

IMMANUEL MONTHLY

March 1, 2014



From Pastor's Desk Repent and Return

by Rev. Jason M. Braaten

The Lord calls His people to return. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). These recorded words of Jesus, at the start of His public ministry, come upon His return to Galilee after forty days of fasting and His temptation in the desert. We will also hear during this upcoming Lent that we are made of dust and to dust we shall return (Genesis 3:19). These godly and loving reminders tell us that He made us, it is His work, we are His, and He wants us to be with Him. Our Lord’s words cause us to turn, repent, to return.

Some of us may be feeling as if we are wandering in the wilderness of employment, finances, family matters, health, or other serious concerns at this time. And we perhaps may not always care for the serious side of Lent. The forty days of Lent, however, do not leave us alone on the ash heap. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, they lead to a triumphant Easter Day and our own Baptism into Christ. Lent is a serious matter. It is about death and life, sin and forgiveness, grace and mercy, through the Word made flesh. “With His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

As your pastor, I encourage you to take advantage of the numerous opportunities to hear the Word of God and receive His gifts at Immanuel this Lent for our Lord calls us and comes to us. If you have not been to Immanuel in a while, please return as our Lord calls. It is wonderful to see many members return weekly to the celebration of Christ's gifts. This year, also consider returning for Wednesday Lenten services, beginning with Ash Wednesday Divine Service on March 5, at 7:00 pm through Wednesday, April 9, 7:00 pm. The theme for this year's Lenten Midweek sermon series is "Our Suffering Savior," a look at the prophecies of the suffering servant song in Isaiah 52 and 53. A schedule of these midweek Lenten services is below. Once you're here, stay with us also after the service to enjoy some light refreshments and good conversation with your fellow members and Lenten travelers to our Lord's cross and the empty tomb.

DATE	THEME
March 12, Midweek Lent I	"Appearances Can Be Deceiving"
March 19, Midweek Lent II	"By His Wounds We Are Healed"
March 26, Midweek Lent III	"Stray Sheep"
April 2, Midweek Lent IV	"Knowing When To Keep Quiet"
April 9, Midweek Lent V	"Is There No Justice?"

Why Lent?

www.lcms.org

During Lent, the Church's worship assumes a more penitential character. The color for the season is purple, a color often associated with penitence. The "Hymn of Praise" is omitted from the liturgy. The word "Alleluia" is usually omitted as well. By not using the alleluia--a



joyful expression meaning "Praise the Lord"--until Easter, the Lenten season is clearly set apart as a distinct time from the rest of the year. Additionally, it forms a powerful contrast with the festive celebration of Jesus' resurrection when our alleluias ring loud and clear.

Finally, the penitential character of Lent is not its sole purpose. In the ancient Church, the weeks leading up to Easter were a time of intensive preparation of the candidates who

were to be baptized at the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday. This time in the Church's calendar was seen as an especially appropriate time for Baptism because of the relationship between Christ's death and resurrection and our own in Holy Baptism (see Romans 6:1-11). This focus would suggest that the season of Lent serves not only as a time to meditate on the suffering that Christ endured on our behalf but also as an opportunity to reflect upon our own Baptism and what it means to live as a child of God.

Thrivent FAQs

An LCMS pastor has recently learned that “money earned by Thrivent from the investments of Thrivent Members is given, via Thrivent’s charitable arm the Thrivent Foundation, to pro-abortion organizations such as: Planned Parenthood Foundation of America; Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin; Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota; Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio; and NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation. Planned Parenthood of the Heartland has been added to the Gift Multiplier database, but is “on hold” and therefore it is unclear whether they have received funds at this time.” (You can read the report in full at <http://daringlutheran.net/2014/01/15/thrivent-has-directly-funded-planned-parenthood-and-naral/>)



The LCMS Response

The Synod in turn offered an official response: “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, guided by the Word of God, is unabashedly and actively pro-life. Thus we are deeply concerned by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans’ decision, announced Feb. 6, 2014, to adopt a ‘Financial Neutrality Policy’ effective immediately to guide its decisions for outreach funding of charitable organizations.

Under this new policy, neither pro-abortion nor pro-life organizations are eligible to receive outreach support or

funding from any of Thrivent’s charitable assistance funding programs. While we applaud the restricts on funding pro-abortion organizations, this is not the outcome we had envisioned for the more than 50 pro-life charitable organizations that have received Thrivent assistance in the past to provide key support for women, children and families. Sadly, this leaves many Christian pro-life agencies providing these pivotal services in a position of expected financial shortfall.

