

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 4, No. 6

May 2015

Taming the Tongue

St. James, in the third chapter of his epistle, strongly urges the Christian for the need to control what we say. He warns us that it can steer a person astray, using the example of a bit or a rudder. He also likens a gossiping tongue to a forest set ablaze. Why does he call it a “restless evil”? Why do I, as your pastor, agree?

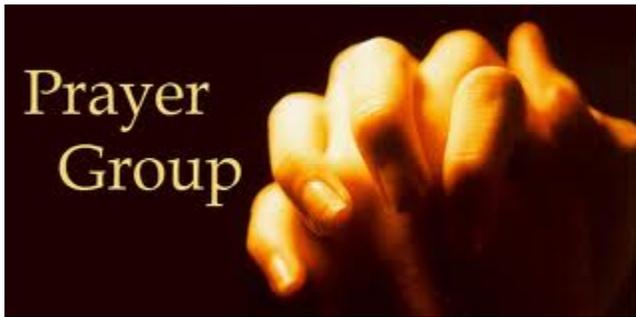


James points out that with the same mouth we utter both blessing and curse. God calls us to use our mouths to sing His praises and to call upon His Name in prayer. These are common themes in the life of a Christian congregation. Regrettably, rumors are also a common occurrence in a congregation. This shouldn't be the case. As your pastor, I urge you to pray, praise, and give thanks to God for all the world to witness. I also notice that the habit of gossip has raised its head here at Immanuel. Our willingness to turn evens, trauma, even tragedies into idle chatter has been responsible for more than its share of problems and discord over the years. We need to walk together in an effort to wage war against this habit. Not spreading rumor, and simply being unwilling to receive rumor goes a long way.

God warns us in the Eighth Commandment to not give false testimony against others. Luther defined “false testimony” as telling lies or even using the truth to hurt someone. He also urges us in his explanation to that same commandment to “explain everything in the kindest way.” My mother used to reproach me to “put the best possible construction” on something. However you say it, the gist is the same.

If something is not our business, we need to keep our mouths shut. If we must say something, say it to the one it concerns. Only do it for the benefit of those concerned. Many times an innocent person has been hurt by misunderstandings and wrong interpretations or perceptions. This goes directly against the work of Christ. When we participate, WE go directly against the work of Christ.

(continued on page 2)



Meeting God in Prayer

At times Christians who truly love God can find it difficult to pray. Our relationship with the Lord may have become stifled. What we sometimes forget is that prayer is an opportunity to have a greater fellowship and relationship with God. God wants us to come to Him with our prayer request daily, because we need His presence in our lives every day. Prayer should be as easy to us as breathing. Prayer is like talking to your best friend. God's desire is that we know Him in the same intimate way that He knows us.

As Christians we need to find a meaningful communion with God through Jesus' example of prayer. Throughout the Bible we see Jesus in prayer to His heavenly Father. Through prayer we come to know a new joy and fulfillment in our relationship with God.

In Matthew 7:7-8 scripture tells us to ask, seek and knock. Each of these has a unique purpose in obtaining direct access to the throne of God.

There is an opportunity at 8:30 every Sunday morning to meet with God in prayer. If you are not comfortable praying aloud in a group, you may come and pray silently, interceding to God for the needs of His

people, for the church and for giving thanks and praise for what He has done and continues to do for us.

Prayerfully consider joining in Sunday morning prayer.

~Carolyn Breithaupt

Taming the Tongue . . .

(continued from page 1)

Yes, sometimes our neighbor has actually done something wrong. If this is the case, you must not go around sharing it. Instead, we are called to follow the guidelines set out in Matthew 18, and approach that person directly with love in our hearts so that they may be brought to repentance – With love in our hearts!

I know the tone of this article may sound a bit harsh. It is. But frankly, I don't know of any other way to approach this subject. There is right and there is evil. Sometimes even well intentioned and loving Christians can be guilty of evil. That is why we also have the call to repentance and the grace and forgiveness that the Gospel brings. Our congregation has come a long way toward healing and change in a short period. It is my hope and prayer that we can continue to show the love of Christ to each other and our community. Please remember, God loves you and so do I.

