

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

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<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

May 2018

Easter Encouragement

*[Article posted April 12, 2018 on the Texas District-LCMS website
<http://txlcms.org/easter-encouragement/>]*



Easter is an exciting time in the Church year even though it is for only 50 days. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost is also exciting, but this excitement rests completely on the resurrection of Jesus. Everything in our faith walk is grounded in the resurrection.

Easter is filled with many wonderful things — the empty tomb, the face cloth and linen cloths, the angels, the message of Mary (“I have seen the Lord!”), the mission directive of Jesus (“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”), Jesus’ teaching on the road to Emmaus, the catch of fish, the three questions to Peter, being seen by more than 500 people, and more. St. Paul would write to the churches that Easter is foundational to all that we do and the solid rock on which our faith and life is based.

Let me encourage you not to let Easter go by too quickly. Meditate on and study the Scripture teaching on Jesus’ resurrection and ours. Listen and take in the words of the resurrected Lord. Let the resurrection change your life and strengthen your faith that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the one who redeems and blesses you.

In the November 2017 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, a number of articles touched on the state of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). From 1966 to 2016, the number of children baptized was down about 50,000. Confirmed membership went down about 220,000, and the total baptized membership decreased by more than 710,000. A recent study by the LCMS has the Synod possibly losing 500,000 baptized members during the next 10 to 15 years. That study also pointed out that people are moving to areas in our country where there are no LCMS congregations.

(continued on page 2)

Encouragement . . .

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We all become discouraged with numbers like these. However, these numbers should spur us into action for planting more congregations and sharing our faith with more people.

Instead of being depressed about the numbers, we should reconnect ourselves to the Great Commission the Lord has given us.

This is where Easter helps us. Jesus conquered sin, death and Satan. Nothing can stand against Jesus and His resurrection, and it is this resurrection power that enlivens us and encourages us to share God's love and forgiveness with others. It is the encouragement of the resurrection that keeps us planting new congregations. It is the resurrection that opens the financial doors to support this church-planting effort along with the training and sending of evangelists into new communities. And it is resurrection encouragement that empowers Christians to engage people in their communities through acts of loving kindness and through sharing the reason for the joy and peace in their lives.

Numbers are helpful, but we don't need the numbers to carry out God's mission in the Texas District or in Synod. Easter is the reason for all of our mission and ministry efforts locally and worldwide. Yes, celebrate Easter! Jesus is alive, He lives in us, and leads us in mission in His name.

*~Rev. Ken Hennings
President, Texas District*



Immanuel Receives New Members

By the power of the Holy Spirit, on Palm Sunday, the membership of Immanuel grew by two families, a total of four adult members.

Received into membership are Dan and Sarah Goeglein, and member Jason Ysaquirre's wife, Snowy, and their daughter Melissa Camario. Melissa's daughter Esther, age 3, became a member of Immanuel through Holy Baptism last year.

We welcome Dan, Sarah, Snowy, Melissa, and Esther to our congregation with love and joy and give thanks to a gracious God for them. May the Lord continue to bless Immanuel.

~Sandi Hrozek



(left to right) Esther & Melissa Camario, Snowy Ysaquirre, Sarah and Dan Goeglein

– photo by Cathleen Chevallier

Immanuel Welcomes New Music Director



Jamie & Stephen Hernandez

--photo submitted by Stephen Hernandez

Stephen Hernandez has accepted the music director position at Immanuel, serving as our primary organist as well as choir and handbell choir director.

Stephen attended Concordia University Texas in Austin, where he studied theology and sacred music with an emphasis in choral conducting. He has worked since 2014 as a technology service technician for the Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District.

He and his wife Jamie were married on December 28, 2013, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Austin. Jamie is in her tenth year of teaching kindergarten at Epiphany Lutheran School here in Houston. They joined Memorial Lutheran Church in 2014 and remain members there where they are both very active.

