

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
229 11TH AVE W
GRINNELL IA 50112-8217

October Newsletter

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH LC-MS

229 11TH AVENUE WEST

GRINNELL, IA 50112

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**ALL SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE
SERVICES ARE LIVE STREAMED ON OUR FACEBOOK**

LET US KNOW...

If you have a change in address, phone or email, have a loved one who is or hospitalized, have a new baby, would like a pastoral visit, or if you would like a special prayer during the prayers of the church on Sunday, please contact Pastor Koeppe or the church office.

DO YOU...

have an announcement for the bulletin or newsletter?

Have a prayer request? Birth/Anniversary/Graduation announcements?

If so, please submit the information as you want it to appear in the bulletin or newsletter by the deadlines listed below to the church secretary at lcms.immanuelgrinnell@gmail.com

Deadline for submitting in the weekly bulletin is Thursdays by noon.

Deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 15th of each month.

For those of you without email access, please call or submit your written request to the church secretary.

2024 Immanuel Officers & Board Members

President Steve Haase

Vice President/President Elect Lucas Bayer

Secretary Kathy Stanek

Treasurer Chris Christinson

Elders Joel McDonough, Steve Haase, Darlo Kelting, Ken Mergen

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Board of Stewardship Keith Thorpe, Pam Sittig, Diane Schultz

Board of Evangelism & Missions June Routier, Bev Huebner, Dianna Kelting

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Pianist Sophia Louden, Sloane McDonough, Elizabeth Koepf

Church Secretary Amber Carnine

Sunday School Opening Pastor Koepf

LWML Board President: Pam Haase
Treasurer: June Routier
Secretary: Dianna Kelting

Altar Guild Helen Thorpe
June Routier
Danielle McDonough
Pam Haase
Pam Sittig



Hello October

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Pastor's Message



As we get ever nearer to the election in November, I wanted to take this month to put several things before you in preparation for November. May this help in your guidance and reflection upon the many issues facing our Nation, our State, and our responsibilities as God's people who live within them.

We confess from the Augsburg Confession: Article XVI Civil Government

¹It is taught among us that all government in the world and all established rule and laws were instituted and ordained by God for the sake of good order,

²and that Christians may without sin occupy civil offices or serve as princes and judges, render decisions and pass sentence according to imperial and other existing laws, punish evildoers with the sword, engage in just wars, serve as soldiers, buy and sell, take required oaths, possess property, be married, etc.

³Condemned here are the Anabaptists who teach that none of the things indicated above is Christian.

⁴Also condemned are those who teach that Christian perfection requires the forsaking of house and home, wife and child, and the renunciation of such activities as are mentioned above. Actually, true perfection consists alone of proper fear of God and real faith in God, for the Gospel does not teach an outward and temporal but an inward and eternal mode of existence and righteousness of the heart.

⁵The Gospel does not overthrow civil authority, the state, and marriage but requires that all these be kept as true orders of God and that everyone, each according to his own calling, manifest Christian love and genuine good works in his station of life.

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- 1
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⁶Accordingly Christians are obliged to be subject to civil authority and obey its commands and laws in all that can be done without sin.

⁷But when commands of the civil authority cannot be obeyed without sin, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Second, I lift up for your reflection the Guidelines for Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship written by the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations. They can be found in this newsletter, on the back table, or on the LCMS website: <https://www.lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations/documents>

As you read, study and pray this month, join me in singing:

Hymn A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

LSB 656



1 A might - y for - tress is our God,
2 With might of ours can naught be done,
3 Though dev - ils all the world should fill,
4 The Word they still shall let re - main



A trust - y shield and weap - on;
Soon were our loss ef - fect - ed;
All ea - ger to de - vour us,
Nor an - y thanks have for it;



He helps us free from ev - 'ry need
But for us fights the val - iant One,
We trem - ble not, we fear no ill;
He's by our side up - on the plain



That hath us now o'er - tak - en.
Whom God Him - self e - lect - ed.
They shall not o - ver - pow'r us.
With His good gifts and Spir - it.



