

Connections

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights

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<http://ImmanuelHouston.org/>

May 2022

Why Go To Church?

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please take the time to read this exhortation which answers the question, "Why go to church?", taken from the Memorial Moment for 18 April 2022.



~Peace in Christ,
✠ Pastor Gaub

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:19-25, ESV)

The first of the catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem concludes with a lovely exhortation to diligence in church attendance. He notes that the catechumens have attended faithfully the instruction that prepared them for baptism. And since through baptism they will be grafted into Christ the true vine as branch is to the tree, they need to receive the watering of the word all the more after being grafted in. Nourishment is found in the word; the word is found in the **assemblies. Let's gather** together with the baptized!

~Borrowed from Rev. Dr. Scott Murray



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Welcome Rev. Ian Pacey & the Pacey Family!



(left to right): Kirk, Clarissa, Rev. Ian, & Rachel Pacey

Rev. Ian Stewart Pacey was born and raised in Orange County, California. He is married to Clarissa. They have two children, Rachel and Kirk. Rev. Pacey studied at UCLA (B.A., Political Science 1992), Concordia Theological Seminary (M. Div., Pastoral Theology 2000), and Drew University (M. Phil., Liturgical Studies 2004).

He vicared at First Lutheran Church/Montana State University in Bozeman, MT (1998-1999), was ordained at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, NY (December 31st, 2000), and has served as pastor in the following congregations:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
Brooklyn NY (2000-2001)

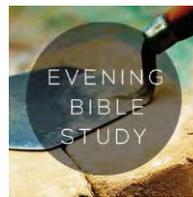
First Lutheran Church, Greenwich CT
(2001-2004)

Catalina Lutheran Church, Tucson AZ
(2004-2014)

Memorial Lutheran Church, Houston TX
(2014-2022)

Pastor Pacey also served as campus chaplain at the University of Arizona (2005-2013) and as the assistant campus ministry coordinator for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (2012-2013).

Pastor Pacey will be installed as Senior Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Houston TX on May 1, 2022.



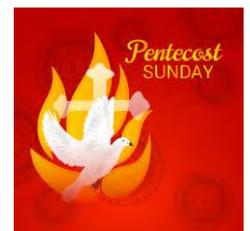
Monday evening Bible Study will meet with Pastor Pacey on Monday, May 16, at 7:00 pm in Miertschin Hall.

We will have an Ascension Day Divine Service at 7:00 pm, Thursday, May 26.



Social Ministry Door Offering will be taken after the Divine Service on Sunday, May 29.

Pentecost, Sunday,
June 5. Divine Service
at 9:00 am



Why Go To Church? . . .

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From Cyril of Jerusalem,
Catechetical Lectures, 7.7

*"If you hold anything against anyone, forgive it. You come here to receive forgiveness of sins. You also must forgive him that sinned against you. How could you face the Lord and **say to Him, 'Forgive me my many sins,'** if you yourself have not forgiven your fellow servant even his little sins. Attend diligently the church assemblies; not only now in catechesis when diligent attendance is required of you by the clergy, but also after you have received the grace [of baptism]. For if, before you have received it, the practice is good, is it not also good after it is bestowed? If before you are grafted in, it is a safe course to be watered and tended, is it not far better after the planting? Wrestle for your own soul, especially in such days as these.*

Nourish your soul with sacred readings, for the Lord has prepared a spiritual table for you. Therefore repeat what the Psalmist says, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul' (Ps 23:1-3) that angels also may share your joy, and Christ Himself the great high priest, having accepted your resolve, may present you all to the Father, saying, 'Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me' (Is 8:18; Heb 2:13). May He keep you all well-pleasing in His sight! To whom be the glory, and the power unto the endless ages of eternity. Amen."



Focus on Stewardship

Living Sacrifices

Stewardship is not just about giving money to the church. It includes this, to be sure, but it is not limited to it. Stewardship involves our whole life – everything we have and everything we are.

Let us not, though, fall into the trap of thinking that because we give of ourselves in one area then we can neglect giving in another. Stewardship is not stealing from Peter to pay Paul. It is not a game that we play whereby we justify ourselves in not giving a tenth of our income because we have given in some other way.

This is why **our Lord warns:** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others." (Matthew 23:23) We are given to do both – tithe of ourselves and what we have.

