

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 4, No. 3

February 2015

## Who are you?

Who are you and what difference does it make? A mother has children. A president runs a country. A pilot flies. So who are you? What do you do as a result of who you are?



1 Peter 2:9 *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

You are a Child of God. Let that sink in. Everything you do, everything you are, and everything you are about should grow from that identity. You no longer have to relate to the old sinner. You are new. In your Baptism you have been adopted as a Child of God.

As Children of God, we should have different ideals, goals, and priorities than the rest of the world. We derive our central focus from God's will being done among us. The two central themes for the life of a Christian are the two greatest Commandments and The Great Commission.

Matthew 22:37-40: *"And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

Matthew 28:19-20 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*



**Love. Grow. Serve.**

*(continued on page 2)*



## Sharing Joy

Happy New Year to all, and pray for a blessed new beginning. 2014 is gone, but even in January 2015, I'm still hearing "Thank you" from the members and friends whose homes we visited in December.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> a group of members went to sing Christmas carols at the homes of ECE families who had requested a visit; I was unable to participate in that event.

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, another group visited the homes of Immanuel shut-in members. Four cars of 12 children and adults enjoyed very pleasant weather that afternoon. I provided our Church Secretary the addresses of those we would visit and I also notified our shut-ins of our intention to visit. Our Secretary printed out a map of the locations, so it was not difficult to find them. We began in the Timbergrove subdivision, and then went out towards Brookwoods Street. We also visited the Brookdale-Heights Senior Living Home, and sang for two Immanuel members there. We visited a total of 9 homes and 15 members.

The children were very excited by the song sheets, and by the goody bags to be given out to each shut-in. As we sang the Christmas carols, I noticed that the eyes of our shut-ins seemed to be dancing with joy, especially as they watched the children sing. The children stole the show as they took turns distributing the goody bags.

On my return home, I received two phone calls giving me thanks for bringing the group to their homes. I regret that we were not able to visit three other locations because of the distance from our route.

The joy that these shut-ins received can be an ongoing thing – you can call them by phone, or send a birthday card or a note of friendship or encouragement. Let's not forget them.

*~Pastor Perez*

## Who are you?

*(continued from page 1)*

When we put God first in our lives and put our neighbor before ourselves, it makes for a whole different perspective. We can draw joy from loving and serving, rather than always looking out for ourselves and our own interests first. When we prioritize our activities, we can ask questions like, "Am I serving the people God has placed in my life?" and "What can I do to help them know Christ better?"

2015 should be a transformational year here at Immanuel. If we approach our worship, our relationships, our scheduling, our use of resources, and even our appearance with the attitudes of Children of God we cannot help but to be a blessing to those around us. God has placed us in the Heights. The people in the Heights need Jesus just as much as we do. Let's spend this year doing everything we can to show them Jesus.

I am a Child of God. I love God and my fellow man. I serve God by sharing Christ with those around me. Who are you? What do you do?

*~In Christ's Service,  
Pastor King*



## Focus on Stewardship

“Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful” (Luke 6:36). The word for mercy that Jesus uses here has a more concrete meaning than what we typically associate with mercy. It means more than just being kind. It means to be concerned about your neighbor’s state and well-being. Thus, Jesus taught that we are to care, to be concerned about our neighbor’s state and well-being even as our Father in heaven cares for and is concerned about our state and well-being.

How has our Father in heaven cared for our state? How has He shown His concern for our well-being? How has He showered this mercy upon us?

He gave of Himself. He sent His only-begotten Son in human flesh, to become one of us—a man—and to suffer all that we suffer and to endure what we endure—a fallen world full of sinful people, temptation, the attacks of the devil, and death. He took upon Himself what rightfully belongs to us—sin and death—in order that He could give to us what rightfully belongs to Him—righteousness, purity, eternal life, and victory over the temptation of Satan and this fallen world. That is how He cared for our state. That is how He was concerned for our well-being. He entered into our state for the sake of our well-being, died in our place, rose for our justification, redeemed us to make all things new. He entered our state so that by

water and His Word we would be granted entrance into His state as children of our Father in heaven. In other words, He had empathy toward us, which resulted in true sympathy.

Jesus, therefore, calls the church to empathy and sympathy for her neighbors. “Be merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful.” He asks the church to give of herself, to enter into her neighbors’ state for their well-being. And the church gives of herself the only thing in her that is worth giving. As the Body of Christ, she gives Christ to her neighbors. She gives out the same mercy that she has received. She gives the mercy that the heavenly Father poured out upon her through the sending of His Son. And she does it through the preaching of the forgiveness of sins in Word and Deed, in Word and Sacrament. For this is how the church lives—in the forgiveness of sins received in the means of grace—and, therefore, this is what the church does. What else can she do?