The old e - vil foe Now means
Ask ye, Who is this? Je - sus
This world's prince may still Scowl fierce
And take they our life, Goods, fame,

dead - ly woe; Deep guile and great might
 Christ it is, Of Sab - a - oth Lord,
 as he will, He can harm us none.
 child, and wife, Though these all be gone,

Are his dread arms in fight; On earth
 And there's none oth - er God; He holds
 He's judged; the deed is done; One lit -
 Our vic - t'ry has been won; The King -

is not his e - qual.
 the field for - ev - er.
 tle word can fell him.
 dom ours re - main - eth.

Text: tr. composite

Text and tune: Martin Luther, 1483–1546

Text and tune: Public domain

+ Soli Deo Gloria +

Rev. Dr. Joel G. Koeppe

Report
of the
Commission on Theology
and
Church Relations



Guidelines
for
Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

Guidelines

for

Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship

SECTION ONE

THE CHRISTIAN AND GOVERNMENT

- I. The Creator instituted government as a means whereby He wills to preserve and order life in community among fallen men. It is an interim structure, designed to direct and regulate the political relationships among men during the interval between the Fall and the Lord's return. (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
- II. The institution of government belongs to God's kingdom of power. Its symbol therefore is the sword (Romans 13:4). Its work is to be distinguished from that of the church. (Cf. Mark 12:17 and Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII: ". . . the power of the church and the civil power must not be confounded.")
- III. The institution of government was created to uphold order and to provide justice. Our Scriptures assign to it the twofold task of rewarding the good citizen and punishing the evildoer. (Romans 13:3-5; 1 Peter 2:15)
- IV. The primary ingredient in the Christian's attitude toward government is expressed by the New Testament term "subordination" (Romans 13:5; 1 Peter 2:13-14). This word signifies the responsibility of ranking one's own needs under those of others. Its practice in one's attitude toward government is a specific manifestation of the general stance of Christians toward their fellow-men. (Cf. Ephesians 5:21; Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4)
- V. The opportunities for carrying out the responsibilities of Christian citizenship vary according to the strength of the church in a given society. (E. g., before the publication of the Edict of Milan in A. D. 313, Christians were declared to be followers of a forbidden religion; accordingly they had very few opportunities to influence the direction of government. Their situation changed when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. A current illustration might be the difference between the position of the church in India, where Christians constitute a minority, and its opportunities in the United States, where Christianity is a majority religion.)
- VI. These opportunities also vary according to the form of government under which Christians live (e. g., the difference between living in a totalitarian nation and in a society that is reasonably open).

VII. Christian citizens have maximum opportunities for service in an open society, which is here understood to be that kind of nation whose citizens have some meaningful control over their political destinies. Such opportunities for service may be broken down into two categories: those that confront individual Christians as citizens and those which they undertake as members of the church.

A. As individual citizens—

1. They share in the responsibility (cf. Jeremiah 29:7) of government, especially where it operates as a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."
2. They seek political office, pay taxes, and exercise their right to vote as ways of manifesting their conviction that government is the servant of God. (Cf. the Augsburg Confession, Article XVI, *in extenso*)
3. They participate in the life and work of voluntary associations, such as service clubs, political parties, civic improvement organizations, in the awareness that they contribute to the preservation of an open society. For the chief characteristic of such a society is to be found in the influence of the work of such associations on the direction taken in the exercise of political authority.
4. They help to shape the content and activity of the "market place." That is to say, they make known their own views in community discussion and activity with a view to influencing public opinion in such a way as to reflect a concern for the application of moral principle to political issues. They do so on the conviction that only where the political climate is infused with ethical standards can justice and freedom be preserved and extended.

B. As members of a church body—

1. Christians engage in public prayer for government. (Cf. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 and the General Prayers given in *The Lutheran Hymnal*)
2. They contribute to the strengthening of the two foundation principles of an open society: respect for the individual citizen as a person and the limitation of political power by means of various checks and balances. This they do by—
 - a) teaching the specific content of the Moral Law and so preventing the concept of a "higher law" from becoming a mere abstraction;
 - b) alerting themselves and others to the role of the "higher law" in the process of preserving and extending justice and freedom on the basis of the moral principle;

