

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

APRIL 2023



Confirmation: A Brief History of Development



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

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There is nothing more Lutheran today than the practice of confirmation. As it is currently practiced, confirmation is a rite (ceremony) within which a person makes a confession of faith, solemn promises before God, and receives a blessing from the pastor. It marks the completion of a more in-depth study of Luther's Small Catechism. But where does it come from? We know that it cannot be found in Scripture. It has no command or institution by Christ. In this article I hope to give you a very brief overview of its history.

Within the first three centuries of the Christian Church, immediately following the baptism, a person was anointed with oil. In the Roman world, anointing with olive oil always followed a bath! But, theologically, Jesus is described as being anointed with the Spirit in baptism (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38) and Christians are anointed and sealed with the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:21-22). Aaron and his sons were anointed into the priesthood (Exodus 29:7) and Christians are called a royal priesthood (Revelation 1:6). It seems inevitable that anointing would be a part of the baptism ceremony. The pastor anointed the person, made the sign of the cross on him, and then laid his hands on the person and blessed him. These were all done together with the baptism.

After the fourth century AD, more and more emphases were given to the anointing and laying on of hands of the baptized. By *chrismation* (the anointing of oil) baptismal candidates were *christened* and called Christians. There seems to be, at this time, an indication that even the Holy Spirit or a particular blessing of the Spirit was conveyed through the laying on of hands in the conclusion of the baptism. Faustus, the bishop of Riez, at the end of the fifth century wrote that a person is

"reborn in baptism for life," but is "*confirmed* after baptism for the strife. In baptism we are washed; after baptism we are strengthened...*Confirmation* arms and supplies those needing to be preserved for the struggles and battles of this world." While this might not have been the prevailing opinion at the time, nor was there a church doctrine regarding confirmation, this seems to present an early attempt to distinguish confirmation from baptism.

By the Middle Ages, confirmation emerges as an independent rite from baptism. Bishops were required for baptisms, but as the Church expanded rapidly and vastly, the number of bishops available for baptisms were few and far between. To adapt to this problem, the Eastern Church allowed the local priests to baptize and anoint the person, rather than wait for the bishop to arrive. The Western Church, however, chose to have the priests baptize, but the bishop would later (sometimes years later) give the anointing and laying on of hands (the confirmation).

By the time of the Reformation, confirmation was an entirely separate rite from baptism. It was a sacrament of the church which conveyed the Holy Spirit and gave God's grace. Martin Luther opposed this, arguing that confirmation was not instituted nor commanded by Christ, nor did it contain any promise of grace from the Scriptures, and therefore could not be considered a sacrament. Lutherans, therefore, removed confirmation as a sacrament. Some quit practicing it altogether. Martin Luther said that while it was unnecessary, it could be kept in good faith. Just as other things like water for baptism, Bibles, or churches can be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer,

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so can people. But we must remember that it is not required by God or given by Him.

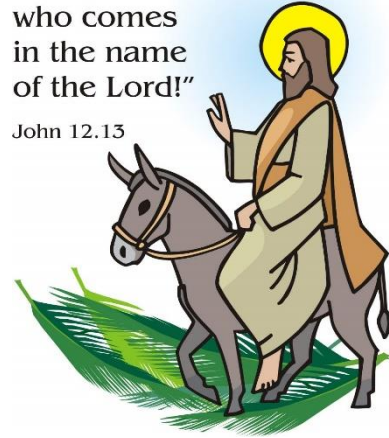
However, the learning of the Catechism was always required by Lutherans. This follows the commandment of our Lord: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..., *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you." And the Apostle Paul writes, "Fathers...bring up [your children] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) Thus, more important than confirmation itself, is what leads up to confirmation.

Next month I hope to write a little more about confirmation during the Reformation and about what should be required before receiving communion.

Pastor

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

John 12.13



Our youth would like to thank everyone for supporting their Bake Sale fundraiser in March!

They are working to raise funds to attend the *Higher Things Youth Conference* in July.



Their April fundraiser will be a Spaghetti Dinner:



Friday, April 28
4:30 – 7:00 PM

Adults \$12
Children 3-12 \$ 7
Under 3 free

Tickets will be sold by the youth; walk-ins are also welcome.

** There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for anyone wanting to HELP with setting up, serving, cleaning up, or bringing a dessert to share.

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES



PALM/PASSION WEEKEND

Saturday, April 1, Worship at 6:00 PM
Sunday, April 2, Worship at 10:00 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 6, Worship at 7:00 PM

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 7, Worship at 7:00 PM

EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, April 8, Vigil of Easter Service at 6:00 PM

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD – EASTER DAY

Sunday, April 9
Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM
Easter Breakfast at 8:00 AM
Sunday School at 8:45 AM
Easter Festival Service at 10:00 AM



FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE. . .**Stewardship Spotlight**

II Timothy 3:16 & 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

New pew Bibles

There are now new ESV Bibles at the ends of each pew provided by the church. The beautiful hard-cover Bibles were dedicated at the February 19 service. Please make use of them and may they be a blessing to us at Immanuel.

Be encouraged to read your Bible faithfully. The bulletin insert has a daily lectionary reading that is an excellent guide. In addition, read a Psalm each day that can also be used as a prayer. The Bible is the Word of God. It tells us everything we need to know for this life and the life to come. It is a "lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." It is the everlasting truth. Take time to read the Bible. It is always true and perfect.