Not to leave this unsaid: As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you of all of your sins in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

~Pastor King



Martin Luther's Hymn "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (LSB 556)

This was most likely the second hymn that Luther wrote. It first appeared in broadsheet form in 1523 and then in the Wittenberg *Etlich Christlich lieder* in 1524. It was entitled "A Christian hymn of Dr. Martin Luther, setting forth the unspeakable grace of God and the true faith." It is Luther's personal confession of the course of Luther's early adult life, from his entrance into the Augustinian monastery to his complete peace in the declaration of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, not by works. It beautifully mirrors his inner spiritual development, his wretchedness and despair over his sin (sts. 2,3), God's compassion (sts. 1,4) God's method of redemption by sending His beloved Son, Jesus, to the world to obey His Father's will, to suffer, die, rise from death, ascend to heaven, and send the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us (sts. 5-9) and finally God's command (st. 10) to spread the Gospel (lines 1-4) and preserve the *Sola Scriptura* (lines 5-7). This hymn can unquestionably be considered the greatest confessional hymn of the Lutheran Church.

Justification is a judicial act of God, and the Lutheran Confessions declare it the most important teaching of divine revelation. Man, through his natural condition and his thoughts, words, and deeds, has broken God's Law, is subject to His wrath, and is condemned to death. But God is moved to justify us by His grace (love directed toward those that are unworthy and undeserving). God sent His holy

and innocent Son to become man and be our Substitute. This Substitute fulfilled all God's requirements in our place, suffered the woes and pangs we deserved. Divine justice is satisfied and love triumphs.

Romans 5:1-2 states, "Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Martin Luther wrote (in German):

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice
With exultation springing,
And with united heart and voice
And holy rapture springing,
Proclaim the wonders God has done,
How His right arm the victory won.
What price our ransom cost Him!



Resources used for this article were:

Christian Cyclopedia @ cyclopedia.lcms.org
Lutheran Worship: Hymnal Companion, Fred L. Precht, CPH, 1992.
Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns, U.S. Leupold, ed., Fortress Press, 1965.

~Diane Robinson

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Hamburger Fry

Hamburger Day on Thursday, May 21st, will be our last one for the summer. This month's proceeds will benefit the Good Samaritan Home. So come out, enjoy the food, fellowship and support a great cause. Thank you.

~Evelyn Marsh



Danny Ortiz, hamburger griller extraordinaire, filling in for regular griller, Lonnie Angst.

~photo submitted by Bob McFarland



Free Football Camp

Saturday, May 2nd 9:00-11:00 am
for students in grades 4-8

Blue Lion Jazz Café

Saturday, May 9th 7:00-9:00 pm

Spring Concert

Monday, May 11th 7:00-8:30 pm

Graduation

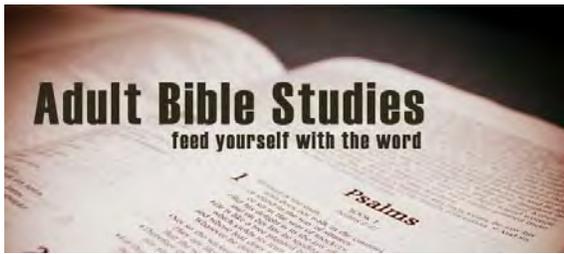
Saturday, May 23rd 3:00-4:30 pm
Grace Presbyterian

~Lynn Eickemeyer

ECE Children Sing in Palm Sunday Worship



~photos submitted by Connie Meave



Mother's Day



The Sunday morning Adult Bible class has begun a study of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Copies of the text for each week's study are being provided and can be collected in a provided folder for continued reference throughout the series. Come join us in our study of one of the foundations of our Lutheran faith.

The Monday night study group will be finishing our study of the book of James soon. Our next study, beginning in mid-June or early July, will be on *The Spirituality of the Cross* by Gene Veith. Originally published in 1999 but updated in 2010, Veith's book covers the ways in which our Lutheran faith is distinct from other Christian denominations, covering not only the theology that we believe, but also the spirituality, real-life, personal Christianity.

If you are interested in joining our Monday night study, we meet 1st and 3rd Mondays each month. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex later this month, or you can let the church office know of your interest so that we can acquire enough copies.

The leadership is also very interested in providing multiple opportunities for members to study God's Word. If you have an interest in leading a small group study on a particular topic, please see Pastor King. If you have a particular topic or study that you would like to have offered, please also convey that to us through Pastor King, the church office, or the suggestion box in the hallway off the narthex.

The first Mother's Day was celebrated in West Virginia in 1912. Mothers were to be recognized as an important part of our culture and lives.

God created families and gave mothers a unique place in that unit. We can love, give of ourselves, cook, clean, wash clothes, put Band-Aids on scrapes ... be the first one up in the morning or the last one down at night. We juggle a lot of things including raising children, working at jobs, managing a home, and sometimes finding time for ourselves.

