myths around Patrick are fabrications, but he was a bishop and great leader of the faith in the fifth century. So go ahead and celebrate by living a godly life and sharing the gospel with everyone on March 17.

Treasurers of Organizations turn in your books to be audited.

Large Print is Tuesday, March 1. Call Eloise 618-322-7609 to volunteer.

Ladies Aid Thursday, March 3, 7PM. Devotion by Diana Wendling. Hostesses are Kathy McGuire, Diana Wendling, Roxana Wendling.

20th Annual Grilled Pork Dinner here at Immanuel Sunday, March 6, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. This year, the dinner will be "Dine In" or "Carry Out". Menu consists of grilled pork loin, pork burger/hotdog, baked potato, chips, baked beans, green beans, coleslaw, applesauce, apple pie, cherry pie, Texas sheet cake, dinner roll. Cost is \$12 for loin dinner; \$7 for pork burger or hotdog meal. Children ages 4 and under eat FREE.

A Special Voters' Assembly has been called by President David Burrow for Sunday, March 6 at 9:45 in the Sanctuary. This meeting will consider an amendment to the revised constitution of ALIS that was presented in January. No other business is being considered.

Prayer Corner

- For healing: Heather Davis, Robi Flach, Gloria Fortkamp, Abbey Franzen, Keith Green, Cheri Hammer, Gerald Holste, Pam Kepley, JR Newby, Ruth Ann Owens, Declan Robertson, Lilly Wright.
- Comfort to the family and friends of Larry Doty, Tiffany Dunaway.
- 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, an end to violence 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

Elders Assignments for 2022:

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Budde-Feller
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Nathan Schnarre 618-367-2884

Flach-Hooks
njschnarre@gmail.com

Card Shower for Pam Kepley Send cards to:
3151 Sleeping Ridgeway, Indianapolis, IN 46217.

Thank you everyone for your prayers, phone calls, cards, gifts and concerns during my surgery and recovery. Still working on getting back to normal! Thanks again for all the love.

God bless you all, Linda Smith

Survey Help Do you know any young man who would make a great pastor? How about someone who would be a great Lutheran school teacher, deaconess or DCE? Jesus gives His church people who work full time in service to the Gospel. He told us to pray for such workers. The LCMS continues to pray, and has begun *Set Apart to Serve* (SAS), an intentional effort to encourage young people to consider church work as their career. Your opinion can help improve SAS. Please fill out a brief survey at lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve-survey by March 15, and let us know how you think SAS can be beneficial to your congregation. Thank you.

The Effingham Zone is collecting hygiene items for Orphan Grain Train to be put together at the Joy workshop in April. They will distribute the items to tornado victims in Kentucky. Our ladies aid group will be collecting items. Please bring some items with you to our March 3 meeting. As always thank you ladies!

Information from Andy and the LYF

Lent Dinners- On Wednesdays during Lent youth will serve a meal after service(no meal after Ash Wednesday). Free-will donations will help us raise money for the gathering.

Youth will be having Together Time throughout Lent (no TT March 2nd).

Pre-Sale Easter Bake Sale- The youth participating in the LCMS Youth Gathering will be having Easter desserts available for pre-order. Desserts include strawberry & chocolate pie, carrot cake, strawberry poke cake, dirt cake and lemon mousse. All order forms must be turned in by **March 31st**. Please place order forms in the designated box in the Narthex or give them to Immanuel's church office. Pick up will be in the Parish Hall on Friday, April 15th 2-4 p.m. or Easter Sunday, April 17th after 6 a.m.& 9 a.m. services.

Easter Breakfast- Youth will be providing a light breakfast after Sunrise Service on Easter Morning. This will include fruits, muffins and breads, milk, orange juice, and coffee.

LCMS Gathering Meeting (with parents!)- March 20, 2022 @7:30-8:30 pm

Houston Contribution- Our envelope Fundraiser is still going on. Take an envelope from our board in the Narthex to contribute to our trip to Houston in the summer of 2022!

Immanuel Youth Group is preparing 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.

What do you think about God always being present? Is it comforting, scary, hopeful, etc.? For a lot of us, we may have to think twice because we don't actively remember that God is always present with us. In fact, many times, we believe God is far off, distracted by the other millions of people on earth. But that's not the case. God is In All Things, which means He is in all aspects of your life. He is not just with us on Sunday mornings or at church activities. God is with us in the mundane tasks of our everyday life. He knows when we're sleeping. He knows when we're awake. He knows if we've been bad or good... (and He knows more than Santa ever could!)

We should always have fearful anticipation, like a child trying to avoid the gift of coal on Christmas morning. We should be painfully aware of when we fail! But we aren't! A lot of the time, we are indifferent. We take the gift of salvation and mercy God has given us for granted. We need to be aware of our sin, not so that we can be reminded of how awful we are, but so we can be reminded of how good God is! When Christ is In All Things, our life; in school, work, relationships, at the grocery store, etc., all belong to Christ.

Don't forget that God is with you as you live your daily life. If you need to write it somewhere as a reminder, do so! We are a walking advertisement for the love of God! The love that sent Jesus to the cross. Live each day being reminded that Jesus loved you so much! So much that He took all of

your failure, regret, pain, and indifference to the cross. He suffered. He suffered! He suffered for you!

Through Christ In All Things,
Andy Wendling, Director of Youth and Family

Altamont LFL Meeting Sunday, March 6, 7PM at Immanuel Church. Election for offices of president and treasurer.

Altar Guild/Flower Committee Please call Diana Wendling 618-335-0067 or email texasgal62411@yahoo.com if you would like to be added or taken off the 2022 Altar Guild or Flower Committee. We have openings.

It is one month out of the year commitment during Communion weekends. You will be working with others in a shift. Men are welcomed to join.

CEFS Meal Deliveries for Immanuel are:
March 7 - 11; and March 14 - 18.

28TH ANNUAL PTL DINNER AUCTION

March 19th at the Carriage House Event Center. Social hour, silent auction and meal from 4:30-6:00 pm. The Live Auction will begin at 6:30pm and the evening will conclude with musical entertainment by Blazing Saddles. The cost is \$25 per person or you may reserve preferred (near the front) seating on a first come, first served basis for \$300 (table of 8). In order for this auction to be a success, we need every family to donate an auction item. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jennifer Milleville 217-821-1898, Robin Elam 618-204-0397, or Shelby Willenborg 618-322-0011.

On March 5, 2022, the CID LLL Convention will be happening at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Decatur. The topic is "The Lutheran Church in the 21st Century" featuring guest speaker Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III. Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. Delores Blessman is accepting registrations deloresblessman@yahoo.com.

The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works. Psalm 145:9