

GABRIEL'S GAZETTE

MAY 2023



First Communion



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

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You may have noticed that in the last fifty years there has been a gradual shift in Lutheranism from first communion at the time of confirmation (usually around 8th grade) to having first communion prior to confirmation and at an earlier age.

The Scriptures, in fact, do not give any age requirement for the reception of holy communion. In its history, the Christian Church has communed people at a variety of ages. The 16th century Lutherans, while not requiring a specific age, generally gave first communion around ten to twelve years old. During the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on human reason, that age became later and was tied to confirmation. Now there has been a shift in the other direction. Why?

The rite of confirmation originally wasn't tied to first communion, but baptism, as I said in my previous article. It was *catechesis* (teaching of the faith) that was required. And catechesis isn't just a two or three-year course with the pastor. It is assumed that catechesis has begun at baptism and will continue one's whole life. But that doesn't answer the question of "when" for first communion, does it?

Here are some guiding Scriptural passages which might help us get to the "when":

- "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls to the pigs." (Matthew 7:6)
- "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42)
- "This is My body, which is given *for you*. Do this in *remembrance of Me*." (Luke 22:19)
- "For I received from the Lord what I also *delivered to you*, that the Lord

Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread..." (1 Corinthians 11:23)

- "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you *proclaim* the Lord's death until He comes....*Let a person examine himself*, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without *discerning the body* eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1 Corinthians 11:26-27)

First, it is evident that communion is not for unbelievers or the unbaptized. One can even receive judgments from God for receiving Christ's body and blood without faith. Communion should happen within the body of believers who have been baptized and are devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship. Only in such fellowship, formed by baptism and in the teaching of God's Word, do we have a unity which finds its most intimate expression in Holy Communion.

Secondly, Jesus' words "Do this in remembrance of Me" and Paul's words "I delivered to you" (i.e. I taught you), "you proclaim the Lord's death," and "Let a person examine himself" indicate that some teaching and examination should happen prior to communion. Thus, the Church has usually required some form of examination of the candidate's knowledge of the faith and repentance. Historically, Lutherans had to go to Private Confession before receiving Communion, even on a weekly basis!

There is, then, a balance which we must have regarding maturity and instruction. On the one hand, we don't want to act as though a person must attain a certain degree of intellectual capability before they are worthy to receive the Supper.

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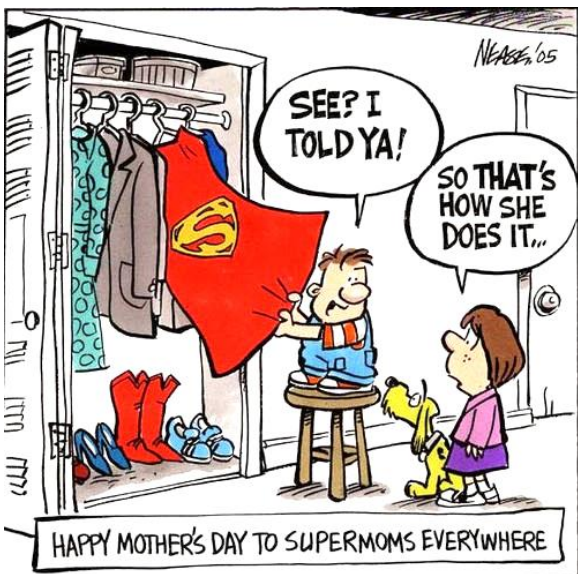
First Communion

(continued from pg.1)

Otherwise, the mentally handicapped would never be able to receive it. All are made worthy, not by works, but by faith because of the righteousness of Christ. Nevertheless, we don't commune infants just because they are worthy by faith. The Scriptures indicate a degree of preparation should happen first to be sure a person has a basic knowledge of the faith, repents of their sins, and believes in what Christ teaches about the Supper. The Augsburg Confession, Article XXV, says, "The custom has been retained among us of not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved." Martin Luther saw it sufficient for them to have learned the catechism, confessed their sins, and explained what the Supper is and why they need it. And this doesn't mean that they must be experts in the Catechism (Luther would say that no one can be!), but can say the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Creed.