And since this is how the church lives and what the church does, this is likewise how Christians live and what Christians do. That is why giving to the church is so important. It ensures that the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins in Word and Deed continues. It ensures that our neighbors’ state and well-being is cared for and attended to. It ensures that our neighbors have access to our heavenly Father’s mercy just as we have received it here in time for all eternity.

Therefore, I say, let us be merciful even as our Father in heaven is merciful.

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for February 2015, provided on the LCMS website <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=3214>)*

## Reader Response . . .

Question: *What book, other than the Bible, has given you help or insight in your faith life?*

Several weeks ago Christ the King Lutheran Church in Kingwood, where my daughter attends, started a 31-week church-wide Bible study that involves children, teens and adults (it is also being done St. John's Lutheran-Cypress).



The book is called *The Story*. It presents the Bible in novel form, in chronological order starting from in the beginning to the end times. There are 31 chapters and one chapter is covered per week. The pastor's sermon is based on that one chapter, and the Sunday school teachers at each age group, with age appropriate lessons, go into the chapter in more depth. My daughter gave Bob and I both a copy of the book so we could read along and keep up with what she is doing. I really enjoy it since it is easier to understand.

There is a lot of information about the study on Christ the King's website  
<http://www.christ4u.net/the-story/>.

*~Martha and Bob McFarland*

*From the Editor: With the start of Lent this month, I expand my initial question to include any special devotions or activities that you use to make your observance of Lent more meaningful.*



Reminder: Altar Guild meeting on Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>, immediately following Bible Class.

The 2015 Flower Calendar is posted in the narthex. Please consider donating one or two bouquets to celebrate special events, in memory of loved ones, for blessings received, or to the Glory of God. Bouquets are \$35 each; flower cards and envelopes are available with the calendar.

Communion – If you have a health condition that restricts your participation of Communion, please contact Pastor King prior to church services, so we can accommodate these whenever possible. Please note that we currently offer individual cups of diluted wine in the center of the tray and we offer gluten-free wafers upon request.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Immanuel Altar Guild, established in 1976. During the February 8<sup>th</sup> service, we will recognize our current members and two remaining Charter members, Cleo Fischer and Delores Quin, for their dedicated and loyal service. Over the years many ladies and some men have served Immanuel thru the Altar Guild; I'd like to thank everyone for the service, past, present and future. Please prayerfully consider joining this rewarding service to our Lord.

*~Blessings & Peace,  
Denise Goehring*

## Faith in Action

*(Reprinted with permission of the author.)*

*I have a friend who is battling cancer. His name is Darrell, and he has incredible faith in the love and power of God in the face of monumental odds. He is a prayer warrior. He is also an inspiration. I'd like to share with you a recent post he made on Facebook. I hope it lifts your heart as much as it did mine.*

*– Pastor King*

"I thought I'd start out the new year with a post for my new FB friends that have recently been diagnosed or had a recurrence of cancer. One of the battles we fight is fear. But take heart; if you are a Christian, you have nothing to fear.

We all have fears. For a cancer patient, fighting fear is a daily battle. Is my tumor growing? Is the chemo working? What will the scans show on my next doctor visit? Will I be cured? Will I live a long life? Will I make it next year? Will I make it through Christmas? Will my family be ok without me?

But, cancer patients aren't the only ones fighting fear. Will I be able to make my house note? Will I lose my job? My business does little more than cover the expenses. Will it survive? Will my marriage survive? My relationship with my child is broken. My relationship with my parents is broken. I'm single, and I may never find someone. I'm alone.

In what kind of belief system are you living? As a Christian, we profess to believe in Christ. Do my actions show that, or am I living in a Fear Belief System? Pessimism... Pride... Selfishness... Self-Pity... Sadness... Guilt... Despair... Anger... All

are evidence you are living in a Fear-Based Belief System. Friends, this is not from God.

The Bible tells us what is a Christ-Based Belief System. 'For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.' (2 Timothy 1:7 HCSB). So, with that spirit God has given us, we are to face our fears with power, with authority from the Almighty. We are to face that broken relationship with the love Christ gives us. We are to use the sound judgment from God to handle the business and job situation.

When we live in that Christ Belief System, we are saying we believe Christ will supply ALL of our needs. The evidence of that Spirit given to us will NOT be the anger, pessimism, pride, selfishness, and such. The evidence of the Spirit when we are living a Christ Belief System life are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.

When fear arises in our lives, we must replace that fear with the Hope, and Belief, that God loves us, and He will supply all of our needs. That even if that tumor grows, that job is lost, that business fails, that relationship breaks, God will be there at the very point of our need and supply us all we need with Mercy, and Compassion, and Love. The thought of that will put a permanent smile on your face. The next time fear crops its head, replace it with the Christ Belief System life. Now THAT is living a radical life for Christ.

