

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 4, No. 7

June 2015

“Our Help is in the Name of the LORD.”

Recently, Julie recounted a funny story to me. She was praying one evening and she started to pray for patience to deal with a certain situation she was facing. She stopped and said to God, “Oh, no, Lord, I’m not praying for that! All You do when I pray for strength or patience is give me more opportunities to be strong and patient!” Isn’t that the way it seems sometimes—like God keeps giving us opportunities to practice those things that we aren’t very good at, such as being patient. And the more we pray for patience, the more opportunities He gives us to practice being patient.



That’s exactly what the Lord has called us to do here in Immanuel Lutheran Church. Recently, I have outlined some points to help us grow together as a congregation and grow in our community here in the Heights. Some of the points in this ministry to each other may be very easy for us. Other points are going to take practice. I know the cliché is overused sometimes, but we have to be ready to step out of our comfort zones. We can go forward, knowing that we are not alone. That the risen Christ has gone before us.

God has first loved you, and that is why He sent Jesus to rescue you. We respond to that by loving God and gathering as a congregation to worship Him. Out of that love we then turn to each other and demonstrate that same love in Christian fellowship and growth. This Christian growth manifests itself by our focusing outside and serving our fellow man. This is a process that will take practice and patience, and it something that we cannot do alone.

Every Sunday, we say as part of our liturgy, “Our Help is in the name of the LORD.” But how often do we take this simple saying and think on it? If you are curious as to where this comes from, it comes from Psalm 124:8 “Our help is in the name of the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth.” The same Lord God, who has created our very sun and earth and all the heavens, has promised to be our helper as well. He has sent the Holy Spirit to guide us in our endeavors,

(continued on page 2)



National Day of Prayer

Immanuel's church doors were opened for the National Day of Prayer. Members of Immanuel and the community came to pray and request prayers for family and neighbors. Wrist bands, printed materials, and printed out prayers (for those in the military, government, and other people who need our prayers) were provided.

At the conclusion of the Day, a prayer service was held. It began with the Pledge to the flag and an opening prayer, followed by readings from Psalms by members of Immanuel, hymn-singing, and readings of the names submitted with prayer requests. Our choir members were present and sang "God Bless America," and we all joined in. It was uplifting. If you were not present, you missed something good.

I was asked to close with a prayer. As I prepared, it dawned on me that this was a National Day of Prayer, we should include our Nation. Do we include in our prayers our U.S.A.? We no longer can call ourselves a Christian nation. In a poll it was pointed out that many do not want to be labeled Christian. Pull out your newspaper, turn on your T.V., and see the hatred, envy of individuals and groups who want their way, not God's way.

I was disappointed by the attendance. I can hear your excuses, "I didn't know about it," "I don't drive in the evening," "I went earlier and didn't know of the special closing." Why was Noah involved in a flood? Why were Sodom and

Gomorrah destroyed? Why was Nineveh spared and later destroyed? How many times did God warn Israel to remain faithful to Him only?

So, I call on you with humility and shame to ask God to spare us, forgive us, and help us to reach out and to change our ways as a nation to praise, worship, and making Him #1 in our life.

~Pastor Perez

Our Help is ... the Lord . . .

(continued from page 1)

convict us of our sin, and lead us to salvation through faith in the risen Jesus Christ. That same Holy Spirit is also given to us to help us grow to be more Christ-like as we reach out in love to each other and our community. We can grow in Christ when we read and meditate on His Word. God's Word also teaches us that the world will know us as Christ's disciples by our love towards one another (John 13:35). Not long after I first came to Immanuel, in a sermon I had us all sing together "By His Love". Today, I again encourage you to be known as Christians by your love.

*Blessings,
~Pastor King*

Newsletter Staff

Editor.....	Barbara Szalkowski
Contributors	Kathy Angst
.....	Cathleen Chevallier
.....	Lynn Eickemeyer
.....	Karen Evans
.....	Pastor Jeffrey King
.....	Connie Meave
.....	Pastor Claudio Pérez
.....	Diane Robinson
Graphic Design.....	Matthew Szalkowski



Focus on Stewardship

We give Thee but Thine own,
 Whate'er the gift may be;
 All that we have is Thine alone,
 A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus
 As stewards true receive
 And gladly, as Thou blessest us,
 To Thee our first-fruits give! (*LSB 781:1-2*).

In many congregations these stanzas are sung every Sunday when the offerings of God's faithful people are received. It's a sung reminder of who God is and who we are in relation to Him, of what God does for us and gives to us, and how we respond to His generosity.