- c) sharpening consciences to respect law and so strengthening the bases of civic order;
- d) encouraging respect for persons in positions of authority (Exodus 22:28; Acts 23:5);
- e) furthering justice by serving as responsible critics of the social order;
- f) preserving the proper distinction between the things of Caesar and those of God (Mark 12:17; 1 Peter 2:17);
- g) reminding rulers that they are under God and the Law and that they too must give an account of their stewardship (Romans 13:4-5);
- h) reminding all men that governments belong to those arrangements which will prevail only until the return of our Lord and that therefore the pursuit of justice and freedom is properly interested in establishing certain manifestations of the destiny God has in mind for His creation;
- i) exhibiting and encouraging the practice of that kind of self-discipline which proceeds from concern for the welfare of one's neighbor (Philippians 2:4) and nation;
- j) actively engaging in the extension of justice by advocating the passage of just laws, the rescission of unjust laws, and the responsible enforcement of all law.

SECTION TWO

THE CHRISTIAN AND CIVIC ORDER

- I. Like the rest of fallen creation, political structures work in a dialectical situation. By virtue of their being situated between God's yes and Satan's no, they find themselves involved in the cosmic conflict between good and evil (Luke 4:6; Ephesians 6:12). They often deal therefore in matters which on their surface manifest a large degree of ambivalence.
- II. God created order out of primordial chaos (Genesis 1:1-2) and so brought about the conditions which make life in community possible despite the ambiguities of human existence which derive from the Fall. (Genesis 3:1-8)
- III. Civic order is a gift of this sustaining God, whose will it is to check and control the demonic forces which at all times threaten society with anarchy. (Cf. Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition as contained in his Large Catechism:

This petition is especially directed also against our chief enemy, the devil. For all his thought and desire is to deprive us of all that we have from God, or to hinder it; and he is not satisfied to obstruct and destroy spiritual government in leading souls astray by his lies and bringing them under his power, but he also prevents and hinders the stability of all government and honorable, peaceable relations on earth.)

- IV. Civic order is not to be thought of in static terms. It is rather to be conceived of as that condition of society in which the many and varied tensions inherent in any kind of community life are kept in creative balance to provide opportunity for fulfillment in terms of both personal life and group enterprise. These are the conditions which constitute that "quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" to which the apostle refers in 1 Timothy 2:2.
- V. Civic order is an essential ingredient of community life. At the same time it is a minimal element, whose function it is to provide the opportunity for men to work together in the task of expanding justice and freedom; for men were created to be persons, and as such they are expected to exercise that dominion which is an inherent part of the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), even though it has been debased by the Fall. (Genesis 3:1-7)
- VI. In its proper sense civic disobedience consists of violating a specific law in the interest of justice and freedom, particularly as these relate to the needs of others. Such disobedience is a responsible expression of citizenship when it is undertaken after all other means of obtaining justice have been exhausted and in full awareness of the demonic and disruptive forces present in any given social order. Under these conditions testing a specific law occurs as a way of determining whether the law at issue conforms to the demands of the "higher law" and the principles set forth in other legal documents, directives, and decisions. This responsibility is perverted and abused when disobedience and resistance are undertaken out of disrespect for law and for the purposes of inducing violence or creating discord and disorder. (Cf. the document on "Civil Obedience and Disobedience" issued by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations)
- VII. The maintenance of civic order at times requires the responsible application of force to the solution of social and political problems. It is the task of police forces and military establishments, as arms of government, to serve in this capacity; hence they deserve the support and encouragement of Christian citizens.

SECTION THREE

THE CHRISTIAN, VIOLENCE, AND WAR

- I. Violence within nations and warfare among countries are potent reminders of the tenuous nature of order in society. Both have their source in man's rebellion against his Creator (cf. James 4:1). Both are vivid manifestations on a massive scale of the demonic aspects of existence.
- II. The Scriptures remind us that the tempo and fury of disorder, calamity, and warfare will increase as the end of history approaches (cf. Matthew 24:6-7 and parallels). Such developments are there described as harbingers of our redemption. (Cf. Matthew 24:32-33 and parallels)