Synod leadership is keenly aware of these troubling events and is in the process of reviewing the details and implications of this new policy to determine a course of action in response to it.

In the meantime, under the new policy, we understand that LCMS members may earmark their Thrivent Choice Dollars for their local parish, and we encourage CLMS parishes receiving these funds to use them to fund pro-life organizations. We further encourage LCMS Thrivent members to contact Thrivent directly with any questions or concerns about its policy.”

The Lutherans for Life Response

Finally, Lutherans for Life (LFL) has announced the following, in part: “Because human life is created in the image of God as proclaimed throughout scripture (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; Psalm 8:5, Colossians 3:10), and because every human being is someone for whom Christ died to restore the image of God, the sanctity of human life is a basic Lutheran/Christian value. We therefore hope and pray that Thrivent will reconsider its action and reinstate those pro-life organizations for which Thrivent has stopped funding. We call upon Christians to pray that Thrivent will correct this policy, to call the Thrivent office and local Thrivent agents to express concern for this policy, and to increase their support for life-affirming ministries that have been affected by this policy.” You can read LFL’s statement in full at <http://daringlutheran.net/2014/02/12/a-statement-from-lutherans-for-life-regarding-thrivent/>

From the President The Joy of Everyday Life

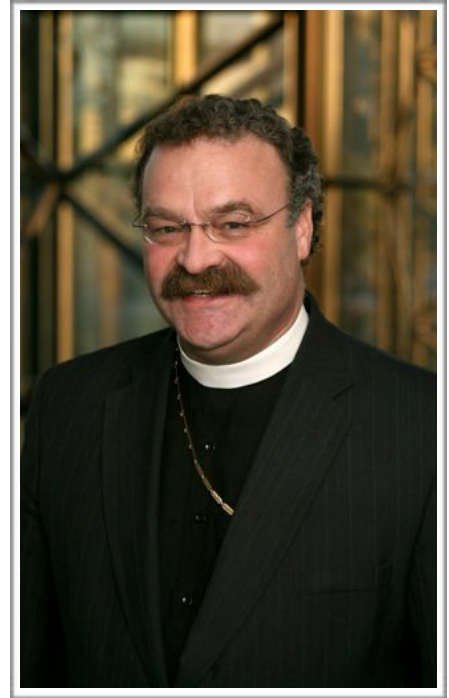
by Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

The word for “church” in the New Testament is ecclesia. It means, literally, “called out.” Christians are “called out” by Christ—out of and away from sin, death, and the devil. But this does not mean that we are called away from living real lives, or as Luther put it, should “live in a corner.” To be sure, Jesus from time to time retreated to “rest for a while” (Mark 6:31) with His apostles, but quickly returned to the fray, to His sacred vocation of accomplishing our salvation. Our souls find their “rest” in Christ (Matt. 11:29), but this very spiritual peace and joy in Christ drives us back into life with both feet. If peace is joy at rest, then happily meddling in the affairs of folks around us who need us is joy in action.

The secret to living a good news life in a bad news world is coming to the deep conviction that the high callings of God, the vocations that He regards as great and marvelous, are those in which we serve folks right under our nose. “There is [according to Martin Luther] nothing more delightful and lovable on earth than one’s neighbor. Love does not think about works, it finds joy in people” [Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation (Muhlenberg, 1957), 43]. The gravitational pull of Christ draws us to Himself for grace and mercy and peace and joy, and then hurls us into the world around us. For the great majority of us, that does not mean being called to serve as a missionary in Africa, or even as a pastor or deaconess or parochial school teacher.

It means that we are driven—freely compelled (“The love of Christ compels us;”

2 Corinthians 5:14) — to serve our spouse in love, to care for our children, to help our next door neighbor, to help the poor, hurting, and suffering in our church, to love our grandparents, and to serve our community.



And no matter what or where our calling, we are placed in a context to serve those right around us. “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). That goes as much for changing diapers as it does for slogging to make a buck to put food on the table and pay the bills. “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). But it is also true that whatever we do in faith is delightful and pleasing to God. We can do it with full confidence that, in Christ, all our sins are covered, and our vocations as father, mother, son, daughter, clerk, farmer, technician, teacher, fireman, or nurse are vocations in which the Lord delights with joy.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being

might boast in the presence of God. And because of him[c] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:25–31).