We are stewards of God's varied grace to us. As stewards we acknowledge that God owns all things and that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Him (*1 Chron 29:14; Ps 24:1; Ps 100:3; 1 Cor 4:7; 1 Cor 6:19*). Even we ourselves—all that we are and all that we have—are His. We are His because He created us, preserves us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us. As the stewards of what He has done for us and given to us, we give of our first fruits to Him and His Church.

And the Lord receives them and presses them into a use all His own. He sanctifies it. He hallows it. He uses it to ensure that the Word of

God is still preached among us. He uses it to ensure that there is water for Baptism, bread and wine for His Holy Supper. He uses what He gives to you and what you give back to Him for your good. Everything that happens in the church is purchased with the giving of the saints from what God has provided them. Holy giving from holy people pressed into holy service.

But there's more. For our giving does not just make the liturgical life of the church possible. It's not just the necessary means by which the vessels and sacramental elements, the hymn books and pastors are made available. The giving of God's stewards is part of the liturgy itself, part of the Divine Service. It is one of our responses within the liturgy where we, not just with words spoken or sung, but with deeds declare, live out and live in, the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (*1 Pet 2:9*). Our offerings are part of God's sanctifying work that He has us do in the Divine Service for the life of the world.

That's what makes our stewardship so precious and significant. God hallows what we give and employs it to sanctify us and others. And that is why we sing: "And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our first-fruits give!"

(Stewardship newsletter insert for June 2015, provided on the LCMS website <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=3380>)

~submitted by Kathy Angst



Luther's Hymn

"Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word"

This hymn has been perhaps the most widely used of Luther's hymns. In many agendas of Reformation and post-Reformation times this hymn was assigned to be sung immediately after the sermon or at the end of the service. Luther may have written it in 1541/42. The earliest existent source is Joseph Klug's Wittenberg hymnal *Geistliche Lieder* of 1543.

In 1541 the Holy Roman Empire was going through dangerous and critical times. King Ferdinand of Austria was defeated by Suleiman and the Turks at Budapest in August, 1541, and Vienna was threatened. The Turks were at the door of the Empire! In October a storm destroyed the fleet of Emperor Charles V near Algiers. In July of 1542 Francis I of France, who posed as a defender of the church, made an alliance with Suleiman against Charles V. There were reports that the pope had sided with this pact. Thus of all things -Pope and Turk in alliance against Christendom!

The Elector requested pastors to pray for divine help and protection. Luther published an admonition to pray against the Turks. He also repeatedly stressed the importance of prayers by the children. This was the historical context in which this hymn was written. The original first stanza was as follows:

*Lord, keep us in Thy Word and work,
Restrain the murderous Pope and Turk,
Who fain would tear from off thy throne,
Christ Jesus, Thy beloved Son.*

But many people took offense at the juxtaposition of Pope and Turk, and in predominantly Catholic principalities the hymn was forbidden. After 1548, when neither group posed such a threat, the text was changed to include enemies of the Word in general.

*Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.*

The melody, "Erhalt, uns Herr," is named after the first three words in the original German. It is thought to be composed by Luther, though it resembles the melody "Nun komm der heiden Heiland" ("Savior of the Nations, Come"), which in turn is taken from the 12th century plainsong "Veni Redemptor gentium." The bold steps of the melody are excellently suited to the mood of the words. It was originally in the Dorian mode.

The English translation of this hymn is by Catherine Winkworth (1827-78), with some alteration. Winkworth did more than any other single individual to make the rich heritage of German hymnody available to the English speaking world. She translated 112 hymns and published 4 hymn books of translations. Forty-six of her translations are included in our *Lutheran Service Book*. The form of the hymn is three stanzas, one each for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a beautiful prayer for God's protection over the Church and over our lives.

*Lord Jesus Christ, Your power make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.*

(continued on page 5)



Luther's Hymn . . .

(continued from page 4)

*O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth,
Support us in our final strife
And bring us out of death to life. Amen.*

Soli Deo gloria! To God alone be the glory!

The gift of music is a gift from God that we all have been given in varying degrees like any gift. It is a blessing to be able to praise God with music whether we sit in the choir or in the congregation.

At this time I would like to thank those who put in extra time and effort and participated in adult and handbell choirs this spring season.