Jamie is on the fellowship committee, works with the music ministry, and is a Sunday School teacher there in the summer months. Stephen serves on several boards at Memorial and is the first vice president of the congregation.

Stephen's goals for his music ministry at Immanuel are many. He wants to build a strong choral program that will support the liturgy, enhance congregational singing, and offer choral selections of the highest quality. His vision for the future includes offering events that will use music to reach out to the community. One way he envisions this happening is with a concert series.

Through many years, God has blessed Immanuel in countless ways. We thank Him for bringing Stephen to us to serve as our organist and music director.

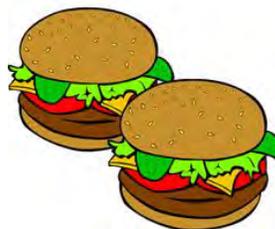
~Sandi Hrozek

Hamburger Fry to Benefit Good Samaritan

Our May Hamburger Day, sponsored by the Naomi Willing Workers, will be Thursday, May 17th, from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm. It will be a free will offering and **all** proceeds will go to the Good Samaritan Lutheran Home.

Last year we were able to send them \$980.50. With your help, we will meet or exceed that total this year. So mark your calendar to come out and enjoy the good food and fellowship which is always found at Immanuel. This will be the last Hamburger Day until September. Have a great summer.

~Martha McFarland



IMMANUEL ECE Easter Egg Hunt



~submitted by Connie Meave



LCMS Young Professionals



--photo submitted by Jessie Nelson

On April 7, Houston LCMS Young Professionals gathered at 8th Wonder brewery for their inaugural event. The social was a success, with over 40 attendees from LCMS churches across the Houston area.

Plans are to continue strengthening the network of believers and connections across the churches in the area, as well as provide fellowship for the group members. Immanuel members in attendance included Phil and Jessie Nelson, Lauren Neu, and Kelli Evans.

For more information on the group, please contact yphoustonlcms@gmail.com.

~Jessie Nelson

Pentecost
Sunday May 20th
Wear Red!



Focus on Stewardship

St. Paul teaches, "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (*Galatians 6:6*).

And again, he says, "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (*1 Corinthians 9:13-14*).

In other words, ministers of the gospel are supported by the offerings of those who are served by them. And this is how the Church lives even now. It is standard practice.

But this deserves closer examination. For it instructs us not *just* that we are to give but also *what* we are to give. And it does so with four little words: "In the same way ..."

St. Paul is building his case for supporting the preachers of the Gospel with the sacrificial giving of individual members on the example of the Old Testament people who supported the Levites with their offerings and sacrifices.

We're to support the Gospel ministry "in the same way." But how did the Old Testament people support the Levites?

(continued on page 8)

2018 Easter Celebration Wrap Up



Jesus + Sunshine + Friends + Neighbors + Eggs =
(1) Blessed Saturday Morning



Awesome Prayer
Cross at the
Salvation Station

140 Children
Under the Age
of 10 Registered



83 Families joined Immanuel for an
hour of Fun and Fellowship





The children enjoyed games and activities at the various "JESUS" stations. The Salvation Station gave out Books, Toys and Surprise bags all focused on taking Jesus home.



Our adorable Easter Bunny is kind and loving.



Over 4000 eggs were hunted and shared amongst all the children



63 Volunteers helped to make this event a huge success. THANK YOU!



Stewardship . . .

(continued from page 5)

Moses records this: "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always"

(Deuteronomy 14:22-23).

The Levites were supported by the tithe, 10 percent of all the yearly yield of that which was harvested.

Does that seem like a lot? Does it surprise you that St. Paul instructs us that we are to support the New Testament Gospel ministry "in the same way?"

If it does, ask yourself: is the Church's job in the New Testament bigger or smaller than the Levites' job in the Old Testament? Back then there was one Temple, and the ministry was almost exclusively located in one nation among the descendants of Abraham.

Jesus calls us to teach and baptize all nations *(Matt. 28)*. And there are churches and ministries all around the world. How could we support this new Gospel ministry with anything less than the Israelites supported the Old Testament ministry?

