

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

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October 2021

Pastor Craig Engel • 320-444-7641

Dress yourself with... Humility

“Jump roping capital of the World!” a sign in Bloomer, Wisconsin once read.

“I am king of the World!” shouted the director of the movie Titanic after it won several Academy Awards.

“USA! USA! USA!” shouted millions of Americans after our Olympic hockey team beat the Russians in 1980 and then went on to win the gold.

We want to be the best in the world at something and to be able to shout: “We are number one!”

It is not all bad to be proud of our accomplishments. After all, it is God who has blessed us with our talents, and we want to express our appreciation for them.

On the other hand, we need to realize that being first, last, or somewhere in between is not really all that important. What really matters is the attitude of our hearts.

God has something very special to say on this subject. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).

As we pursue being the very best, we can be, it must never be at the expense of others. Nor should it be with the attitude that we are more deserving of what we have than others.

The perfect example of humility is Jesus. St. Paul wrote, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:5-8)!



All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- 1 Peter 5:5

We have all failed to meet that standard of God's expectations perfectly—having an attitude the same as Christ's. Fortunately, Jesus humbled himself to take our place and bring us close to God. Jesus willingly wore our selfish ambition, our vain conceit and our prideful attitudes. In his humility, he dressed you with his perfection gifted to you by faith. Now, having been forgiven, you seek to serve in humility even as you have been served by Christ's humility.

October Worship Themes

- 10/3 - The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Grow in Humble Service
- 10/10 - The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost - Reflect the Love of God in the Family
- 10/17 - The Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost - Treasure Jesus More Than All
- 10/24 - The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost - Jesus Came to Serve
- 10/31 - The Festival of the Reformation - Repent and Cling to the Eternal Gospel

Proposed Bylaw Changes

After hearing recommendations from the committee, the church council recommends to the voters that the following changes be made to our bylaws.

- 1) Congregational voters meetings be held twice a year instead of four times a year.
- 2) The number of trustees be changed from three to two.
- 3) Eliminate the Board of Education. This would mean that the chairman of the Board of Education would no longer be a church council position. The Board of Elders would assume the duties of the Board of Education.
- 4) Under the description of the duties of the trustees, change the current word "upkeep" to "maintenance."
- 5) Change the composition of the Auditing Committee to two members. One of the members must be a council member. The other member of this committee may be a church council member or voting member.
- 6) Eliminate the Stewardship Committee. The Board of Elders would assume the duties of the Stewardship Committee.
- 7) Change the composition of the Planned Giving Committee so that one member will be a church council member.

A copy of the proposed changes is available on the shelf in the Narthex. If you would like a copy emailed to you, please email pastor

and he will send one. The voters will take up this matter at the meeting scheduled for October 17, 2021. Any changes to the bylaws require a majority vote of the voting members present at any quarterly meeting.

Hymnal Orders

Our church body's new hymnal will be available soon. We will begin using parts hymnal in Advent. Like we did in 1993, we are offering an opportunity for members to purchase hymnals for the Sanctuary and for home use. Each hymnal costs \$24. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Please indicate how many you would like to purchase and if you would like them to be in memory of a loved one. You may include the cost of the hymnals you order in your offering envelope by designating how much under the "Special Funds" section of the envelope. There are two copies of the hymnal and a copy of the psalter for members to look at in the Narthex.



MLC Food Bank

Collection for the MLC Food Bank will run through October 3rd. Auxiliary meeting will be held October 9th at MLC.

New Picture Member Directory

If you haven't, please sign up to have your picture taken on October 12th or 13th. We will need people to volunteer to host the days of the picture taking. Contact Jan Krueger or Bonnie Watson for more information.

MN Prairie OWLS

Will meet Tuesday, October 26th, at 9:00 a.m. in Danube at St Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Speaker will be Kate Tohal, sharing about Equipping Christian Witnesses and the MLC auxiliary. The meal will be catered and ordered at registration that morning. Either roast beef dinner or tuna salad sandwich and soup for \$7.50. All are welcome.