Take it from a cancer patient, that's a lesson hard-learned!"

**GOD** | will provide |



*(Above)*

Immanuel took the final hymn of the Christmas Eve service into the community – the approximately 165 attendees filed out of the sanctuary at the close of the service to sing “Silent Night” in the cold air, among the Christmas lights, in view and hearing of our neighbors.

*--photos by Joel Norris*



*(Left)*

Members of the Handbell and Adult vocal choirs celebrated the start of 2015 at the home of Diane and Joel Robinson. Pictured *(front)*: Kyla Rocha, *(l-r)* Daniel Rocha, Laura Suffridge, Diane Robinson, Connie Meave, and Nora Lee Froehlich.

*--photo by Joel Norris*

## A New Logo?

Back in October, we volunteered to help Pastor King with a new look for the Immanuel logo. Now that the holiday season has passed, it is time to get moving. Our logo is a complex one with a number of colors and design aspects. We have used our logo well – but the goal is to find a simpler, cleaner design. Our preference is one color and one design that can be printed in various colors or sizes, depending on the need. We want it to look good in print such as letterhead or advertisements, and also on shirts too.

Pastor King submitted to us the design we are sharing here. The design is clean. It includes the Missouri Synod cross, our name “Immanuel” and “God with Us”.



We are interested in seeing any ideas that you may have. Please leave any designs in the church office for us or you can email me at [jackiejanderson@earthlink.net](mailto:jackiejanderson@earthlink.net). Submit any ideas by Sunday, February 15. Call Winnie or Jackie if you have any questions. Thank you!

*~Jackie Anderson & Winnie McNamara*



### Home Athletic Events

- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Girls soccer 5:00 pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Boys basketball 7:00 pm
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Boys soccer 5:30 pm
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Baseball 5:00 pm

**Lion Look Breakfast** for parents of potential students – Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:30–10:00 am

**Scrip Orders due** – Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, noon. This is a PTL fundraiser. You can support Lutheran High North by buying gift cards. They can be used for gifts or you can just use them yourself at places you spend money anyway. You buy them at face value and the LHN PTL gets a percentage. For more information see the website <http://www.lutheranhighnorth.org>, or talk to Lynn Eickemeyer at church or call her at (832) 778-4108.

**GALA.** Dinner, Auction, Western theme  
April 11<sup>th</sup>

**Musical** – “Footloose”. Matinees April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Evening shows – April 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

*~Lynn Eickemeyer*

### Volunteers Needed!

We are in dire need of additional volunteers to run the worship service PowerPoint and sound system. The tasks require complete attention to the service and commitment to a schedule. If you are interested in learning more about it, contact Ray Thomas or the church office, or just come up to the balcony one Sunday and observe!

*~Barbara Szalkowski*

## Martin Luther's Catechism Hymns – Baptism

"To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord," *Lutheran Service Book* #406, is Martin Luther's hymn on the Sacrament of Baptism. It is noted underneath this hymn "In his catechism hymn on Baptism Luther uses the Biblical narrative of Jesus' baptism to teach the meaning of Baptism for our lives."

Why did Jesus need to be baptized? Not because He had sins of His own, but because He had our sins. Jesus entered baptism with no sin. He left with our sin. He took to himself the sin of the entire world. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:21) The justice of God requires the punishment of sin. When John baptized Jesus, God placed our sin on Jesus. Jesus, in turn, carried those sins to the cross. There on the cross Jesus satisfied both God's justice and His love. God's justice was satisfied by punishing our sin IN Jesus Christ. God's love was satisfied by punishing Jesus Christ instead of us. In this way, God punished our sin without punishing us.

What does this mean for our baptism? The Holy Spirit inspired St. Paul to answer that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. (Romans 6:4) These words teach us that through baptism we share all things with Christ Jesus. In the eyes of God's justice, Christ's punishment is our punishment. Christ's death is our death. And through baptism we share in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism, as a Means of Grace, takes the forgiveness that Jesus earned for us on the cross and delivers that forgiveness to us

to be received by faith. This all happens through grace, God's love for us undeserving sinners, not through any work or action on our part. That is why Lutherans can baptize even tiny babies in full confidence of God's promises, because the saving work is done completely by our loving God, and nothing needs to be done by us. God's promises are forgiveness, life, and salvation. "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-8)

Why is baptism considered a sacrament? Because at the command of Christ himself, washing with water (a physical element) is combined with God's Word. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19) In this washing, we are reborn and made new through the Holy Spirit. Our sins are forgiven, we are rescued from death and the devil, and we are promised eternal life.

Jesus' baptism was also a manifestation of the Triune God. The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus. God the Father expressed His pleasure with the words, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." In this grand epiphany, the Father and the Spirit show us that Jesus is indeed the Son of God who has come into the world in order to save it from sin.

