

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights  
Celebrating 100 Years • 1919-2019

Vol. 9, No. 12

<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

November 2020

## **Festival of the Reformation and All Saints' Day Back to Back Celebrations of the Christian Faith**

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As I write this newsletter article, we are in the midst of our preparations for the Festivals of the Reformation and All Saints' Day. As a congregation, we will have celebrated Reformation on Sunday, October 25 (transferred from October 31) and All Saints' Day on Sunday, November 1.



Martin Luther illustrated the heart of Reformation theology in the Luther seal and its explanation as quoted below:

*The first thing expressed in my seal is a cross, black, within the heart, to put me in mind that faith in Christ crucified saves us. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."*

*Now, although the cross is black, mortified, and intended to cause pain, yet it does not change the color of the heart, does not destroy nature - i.e., does not kill, but keeps alive. "For the just shall live by faith," - by faith in the Savior.*

*But this heart is fixed upon the center of a white rose, to show that faith causes joy, consolation and peace. The rose is white, not red, because white is the ideal color of all angels and blessed spirits.*

*This rose, moreover, is fixed in a sky-colored ground, to denote that such joy of faith in the spirit is but an earnest and beginning of heavenly joy to come, as anticipated and held by hope, though not yet revealed.*

*(continued on page 2)*

# Celebrations of Faith

*(continued from page 1)*

*And around this ground base is a golden ring,  
to signify that such bliss in heaven is endless,  
and more precious than all joys and treasures,  
since gold is the best and most precious metal.  
Christ, our dear Lord, He will give grace unto  
eternal life.*

*Amen.*

*Martin Luther*

On the cool night of October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed a printed sheet of his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The next day, All Saints Day, hundreds of people would come to the church, see his list, **and find the truth of God's free forgiveness.**

Luther had no idea that his hammering would get the attention of people around the world. His goal was to reform the church from within.

Yet Martin Luther, a Catholic monk with a deep **desire and need for God's forgiveness went on** to stand up to both emperor and pope in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whose free forgiveness is the keystone of the Church.

On Reformation Day we celebrate the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the forgiveness of our sins by the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the Festival of All Saints we remember the saints who have gone on before us, from the earliest Christian martyrs such as St. Stephen (*Acts 6-7*) to the more than 400,000 faithful who had been martyred in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century under Roman persecution, to the countless unborn children who have been murdered for **'convenience' or 'choice', to our family**

members and friends who have died in the One True Faith.

*Behold a host, arrayed in white,  
Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright!  
With palms they stand; Who is this band  
Before the throne of light?  
These are the saints of glorious fame,  
Who from the great affliction came  
**And in the flood of Jesus' blood are**  
cleansed from guilt and shame.  
They now serve God both day and night;  
They sing their songs in endless light.  
Their anthems ring as they all sing with  
angels shining bright. (LSB 676.1)*

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!  
(*2 Cor 9:15*)

*The ✠ Peace ✠ of the Lord be with you all!  
✠ Pastor Gaub*

## Midweek Advent Services & Schedule

Immanuel will have additional worship services midweek on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm during Advent with a meal before each service at 5:30-6:30 pm. Thanks to Winnie McNamara for coordinating the meals.

**Pastor Gaub's** sermon series for these midweek services will be "All Christians Who Have Been Baptized," **focusing on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.**

Menus and providers are tentatively as follows:

December 2 – Tostadas (ECE)  
December 9 – TBD (Finance)  
December 16 – Chili (Lauren Neu, lead)  
December 23 – *No meal*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL – “FALLING” FORWARD WITH JESUS!