Therefore, some children might be well-prepared long before the 8th grade, while others not ready until later. We need not put an age or grade to readiness, but parents and grandparents should make sure that the children of their households continue in the instruction of the faith and are brought to the pastor when they are ready and desire to receive communion.

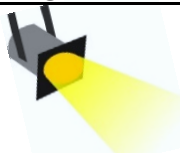
Pastor



PLAN TO JOIN US
FOR
THE ASCENSION DAY
WORSHIP SERVICE
THURSDAY, MAY 18
7:00 PM



FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE...



Stewardship Spotlight

1 Peter 4:10 "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Church Cleanup Day on March 25: Our faithful stewards included three youth. Due to inclement weather, outdoor yard work was not possible so we moved indoors. We thank Grace, Evia, and Levi for helping to clean the pews and kneelers, wash the ceiling fans in the Fellowship Hall, knock down cobwebs and place sharpened pencils in the pew racks. Sherri Kempf also helped. While this was going on, Luke cleaned ceiling light fixtures in the hall and cleaned out the inside base of the kitchen dishwasher. Chris Elser braved the weather and did spring cleanup of the courtyard along with Bob and Jim. It looks lots better! The workday also consisted of the **Trustee Board**: Mike Shepperson, Bob Solum, Jim Waltz, Justin Pavolka and Rich Knoll. As a board, they are charged with oversight of the physical properties to keep them in good condition and repair. The board thanks those who assisted them in their task by volunteering this day. As the weather warms, some future volunteering will be done by Justin Pavolka and Nolan Ponder in mowing the grass again this summer. The Minnick family will be taking care of the hillside garden and some other yard work. Thank you to these faithful stewards in sharing their talents.

Benevolence Fund: Occasionally there is an urgent need to financially assist a family or individual. Pastor oversees this fund. If you wish to donate, indicate on your giving envelope the amount you wish to give and mark it "Benevolence Fund."

Word of Inspiration: Tell others of the love of Jesus. Encourage your fellow Christians. We need more Christian soldiers who are willing to stand for Christ. Be in the Word by reading your Bible daily. Challenge yourself to read at least three chapters a day and you will be blessed in your walk in the Lord. "Onward Christian Soldiers" is such a great hymn. Verse 2 says, "Like a mighty army moves the church of God; brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided, all one body we, one hope and doctrine, one in charity. Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war with the cross of Jesus going on before."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE PARK 2023**

**Sunday, JUNE 25,
10:00 a.m.**

at Creek Ridge County
Park, 7943 W. 400 N. in
Michigan City



We will be having another TRIVIA NIGHT here at church on **Friday, June 2nd**.

Cost is \$10 per player.

Doors open @ 6PM, TRIVIA starts @ 7PM.

Teams can bring their own drinks & snacks.

Proceeds to benefit

the youth outing to *Higher Things*.

Please come join us to support our youth!

VBS NEEDS LIST – CAN YOU HELP?

PLEASE VISIT THE VBS TABLE IN THE GATHERING PLACE TO LET US KNOW.



Our VBS plans are under way and here is a current list of items needed. Donated items can be placed in the box under the VBS table in the Gathering Place. If you can lend us an item, please put your name on it and we will return it when VBS is over. Watch the bulletin or check the VBS table for weekly updates. For more information, contact a member of the Board of Parish Education: Peggy Elser, Sherri Kempf, Chris Glick, and Lynette Johnston-Martin. Thank you!

CRAFTS

3 dz. small (8 oz.) empty water bottles with caps
 packages of mini pom poms, assorted colors
 assorted colors card stock sheets
 6 dz. mini clay pots (*approx. 1.625 high*)
 3 dz. small clay saucers (*approx. 3.5" diameter*)
 3 dz. small cans, empty – (*4-8 oz. mushrooms, vegetable, tomato sauce, etc.*)
 9 stone or brick print scrapbook pages
 blue crayons – assorted shades
 36 sheets large felt 12"x18", black
 24 sheets 9"x12" felt: dark (*royal*) blue
 18 sheets 9"x12" felt each: red, lt. blue (*or turquoise*)
 13 sheets 9"x12" felt: orange
 11 sheets 9"x12" felt: green
 9 sheets 9"x12" felt each: white, light gray
 7 sheets 9"x12" felt: yellow
 3 dz. 1/4" x 12" wood dowels
 clear craft glue