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The LCMS News Desk

photo courtesy LCMS Communications



LCMS Sends 16 New Missionaries

On Friday, February 14, 16 new LCMS missionaries finished orientation and prepared to deploy to nine countries including Peru, Ghana, Dominican Republic, Togo and the United Kingdom. At a sending service held at the completion of their training, the Rev. Randy Golter, executive director of the LCMS Office of International Mission, told them: “The Lord is making history, as He always has, using His church and Her missionaries to speak the reality of the forgiveness of sins in Christ. The Lord is working His mission and we’re privileged to be a small part of it.” Read more at <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/new-missionaries>

LCMS Signs HHS-Related Amicus Brief

The LCMS recently signed an amicus brief written in light of two upcoming Supreme Court cases – one dealing with Hobby Lobby (an arts-and-crafts retailer) and one with Conestoga Wood Specialties (a wood-cabinet manufacturer) – that resulted from the Obama

administration’s Affordable Care Act and its accompanying Health and Human Services’ mandate. Learn more at <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/lcms-signs-hhs-amicus-brief>

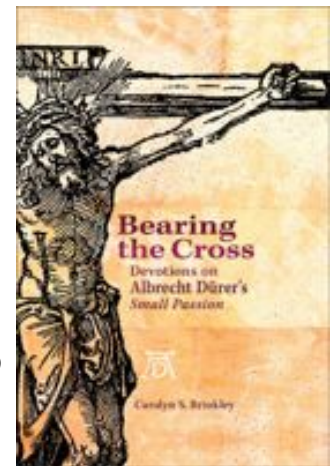
Survey begins process of updating catechism's ‘Explanation’

By the time the next Synod convention comes around in the summer of 2016, the church ought to have a newly revised “Explanation” of Luther’s Small Catechism. Discover who’s taking part in this project at <http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/survey-updating-explanation>

Book of the Month

Bearing the Cross: Devotions on Albrecht Durer’s Small Passion

Albrecht Dürer, 1471–1528, is said to be the greatest German artist of the Northern Renaissance. His works include woodcuts, engravings, sketches, and paintings of both oils and watercolors. Dürer’s genius in printmaking forever changed the world of art. Up until this time woodcuts had been merely combinations of black and white. His innovative technique of cross hatching brought new shades of grays making a pallet of contrasts between light and dark. This greatly enhanced the woodcuts of his Small Passion giving visual depth, dimension, and drama to the biblical narratives. The Small Passion contains the largest number of scenes, but is known as “small” due to the 3x5 inch size of the intricate woodcuts.



Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

Greeters List

2 Mar Tim & Teri Pollock (West)
Donna Campbell (East)

9 Mar Harold & Irene Wattjes (West)
Jim Dyer (East)

16 Mar Joan Vukelich (West)
Laverl Byers (East)

23 Mar Ruth Sims (West)
Tim & Teri Pollock (East)

30 Mar Donna Campbell (West)
Harold & Irene Wattjes (East)

6 Apr Jim Dyer (West)
Joan Vukelich (East)

13 Apr Laverl Byers (West)
Ruth Sims (East)

20 Apr Tim & Teri Pollock (West)
Donna Campbell (East)

27 Apr Harold Wattjes (West)
Jim Dyer (East)

Coffee Committee

Mar Janet Stumeier
Apr Arleigh & Mary Jane Jones

Funeral Committee

Mar Lauren Braaten
Apr Theresa Fields

Altar Committee

2 Mar Lauren Braaten
5 Mar Donna Campbell

9 Mar Donna Campbell
16 Mar Donna Campbell
23 Mar Donna Campbell
30 Mar Theresa Fields
6 Apr Theresa Fields
13 Apr Theresa Fields
17 Apr Pastor Braaten
18 Apr Pastor Braaten
19 Apr Pastor Braaten
20 Apr Sharon Allen
27 Apr Sharon Allen

Elder On Duty—Communion

5 Mar Josh Whitson
9 Mar Josh Whitson
16 Mar Steve Hilgendorf
23 Mar Mark Whitson
30 Mar Steve Hilgendorf
6 Apr Mark Whitson
13 Apr Ron Legg
17 Apr Josh Whitson
18 Apr Ron Legg
20 Apr Josh Whitson (SUNRISE)
20 Apr Steve Hilgendorf (9:00 AM)
27 Apr Mark Whitson