**Making boats.  
Jesus calmed the storm,  
wiping away fear.**



**Learning about Jesus  
and our emotions!**



**Jesus can turn  
mad into glad.**

**During the month of October, Sunday School focused on how to train our emotions: Anger, Fear, Sadness, and Joy. First to recognize the feeling, then to understand how Jesus helps us to deal with them. The Bible gives us instructions and examples of how Jesus wants us to live. We are taught not to be angry or sad, nor live in fear but love, trust, show compassion and share the joy we have in Jesus.**



*Thank you so much to the Sunday School families for your love, support and compassion shown by all the delicious food and gift cards. To the children, thank you for all your lovely artwork. It warms my heart and is greatly appreciated. Miss you all during these times, but Jesus loves and heals. This I know for the Bible tells me so.  
Love Ms Cathleen*



## Focus on Stewardship

Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His **own. By the shedding of His Son’s blood, His** death for our sins, and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water – combined with His Word, promise, and Name – the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And, being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure is that we belong to the most Holy Trinity, and everything that is His – righteousness, peace, eternal life – also belongs also to us. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and **God’s holy Word, as a sacrifice.**

Thus, all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him. We eat to nourish our bodies. We share with our family, neighbors, fellow Christians, the poor, and even our enemies as holy things given by the holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and they bring blessings upon us

even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom.

**Thus, we place all that we have into God’s** hands, and He never fails to remember us. He pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing, and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but, giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for the celebrations of Thanksgiving, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we **have because of God’s providential care. And** may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all – even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

*~submitted by Kathy Angst*

*[Stewardship newsletter insert for November 2020, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=88sfz9iCKpOt4yPrZzBfHEpleuToPOPc>*

### Newsletter Contributors

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 .....Pastor Joel and Clarion Fritsche  
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# Mission Report

## The Fritsche Family: A La Republica Dominicana

*[Excerpt, Fall 2020 newsletter]*

These past six months, as I am sure is the case for so many of you, have been incredibly challenging, personally and professionally.

Here in the DR we are still under a state of emergency, complete with a daily curfew. Thanks be to God, after three months of completely virtual ministry (services, visits, seminary classes), we were able to return to in-person services on June 7 in all of our missions.

At Iglesia Luterana de Pueblo Nuevo where I serve as Pastor, we began celebrating the **Lord's Supper again on June 21** after that long fast. What a joy it was to commune again, **receiving the Lord's body and blood together** with members, seminary students, and fellow **missionaries. We've ramped up safety** precautions in our celebration of the **sacrament, but it's worth it. But that's not the** hard part.

The hard part is seeking out and bringing back the scattered sheep. Virtual ministry was novel at first and we had pretty solid participation online. But as the weeks went by, online participation dropped off until it was just a handful. We maintained communication with many of our sheep, sending daily devotions, making check-in calls and the like, but there is nothing like physical presencial ministry.

Unfortunately, when we began to gather again in the church for weekly Divine Service, it was clear that some were out of the routine of

weekly worship. The list of visits began to grow, even as we were preparing to gradually resume in-home visitation and somewhat normal ministry

In July the airport opened back up, so we took the opportunity to go to the states to pick up **Andrei's growth hormone, visit family, and drop Sergei off at boarding school at St. Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, MO.** It all went well, and we were ready to return to the DR in mid-August when very suddenly my mother passed away. It was not COVID-related. It was another minor health issue that turned bad at the last minute. Wow! We ended up spending a couple more weeks in Houston for funeral, grieving, and assisting my father with this huge adjustment in his life. I do not think I was ready to return, but life and ministry goes on.

It was a difficult summer for our [Seminary] students. Normally they return to their home countries for summer, but COVID made that impossible. My colleagues and I met with students and made a plan for summer, a plan that would balance time off with continued service in the missions and some other projects on the field. Thank you to a very generous donation from supporters in Plano, TX, we were able to fund this special summer that was not in our already stretched budget. The Lord is good. Students got time off, albeit with little opportunity to venture out to places like the beach or other attractions around the country which were closed or very limited during the pandemic. But now students begin a new school year not having seen family for more than a year. Please pray for them as they **continue prepare for service in our Lord's** kingdom.

