

# Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

Vol. 4, No. 11

October 2015

## Home Improvement: Getting Your Rest

*Psalm 46:10. "Be still, and know that I am God."*

Last month, I discussed the importance of prayer, both personal and with family. This month I'll continue in what is shaping up into a "home improvement" series. So many times in life we struggle with what to do next. We're called upon to do so many things in an ever increasingly hectic world.

There are always two things that need to get done for every one moment we have available. Sometimes we don't know where to start...or where to stop. You may be saying this is true, but what choice do we have?

In answer to this I recall the words of the psalmist in Psalm 46:10a, "Be still, and know that I am God." When life gets hectic, as it often does, I recommend we follow this simple advice: We should be still, and know that God is God. In guidance of how to do this I would like to go to the third commandment for a moment. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." God created the whole universe and everything in it in only six days. Talk about having a busy week! He decided to set the seventh day aside for rest. Many times I've had catechumens ask if God was tired. No, God was not tired. Instead, he was setting up his created order. In that order He gave us the gift of rest. He set aside the seventh day, the Sabbath, as a day of rest in his creation. His later instruction to the Israelites in the third commandment was simply reconfirming this already established order.

At this point many people are probably wondering where all of this is going. "How is this relevant in my life?" I contend in this modern day of technology, hustle and bustle, cell phones, instant messaging and e-mails that this time of rest is more important than ever. God gave everyone 24 hours in a day, 168 hours in a week, and 61,320 hours in a year. We all get the same, no more, no less. God intends for us to be productive in our lives, but he also intends some of those hours to be spent resting. Resting and remembering He is God.



*(continued on page 3)*



## Caring For Each Other

October brings relief from the summer heat, it also signals the coming holidays: November has Thanksgiving; in December, Advent prepares us for the birth of the Christ Child over two thousand years ago, then the year comes to an end and a new year begins.

What I have observed is the joy, the celebration of these special holidays for our shut-in members who are unable to join in the celebrations among the members at Immanuel. You should see the joy, the sparkling eyes, as they welcome me for my monthly visits and offer them Holy Communion. Besides my customary devotions, they ask about the Church, the members they still remember. Many of their friends are no longer around; some have gone to receive their crown of glory in eternity.

All of these homebound members served Immanuel in many ways, holding a church office, helping in the kitchen when we had school, pumping out water from the old church building, and many of them still are faithful in the monthly pledge contributions. There is still joy in their heart for Immanuel, the church they love, the church where their children attended, were baptized, and married.

This is to make Immanuel aware; you may not know them because you never get to see them at our worship services or other church functions. I have 15 to 20 homes to visit, I have listed them here. Perhaps you could drop

them a note or call them on the phone: Mr. and Mrs. Wilson; Mr. Koester; Mr. and Mrs. Walther; Mrs. G. Walther; Mr. Kain; Mrs. Cade; Mrs. Telge; Mrs. Huffman; Mrs. Harmel; Mr. Dube; Mr. & Mrs. Spates; Mrs. Johnson; Mrs. Dietrich; Mr. Howard; Mrs. Bradham; Mr. Cade; Mrs. Wilkerson.

I have asked our Church Secretary to provide their names and addresses so that Immanuel members will call them or even visit them during the holidays. You may call the church office and get the information you need. Please don't forget our shut-ins this year!

*~Pastor Perez*

## Hamburgery Fry Returns!



September saw the Hamburger Fry return after its summer break. Chief Cook Lonnie Angst served up mouth-watering burgers with the encouragement of Henry Dietrich.

*~photo by Ken Harvey*

## Getting Your Rest . . .

*(continued from page 1)*

As Christians, we can rest assured in the promise of our salvation by the grace bought and paid for us on the cross by Christ. We can rest assured that no matter what is going on in this world, God, the creator of the whole universe, is in charge. Not only is He in charge, He cares about us. We can ease our burdens and our worries by turning them over to Him. When we “Be still, and know that He is God” we give up our burdens and lay them at the feet of our Father, the King of all Heaven and Earth. When we gather together to receive His wonderful gifts in His Divine Service, or stop for a moment of prayer, or do our daily devotionals we should “be still.” We should take that time to relax and know that God is God, and He is in charge. God is in control. That is a burden we need **not** bear.