Of course, we are free to give more, for we have received more than those in the Old Testament. We have received the fullness of God's revelation, the fullness of His salvation, the fulfillment of everything that God promised to do.

For we have received Christ, God's own Son, in the flesh, who took upon himself our sins and in exchange gave us his righteousness. The Father claimed us as his own in Holy Baptism.

He gathers us together in the place where his name dwells to feast on the first fruits of the resurrection, the risen and living body and blood of his Son, our Lord, Jesus. He reminds us that we are His, that all things are ours because we belong to Him. He blesses us here in time with physical and spiritual gifts.

In the same way, and in response to his fatherly divine goodness and mercy, we gladly give to those who proclaim to us "the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light."

For once we were not a people, but now we are God's people; once we had not received mercy, but now we have indeed

(1 Peter 2:9-10).

~submitted by Kathy Angst

(Stewardship newsletter insert for May 2018, from the LCMS website <https://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=5074>)



May Events

Band and Choir Concert

Monday, May 14th at 7:00 pm

Graduation

Saturday, May 26th at 3:00 pm
at Grace Presbyterian Church

~Lynn Eickemeyer

Mission Report: Los Schullers for God in Puerto Rico

[Excerpt from their March 2018 newsletter.]

The highways stop traffic with processions of Jesus or one of the saints. The malls are filled, parking jammed as people crowd into the cities to celebrate the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus. On one street from the main square and Cathedral sits the nice pale blue four story building that houses Fuente de Vida and CARD (Centro de Amparo y Rescate por Desastre, Lutheran World Relief).

We join in the activities as today we pass out 1,000 community invitation fliers for Good Friday and Easter Sunday to those living around us. We are going to walk the last 50 steps of Jesus on earth. The newspaper has our ad, and the mall Bible study group will help color the 50 poster-sized depictions of Jesus' travels through Jerusalem. The fliers invite the community for Friday from 12:00-3:00 pm as well as for Easter Sunday at 3:00 pm.

We do not know if 5 or 250 will show up. The church and CARD are set up in two adjoining rooms, with a large courtyard and bathrooms in between. God was so kind to put a fountain in the place we would call "Fountain of Life."

Now we have three main roles that we try to fill. Principe de Paz is the church on the West coast, in Mayaguez. William Torres is a musician who leads the Puerto Rican church as president. We will also have Arturo Maita, who will be receiving his "Pastorado" in our sister church in Venezuela, and then he will serve in Mayaguez.

Presently, my main job is to preach twice a month, do the liturgy the other Sundays, and being an outside help as the church goes forward. Principe de Paz sends 20-30 bags of food which we haul in the little RAV 4 over several mountain ranges to the dry coastal plain of Ponce, where we continue the church plant of Fuente de Vida.

We were so pleased to have a great representation on February 18th for the official opening of Fuente de Vida. We had worked hard to get people from different groups around Ponce to attend. Rev. Charles St. Onge served as the opener of the local. The Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson led us in preaching and cast a vision for what the Lord could do through us as forgiven sinners. How great it was to mix with friends in Christ from near and far. Now the challenge is to incorporate people with great need with those who live normal established lives in society, always remembering the advice of James to not to set the poor in the corner. But we also need to extend welcome to well-educated, professional Puerto Ricans. In Puerto Rico, cold water serves both very well!

After Divine Service on Easter Sunday we will have some refreshment along with Easter egg hunting for the children. Our services have begun in Lutheran Church Fountain of Life, Ponce. Mayaguez is at 11:00 am. We rush out of Bible study a little early to set up in Ponce, screeching over the mountains. After service we visit over coffee, then have a few games of ping pong. We reach out for the Lord, remembering His resilience in us as we bounce back after being forgiven, to start again.