The Festival of the Reformation (October 31)

Isaiah 66:1,2 (ESV) - Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word."

For hundreds of years Lutherans have observed October 31 as a day for celebrating the blessings of God that have come to us as a result of the Lutheran Reformation. It was on this day in 1517 that Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. He called for a debate over the value of indulgences. The indulgences that so infuriated Luther were scraps of paper hawked on the streets by which the purchaser was promised—for a price—a remittance of time spent in purgatory. The whole business of indulgences, like the whole doctrine of purgatory, which was at the bottom of the indulgence traffic, was a horrible insult to the mercy of God and the merit of Christ. Both the heresy of purgatory and the blasphemy of indulgences purchased to get out of it hid from the eyes of the people almost the entire doctrine of salvation as revealed in the sacred Scriptures. In sum, the teaching was that after this life Christians must go to a place of suffering—purgatory—to be purged through suffering for sins not fully purged in this life. According to the pope and his minions, only the guilt of sin was taken away by the suffering and death of Jesus; punishment still had to be endured by the sinner. Some of that punishment could be taken care of in this life through the penance prescribed by a priest after the sinner made confession to him. Masses bought, prayers said (prayers said as a punishment!), and indulgences paid for could lessen the time of purging. But there would always be some punishment left over that still needed

(Continued on Page 3.)

Church Council Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2021

Members Present: Rollie Nissen, Jim Buffington, Scott Claussen, Martin Fabrizio, Pastor Engel, Jay Remmele

MMSP = Motion Made, Seconded, Passed

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nissen at 10:37 am.

Pastor opened with a reading from 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Agenda: MMSP to accept the agenda as presented.

Secretary's Report: MMSP to accept the minutes from the July 11th council meeting with no corrections.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Chairman's Report: No report.

Elders Report: No report, meeting is upcoming.

Trustees Report: Not much going on. Slowed down for the summer.

Board of Education Report: No report.

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 had a nice vacation.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION COMMITTEES

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

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed by-law changes:

- There was some discussion around stewardship, the trustees and the board of education
- Council will review and finalize the changes at the September meeting so it can be presented to the voters in October.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- September 19, 2021 11:30 a.m. council meeting. **Note date change.**
- October 10, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. council meeting
- October 17, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. voters meeting

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Closed with the Blessing.

Respectfully,
Jay Remmele, Recording Secretary

(Continued from Page 2.)

to be endured after death. And so for comfort, the sinner could buy indulgences for himself and even for his dead friends and relatives. For how could one think of the suffering yet to come for oneself or the suffering already inflicted on dead loved ones without wanting to alleviate it? And here was the solution, here the cure: Buy more masses, pray to the saints and ask for their help (another soul-corrupting false doctrine!), and buy indulgences on the street! Where is Christ in all of that? Where is his glory as the one and only and all-sufficient Savior in all of that? All of that beautiful gospel had disappeared; it had been smothered by the imagined value of masses purchased, prayers said in order to earn God's favor, and indulgences bought to set aside God's anger against the sinner.

May this brief summary of the church in Luther's day be sufficient to satisfy the reader that the celebration of the Reformation should never, no, never go out of our calendar or our grateful memory! But some will protest, "No! We don't want to remember the Reformation! Things have changed in the church. Even Catholics don't talk much about purgatory anymore. Why bring up all these bad memories of division and conflict in the church? Better that we concentrate on things that unite us instead of dwelling on things that divided us five hundred years ago! Besides that, we live in a secular age; the legions of agnostics and atheists laugh at Christians, whatever label they may wear. Indeed, the persecution of 'Christian values' is becoming more open and growing even in supposedly tolerant western democracies; it seems that the only thing not to be tolerated these days is any mention of Christ as Savior and the Bible as the Word of God. So we all have to get together to defend what little is left of Christianity and forget about anything that might divide us! Yes, we have to build the house of God on earth together, no matter what our differences may have been in the past!"