So as we head into Fall, a very busy time of year for most of us, let us remember God’s third commandment to us, “Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.” It is not something we are burdened to do. No, it is a wonderful gift given to us by a loving Father. I urge you when things get hectic, to “be still.” Do not let “to do” lists steal your God-given time of rest. I will leave you with wise words from the letter to the Hebrews concerning our rest. Hebrews 4:9-10, “<sup>9</sup>There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; <sup>10</sup>for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.”

*~With the rest and reassurance of our Lord,  
Pastor King*



## We Are Lutherans. What Does This Mean?



On Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. This is a significant day in Church history, which we often think of as the beginning of the Reformation. Those bearing the name Lutheran and some Protestant congregations commemorated this day at the end of October. So, what was the Reformation, and why is it so significant?

Ultimately, the Reformation came down to a single issue: how sinners were to be forgiven and obtain eternal life. On the one hand, Rome claimed that sinners needed to earn forgiveness of sins by their doing: praying certain prayers, paying for church services, buying indulgences, making pilgrimages and more.

The Reformation wasn't about making a new church. It wasn't about how statues, crucifixes, liturgy, vestments and sacraments were “too Catholic.” It wasn't about personal preferences. The Reformation was about how God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the flesh in order to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in order to bring us eternal life. That's what the Reformation really is about. That's what being Lutheran is really all about.

And that's why Lutherans do what we do. We baptize babies because they need the work of Jesus that gives them the forgiveness of sins. We confess our sins at the beginning of the

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# We Are Lutherans . . .

*(continued from page 3)*

Divine Service because we need the forgiveness given in the absolution. We cry out to God for mercy, because we know that we deserve to be punished instead. We hear the Law condemn us, because our flesh needs to be put to death. We hear the Gospel, because we need the comfort and forgiveness it brings us. We receive Christ's body and blood, because apart from Christ, we have no life in our flesh. But don't be fooled: These things are not about what we are doing; they are about God doing something for you, namely bringing you the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation.

We're not disgruntled, but we are sinners who need the forgiveness Christ brings. We are Lutherans.

*~Pastor Jordan McKinley*

*St. Paul Lutheran Church, Bennett, Iowa, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Stanwood, Iowa*

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## Focus on Stewardship

The reason we come to Church on Sunday morning, as opposed to Sunday afternoon or Monday evening, is because it is the first day of the week. The first thing you do this week, before you do anything else, is come to Church. You begin your week with the Word of God, Prayer, and the Holy Communion. You give the first seventh, off the top, of your time to the Lord. He blesses that time. In that time, He forgives your sins, cleanses, and purifies you. He then sends you out into the world, into the week, as *His* in all your days and hours and life.

This is also the reason we pray before we eat. We want to establish that food is a gift from God and that He provides for us through it. Before we eat, we pray. This also blesses the food and makes it holy food because you are holy people.

Nonetheless, we have a tendency to compartmentalize our lives, to separate the spiritual and the secular, to put on different masks at work, with our friends, or at home. This is a fantasy. We are who we are wherever we are. We are the baptized and we never go anywhere alone. Everything we do is spiritual — including our use of time and food and money.

Now, you have a Christian duty to support the Church, to give of your time, money, and abilities so that the Ministry would be

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## Stewardship . . .

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conducted among us and that the Gospel would be preached beyond us. How much you are to give is not dictated in the New Testament, unless it is everything. But how you are to give is clear. It is sacrificial, generous, first fruits, and proportional. You are to give a percentage offering—not an amount, but a percentage.

In the Old Testament ten percent was the norm. It's hard to imagine that St. Paul was thinking that "being generous" would be anything less than this. But whatever it is, the point is to set your offerings in comparison to your total income. That is what makes it a sacrifice, a spiritual gift. How much of what the Lord provides do you return?

Next, it is to be first-fruits giving. It comes off the top. You write the check, or pay your offering, before you pay any of your bills. It is your first obligation and sets your priorities. You don't pay your other bills and then give the leftovers to the Church. You make your offering first, in accordance with whatever promised percentage you made. This is not only first fruits, it is also sacrificial.

And you can always give more. Start with your commitment, with your percentage-based, first-fruits weekly offering, then as you have leftovers, give them out as it pleases you. But start with the Biblical model or percentage, first fruits.

That is how money is to be used and given by Christians. It is to be pressed into the service of the Gospel. It is not actually that hard. Start where you are and work toward greater faithfulness. Start now. Just take what you give

now and figure out the percentage of your income and commit to keep that pledge for the year. Over time you can increase that commitment, that percentage. As your income fluctuates, going up or down, so will your offering amount. Set the percentage, then take that out of your check first each week. Make it a priority. It is the most important thing you do with your money. It is a spiritual exercise.