*(continued on page 6)*

# Mission Report . . .

*(continued from page 5)*

Please pray also for Vicar Mario, who finished his vicarage and returned to Spain in mid-July. He is awaiting an opportunity to serve a year in the USA, but COVID has made his visa process difficult. Meanwhile he is active in ministry in Spain as he awaits this next exciting step in pastoral formation.

We have three new students this new academic year, but they are studying from their home countries until things fully open for obtaining a visa. Classes have started. Unfortunately for classes we are still completely virtual, not necessarily because of COVID. Our campus is completely solar powered. As we were on the brink of expanding this system, part of our original system went dead. As we await new circuit boards and other parts, the campus is running on limited power. So we made the decision to begin the year virtual. We will continue virtual at least through the end of October.



Nevertheless, our seminary community did gather for an in-person opening service. That was a true joy! Despite virtual classes, I love **being back in the "classroom."** I am teaching

Greek this year and Hebrew readings alongside my administrative duties. I love it!

There have been great blessings in this pandemic. For the seminary, students have learned another side of ministry and are all the more prepared for challenging ministry in their countries. We held a virtual theological symposia with 200 attendees. In Pueblo Nuevo, we have celebrated seven confirmations since July. Our virtual VBS was a huge success, ending with a friendship Sunday. Also, we have reached even more children through virtual Sunday school. The challenge remains, bringing all the sheep into the fold for regular participation in Word and Sacrament.

I pray that you, like me, have been drawn closer to our Lord in these months and rejoice in that which is sure and certain in the midst of this very uncertain world with its crazy pandemics and politics. Your Lord Jesus reigns victorious! Rejoice!

Thank you all for your patience, love, prayers and amazing continued support! The Lord be with you!

*~Pastor Joel Fritsche*

## Updates from the Missionary Wife

Clarion was very disappointed not to be able to travel for her deaconess intensives in Fort Wayne this summer, but thoroughly enjoyed participating via Zoom and learned a lot. She is occupied with classes and heads into her second and last year of deaconess studies. Dios mediante, she will graduate in May.

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# Mission Report . . .

*(continued from page 6)*

Viktor is doing well with his classes and **receiving all A's so far. We are proud of him!** He is a bit anxious as we consider options for his future and what he would like to do after graduation. He is preparing for the ACT and thinking about what he wants to do after next **year. We ask for your prayers for God's** guidance as Vik considers options ahead.



**Sergei (aka Max) at SPLHS in Concordia, Missouri**

Sergei, now affectionately known as Max, is in Concordia, Missouri attending boarding school. St. Paul Lutheran High School has been around for a long time and has a great tradition of education. It is not always easy but Sergei is doing well and we could hardly be happier with his progress.

Andrei continues to zoom forward. He has shown maturity and responsibility with his classes and continues to grow. We were able to pick up some more growth hormone this summer so he started injections again after a 3 month hiatus.



**Andrei's confirmation July 2020**

It was really an adjustment coming back to the D.R. without Sergei and having to say good-bye to Joel's mom. However, the Lord's mercies are new every morning and we find our joy and peace in Him. May that be said for us all. Bendiciones!

*~Clarion*

## Seminary Support

Donate online: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support>.

By mail, make a check payable to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, **specify "Dominican Republic Seminary"** in the memo line. Mail to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
Mission Advancement  
PO Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

## Support the Fritsche's ministry

Send a tax-deductible gift to either:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central  
40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks **"Support of Joel & Clarion Fritsche."**

Donate online on the LCMS website at <http://www.lcms.org/fritsche> or call (888) 930-4438.

*You can read the full Fall 2020 newsletter issue at <https://mailchi.mp/c8d6c191ef88/3bek9lzlzlow-4816990> And follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/lcmsfritsche/>*



4th Annual  
ILC Sunday School  
"Love" Project

Help us show **Love** and **Reach out** to children of all nations  
by filling **Shoebboxes** for Christmas



Different Times - Different Ways of Reaching Out.

