

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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August 2021

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

Dress yourself with...Compassion

Every so often our news will carry a story about a school struggling with the question of going to mandatory uniforms. It's easy to understand the logic. Some of the most respected people in our society are those who wear uniforms.

Proponents of school uniforms could probably produce studies that show that students are more likely to respect themselves and each other when wearing uniforms, too.

On the other hand, we also hear stories about people bringing disgrace to the uniforms they wear: criminal charges against professional ballplayers, corruption in police departments, and sexual abuse by clergy. Examples such as these indicate that just putting on a uniform does not make a person better.

Listen to the apostle Paul describe a different kind of clothing: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12).

Notice that Paul isn't just describing a change in outward appearances. Nor is he suggesting that we can somehow will ourselves into better behavior.

We don't earn the right to wear the clothes Paul describes. They come from being loved by God.

It all starts with the compassion Jesus had that moved him to lay down his life for the world.

Believing that Jesus loved us enough to die for us is what makes us one of his people. It also is what produces a change in our attitude.

As God's dearly loved people, we want to reflect the kind of compassion Jesus showed. That is something that will be as plain to see as any uniform.



Real changes in our lives won't happen just because we put on a district-mandated or color-coordinated outfit. That clothing just changes us on the outside. The inner change begins when we are clothed with God's love. You were clothed with Jesus and all of his holiness in your baptism! You were gifted a royal righteous robe to cover you all your days. You were freed from your old way of life and set free to serve your neighbor in love and good deeds. This is who you are dear child of God!

***Indeed, as many of you as
were baptized into Christ
have been clothed
with Christ.
- Galatians 3:27***

Worship Notes

We have moved into the non-festival half of the church year. Sometimes this part of the year is called "the Half Year of the Church." We never leave behind Christ and his work for us which was the center of our attention in the Half Year of Our Lord; but now the emphasis will shift to the result of his work through the Word: the work of defining faith, of creating it and inspiring its fruits in the Church collectively and in each of us individually. After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to strengthen the faith of believers.

July Worship Themes

- 8/1 - The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost - A Miraculous Meal...A Miraculous Fellowship
- 8/8 - The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost - God Gives His Children Life
- 8/15 - The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost - Jesus Is Our Bread of Life
- 8/22 - The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Spiritual Wisdom Receives the Gifts of Christ
- 8/29 - The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost - To Whom Shall We Go



Family VBS

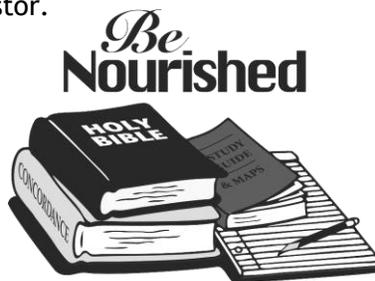
The second and third nights of Family VBS will be held on August 4th and 11th. We will begin with a meal at 6:00 p.m., followed by study and discussion as well as application of God's Word and will for the Christian family. Our focus will be on family devotions at home and the gift of forgiveness in the family. We will end each night with worship. Please sign up if you plan to attend so we have an idea how much food to prepare.

Sunday School Classes

Instruction in Bible history will begin on Sunday, September 12th.

Sunday School Teachers

Planning for Sunday School classes has begun. We are looking for people who are willing to teach God's Word to our children. Please consider serving in this way. If you are interested or would be willing to help teach, please speak with pastor.



Confirmation Classes

Instruction in God's Word following the outline of the Small Catechism will begin on September 8th. On that night, we will begin with a meeting with parents and children at 6:30 p.m. Parents, watch for a letter toward the end of the month for more details.

Wednesday Bible Class

We'll start a new series of studies on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on September 8th. Watch the bulletin and September's newsletter for more information.

Online Bible Class

We are going to continue our Tuesday afternoon online Bible class. We meet at 1:00 p.m. If you would like to participate, please email pastor to let him know to include you when he sends out the link each week. More information will be shared in the bulletin and in next month's newsletter.

Lawn Mowing

A sign-up sheet for the lawn mowing is posted in the narthex. You may also sign up online. Please consider helping out. If you have any questions about using the lawn mower or getting into the shed, please speak with Scott Claussen, Jim Buffington or pastor.



Volunteers

We are in need of some volunteers for the following: folding bulletins and newsletters and preparing the elements for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Please consider helping out in this way. The sign-up sheets are on the shelf in the Narthex.

MN Prairie OWLS Outing

The MN Prairie OWLS are planning an outing on August 10th to Watertown, SD. We plan to tour Redline Art Center from 10:30-12:30, have lunch locally from 12:30-1:30, then go to Great Plains Lutheran High School at 1:30 to see their school and new facilities. If interested in carpooling, please call Jan Krueger at 520-400-7930, and we will arrange a time and place. We have vans that can take about eight people.