Choir members were: Jackie Anderson, Margaret Beacom, Fred Cooper, Nora Lee Froehlich, Denise Goehring, Ken Harvey, Virginia Kleb, Evelyn Marsh, Jessalyn Nelson, Philip Nelson, Joel Norris, Brenda Paulsel, Tina Petway, Barbara Szalkowski, Melissa Theis, Bonnie Thomas, and Ray Thomas.

Bell ringers were Jackie Anderson, Joan Luker, Connie Meave, Lauren Neu, Joel Norris, Brenda Paulsel, Laura Suffridge, Barbara Szalkowski, Ray Thomas, Carol Whitefield, and substitute Meredith Whitefield.

Choir and bells are now off for the summer season, but will resume rehearsals in September. We are always open to new members, so consider joining us in the fall. It is a privilege to make music in the Lord's house. To God alone be the glory!

~Diane Robinson

Sources for this article were:

Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship, Marilyn K. Stulken, Fortress Press, 1981

Lutheran Worship: Hymnal Companion, Fred L. Precht, CPH, 1992

Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns (Vol. 53), Ulrich S. Leupold, Fortress Press, 1965.

~Diane Robinson



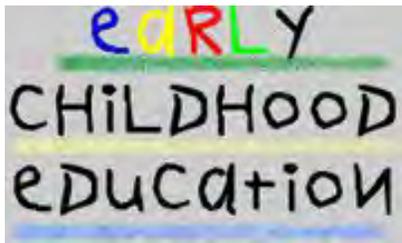
Summer camps throughout June for Fine Arts, Athletics, Computers see

<http://www.lutheranhighnorth.org>

Click "2015 Summer Camps" under Fine Arts or Athletics for information and to register.

~Lynn Eickemeyer

Immanuel needs additional Media volunteers for Sunday morning worship services. Training and shadowing will be provided. Contact the Church Office or come up to the balcony and observe the process on any Sunday.



Father's Day



On May 5th Immanuel Teachers and Staff celebrated Teachers Appreciation Week with a "Cinco de Thanks-o" luncheon sponsored by the PTL. During that time, the PTL Parents who were organizing the luncheon wanted to be able to allow each teacher to really "see" their gratitude. So they gave them something to look at!

The children and parents wrote their teacher and assistant(s) a note, card, etc. and shared something that they appreciated about them. They made fancy cards, cards with scribbling from their kiddo's with words of thank you and we appreciate you! There was a lot of oohing and aahing over the notes while the teachers were enjoying their lunch.



Thank you parents for all the wonderful cards and notes that you sent in. And special thanks to Mrs. Teague, for all her love and work she put into the luncheon, along with her helpers, Mrs. Ferrier and Mrs. Robles.

~Connie Meave

The first Father's Day in the United States was observed in Spokane Washington on June 19, 1910. It was proposed by Mrs. John B. Dodd in 1909. Her father, William Smart raised six children alone after his wife died in childbirth. He was also a civil war veteran.

The Bible says, "Honor your father and your mother, so that it may go well for you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." When we listen, obey, love, appreciate, and forgive our dad, that's how we honor him. When you show you love your dad by hugging him and telling him that you love him, that's another way to honor him. You can also appreciate your dad by thanking him when he does things for you.

Our dads won't be perfect all the time, we all make mistakes. We should forgive our dads when they make mistakes because God asks us to.

And most importantly, don't forget that we also have a heavenly father that cares and loves us no matter what. So if you don't have a father around all the time (or even if you do), God is the father of all fathers. He is there when our father can't be.

Excerpt from a Father's Day devotion by Barb Uecker, from <http://www.bethanyhustisford.com/early-childhood-learning-center-blog/104-devotion-for-father>

Butterfly Benefit

Thanks to ALL the Volunteers – organizers, advertisers, ticket sellers, contributors, set-up crew, cooks, bakers, greeters, dish washers, clean-up crew, and everything in between! We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you!

A special THANK YOU to Thrivent, for the gift card contribution and "Action Team" t-shirts.

~photos submitted by Kathy Angst





Lots of pictures with the Easter Bunny



Variety of Crafts



2015 EASTER CELEBRATION WRAP UP

~Cathleen Chevelliar



Egg Hunt for approx. 85 children



Thank you to all who supported and helped make the day a huge success.



Immanuel Lutheran Church
306 E 15th St
Houston, TX 77008

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2489
NORTH HOUSTON,
TEXAS

Return Service Requested

To the Family of:

God with us, transforming and sending



Voters Meeting

**Tuesday
June 2 • 7:00 pm
Approval of
2015-16 Budget
and
Election of Officers**