Each day is a new beginning of what lies before us. We have destiny, purpose, and the power to do and be all that we are called to be. Nothing can stop us except ourselves. As mothers, we need to find the strength to face each day knowing that God loves us.

Mothers make up a crucial part of our lives. So we should show we care. It is so important to give our love to these dedicated women in our lives and don't take them for granted.

"Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." 1 John 3:18

Excerpt of a Mother's Day devotion by Martha Noebel, from
http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/Devotions/noebel_mothers_love.aspx

Butterfly Benefit

For Winnie McNamara in her battle with cancer

We all know how Butterflies are a symbol for life and God's transformation. One of Immanuel Lutheran ECE's Teachers is known throughout the Heights and beyond affectionately as "The Butterfly Lady". Every year she uses Caterpillars, Chrysalises, and Butterflies to teach area children about God's love, earning her this name.

You may simply know her as "Ms. Winnie". However you may know her and by whatever name you may call her, Winifred McNamara needs our help. I know she may not look sick, but since late last year she has been fighting cancer: first lifestyle changes, then surgery, now chemo. Throughout all this she has continued to teach our two year olds all the normal things a child needs to learn about the world plus about God's love!

All the expenses, time, and medical bills continue to add up. She did not ask for our help; we had to talk her into letting us do this and demonstrate our love for her. If you know Mrs. Winnie, you know that she is usually the one organizing things like this to help others. This time, we get to help her.

On, Saturday May 16th, 2015 we will be hosting the Butterfly Benefit, a drive-thru chicken dinner here at Immanuel. This is a wonderful opportunity to show the spirit and purpose of Immanuel: To Love God by Loving and Serving Others. If you have ideas, would like to give donations, or would even like to help on the day of the Benefit please contact Pastor King or the Church Office. We are trying to cover all costs through donations so that all proceeds may go to Ms. Winnie in her time of need. Your help and prayers are appreciated.

Saturday May 16, 11:00a -4:00p

ILC @ 15th St. & Arlington, Houston Heights

Only \$10 a plate

Includes: BBQ Chicken & Sausage, Rice & Beans

Food by Maria & Danny Ortiz

Tickets can be purchased through the church office or the day of the event.

(Donations appreciated)

Immanuel Lutheran Church & ECE

(713) 864-2651

Loving God—Loving Neighbors—Serving Others • www.LutheranHouston.org



Fritsche Family Update

(Excerpt from their April e-newsletter)

Wow! It's hard to believe that we've been in the Dominican Republic for nearly two months. Thank you for your prayers and support as we continue to get settled and do the work God has put us here to do.

We've jumped right into things...language, culture, integrating into our congregation here in Las Americas. Clarion and I are both taking private Spanish courses at Academia Europea, a language school near our house. We've only had 15 hours of classes out of 120, but we're both making progress. Clarion continues to work on Spanish at home with the boys.

We're also getting the feel of the culture around us. That includes meeting and visiting with neighbors, conversations with taxi drivers, and seeing the sights of this rich, historic city. We're becoming more and more comfortable in our neighborhood, confident in exploring, and blessed by new relationships.

Most of our time has been spent here in Santo Domingo, but we do have occasion regularly to travel up to Santiago for meetings and gatherings with other missionaries and their

families. We spent last week in Santiago at a wonderful retreat with our colleagues.



Joel is really getting immersed into his work as a missionary. Just before Easter he had the privilege of baptizing seven children at our congregation in Palmar Arriba. *(left)* Doing it all in Spanish was like a baptism by fire, but has given Joel the confidence to lead almost the entire liturgy in Spanish at Amigos de Cristo.

Church members and colleagues have told Joel that his Spanish is coming along very well.



Clarion is busy getting a routine going with the boys for homeschooling. But she is also getting immersed in the life of our congregation by helping teach Sunday school *(above)*. She's doing a great job working with Deaconesses Katie and Danelle as well as Pastor Willy's wife, Santa. Clarion's Spanish is even better than Joel's.

The boys are doing very well. We're working at home on learning Spanish liturgy and hymns. Just as it was in the states, you can hear them belting it out at church here.

(continued on page 8)

Fritsche Family . . .

(continued from page 7)

The Lord is blessing our beginnings here in the DR. And we continue to be blessed by your generosity and love!