It will feel a little scary at first. Just do it. Take the risk. Set the money aside for the Lord and trust that He will provide. And over time you will find that you really can give more than 1% or even 10%, and even do so without regret. This kind of Biblical, disciplined, first fruit giving takes the unease out of it. It creates cheerful givers because when they drop the offering in the plate, they are already committed. They decided beforehand what to give. They don't think about it. They are glad to fulfill their promise and to be in God's house where He receives them according to grace.

*(Stewardship newsletter insert for October 2015, provided on the LCMS website  
<http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=3571>)*

*~submitted by Kathy Angst*

## Support Missions

Pastor Keith Aschenbeck visited Immanuel to talk about his family's mission work in Alaska. To support his family's ministry:

### **Donate online:**

<http://www.alaskamissionforchrist.org>

**Make checks payable and Mail donations to:** Alaska Mission for Christ, 8100 Arctic Blvd., Anchorage AK 99518. Note "Keith Aschenbeck" in the memo section and 100% of your donation will go to support him directly.

# Mus Notes

## The Hymns of Paul Gerhardt: Evening and Morning LSB 726

Last year in this column I spoke at length about how Martin Luther's hymns were written to proclaim God's Word, preach the Gospel, and teach the orthodox Lutheran faith. This was considered the Early Reformation Period (1517-1577) and during this time most new hymns, both words and music, were written by the same person. After this period there was a time of transition from more objective and confessional hymnody to hymnody of a somewhat more personal, devotional character.

Then came the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). The "privation and distress which was the lot of countless people caught up in this war was the significant factor in the development in a new kind of hymn. Confronted with the horrible killing and pillaging of the Thirty Years War, the individual sought enlightenment, self-understanding, comfort, and consolation in a personal and subjective approach to God." Many of our "cross and comfort hymns" come from this period.

At this time there was also a new approach to German language and poetry. The impact on hymnody was a greater concern for metrical regularity and purity of language, which gave a smoother and more polished character both rhythmically and poetically. There was also an

increased separation of the roles of poet and composer. No longer was it the norm for a single person to write both words and music.

Into this time period God put Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676), a Lutheran preacher and poet who personally suffered the ravages of the Thirty Years War. Gerhardt wrote 123 hymns in all. His hymns are usually paired with music composed by Johann Cruger, his organist and choirmaster at the Nicolaikirche in Berlin, and Johann Ebeling, Cruger's successor, who wrote the music for "Evening and Morning."

We have sung Gerhardt's hymn "Evening and Morning" several times lately at Immanuel. It appears in the Trust section of our hymnal. It is most valuable for the message it gives us of God's care and protection, but read it again in the context that Gerhardt wrote it with war at his doorstep for 30 years!



*Evening and morning, sunset and dawning,  
wealth, peace, and gladness, comfort in  
sadness;*

*These are Thy works; all the glory be Thine!  
Times without number, awake or in slumber,  
Thine eye observes us, from danger  
preserves us,*

*Causing Thy mercy upon us to shine.*

*Father, O hear me, pardon and spare me; calm  
all my terrors, blot out my errors  
That by Thine eyes they may no more be  
scanned.*

*Order my goings, direct all my doings; As it  
may please Thee, retain or release me;  
All I commit to thy fatherly hand.*

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**Fall Community  
Gathering  
Saturday,  
October 31  
5:30 to 9:00 pm**



Free Hotdogs, Water, Bibles  
and LOTS OF CANDY!

Contributions of Money and Candy are greatly appreciated. Look for collection boxes located in the office and church narthex.

Volunteers needed! Please prayerfully consider helping to make these events successful. If interested, contact Cathleen Chevallier, (936) 499-5531 or the church office (713) 864-2651.

~Cathleen Chevallier

## **Paul Gerhard . . .**

*(continued from page 6)*

*Ills that still grieve me soon are to leave me;  
though billows tower, and winds gain  
power,  
After the storm the fair sun shows its face.  
Joys e'er increasing and peace never ceasing;  
these shall I treasure and share in full  
measure  
When in His mansions God grants me a place.  
To God in heaven all praise be given! Come, let  
us offer and gladly proffer  
To the Creator the gifts He doth prize.  
He well receiveth a heart that believeth; hymns  
that adore Him are precious before Him  
And to His throne like sweet incense arise.  
Amen.*

~Diane Robinson



**Friday October 16  
6:30-9:30 pm**

An evening of fun!