- III. The responsibility of taking up arms against other human beings, either as part of a police force or of a military establishment, is to be carried out without hatred of one's fellowman; for such animosity and anger constitute the most serious violations of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." (Cf. Matthew 5:21-22)
- IV. The word used in this commandment for "killing" is one that implies malice and hatred. It is nowhere used in the Old Testament for taking life in battle. This would suggest that the tragic task of taking up arms for combat under orders from legitimate authority is not by itself a violation of the Fifth Commandment. (Cf. Johann Stamm, "Sprachliche Erwaegungen zum Gebot, 'Du sollst nicht toeten,'" *TbZ*, Aug. 1945, pp. 81—90)
- V. The one-to-one relationship between individuals is changed during hostilities by the interposition of a set of divergent loyalties on the part of persons opposing each other in combat. Under these conditions a hierarchy of relationships is created, requiring the application of justice in the practice of love.
- VI. Christian love expects the one-to-one relationship of individual to individual to return and to be applied even during times of hostility in a personal confrontation with an enemy who is wounded or is in need of some other personal service.
- VII. The destructive potential of modern weaponry and the impersonality of contemporary techniques of warfare lay upon the Christian citizen the special burden of reminding himself and others that human life is a sacred trust from man's Creator and that the temptation to rely on and resort to the kind of massive violence made possible by these inventions has introduced into the human situation a new factor of incalculable moral magnitude. It is therefore imperative for him to work together with all men of goodwill for the responsible limitation of armaments, the eradication of sources of conflict, and an aggressive interest in the preservation and expansion of the conditions of peace.
- VIII. The requirements of justice and love apply in much the same way to service with police forces.

SECTION FOUR

THE CHRISTIAN AND CONSCIENCE

- I. The word "conscience" may mean man's faculty to respond to such moral principles as transcend human existence. It is so used, for example, in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (Article One).
- II. In the New Testament it is used as a term to signify moral response in depth on the basis of conclusions reached by evaluating the ethical aspects and implications of a given issue or situation (cf. Acts 23:1; Romans 2:15; 1 Corinthians 8:7, 10; etc.; cf. also C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament*, London: SCM

Press, 1955). In other words, it stands for more than strong feeling and emotional reaction to an issue or a task.

- III. A Christian is bound in conscience to disobey an order or a law which violates God's will. (Acts 5:29)
- IV. When a Christian is persuaded that he faces a choice in conscience, he must be certain in his own mind that his conscience is informed by principles which conform to God's will. For he has the burden of not violating his own conscience.
- V. When he is inclined, for example, to claim for himself the right of conscientious objection to a particular war, he will first need to give serious consideration to the following matters as they relate to his responsibilities as a citizen of a particular nation:
 - A. The role of government in the maintenance of order and in the defense and extension of justice and freedom;
 - B. The role of military establishments in the life and tasks of a nation;
 - C. The purposes of the war in question as these relate to the foreign policy of a nation;
 - D. The significance and applicability of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill";
 - E. The ideological ingredients of the war under evaluation;
 - F. The principle that the government of a nation in its dealings with other nations has an a priori, though not unquestioned, claim on the trust of its own citizens as a source of information and direction.
- VI. The Lutheran Confessions operate with the concept of a just war (cf. The Augsburg Confession, Art. XVI, and the Apology, Art. IV, 191). Before a Lutheran can rightly become a conscientious objector, he will need to formulate answers to the following questions that have been developed in the course of the history of Christian theology as a way of determining whether a war is just or not:
 - A. Is a war being fought under legitimate authority?
 - B. Is it being conducted within the framework of international agreements?
 - C. Is it being waged in the interest of vindicating some obvious right that has suffered outrage?
 - D. Have all peaceful means of achieving a settlement been exhausted?
 - E. Is the destruction incurred excessive in terms of the goals to be achieved?
 - F. Is it being waged with good intentions, or has it been undertaken for purposes of aggression?
 - G. Will the results achieved by engaging in hostilities provide greater opportunity for justice and freedom to prevail than if such a war had not been entered into?

Here we are again, a political year packed with ads and campaigns for issues and candidates. I don't know about you, but the next month will exhaust me until it is over in November. There are issues that we care deeply about and have great influence as to how our votes are cast. The challenge for the church worker is to determine what can be said and what can't be said in our professional capacity of servants of the Church. In this edition I will share with you some quotes from an organization called *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*. They are a legal firm who specializes in advice and defense of Christian organizations. I recently receive from this a booklet on this topic and want to share a few sound bites for your benefit as we approach an election month.