*(continued on page 9)*





## NUEVA CRIATURA

February 21 is when everything becomes new, at least for the Fritsche family. That's our departure date for our new life in the Dominican Republic. On December 16 we received the green light for deployment. Ever since then we've been pressing on toward that newness. The old is passing away as we sell things, give things away and throw a lot away.

We are super excited as we press on toward a new culture, new language, new people, new home, new colleagues and more. We'll be living in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the DR, also the oldest European settled city in the Americas. But as old as the city is, it will be completely new to us.

As God's child in Christ, you are a new creation. St. Paul says that the *"old has passed away; behold, the new has come"* (2 Cor. 5:17). That's good news for you. Leave behind your sin. Christ died for it and has taken it away, leaving it buried. Leave behind your pain and sadness of the past. Christ has made you new in the waters of Holy Baptism and raised you to a whole new life. And that is super exciting!

We struggle to let go of the old, whether we're speaking about missionaries moving to a new place of service or Christians living new lives in

Christ. The battle with the Old Adam rages on each day. We grapple with sins old and new. We contend with sufferings past and present. Americans, Dominicans, sure there are different contexts, unique trials and temptations, but it all boils down to the same Old Adam deceiving and destroying. But your Baptism into Christ is more than some old event in the past. It's a present reality, a daily reality of being made new in Christ. The Gospel is always new. The Lord's mercies are new every morning. Every time you hear His absolution, you return to the new life given you in Holy Baptism. Every time you receive Christ's body and blood, you're nourished in that new life. The Old Adam is put to death and a new creation is raised with Christ!

You are God's new creation in Christ. You have a green light. Press on in your new life. Revel in Christ's mercy as you receive it and share it with others. Behold, He makes all things new!

~Pastor Fritsche

## Hymn on Baptism . . .

*(continued from page 8)*

"To Jordan Came the Christ our Lord" first appeared in 1541. It was translated into English by Elizabeth Quitmeyer (1911-88) at the request of Carl Schalk and was first used in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The melody, "Christ Unser Herr," was first published in Johann Walther's *Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn* in 1524. It may be an original Luther melody.

*[Sources for this article were: LCMS Sermons "Baptism of Our Lord" January 9, 2011 by James T. Batchelor; and "Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship," Marilyn K. Stulken, Fortress Press, 1981.]*

~Diane Robinson

# Immanuel Lutheran Church - February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 <b>Usher Team #3</b> Worship w/Communion @ 9:00 am</p> <p>Adult Bible Class and Sunday School <i>Unveil Church</i> @ 10:15 am</p>	2	<p>3</p> <p>Boards Meeting @ 7:00 pm</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Women's Bible Study @ 10:00 am</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Bingo 11:00-1:00 pm</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir @ 7:30 pm</p>	6	<p>7</p> <p>Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 11:00 – 1:00 pm</p>
<p>8 <b>Usher Team #4</b> Worship @ 9:00 am</p> <p>Adult Bible Class and Sunday School <i>Unveil Church</i> @ 10:15 am</p>	9	<p>10</p> <p>Men's Breakfast @ AAA Restaurant @ 6:30 am</p>	11	<p>12</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30 pm</p>	13	<p>14</p>  <p>Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 11:00 – 1:00 pm</p>
<p>15 <b>Usher Team #5</b> Worship w/Communion @ 9:00 am</p> <p>Adult Bible Class and Sunday School <i>Unveil Church</i> @ 10:15 am</p> <p><b>Newsletter Deadline</b></p>	<p>16</p> <p><b>Offices Closed In Observance of Presidents' Day</b></p>	17	<p>18 <b>Ash Wednesday</b></p> <p>Women's Bible Study @ 10:00 am</p> <p><b>Usher Team #6 Ash Wednesday Service @ 7:00 pm</b></p>	<p>19</p> <p>Hamburger Fry 11:00–1:00 pm</p>  <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30 pm</p>	20	<p>21</p> <p>Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 11:00 – 1:00 pm</p>
<p>22 <b>Usher Team #7</b> Worship @ 9:00 am</p> <p>Adult Bible Class and Sunday School <i>Unveil Church</i> @ 10:15 am</p>	23	<p>24</p> <p>Men's Breakfast @ AAA Restaurant @ 6:30 am</p>	<p>25</p> <p><b>Usher Team #1</b> Lent Service @ 7:00 pm</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30 pm</p>	27	<p>28</p> <p>Unveil Church set-up Gym @ 11:00 – 1:00 pm</p>



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HOUSTON, TEXAS

**Return Service Requested**

To the Family of:

*God with us, transforming and sending*



**Ash Wednesday**  
**February 18**  
**Worship Service**  
**w/Imposition**  
**of Ashes**  
**and Communion**  
**7:00 pm**