The Lutheran Convention

for Seniors, sponsored by the OWLS, is scheduled for October 20-22 at Best Western Plus and Martin Luther College in New Ulm. We will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the formation of Martin Luther College, 1995-2020, with the theme of "Teaching the Next Generation the Praiseworthy Deeds of the Lord." All seniors are welcome. Please review the agenda as posted in the narthex along with registrations. Note that you can attend Thursday only with or without the banquet. It is always a good time and there are great speakers. Talk to Jan or Dennis Krueger, Tom Schroer or Evelyn Heil if questions.

Church Council Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2021

Members Present: Rollie Nissen, Tom Jurgenson, Jim Buffington, Todd Marxhausen, Scott Claussen, Martin Fabrizius, Justin Kannas, Pastor Engel, Jay Remmele

MMSP = Motion Made, Seconded, Passed

Pastor opened with a reading from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 followed by the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 10:39 am.

Agenda: MMSP to accept the agenda with one addition under Elders: Receive Jane Pickle by profession of faith.

Secretary's Report: MMSP to accept the minutes from the May 9th council meeting with no corrections.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Chairman's Report: No report.

Elders Report: MMSP to receive Jane Pickle by profession of faith.

Trustees Report:

- Grass was planted where the snowplows had pushed up dirt.
- The sump pump by the church kitchen was replaced.
- The electric company has been contacted about the lighting of the outdoor sign.
- The on-line sign up for lawn mowing is also being transferred to the bulletin board so both are up to date.

Board of Education Report: Since we do not have the music program this summer, the typical VBS activities will not be taking place.

Financial Secretary's Report: MMSP to accept the Financial Secretary's report as presented

Treasurer's Report: MMSP to accept the Treasurer's report as presented

Planned Giving: No Report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor will be taking vacation time in July.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION COMMITTEES

Equipping Christian Witnesses: recruitment, financial aid and facility improvement at MLC.

Parsonage Repairs: Have been completed and insurance covered all expenses.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- July 11, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. council meeting
- July 18, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. voters' meeting
- August 8, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. council meeting

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Closed with the Blessing.

Respectfully,
Jay Remmele, Recording Secretary



A Devotion on The Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1-8 (ESV) And [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

What an interesting parable! Have you noticed when reading Jesus' parables that there is nothing on earth, nothing in nature, nothing in human relationships both good and bad that Jesus cannot use to highlight some profound truth from God's Word? Everything that exists—everything that we see and experience—he uses as a tap on the shoulder to remind us of something else, something more important. In the parables in particular, he finds a way in such things to sum up our relationship with him and often also the relationships we have with one another.

In this parable Jesus takes a wicked example in order, by contrast, to exalt the love and the goodness of God. He uses the example of a wicked judge to encourage us in our life of prayer. Jesus sets forth the wickedness of the judge very simply. Anyone could easily understand it and perhaps even relate to it. This particular judge doesn't even make an effort to hide his corruption. He does whatever suits him without regard to God or conscience. He is so certain of his position that he doesn't care what anyone else thinks of him.

But look at this widow who comes to him for help against some injustice that has been done to her. She should not expect any help from this judge. She is of no use to the judge and can, in any case, do him no harm, even if she broadcasts his callous indifference to her case all over town. Why does she keep coming? Why doesn't she just give up after the first, the second, the hundredth time that he ignores her? She doesn't give up because she has nothing to lose. She doesn't give up because there is no one else who can help her. She doesn't give up because all is lost if this wicked man doesn't finally come to her aid. So the widow comes to the judge and plagues him day and night with her pleas. Can't you just hear the judge the first, the tenth, the hundredth time she came? "What, you again?! Leave me alone! I've got better things to do with my time and my power than to be bothered with your little problems; they mean nothing to me. And as for you, you're not worth a moment of my time or attention."

So there we are in the parable on the first and most basic level. Each of us is the widow in the parable. In our prayers she is a perfect picture of our condition before God. What do you have to ask for from God? You have a host of needs that none other than God can satisfy. Most obviously and most constantly there is the need for forgiveness. There is the need for God to preserve among us the use of his Word and sacraments. There is the need for faith that does not fail, which comes from the Word and sacraments. There is the need for strength in the struggle against temptation and for rescue from the shame and disgrace of blatant sins. There is the need for deliverance from self-righteousness. Who but God can grant those things? And so to him we pray day and night for these absolutely necessary blessings, without which we will perish in time and fall into the abyss in eternity.