Spotlight on LWML

Lutheran Women's Missionary League -Indiana District is active at Immanuel. Our President is Ruth Riederer, Vice President is Nancy Froehlke, Secretary is Janet Toyra-Smith, and Treasurer is Pat Potratz. LWML

encourages Bible study, prayer, and worship. The LWML is mission-focused and stresses service to others. Mite boxes are used for collecting "mites" for supporting missions locally and worldwide. These will be collected this year on the weekend of April 29 & 30. LWML meets at 6:00 p.m. on the 4th Monday each month. If you would like to join or know more, please contact any of the above officers who would love to hear from you. To read more on this women's auxiliary of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, go to lwml.org.

Power in Prayer

By Ruth Bell Graham

The center of power, it has been said, is not found in summit meetings or in peace conferences. It is found when children of God pray for God's will to be done in their lives, in their homes and in the world around them.

We cannot pray and remain the same. We cannot pray and have our homes remain the same. We cannot pray and have the world around us remain the same. God has decreed to act in response to prayer. He commands us to ask. And Satan trembles for fear we will.

We need to start where we are, as we are. We can start with whatever concerns us, with whatever is lying most heavily on our hearts, whatever is irritating or frustrating us.

Be pointed. Be persistent. Be patient. But pray.

from Decision Magazine, February 2023



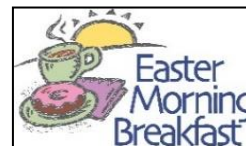
Our Annual
Easter Egg Hunt
is

Saturday, April 8th
at 9:30 a.m.

at Creek Ridge County Park
on County Road 400 North
(if it's raining, come to the church)

For ages 0 – 4th Grade
Bring your friends!

***Come out and enjoy the
fellowship and fun!***

**Our annual EASTER**

BREAKFAST will be served immediately following the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 9, and will end at 9:45 a.m.

All the food for this meal, the set-up, and the clean-up are provided by you, the congregation. So, please let us know how you can help this year.

Items needed: egg casseroles (*already baked*), fruit platters (*washed, cut, and ready to serve*), sweet breads and muffins (*sliced and ready to serve*), colored hard-boiled eggs, cash donations, juice/milk, kitchen help, set-up before, and clean-up after. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, contact the church office, or Lori Dobkins.

Thank you for your help again this year in making our Easter Breakfast possible.



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter

April 2023

Do you ever make plans and things don't work out? It's disappointing, isn't it? We are disappointed when we don't get our way. And yes, we disappoint God by our actions and our lack of doing what we should do.

Have you ever had something happen that you didn't quite understand how it happened? You may call it a miracle!

Well, during this Easter season, we realize that God had a plan all along for us sinners, a plan to rescue us from the punishment we deserve for disobeying Him. The love Jesus has for us is shown in His coming down to earth with one purpose in mind, that is to save us from those sins. The pain and beating He endured in our place shows us that love. Three days after His death, He rose again triumphing over the devil and our evil ways. Here's one way to think about miracles: A miracle is something only God can do. It shows His great love for me and you! We understand this miracle, God's love for all people and His desire for us all to follow Him and live with God in Heaven. Disappointing, NO WAY! A miracle, YES!

I hope that your families were enriched with the weekly devotions and assembling an Easter cross magnet by adding a new piece of the cross puzzle each week. You can leave the finished cross on the refrigerator all year. I put mine on the back of my car as a witness.



Our students will sing during the Palm Sunday service. Make sure that your children are there.

I want to thank Deb Topolski for filling in for me this winter. It's nice to know that Sunday School was in capable hands while I was gone! Thanks again, Deb!



A Blessed Easter to your family,

Lynette Johnston-Martin
Superintendent



HE IS RISEN! EASTER WORD FIND

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| FORGIVEN | CRUCIFIED |
| LOVE | |





VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
JUNE 26-30
8:30-11:30 a.m.

For children ages 4-11
(or just finished 5th grade)

This summer at Vacation Bible School, we're covered in Jesus' grace! Our theme for this year, *God's Living Water: Covered in Jesus' Grace*, is inspired by 1 Timothy 1:14, which says, "The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." Each of the lessons focuses on biblical accounts that emphasize the Living Water, Jesus Christ. We'll go straight into God's Word and see how He continually offers us grace each day, even when we don't deserve it!

Watch for registration information
in the May issue of Gabriel's Gazette!



It takes a lot of helping hands to offer a quality Vacation Bible School program to our community.

There will be a
VBS General Information Meeting
Thursday, April 20
6:00-7:00 PM

for all those interested in finding out where their time and talents can best be used to assist Immanuel's Vacation Bible School ministry. We need help during the planning stages, during VBS week, and during the follow-up time after it's over. Plan to attend for more information, or contact Peggy Elser.



PLANTING YOUR SPRING GARDEN

For The Garden Of Your Daily Living:

Plant Three Rows of Peas

1. Peace Of Mind
2. Peace Of Heart
3. Peace Of Soul

Plant Four Rows Of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant Four Rows Of Lettuce

1. Lettuce Be Faithful
2. Lettuce Be Kind
3. Lettuce Be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

No Garden Is Complete Without Turnips

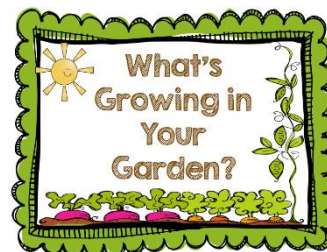
1. Turnip For Meetings
2. Turnip For Service
3. Turnip To Help One Another

To Conclude Our Garden, We Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme For Each Other
2. Thyme For Family
3. Thyme For Friends

Water Freely With Patience
 And Cultivate With Love.

There Is Much Fruit In Your Garden
 Because You Reap What You Sow.





PLEASE NOTE: The deadline to submit items for the *May Gazette* is Monday, **April 3**.