Altar Flowers

NO FLOWERS DURING LENT
(5 MAR–13 APR)

20 Apr Easter Lilies
27 Apr Open

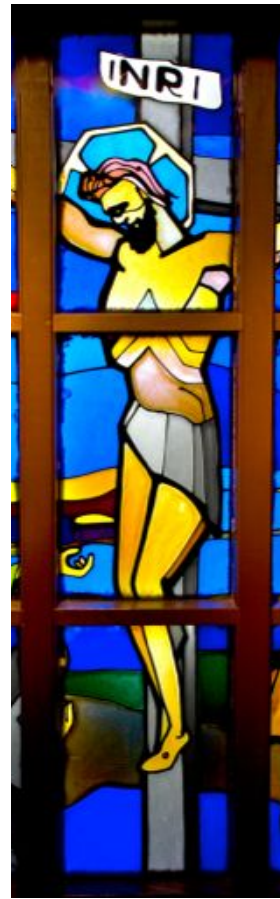
ATTENDANCE				OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Special	General	Missions	Building
2/2	16	79	0	\$1,920.00	\$20.00	\$0.00
2/9	23	77	0	\$2,922.50	\$20.00	\$0.00
2/16	16	61	0	\$1,715.50	\$200.00	\$5.00
2/23	23	84	0	\$3,288.25	\$20.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	78	301	0	\$9,846.25	\$260.00	\$5.00
Average	95			\$2,461.56	\$65.00	\$1.25

MARCH 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>6:00 AM Junior Aids Fellowship 8:00 AM Drive Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Church School 11:30 AM Ladies Bible 11:30 AM Men's Bible 4:00 PM Access Tree Baptist Church Home Visitation Catholic Reconciliation Day</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Elders Meeting Linda Hutter</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Pam & Arnold Dean</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 9:30 PM Ash Wednesday Drive Service with Communion 8:00 PM Rehearsals (Men's Club) Dean Van Cleave</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 9:30 PM Organ Search Celebrate Boyd Stenger Shawn Watkins</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8:30 PM Men's Club at The Whitson Street Joan Rahn Sandra Kees Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>1</p> <p>8:30 PM Drive Service (Communion) Brenda Aker</p>
<p>9</p> <p>6:00 AM Junior Aids Fellowship 8:00 AM Drive Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Church School 11:30 AM Ladies Bible 11:30 AM Men's Bible 4:00 PM Access Tree Baptist Church Children's Seminar Day</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Massions Meeting Audrey Dubois Wayne & Janice Arthur</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 AM Church Practice Audrey Dubois Wayne & Janice Arthur</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 9:00 PM Lenten Service (Rehearsals & Elders)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Pam Dean</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:30 PM Drive Service (Communion) Gail & Stephen</p>
<p>16</p> <p>6:00 AM Junior Aids Fellowship 8:00 AM Drive Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Church School 11:30 AM Ladies Bible 11:30 AM Men's Bible 4:00 PM Access Tree Baptist Church Catholic Reconciliation Day</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Bonnie Bonson Pastor at CIO Spring Pastor's Conference</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Michael Taylor Teressa Rahn</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7:00 PM Lenten Service 8:00 PM Rehearsals (Rehearsing & Elders)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Pat Moore</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30 PM Drive Service (Communion) Adam Wilson</p>
<p>23</p> <p>8:00 AM Junior Aids Guild 9:00 AM Elders Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Catechesis 11:30 AM Catechesis Class Catholic Reconciliation Day</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Board of Education</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 11:30 AM Ladies Bible 11:30 AM Men's Bible 4:00 PM Access Tree Baptist Church Catholic Reconciliation Day</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 1:30 PM Ladies Aid David & Sue Snyder</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30 PM Drive Service (Communion) Milt Driver</p>
<p>30</p> <p>8:00 AM Junior Aids Guild Training 9:00 AM Elders Service (Communion) 10:30 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Catechesis 11:30 AM Catechesis Class 2:00 PM Nursing Home Service 7:00 PM Youth Group</p>	<p>31</p> <p>7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Scott Capremonica</p>					

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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.

IMMANUELMONTHLY
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