Games, Crafts, Movie and **Snacks!**

Ages 2-9

\$20 (Siblings \$10/each)

Contact the church office to register

Registration Deadline: Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>



**October 25, 11:30 am  
following Bible Class  
and Sunday School**

After eating, stay and fellowship while helping stuff candy bags for the upcoming Fall Community Gathering! The more help we have, the faster we get done.

## October Events

Fri. Oct. 2, 7:00 pm

**Football** game vs. Bay Area Christian

Sat. Oct. 3, 7:00 pm, Sun. Oct. 4, 3:00 pm

Fall **Comedy Drama**

Tues. Oct. 6, 5:00/6:00 pm

JV/Varsity **Volleyball**

vs. St. Thomas Episcopal

Fri. Oct. 9, 5:00-6:30 pm

Homecoming **BBQ dinner**

7:00 pm **Football** vs. Bryan St. Joseph,

Coronation at halftime

Sat. Oct. 10, 6:00 pm

Alumni and Friends Brewery Event

Mon. Oct. 12

Lutheran High North **Golf Tournament**

at Tour 18.

This golf tournament a fundraiser for the athletic department.

Thurs. Oct. 15, 5:00/6:00 pm

JV/Varsity **Volleyball**

vs. Woodlands Christian

Tues. Oct. 20, 5:00/6:00 pm

JV/Varsity **Volleyball** vs. Faith West

Wed. Oct. 21, 7:00 pm

College Planning and Financial Aid Workshop

(by Thrivent)

Fri. Oct. 23, 5:30 pm

Friday Night Lights program for potential students/parents

7:00 pm **Football** game

vs Magnolia Legacy Christian

Wed. Oct. 28, 6:30 pm

City-wide **choir festival concert** – multiple schools and Houston Lutheran Chorale members

Orders for the "Lions Share Program" gift cards are due November 6. This is a PTL fundraiser. You simply purchase gift cards at face value and the Lutheran High North PTL gets a percentage. These make great gifts or you can use the gift cards yourself at places you normally shop anyway. It's an easy way to help out and it doesn't cost you anything extra.

Order online at the Lutheran High website [http://www.lutheranhighnorth.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=108949&type=d&pREC\\_ID=518812](http://www.lutheranhighnorth.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=108949&type=d&pREC_ID=518812)

~Lynn Eickemeyer

## Advent Preview

The Houston Lutheran Chorale will enhance our midweek Advent service at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Chorale will sing many of the selections that will make up their annual Christmas concerts on Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> and Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>. Plan now to attend this special service and prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. More details will be provided as they become available.





# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



The Parent Teacher League hosted their first meeting of the school year in early September. There was a fantastic turnout, with more than half of the school's families attending. PTL coordinator Jenny Teague presented volunteer opportunities for the 2015-16 school year, and Pastor King and congregation president Ken Harvey addressed the meeting and welcomed families new and returning. Former ILS parent and speech therapist, Jennifer Cashion, gave an informative talk about developmental milestones in the speech of preschoolers. Mrs. Cooper and Ms. Vida both won prizes for having the most families in attendance.

*~Jenny Teague  
ECE PTL Coordinator*



## You're Invited

On Sunday, October 11, Immanuel's ECE will host an Open House during the Sunday School hour (10:15–11:15 am). We invite everyone to meet our ECE staff and tour our newly updated classrooms and playgrounds. Re-dedication of teachers and aides to service in our ECE will take place during Sunday morning worship (9:00 am). Please join us for this time of fellowship. Refreshments will be served in Miertschin Hall.

*~Cathy Swanstrom  
Director, Early Childhood Education*



Immanuel Lutheran Church and ECE would like to thank Melissa Reyes for twelve years of service to our early childhood programs. Melissa began working at Immanuel part-time when she was still in high school. She most recently held the position of teacher in the Toddler Room. We wish the very best to Melissa as she pursues an undergraduate degree in Education.



