

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

MAY 2017



*"Loving, Sharing, Serving
Jesus with you."*

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Vacationing in Christ and Not From Christ

As the warm, sunny days increase you might be getting into vacation mode. You're getting excited for all the fun and relaxing summer activities. You've probably started reserving hotels and campgrounds and planning your summer away. Summer is my favorite time of year for a couple reasons. First, because it's nice and warm. Secondly, because it's two seasons away from winter in either direction! I look forward to enjoying the sunshine, green trees and grass, and, perhaps, getting a little hiking and fishing in.

Summer vacations help us to let loose, unwind, and bond with our families, so that we can return to work, school, and other vocations refreshed and ready to serve. When the twelve apostles returned to Jesus, after having been sent out to preach, cast out demons, and heal the sick, Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while" (Mark 6:30-31). They needed to recharge. Unfortunately they didn't get the chance because the crowds had followed them (Mark 6:33). Nevertheless, the Lord does offer us time for the same.

Vacations are also a good way to appreciate the power and majesty of God. King David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Being out in God's beautiful creation can remind us to thank and praise God for the works of His hands. Sitting on the beach of Lake Michigan or hiking through the dunes or fishing on Pine Lake can even give us a small picture of what the new creation in heaven must be like in its

peaceful, tranquil, yet grand beauty. –The mosquitoes and ticks bring us back to reality though!

There is something you should be aware of as you plan your summer: The devil doesn't take vacations. Yes, it's true; night and day, season after season, the devil is still doing his destroying work. He does not tire or give up. Even in the beautiful days of summer, the devil will try his hardest to make you forget your Savior and neglect your neighbor.

In our pleasure-seeking culture this is a real danger. Sometimes we see vacations as the end goal. We work in order to have vacations, instead of having vacations in order to work. Our vocations are just a means through which we can earn more vacation time, or something we have to endure until we're able to have more time for ourselves.

But God didn't create and redeem us for vacations. Jesus didn't commission the disciples for 10 or 20 years' service so that they could retire well! They received their reward, but not in this life. Your purpose in life is not to relax and have as much pleasure as possible. If you live for vacations, then vacations are your idol. They are something you love more than God. You were created and redeemed to serve the Lord, not sin.

Paul writes in Romans 6:17-18, "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." What does it

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Vacationing in Christ and Not From Christ

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mean to be a slave? -To be under an authority as obedient servants. If you are a slave to sin, you obey the sinful desires which lead to death. If you are a slave of righteousness, you obey the Gospel – that is, you believe God’s Word, which leads to life everlasting. Slaves of righteousness have been set free from sin to serve the living God.

As you plan your summer, ask yourself, “How am I to be a servant of righteousness?”

First, do not neglect to come to church. It is true that God is present everywhere. It is also true that we can appreciate God’s majesty in nature. It is NOT true that being out in nature is the same as being in church. You cannot learn God’s *grace* from nature. The Gospel isn’t found in nature; it’s found in God’s Word and Sacraments. The merciful, saving God is found where He is giving His gifts for the forgiveness of sins.

Continue your regular pattern of receiving God’s gifts all summer long. If you are going to be out of town, plan ahead. Go to lcms.org to find a church in your area. If no church is nearby or you’re on a plane, plan to conduct a service with your family. Bring with you the Bible readings for that day (the next week’s readings are in our weekly bulletin) and a hymnal. The Lutheran Service Book has services that are short and simple that anyone could lead. Check out Responsive prayer on pages 282-287 or Daily Prayer on pages 294-298. If you need help or have questions, ask me before you go.

Secondly, do not vacation so much that you forget your neighbor. Being a slave to righteousness also means that you are dedicated every season to helping those in need. Take time to serve your family, church, community, and workplace all year long, so that the love of Christ would be shown to the glory of God.

As you do so, remember that Satan isn’t the only one who doesn’t take vacations. Sure, Jesus retreated to pray while He was living in weakness on earth, but Christ rose and ascended into heaven so that He can work 24-7 for your salvation. Christ has triumphed over Satan and wants to share His victory with you. Christ is risen! And may the grace of God and the love of Christ abide with you all summer long.