~Rev. Richard and Gema Schuller

[Sign up to receive full newsletters via email at <https://missioncentral.us/schuller/>]

Support Our Sponsored Missionaries

Puerto Rico Ministry Rev. Richard & Gema Schuller

Send a tax deductible gift to:
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, PO Box
66861, St. Louis MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central-LCMS World, 40718 Highway
E16, Mapleton, Iowa 51034-7105

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church-
Missouri Synod, and include Schuller, Puerto
Rico, and A-10898-69376 in the memo line.

Gifts can also be given securely online through
their website <http://www.lcms.org/schuller>

Dominican Republic Ministry Rev. Joel Fritsche & Family

Seminary Support

You can donate online through the following
link: [https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-
support](https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support).

By mail, make a check payable to Lutheran
Church—Missouri Synod and specify
“Dominican Republic Seminary” in the memo
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St. Louis. MO 63166-6861

General Support

Support/prayer card:
[http://prayercards.lcms.org/Fritsche_DR_April
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To support the Fritsche’s ministry, you may
send a tax- deductible gift to either of the
following:

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
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Gifts can also be given securely online through
the LCMS website, on our online giving page at
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Donate via Amazon.com’s Smile program
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Witnessing for Christ

In the book of Acts we see after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit they began to use their lives to witness boldly for Christ.

Luke, the author of this book, recorded the most important factors that brought about growth in the early church. The individual who studies this book will understand that the Lord used ordinary people to build His Kingdom on this earth.

In 1 Corinthians 1:28, Paul says, "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." God used sinful and pathetic people to spread the Gospel by enabling them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We see wonderful changes in Peter, the disciple who doubted the Lord when he attempted to walk on the Sea of Galilee; the same disciple who denied Jesus three times in the high priest's courtyard is transformed. After he had received the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day, Peter stood up with the other remaining disciples, raised his voice, and addressed the crowd.

For the first time the world heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ being preached. This was the first Gospel meeting held in the early church.

God has called each of us to a purpose. We have become His children not by an accident but according to His will and heavenly plan. In our Baptism we received the power of the Holy Spirit to witness for Christ in our family, church and community. God wants our faith to be a living, active thing. He knows that faith without any kind of expression is a dead thing.

People need Jesus to provide salvation and forgiveness from their sins. They need the Savior. Understandably, if they do not know the Gospel, they will never receive the Holy Spirit, who can lead them to faith and forgiveness.

To reach out to them is why we do our best to share the Savior. He came to seek and save the lost, and now He has asked us to share that news with every time and every nation. In this endeavor we are servants of the Holy Spirit. As the Lord has said, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord Almighty" (*Zechariah 4:6b*).

~S. Sathiyabalan
Lutheran Hour Ministries, Sri Lanka

[Excerpt from "Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries," March 14, 2014, <https://www.lhm.org/dailydevotions/default.asp?date=20140314>]



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Operation Summer Snack Supply

April 10 – May 10, 2018

Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry

Immanuel Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Education hope to collect 2,500 or more individually wrapped non-perishable snack/lunch items. 2,500 snacks would provide two snacks a day for sixty days to more than 200 young clients at the Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry.

Every classroom meeting their goal will have a pizza party with all the trimmings provided at the close of the contest. If each child in every class donates at least 18 individually wrapped snacks, we can achieve this goal and maybe more.

A donation box will be available in the Narthex for Immanuel Members. If you'd like to participate, but don't want to shop, you can make a donation made payable to the church in the envelope provided. Just drop your envelope by the church office or into the offering plate and the Evangelism Committee will shop for you.

This will be our last food collection until September of next school year. Thank you again for all your donations throughout this past year.

Ever Popular Items Include:

- Applesauce Cups
- Breakfast Bars
- Chips
- Cookies
- Crackers
- Fruit Cups
- Goldfish (any variety)
- Gummies
- Pirate's Booty
- Pouches (all varieties)
- Sandwich Crackers (Austin, Keebler, Lance, Ritz, etc.)
- Seaweed Snack
- Veggie Straws
- Anything you a your family like for snack will work



Donated products must have an expiration date beyond August 15, 2018.