But there are other needs too that never really stop, needs for which only the ruler of heaven and earth can supply. We acknowledge that in sum every time we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." As Luther reminds us in the catechism, we pray here not just for our next meal but for everything

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SPOTLIGHTING Our Members



Rollie and Glenda Nissen

Rollie was baptized and confirmed at St. John's in Hancock. Around the time of his confirmation in 1960, a group from the congregation, including the Pastor, left St John's because the WELS had not ended its fellowship with the Missouri Synod over doctrinal issues. Rollie's parents became members of the CLC. Glenda was baptized into the Christian Reformed church, and when she and Rollie were married in 1968, Glenda became a member of the CLC by profession of faith.

After they were married they continued to drive to Morris to worship. When their two children, Lisa and Derek, were ready to start Sunday School, the decision was made to begin to attend services at Immanuel. That decision to go back to the WELS was driven by the desire to be sure our children had access to Sunday School on a regular basis and that, in my opinion, the issue with the Missouri Synod had been resolved. Pastor Reiter was gracious and welcoming as we began our time here at Immanuel.

Rollie has served as an usher, on the council, currently as chairman, sung in the choir, and as a member of a quartet here at Immanuel. Glenda has sewn quilts, served coffee and helped serve for funerals when asked.

Rollie retired from retail, Tradehome Shoes, at the age of 50 then began a career in the insurance business. He is not really retired now as he serves as County Commissioner with many meetings and phone calls. He does try to get in a little golfing! Glenda worked at Health and Human Services for 41 years and is enjoying retirement doing crafts.

Rollie's favorite Bible verse is Ephesians 2:8: "It is by grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is a gift from God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." They both appreciate the forgiveness that is emphasized by sticking to the word of God and our need for a Savior. Attending worship here has nurtured their faith. It is food for the soul.

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that we need to sustain our earthly life and for everything that might make life worthwhile. We pray for family and friends; for no one can long endure total isolation. We pray for crops and favorable weather, without which we would starve or otherwise perish. We pray for good government or at least for one that does not harm us or persecute the church and believers. We pray for rescue when we are in trouble. We pray for things that are a mix of spiritual and temporal blessings; we ask God to comfort us with the assurance of his gracious presence when others have abandoned us. We pray for the consolation of his promise of eternal life for our loved ones who have died in faith; we pray for triumph over our grief at their loss. In sum, *need pretty well sums up our existence, does it not?*

If the Lord will not grant even these prayers for earthly blessings, our faith will falter; we will stumble into doubt about his love, his mercy, or even his power. That doubt can end finally in horrible unbelief. So day and night we cry to God for rescue from all the perils that threaten our body and earthly life, lest in our earthly need our souls lose hope and despair of God's grace and mercy. Like the widow, we have none other to help. If he does not hear and help, we are lost.

Like the widow, we have nothing to bring to the judge that might influence him or buy him off. He really doesn't need anything from us in an absolute sense. What he wants accomplished in the world he can accomplish with someone else if not with us, or he can accomplish it with the holy angels for that matter. He, therefore, owes us nothing and we have nothing that might ever put him in our debt.

Those basic facts about our condition when we approach God should cause us to think a bit more than we usually do about how we pray. Prayers for all the blessings mentioned above and such others as we might have should not just be rattled off with the mind somewhere else and the mouth even yawning in the middle of the prayer. Remember who you are and remember who it is that must hear your prayer. The widow comes in rags. She comes with nothing but needs. She comes with no hope of help from anyone else. Her cries would have been urgent, earnest, and humble, with all the heart and mind fully engaged. That's how we should see ourselves when we pray. Prayer is not our way of instructing or giving advice to God. It's a time for presenting to God our problems and our needs—not prescribing or dictating to God how those problems should be solved and those needs met. That's a hard lesson to learn! Likewise, given our poverty and utter lack of power, prayer is not a time for complaining to God or presuming to correct him for things we think he didn't get right; the judge of all the earth owes us no explanations for what he does. No, our prayers are the cries of one in desperate and absolute need, cries to the only one who can satisfy those needs. If he doesn't, no one else can; if he doesn't, we are ruined in time and lost in eternity. And so we pray.

O God, by this parable save me from ever yawning when I come into your all-powerful and all-holy presence. Bring it ever to my mind who you are and who I am; then mindful of my poverty and my total lack of merit, I will bow my head humbly in your presence. Pleading not my merit but the merit of your Son, I know that you will not be like the unjust judge. Holding before you his holy cross, I will cry day and night for the help I so desperately need and so little deserve. For his sake hear me; for his sake relieve and rescue me in my need. Amen.



(Deutschlander, Daniel. On Giving Advice to God, Part 2. Pp.127-130.)

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**GOD'S LOVE
IS ETERNAL
AND HIS
FAITHFULNESS
LASTS
FOREVER.**

— *Psalm 100:5* —