Well, what about that objection? Don't those who say these things have a valid point? Most "Lutherans" have decided that they do! Few indeed are the churches that have special services marking the anniversary of Luther's bold challenge in 1517. In fact, where there is any note taken of the Reformation, it is usually to give thanks that it is over and done. Instead, there is a celebration of the restoration of fellowship with Rome and anyone else, even non-Christians, who might care to worship together. Because, don't you see, we have to build the house of God on earth! Doctrines are dismissed as too divisive to talk about and are renamed "faith traditions." That way doctrines are disposable, just like any traditions that have become a bother: "You think this; we think that. Whatever you think is right is right for you; that way no one is ever wrong and we can all agree and get along."

What should we answer to all that? Why not do what Luther did? Yes, why not do what the church rightly so called has always done? Why not go back and ask God what he has to say about all this? The verses above are a good place to

(Continued on Page 5.)

(Continued from Page 3.)

start. Should we build God a house on earth, a church with our opinions, our decisions about what in his Word matters and what does not, about how much of it—or indeed if any of it—should be taken seriously? Is our faith just a tradition, a matter of our opinion, with one opinion as good as another? Will God dwell there where we have built him such a house, established for him such a church?

"Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD.'" Those words of God—not words of a mere man nor just some dead prophet's opinion—should send a shudder down the spine of anyone who is arrogant enough to think that we can build a house for God, a church in which God should dwell. In fact, these words of God stand as God's own rejection of the works and opinions of all false teachers and all false religions. God created the world and God builds his house on earth, the church, by his Word—not ours.

Should we still bother with the celebration of the Reformation? "Thus says the LORD"! That's what the Reformation is all about. That's what the church faithful to the heritage of the Reformation is all about. That was the phrase that ruled Luther's thoughts and actions. Yes, it is the phrase that began, continued, and ended the work of all the apostles and prophets and of all the great church fathers down through the ages. Do you notice how that phrase is altogether absent in the thinking of those who want to set aside doctrines revealed in the Scriptures for mere "faith traditions" of their own choosing?

How unspeakably ungrateful that is, given the essence of what God says in all of his Word. It is in his Word that God builds the church by showing us the wounds of our dear Savior. It is in his Word that God warms and brings to life our dead, stone cold, and doomed hearts so that we embrace Jesus and his cross in faith for our salvation. Yes, it is God's Word by which God builds his house of

faith, apart from and outside of which there is no salvation. Where "thus says the LORD" is absent, we should not expect to find his house. Where "thus says the LORD" is twisted with a pick-and-choose smorgasbord theology, we should not expect the Almighty to be any more pleased than he was with the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day who did exactly that. Because of all the twisting of God's Word and indifference to it that is so common in our day and a constant temptation, we have good reason to pray:

Dear Lord Jesus, save us from the arrogance of imagining that we by our own opinions could build the house on earth in which you should dwell. Instead, ever fix our minds and hearts on what you have said in your Holy Word. There may our focus remain on Jesus, your Son, our one and only Savior. Move us to cling ever more tightly to your saving Word and to all that you teach us in it. Hear us for the glory of your own saving Word and name. Amen.



SEPTEMBER 2021

Campaign Update

CONSTRUCTION FOR THE BETTY KOHN FIELDHOUSE CONTINUES!

You can follow its progress via the fieldhouse live webcam and time-lapse at: mlc-wels.edu/webcams



GIVING

\$7,872,857 Donated or Pledged to ECW

5,623 Total Gifts

2,718 Donors



STUDENT RECRUITMENT

900-1,000 STUDENTS
Eager to Train for Gospel Ministry

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Congregational Partner Grant Matching Fund
\$3-5 M

STUDENT FACILITIES

Residence Hall \$12 M
Athletic Center FUNDED!

CONGREGATIONAL PARTNER GRANT PROGRAM

We report these 2020-2021 statistics to demonstrate our need to match about **\$500,000** in CPGP congregational gifts every year. Our ECW goal of **\$3-5M** will allow us to match these gifts for years to come.

280
Participating Congregations

607
Students Receiving Grants

\$545,638
Submitted for Matching



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Come to me,
all you who are
*weary and
burdened,*
and I will give you
REST.

-Matthew 11:28