If you have any questions, please contact Winnie McNamara at 281-881-5872 or

Ms.Winnie@ImmanuelHouston.org Thank you!



Immanuel Lutheran Church - May 2018



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | 1 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00 – 1:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30–9:30 pm All Boards @ 7:00 pm | 2 <i>ECE Chapel</i> @ 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am | 3 Bingo @ 1:00–3:00 pm FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm | 4 | 5 |
| 6 <i>Usher Team #5</i> Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am Altar Guild Mtg (MH) <i>(after Bible Class)</i> | 7 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club In Gym @ 5:30–9:00 pm Evening Bible Study @ 6:30–8:00 pm | 8 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Naomi Meeting @ 10:00 am ILC Youth Night @ 6:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30–9:30 pm Church Council @ 7:00 pm | 9 <i>ECE Chapel</i> @ 9:30 am | 10 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm | 11 | 12 Young Life Pancake Breakfast @ 8:00–11:00 am Outside & MH |
| 13 <i>Usher Team #1</i> Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am  | 14 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club In Gym @ 5:30–9:00 pm | 15 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00 – 1:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30 – 9:30 pm | 16 <i>ECE Chapel</i> @ 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study @ 10:00 am | 17 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00 – 1:30 pm Hamburger Fry @ 11:00–1:00 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Pentecost <i>Usher Team #2</i> Junior Confirmation Worship Service w/Communion @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am | 21 Jr. Confirmation @ 4:45 pm Young Life Club In Gym @ 5:30–9:00 pm Evening Bible Study @ 6:30–8:00 pm | 22 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm ILC Youth Night @ 6:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30–9:30 pm | 23 <i>ECE Chapel</i> @ 9:30 am | 24 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm | 25 <i>ECE Last Day of School</i> | 26 |
| 27 <i>Usher Team #3</i> Worship Service @ 9:00 am Bible Class & Sunday School @ 10:30 am | 28 Offices Closed In observance of  | 29 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm RDCDS @ 7:30–9:30 pm | 30 | 31 FOD Work Day (MH) @ 10:00–1:30 pm Men's Basketball @ 6:00–9:00 pm | | Voters Meeting Sunday June 3 (immediately after Sunday School /Bible Class) |

Serving Immanuel in May & June 2018

| | Sunday May 6 | Sunday May 13 (Mothers' Day) | Pentecost Sunday May 20 (Confirmation) | Trinity Sunday Sunday May 27 (Memorial Day weekend) |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Elder | Lonnie A. | Lonnie A. | Lonnie A. | Lonnie A. |
| Acolyte | Emily H. | Lawrence K. | Cameron W. | Lane H. |
| Usher Team | #5 Bill O. | #1 Bill E. | #2 Larry G. | #3 Ralph E. |
| Media | Barbara S. | Karen E. | Jackie A. | Barbara S. |
| Audio | Gerald O. | Max B. | Ray T. | Gerald O. |
| Altar Guild | Bob & Martha M. | Bob & Martha M. | Bob & Martha M. | Bob & Martha M. |

| | Sunday June 3 | Sunday June 10 | Sunday June 17 (Fathers' Day) | Sunday June 24 |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Elder | Max B. | Max B. | Max B. | Max B. |
| Acolyte | Jacob K. | Emily H. | Lawrence K. | Cameron W. |
| Usher Team | #4 John C. | #5 Bill O. | #1 Bill E. | #2 Larry G. |
| Media | Karen E. | Jackie A. | Barbara S. | Karen E. |
| Audio | Max B. | Ray T. | Gerald O. | Max B. |
| Altar Guild | Evelyn M. & Bonnie T. | Evelyn M. & Bonnie T. | Evelyn M. & Bonnie T. | Evelyn M. & Bonnie T. |

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



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Love God ~ Care for Others



**CALLING ALL
YOUTH**

**Youth
Fellowship
Nights
Tuesdays
May 8th & 22nd
6:30-8:00 pm**