Pastor

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...

Living Sacrifices...in View of God's Mercy

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

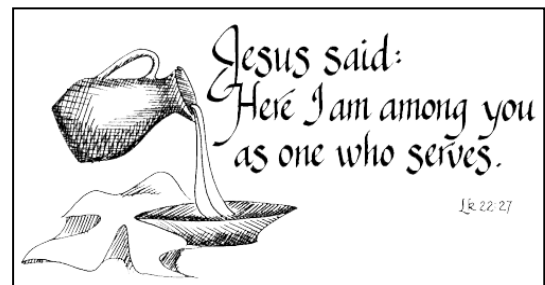
As discussed last month, we trust that the Lord will transform us through the mercies of the Gospel. After being transformed we are:

Moved to Service

“Once the Gospel transforms us, God calls us to greater service. We serve the Lord as He enables us. Each member of the Body of Christ serves with his or her particular gift or gifts.

An unfortunate concern that plagues many churches is that a handful of people usually end up doing much of the work. Three problems contribute to this situation. First, many people fail to recognize that God wants them to actively serve in the congregation. Second, pride and impatience on the part of some congregation members easily discourages others from serving. People stay at home because they feel that their service is neither needed nor appreciated. Third, most of us keep ourselves too busy. We fill our time with things that do not encourage us or anyone else in the faith. How easily we slip back in the ruts!” (*Taken from the Lutheran Study Bible*)

God serves us through His Son. Stewardship is about using the gifts God has given us to serve others.





In Jesus' Name We Pray

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
(Philippians 4:6).

We go through many changes during our earthly lives, which sometimes can be very challenging. Though we often do not know what to do or what is going to happen next, God knows all things and is always in control. Our loving Father encourages us to turn to Him, as young children turn to a loving parent, with whatever is on our minds. Let us not waste time worrying or trying to solve problems on our own. God has the answer to everything and delights in giving appropriate gifts to His children in His time.

Let us turn to Him at once. He never tires of our attention. Our innermost thoughts and desires are safe with Him. Let us always pray in Jesus' name, asking for His will to be done.

Let us also remember to pray for the precious ones on our weekly and on-going prayer lists who are especially in need of His comfort and/or intervention, and still wait for their prayers to be fully answered. We include their caregivers and families, as the suffering of each individual affects many. Please contact Jaime Caldwell at jaimecaldwell27@gmail.com or (219) 229-4590, or the church office at immanuel1237@comcast.net or 872-4419 for updates or suggestions, or to join the prayer chain. Let us pray for others as we would like them to pray for us when we are in need.

--Marie Matthews for the Prayer Chain

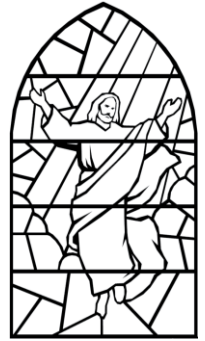
***** Thank you, Marie, for having served as the Prayer Chain coordinator. We truly appreciated your dedication to this ministry. Thank you so much!! *****

OUR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PLANS ARE BEGINNING, AND YOU CAN HELP!

Please check out the information table in the Gathering Place for the many opportunities to serve. For more information or questions, please talk to a Parish Education Committee member: Peggy Elser, Chris Glick, Lisa Knoll, or Lynette Johnston-Martin.



PLAN TO JOIN US
FOR
THE ASCENSION DAY
WORSHIP SERVICE
THURSDAY, MAY 25
7:00 PM



**GATHER AT GARDENA
SATURDAY, MAY 20
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

As an outreach to our community, Immanuel is hosting a family activity event at Gardena Park on the third Saturday of each month in May, June, July, August and September. From 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., we will invite families to play games and participate in crafts. Food will be served, as well. The congregation embraced this idea at a voters' meeting. Please sign up on the poster on the bulletin board for the dates/areas in which you can help. Please note that we have organizers—we just need helpers! Questions? Talk to Janet Solum, Lori Dobkins, Jill Palmer, Anita Henn, or Marlyn Martz.

YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE!



**American
RedCross**

**The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.**

**BLOOD DRIVE
THURSDAY, MAY 11**

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
1237 E. Coolspring Ave. – Michigan City

3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Please contact the church at 872-4419, call 1-800-RED CROSS or go to redcrossblood.org to schedule your blood donation appointment.



Shepherds & Lambs The Sunday School Newsletter May 2017

Nine students had Perfect Attendance for March! Keep up the good work!!



We welcomed one new student in the 3 yr.-old class! We are sure glad to have him with us so we can share with him how much God loves him!!

I'd very much like to thank Jill Palmer and Chelsea Romero, my assistant superintendents, for filling in for me this winter. They did a fantastic job while I was in Florida. I appreciate their help and the time they spent in my absence!! Also a thank you to our teachers too!



I seem to be drawn to parenting articles. I guess it's because when I was raising my family, I wanted to be the best parent I could be and accepted suggestions from those who either had experienced what I was experiencing or

was an expert. I really appreciated hints . . . so these tips come to you from Mark Merrill who is the president of All Pro Dad and Family First Christian website. I have recommended this site before, AllProDad at familyfirst.net. These items are **5 THINGS PARENTS SHOULD STOP DOING:**

1. **Stop yelling at your kids in public.**
Every parent has instances of anger that they wish they could take back. But berating your kids in public is a double-edged sword, combining personal attack with public humiliation.
2. **Stop trying to be the "cool mom" or "cool dad."**
Your kids don't need you to be their pal, they need you to be their parent. Don't try to dress like them or "stalk" them and their friends through excessive or awkward use of social media. Guide them through their experiences, but give them room.
3. **Stop allowing them to have or do things that are not age-appropriate.**
Life is hard for our kids today. The media bombards them with pressure to grow up too quickly. The world is trying to strip away their innocence. Don't accelerate them to that point of no return by subjecting them to things they are not ready for, even when they beg you

to let them. Just because all the other kids have an iPhone, go to the party, or go on a date doesn't mean your child should.

4. Stop shielding them from all the consequences of their mistakes or messes.

How to Guarantee Your Teen Learns Nothing from Bad Decisions addressed what happens when you remove the consequences of their poor choices and their responsibility for them. Devastation is ahead for those kids who believe they never have to answer for their actions.

5. Stop living vicariously through them.

It's hard enough for your kids to figure out what they like and dislike, what they're gifted at and not gifted at. Don't complicate it for them by trying to live your life again through them. Just because you were the star quarterback of your team doesn't mean your child will be or want to be. Just because you were a professional ballet dancer doesn't mean your child will want to follow. Help them to find their dream and pursue it.

WISHING YOU SUCCESSFUL PARENTING!!



-- Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
JULY 17-21, 2017
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

for ages 4 – 11 (or just completed 5th grade)

In Jesus the Victory is Won!

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." – 1 Corinthians 15:57

His kingdom endures forever! At *Mighty Fortress*, kids learn that God is their refuge and strength. Friends may fail them. They may not ace their test or make the team, but God promises to be their rock and their salvation—their fortress and sure defense. So raise your banner! In Jesus, the victory is won!



Join us on
 May 21, 2017
 for our
**SENIOR SERVANT
 RECOGNITION POTLUCK!**

We will begin the potluck around **11:30 a.m.**, right after the church service. Please join us in saying THANK YOU to those who have served Immanuel for countless years!



PLEASE NOTE:
 The deadline for submitting news for the June issue is **Monday, May 1.**

There will **not** be July or August issues of *Gabriel's Gazette*, so be sure to get all your summer news in now.

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V★	T	O	T★	S	N★	A	V	O★	E
S	I	C★	N	N	T★	E	S★	R	S

The Book of 1 Timothy

Color in all the squares with a ★. Then write the remaining letters on the lines below to reveal the hidden verse

-1 Timothy 1:15