"Introduced to the U.S. Code in 1954, the Johnson Amendment forbids 501(c)(3) charitable organizations- including churches- from participating or intervening in political campaigns for or against any candidate for public office. The Johnson Amendment prohibits churches from supporting or opposing a political candidate or party. This is applicable to all political races- federal, state, or local. This includes elections ranging from the President of the United States all the way to your local school board or city council. The law prohibits speech in the form of both sermons from the pulpit and monetary contributions."

"While pastors are restricted by the Johnson Amendment when speaking as an official representative of their church, they can support or oppose candidates from public office when acting in their personal capacity. As a pastor, you do not surrender your individual First Amendment rights when you agree to lead a ministry. The best way to ensure that whoever you are talking with understands you are speaking from your personal capacity is to indicate clearly that your comments are personal and are not intended to represent the church. For example, posting on your personal Facebook page with the caveat that all opinions are your own and do not represent the church would be considered speaking in your personal capacity. Making partisan comments in official church publications or at official church events does not qualify as speaking in your individual capacity."

You are all servants of the Word and have the responsibility to proclaim it from the rooftops.

"The law cannot stop you from teaching your church how to approach current topics of debated from your religious perspective. There is much to expound from the Bible on the public, social, and moral issues of concern today, and the church has a unique opportunity to guide the discussion surrounding many of these topics."

What was said by ADF about pastors also applies to any of our rostered church workers in their official capacity. I will repeat what I have said for many years. Preach and teach the Word of God in all of its truth and purity. Do so boldly and do not apologize for doing so. You are all servants of the Word and have the responsibility to proclaim it from the rooftops.

As you preach and teach the Word of God it will form the conscience of your members and students. That is all we can ask for in a political climate like ours, that we vote according to our conscience. We leave the conclusion of the elections to the ones the Lord of Lord's and King of King's has decided will lead the nation, state, and city. "Thy Will Be Done".

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President



November will be picture taking time for the new pictorial directory for Immanuel.

The dates and times for picture taking are:

Sunday, November 3

11:00am-3:00pm; 4:00pm-7:00pm at Immanuel

Tuesday, November 5

11:00am-3:00pm; 4:00pm-7:00pm at Cory Hall

Wednesday, November 6

11:00am-3:00pm; 4:00pm-7:00pm at Cory Hall

Sunday, November 10

11:00am-3:00pm; 4:00pm-7:00pm at Cory Hall

The session on **Sunday, November 3rd will be in the fellowship hall at Immanuel.** The other three sessions will be held at Cory Hall Photography, 811 4th Avenue, Grinnell.

Members will be able to order picture packages, which will arrive by mid-December.

Sign-up for picture times will be on Sundays, October 13, 20 and 27.

We will also ask you to proof your names, address, phone number, and email address.

***Any questions please contact the Evangelism Committee
Dianna Kelting, June Routier, Bev Huebner***

Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca



October 2024

IDE Confirmation Retreat - October 11-12

The **IDE Fall Confirmation Retreat** is scheduled for October 11-12, 2024 and will be held at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca. The retreat will begin at 7pm on Friday, the 11th and go through approximately 3pm on Saturday, the 12th. Registration is now open!

Pastor Caleb Schewe from St. John's Lutheran Church in Monticello will be teaching on The Lord's Prayer. We will be studying each petition and their meanings as well as how they relate to some of the parables we read in Scripture.

Registration is \$55 per youth and \$30 per chaperone. This retreat includes a pizza snack on Friday evening and breakfast and lunch on Saturday. You can register online or download a registration form, or find more information at www.lcmside.org.



Fall Workday - November 2

Camp needs your help! Come out to our Fall Workday on November 2 from 9AM to 3PM.



We are planning on doing some maintenance to fix things up around the horse activity areas. Additional information is still to come. Any help with this project will be greatly appreciated and of great assistance to one of Camp's biggest attractions! We'll have projects for people of all ages, so bring the whole family! Remember, lunch is provided!