Financial Support. To support our work financially, you may send a tax-deductible gift to either of the following:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179-0089

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034

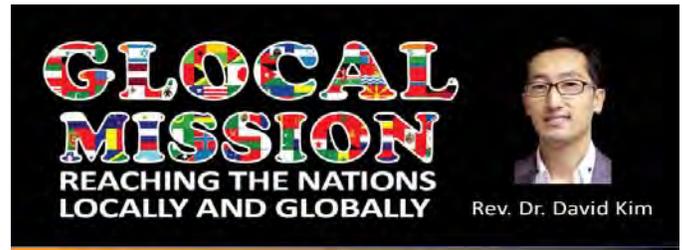
Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Support of Joel & Clarion Fritsche.”

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at www.lcms.org/fritsche or call **(888) 930-4438**.

Prayer Support. Please pray...

- For the seven children baptized last month in Palmar and their families.
- For Rev. David Preus & family as they raise support in order to join our DR team soon in Santiago.
- For Jesús, one of our catechumens here at Amigos de Cristo and for his wife and young son.
- For continued growth in our Spanish language studies.

*~Bendiciones en Cristo,
Pastor Joel & Clarion Fritsche & Family*



What is Glocal Mission?

Glocal mission is reaching the unreached with the Gospel and making disciples of all nations locally and globally (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

The Great Commission and the Kingdom of God is GLOCAL.

Not just GLOBAL – which sounds like it is over there somewhere.

Not just LOCAL – which sounds like it is only here.

Christ’s mission embraces both LOCAL and GLOBAL at the same time in all dimensions.

Why do Glocal Mission?

God is by nature a **Glocal-Missionary** God. We are committed to reaching *ALL* people in *ALL* nations without bypassing any region or people group. Like the apostle Paul, our first priority is those who have not heard the gospel.

What can I do to be a Glocal Missionary?

Step 1. Make a difference. Match your talents and skills with needs of the community. Make a difference in people’s lives by meeting their tangible needs by acts of kindness. *“...not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”*
1 John 3:18 ESV.

[This information was taken from the Rev. Kim’s/LINC’s website at glocalmission.org. More on Glocal Mission in future issues.]



Focus on Stewardship

We pray in the Lord's Prayer for daily bread. The Small Catechism teaches that "Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like." This is a pretty comprehensive list of what God provides for our daily bread. But all of this, eventually, and finally, will be taken away from us—not because God is punishing us, but because this is not the goal of life. There is more to life than these things. In fact, we will truly live when all these things are taken away, and we no longer need to pray for daily bread.

For God our Father in heaven is calling us home to Himself. We are just sojourners here. We are on a journey in the wilderness of this world toward our true home, the land of promise, in heaven. Everything that we have in this world and this life will be left behind.

But as much as we long for heaven, as much as we eagerly await that time when our Lord will take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven, we still struggle with letting go of what we have in this world. We still suffer the temptation to hold on to this life and this world

and the things of this life and this world. But this is not our true home. And as good as this life is, and it is often by God's grace very good, the life to come in His kingdom far exceeds it.

And giving, stewardship, is a practice that teaches us to look to, long for, and trust in the eternal realities rather than the earthly. It teaches us to loosen our hold and let go of those things that keep us earthly minded, so that we may look what our Father in heaven has in store for us for all eternity. It teaches us to concentrate on what God has done, is doing, and will do for us instead of the constant work-a-day world and noise that we have here. It teaches us to long for that better country, the heavenly one. For God is not ashamed to be called our God. And He has prepared for us a city, His city, not made with hands.

Thus we give generously to the church, to our family, to those in society. We release our grasp on what would keep our focus on the here and now, so that we would be free to receive and rejoice in what our future shall be in heaven. We invest where moth and rust will not destroy. We put our treasures so that our hearts will follow them (Matt 6:21; Luke 12:34). For we are only of any earthly good, when we are truly heavenly minded. Make this your practice for your own good eternally and your neighbors' good temporally.

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for March 2015, provided on the LCMS website
<https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=3335>)*

~submitted by Kathy Angst





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TEXAS

Return Service Requested

To the Family of:

God with us, transforming and sending

**Everyone Saturday May 2
Welcome!**

Fun Activities for All Ages!
(11:00 – 3:00)
Inflatables • Bingo • Games
Contests • Races • Dominos
Loads of Fellowship

Meal Served: 12:00 – 1:00
Adults (12 & over) \$ 12.00
Children (Ages 5-11) \$ 6.00
Children under 5 FREE

ALL YOU CAN EAT
Fried Catfish/Popcorn
Shrimp, Fries,
Hushpuppies, Cole Slaw,
Beans and Sauces