Enclosed is a red donation envelope. All funds collected  
will be used to purchase filled shoeboxes thru the  
Samaritan's Purse website.



Goal: \$1000 (40 Shoebboxes)

By putting our money together, we will be  
able to buy more shoeboxes. Please mail or  
return your donation envelope to  
Immanuel church office by  
**Sunday, November 15th.**

Any questions, contact Cathleen Chevallier, 936-499-5531 or [jcsnchevallier@gmail.com](mailto:jcsnchevallier@gmail.com)



# Immanuel Lutheran Church – November 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Usher Team #2</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	<b>2</b>  <b>Bible Study</b> <b>@ 7:00 pm</b>	<b>3</b>  <b>All Boards</b> <b>@ 7:00 pm</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Usher Team #3</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  <b>Council @ 7:00 pm</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15 Usher Team #4</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	<b>16</b>  <b>Bible Study</b> <b>@ 7:00 pm</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 Usher Team #5</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25 ECE Closed</b> <b>Offices Closed</b> <b>Usher Team #1</b> Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service w/Communion @ 7:00 pm	<b>26</b>  <b>ECE Closed</b> <b>Offices Closed</b>  <b>Thanksgiving Blessings</b>	<b>27</b>  <b>ECE Closed</b> <b>Offices Closed</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 Usher Team #2</b> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am <b>Social Ministry</b> <b>Door Offering</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Voters' Meeting</b> <b>Sunday</b> <b>December 6</b> <b>Immediately</b> <b>Following</b> <b>Worship Service</b>		 <p><i>Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.</i></p> <p>~ Psalm 100:4 ~</p>		

# Serving Immanuel November 2020

	Sunday November 1	Sunday November 8	Sunday November 15	Sunday November 22	Thanksgiving Eve Wednesday November 25	Sunday November 29
Elder	Steve H.	Steve H.				
Acolyte	Malachi W.	Molly H.	Nikki B.	Emily H.	<i>Elder</i>	Eve H.
Usher Team	#2 Larry G.	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
Media	Barbara S.	Karen E.	Melissa T.	Jackie A.	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
Audio	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
Altar Guild	Mary O. & Vivian G.	Mary O. & Vivian G.				
Trustee	Mike R.	Mike R.				

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.

# Serving Immanuel December 2020

	Wednesday December 2	Sunday December 6	Wednesday December 9	Sunday December 13	Wednesday December 16
Elder	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.
Acolyte	<i>Elder</i>	Malachi W.	<i>Elder</i>	Molly H.	<i>Elder</i>
Usher Team	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
Media	<i>No Media</i>	Karen E.	<i>No Media</i>	Melissa T.	<i>No Media</i>
Audio	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.
Altar Guild	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.
Trustee	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.

	Sunday December 20	Wednesday December 23	Thursday Christmas Eve December 24	Friday Christmas Day December 25	Sunday December 27
Elder	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.
Acolyte	Nikki B.	<i>Elder</i>	<i>Elder</i>	<i>Elder</i>	Emily H.
Usher Team	#3 Lonnie A.	#4 John C.	#5 Bill O.	#1 Bill E.	#2 Larry G.
Media	Jackie A.	<i>No Media</i>	<i>No Media</i>	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
Audio	Gerald O.	Max B.	Ray T.	Gerald O.	Max B.
Altar Guild	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.	Vivian G.
Trustee	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.	Max B.

If you would like to fill in, trade, or substitute please contact the church office. Thank you.



Immanuel Lutheran Church  
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Houston, TX 77008

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*Witness, Mercy, Life Together ✝*  
*In Christ, for the Church and the World*

Thanksgiving Eve  
Service w/Communion

Wednesday  
November 25

7:00 pm

Give thanks to  
***the Lord***  
and proclaim his  
**greatness.**

Let the whole world  
know ***what he has done.***

I Chronicles 16:8

*Give Thanks*