3271 Sandy Beach Road NE, Solon, IA 52333

phone 319.848.4187

web www.campiodiseca.org

email office@iodiseca.org



Confirmation

MEMORY WORK SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

5th & 6th Grade Memory Work

October 2: 2nd and 3rd Commandment and Meaning

October 9: 4th Commandment and Meaning

October 16: 5th and 6th Commandment and Meaning

October 23: 7th and 8th Commandment and Meaning

October 30: Luther Movie

8th Grade Memory Work

October 2: 6th Commandment and Meaning

October 9: 7th Commandment and Meaning

October 16: 8th Commandment and Meaning

October 23: 9th/10th Commandments and Close of Commandments

October 30: Luther Movie

ALL WOMEN OF IMMANUEL

SO THAT ALL WOMEN, YOUNG AND OLD OF OUR CONGREGATION CAN ATTEND, LWML WILL BE CONDUCTING ALL FUTURE MEETINGS ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH STARTING NOVEMBER 10TH AT 10:30am IN THE BACK SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM.

THIS WILL GIVE ALL THE WOMEN OF IMMANUEL THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE WHAT WE DO AT LWML AS WE JOYFULLY PROCLAIM CHRIST, SUPPORT MISSIONS THROUGH PRAYER, MITES AND SERVICE... AND HOW YOU CAN TOO!

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

“SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS”

PSALM 100:2

POWESHIEK COUNTY CHRISTMAS SHARE SIGN-UP

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 28 THROUGH
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON
DRAKE COMMUNITY LIBRARY
930 PARK STREET, GRINNELL, IA**

Required Documents for Sign-Up:

1. Photo ID
2. Utility Bill (proof of residency)
3. One of the following:
 - Subsidized Rent Receipt
 - LIHEAP Approval or Appointment Information
 - Current SNAP Notice of Decision
 - *** SNAP cards will not be accepted ***
 - Current DHS Notice of Decision
4. If signing up children, a birth certificate is required.
5. Proof of residency is required for anyone over 18.

REQUIRED
DOCUMENTATION
FOR SIGN-UP

**To avoid long lines and extended wait times, we suggest you
sign up using the schedule below. Use first letter of last name:**

Monday, October 28 - Last Names A-G
Tuesday, October 29 - Last Names H-M
Wednesday, October 30 - Last Names N-Q
Thursday, October 31 - Last Names R-T
Friday, November 1 - Last Names U-Z

Questions can be directed to Christmas Share at (641) 990-9051.

“The Singing Church”

Lutherans have historically been called “the singing church.” There is no doubt that music has been a major component in the theology and practice of the Lutheran church. Luther once remarked about music, “We can mention only one point, namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.”¹ Music has a power and purpose that cannot be understated in our worship and the life of the congregation.

But music does more than touch the emotions. Music is a vehicle that carries both the musician and the hearer deeper into connection with the truth of the Scriptures. This is true of the most complex Bach chorale and even the simplest of songs like “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know.” Each musical selection within the church shapes the thoughts, minds and faith of the people who experience them.

This is also true of stewardship hymns. We are currently considering the verses of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB 788*) as it shapes our understanding and practice of stewardship. This month we take a deeper dive into verse two:

Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace
For life and vision, for a purpose clear,
For Christ Your Son, and for each human face
that shows Your message ever new and near.

The stanza begins by touching on the truth of the Law. Thankfulness is not a natural posture for fallen humanity. For sinners curved in upon themselves, thankfulness for love and grace is something that must be taught. We are those who hoard and clutch. Our confession of our shallow thankfulness highlights the need for us to learn thankfulness to God.

Thankfulness also points to what we are stewards of: love and grace! All the things we have traditionally called stewardship aren’t actual stewardship. Rather, what matters is how we steward the one, true and only treasure: the love and grace of God revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, all stewardship is stewardship of the Gospel! How can we gaze at the cross and empty tomb and not be thankful?

The LCMS defines stewardship as “the free and joyous activity of God’s family — the church — in managing life’s resources for His purposes.” God’s love and mercy give us a clear purpose as we live out our Baptism and practice this joyous stewardship. All we are, all we have entrusted to us, and all we are called to do is to connect others with the love and mercy of God revealed in Jesus!