DECORATING

Our decorating theme is various WATER scenes.

blue crepe paper streamer rolls – assorted shades
 clear cellophane roll
 bulletin board paper roll – brick or stone pattern
 kraft paper roll – natural/tan color
 2 wood palettes
 wishing-well yard ornament to borrow

GENERAL SUPPLIES

small paper plates
 paper towels
 quart-size Zip-Loc bags
 lemonade mix
 cookies
 paper lunch bags
 napkins
 tape
 baby wipes



Shepherds & Lambs

The Sunday School Newsletter May 2023

I read an interesting article recently about what to teach your child before 12 years old. Parenting is not an easy thing. I always welcomed suggestions when I was raising my kids. I'd like to share these over the next 2 months. These are golden years because we can help our children build the spiritual and moral warehouse they'll need as they face life's challenges and troubles. We've all seen this phrase "What would Jesus do?" That should be our first self-question!!



Number 1: TEACH THEM ABOUT THEIR SAVIOR.

It's said that the early years of their lives are the best time to instill our values in them before they start forming their values and opinions from others. Teach them about Jesus with daily family devotions, Sunday School, church, and a Christian example in your home life. Share Jesus in every aspect of their daily life.

Number 2: TEACH THEM TO MAKE WISE CHOICES.

"What would Jesus do?" Teaching them this will save them a lot of pain from making bad choices. We make many decisions each day. Guide them to make wise choices in light of their past experiences, current circumstances, and future hopes and dreams.

Number 3: TEACH THEM TO DISCERN RIGHT FROM WRONG.

"What would Jesus do?" When training your child to stand up for what is right and determine right from wrong, here are some filters: Is it against God's law, is it against our personal conviction, or is it the Law?



The children will be making May Day baskets for our shut-ins. They will be delivered and put on their door!!

Enjoy the Lord's renewal of our land in budding trees and flowers, new life, rain, and fresh, gentle breezes. Isn't our GOD GOOD?? YES!!



A Happy May to you all!

Lynette Johnston - Martin
Superintendent



**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! Make plans to attend, and invite a friend!

Register Today!

You can use the registration form on page 5 or register online at immanuelmc.com and click on the VBS box.

One form is needed for EACH child.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
JUNE 26-30, 2023
8:30-11:30 a.m.

For Ages 4 – 11
(or just completed 5th grade)



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
1237 E. COOLSPRING AVE.
MICHIGAN CITY, IN 46360
(219) 872-4419



Registration Form

(one form for each child, please)

Child's Name _____

Birth Date _____ Age _____ Grade just completed _____

Names of Siblings Attending VBS _____

Parents' Names _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____ Church Home _____

Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Food Allergies _____

Medical Allergies or Conditions _____

People who may pick up the child _____

I permit my child's name and food allergy to be posted for VBS staff to see. Yes ___ No ___ NA ___

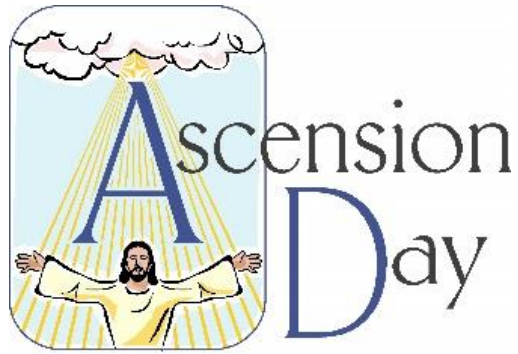
VBS leaders have permission to photograph/film the minor(s) designated above in any manner or form for any lawful purpose associated with this VBS program. Yes ___ No ___

By signing, I agree that my child has my permission to attend and participate in the *God's Living Water* VBS program, June 26-30, 2023.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

You can also register online at immanuelmc.com and click on the VBS box.

PLEASE SUBMIT REGISTRATION FORM BY MONDAY, JUNE 19.



PLEASE NOTE: The deadline to submit items for the June *Gazette* 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.