*Melissa at her farewell luncheon*

*~Winnie McNamara*





# SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY

Our Sunday School Rally Day was a great success. Everyone had a wonderful time; especially the children. Special thanks to Julie King, Sunday School Superintendent, for organizing this special day, and to all the volunteers who helped make it such a great day. *~ Winnie McNamara*







## *Immanuel Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Education*

### **4th Annual Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) Holiday Gift Express Christmas Project October 11 - December 1, 2015**

HAWC is in need of new unwrapped toys and gift cards to stock their 2015 Holiday Gift Express Store. Families participating in HAWC programs including those children living in the shelter will be able to shop for their caregiver/parent and the caregiver will be able to shop for their children. ***There is no charge to children and parents "shopping" in the Holiday Store.***

#### **Suggested Items:**

- ◆ New unwrapped toys for all ages
- ◆ New items of clothing in all sizes, newborn to adult; especially pajamas and outerwear
- ◆ Gift cards to any store in any denomination
- ◆ Toiletries and small items for ladies' gift baskets (assembled and decorated by church members and ECE Staff). Suggested items include toiletry samples, perfume samples, notepads, pens, earrings, inspirational books, mugs, individually wrapped coffee/hot chocolate/tea - anything you can think of that would fit in a small basket

#### **Make Your Donation by:**

- ◆ Credit/Debit Card
- ◆ Check (payable to Immanuel Lutheran Church)
- ◆ Cash

Donations may be dropped off in the Church/School Office or with your child's teacher through December 1. If you have any questions, please contact Winnie McNamara, [mcnamara.ils.ece@gmail.com](mailto:mcnamara.ils.ece@gmail.com) or call the school office at (713) 861-8787.

***Please remember these families in your prayers!***



ImmanuelHouston@gmail.com

## German Meal

Dine-In or Carry-Out  
4pm-6pm

Advanced Tickets Available:  
\$15.00 Adult  
\$7.00 Child (12 and under)

Entertainment For  
All Ages  
Invite Your Friends!

Bouncy Houses  
Carnival Games  
Music  
Face Painting  
Balloon Animals  
Sausage on a Stick  
Desserts  
Bavarian Pretzels  
Popcorn  
Snow Cones

E.15th St. & Arlington  
1st Saturday in October  
2pm-6pm





# Immanuel Lutheran Church - October 2015



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Bingo @ 1:00 – 3:00 pm  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir @ 7:30 pm	2	3 Unveil Setup @ 11:00 am–1:00 pm <b>Oktoberfest</b> 2:00-6:00 pm <b>German Dinner</b> 4:00-6:00 pm
4 <b>Usher Team #2</b> Worship @ 9:00 am w/Communion Adult Bible Class and Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am  LWML Zone Rally 1:30 pm	5  Bible Study @ 6:30 – 8:00 pm	6  All Boards @ 7:00 pm	7  Women's Bible Study @ 10:00 am  <b>Oktoberfest Recap</b> <b>Meeting @ 6:30 pm</b>	8  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir @ 7:30 pm	9	10  Unveil Setup @ 11:00 am–1:00 pm
11 <b>Usher Team #3</b> Worship @ 9:00 am Adult Bible Class and Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	12 <b>Columbus Day</b> 	13 Men's Breakfast @ AAA restaurant @ 6:30 am Naomi Meeting @ 7:00 pm	14	15 <b>Hamburger Fry</b> 11:00 am–1:00 pm  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir @ 7:30 pm	16  Parents' Time Off 6:30-9:30 pm	17 Unveil Setup @ 11:00 am–1:00 pm  FOD Halloween Dance 4:00–9:00 pm
18 <b>Usher Team #4</b> Worship @ 9:00 am w/Communion Adult Bible Class and Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am	19  Bible Study @ 6:30–8:00 pm	20	21  Women's Bible Study @ 10:00 am	22  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir @ 7:30 pm	23	24  Unveil Setup @ 11:00 am–1:00 pm
25 <b>Usher Team #5</b> Worship @ 9:00 am Adult Bible Class and Sunday School Unveil Church @ 10:15 am <b>Social Sunday</b> @ 11:30 am <b>Help Stuff Candy</b> <b>Bags For Fall</b> <b>Gathering</b>	26	27 Men's Breakfast @ AAA restaurant @ 6:30 am	28	29  Bells @ 6:30 pm Choir @ 7:30 pm	30	31 Unveil Setup @ 11:00 am – 1:00 pm  <b>Fall Gathering</b> <b>@ 5:30–9:00 pm</b>





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

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TEXAS

**Return Service Requested**

To the Family of:

*Loving God ~ Loving Neighbors ~ Serving Others*

# Fall Community Gathering

Free Hot Dogs,  
Water, Bibles, and  
**LOTS OF CANDY**

Saturday, October 31, 2015  
5:30 to 9:00 PM  
306 E. 15th Street

*Join Us!*