The faithful steward sings with lips and life of this love and mercy that is ever new and near. In the Scriptures. In the Lord’s House. At the Lord’s Table. This is where our stewardship song starts and ends. Our family, our co-workers and classmates, and our world need to hear this song!

¹ Martin Luther, “Preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*,” in Luther’s Works, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut T. Lehmann, and Christopher Boyd Brown, vol. 53 (Philadelphia and St. Louis: Fortress and Concordia Publishing House, 1955–), 321–322.

God's Work in Latvia

A Mock Family Newsletter

The Fall Semester Is Off!

Twenty-six students from sixteen countries with theological educators across three countries have come together for the start of the 2024-2025 academic year at Luther Academy. This year sees a large incoming freshman class, or “First Years”, along with our first class of seniors (“Fourth Years”) that are nearing their graduation. I have been able to sense the excitement as these students come together to both start their studies and to continue their studies together.

As First Years, some students haven't had the opportunity to get their English to a confident level of proficiency—especially when it comes to theological terms. One suggestion came across my desk regarding enabling the translation of the captions that we use for our online classes. Normally, these captions are simply in English to match the language that is being spoken during class. Having these captions translated in real-time from English into their native language would go a long way to bridge the gap in their language needs. I set off to get this feature enabled so the students could benefit from this helpful tool. With the help of the Office of International Mission (OIM) and the LCMS, we were able to get this feature enabled and set up in a short amount of time. The students (myself included!) are very excited to have this new tool, which ultimately, due to their increased comprehension of course material and class discussions, will help them to become better-trained pastors and church workers.

In other news at the Academy, additional technologically-heavy work is being done to shorten the gap between students and their digital library resources. We continue to work with providers of these digital libraries to more tightly integrate them with our learning management system (LMS), which helps both save time and eliminate barriers to these resources.

Family Update

A bit closer to home, the girls have also started their next year of home school. The girls enjoy being back in school with their mom as their teacher. We continue to look for activities and friendships for the girls to get involved in. We also continue to settle well here and look forward to hearing the decision regarding our Latvian visas—which should be any day now.

Thank you so much for your prayers as we continue in the work that God has set before us, that the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world may be proclaimed.



– Cody, Aurélie, Eva and Moriah

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Monthly Meeting of the Church Council
Sunday, August 11, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Church Council was held on August 11th at 8:00 AM. Present: Pastor Koepp, Keith Thorpe, Kevin Schultz, Diane Schultz, Chris Christinson, Joel McDonough, Markie Koepp Pam Sittig, Luke Bayer, and Kathy Stanek. The meeting was called to order and Pastor Koepp opened with prayer. Keith motioned to approve the July minutes and Diane 2nd. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS

Board of Elders: Joel McDonough

- Working on membership list.

Treasurer's Report: Chris Christinson

- All bills have been paid with current balances reflected.
- Building insurance has been paid for the year.
- Previous Sunday's deposit was put into savings.

Board of Trustees: Kevin Schultz

- Electric contractor is waiting for a component to fix the outside cross light.
- Keith & Helen sprayed for weeds in the parking lot.

Board of Evangelism: June Routier

- Cory Hall is putting together a price list for the fall pictorial directory.

Board of Education: Markie Koepp

- Sunday School classes begin September 8th.

Board of Stewardship: Keith Thorpe

- Giving is steady with no issues to report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Koepp

- Providing spiritual leadership to members of Immanuel church, preparing weekly sermons, preaching, and conducting worship services. Leading Confirmation and Bible Study classes.
- Counseling/home visits, attending board meetings, visiting sick/shut-ins as allowed and providing Communion to those who cannot attend Sunday Divine service.

Unfinished Business:

- The Elders and Trustees prepared a proposed ballot for 2025 board elections
- The Corpus has been ordered and should be here by Christmas.

New Business:

- Diane motioned to switch the church internet service to MSG. Pam 2nd. Motion carried.

With no other business to discuss Pastor closed in prayer.

Next Council Meeting: September 8th, 8:00 AM

Submitted by:
Kathy Stanek