And so it is that St. Paul makes his appeal to us: **"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing**

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Stewardship . . .

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you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." *(Romans 12:1–2)*

We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. We are not to have the mind of the world, where we exchange equal weight of this for an equal weight of that and think that we have done what God has required. Our whole life is given over for service in and for the Church of God. This is to be done in thanksgiving for what God in Christ has accomplished for us. This is our spiritual worship, the reasonable response to what He has done for us. Not one for the other but all in all.

But what does this look like? St. Paul never lays down a general principle without also giving us some practical application of what shape that principle is to take concretely. He gives the general principle that our bodies are to be living sacrifices to God. And, after admonishing those who have been given particular gifts of grace to serve the church, St. Paul then speaks generally of what is expected of all. He says:

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." *(Rom. 12:9–13)*

This is what it looks like to present your bodies as living sacrifices. This is how we live out the grace of God here in time.

Let us then heed the apostle's teaching. Let us present our bodies – everything that we have and everything that we are – as living sacrifices to God, our reasonable response to what God in Christ Jesus accomplished for us by His death and resurrection. Through this, we have forgiveness of sins, a new life in Christ, and eternal salvation. And through this worship, the grace of God is made manifest in His saints – for the church and the world.

[Stewardship newsletter insert for May 2022, from the LCMS website <https://files.lcms.org/dl/f/EA118F63-3EE2-4C1F-8B92-99B71F5F5236>]



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Mission Report

The Fritsche Family: A La Republica Dominicana

[Excerpts from April 2022 newsletter. Read the entire issue is online at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/bbtzzkfsvitkk8/April%202022%20Newsletter.pdf?dl=0>]

Eight pastors ordained in Bolivia!

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Easter greetings from the Dominican Republic! As always, it has been a whirlwind of a few months since last Christmas. I would like to share with you some blessings on the seminary and regional fronts, starting with Bolivia. For nearly ten years LCMS OIM has been supporting pastoral formation for the Iglesia Cristiana Evangélica Luterana de Bolivia (ICEL), that is the Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia, a church body with which LCMS does not yet have altar and pulpit fellowship. It is a pleasure to walk with them toward that goal.

For the last two years we have worked hard with the Bolivian pastors, teaching them especially about the theology of ministry, ordination and church order. Our DR seminary faculty played a foundational role in this, never telling them what to believe, rather what we believe, teach and confess according to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions. God be praised, the Bolivian pastors penned a document that is their confession on the Office the Holy Ministry. The two men ordained back in 2020 were ordained with a full subscription to the Book of Concord. Back then in 2020, the pastors made the decision to pursue ordination with a full subscription to the Book of Concord for the remaining pastors. At our most recent

visit, their document on the ministry was formally presented to the church assembly, adopted, and the eight men were subsequently ordained.

A large part of the Bolivian church is made up of Quechua-speaking people, an indigenous people of South America (Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador primarily), who are descendants of the Incas.



Another highlight of the trip was presenting the Bolivian church with **copies of Luther's Small Catechism** in Quechua, done in partnership with Lutheran Heritage Foundation. During the assembly, church body president Limberth Fernandez taught several sessions from the Catechism in Quechua and also in Spanish. Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw (LCMS Church Relations) was there with us, representing **President Harrison's** office. We rejoice that our brothers and sisters of ICEL are advancing in the process of attaining altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. We rejoice in their faithful confession of the Gospel of Jesus.

Now, over ten years in the making, copies of *Himnario Luterano*, our new Spanish hymnal, are arriving around the region. Our DR seminary will have a big role in the implementation of and training for the new hymnal.

At our first in-person symposium since May 2019 we will graduate 12 new deaconesses and 3 new pastors. However, another 80+ women will graduate from Mexico, Guatemala, Panama and Venezuela.

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Mission Report . . .

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Deaconess Happenings

As Joel reported above, there will be almost 100 deaconess students graduating from Concordia Seminary El Reformador in May. It has been my privilege to help write curriculum and teach courses to these women, both in person and by zoom.

The women in Pueblo Nuevo and I are meeting once a month for Bible study, crafts, and food. The Saturday Bible school which continues to do very well.

The joy of having Bible study and praying with the wives of the seminarians is not to be overlooked. We study once a month and share prayer and devotions through WhatsApp. Joel and I were blessed to have several of them, along with their husbands, celebrate Easter at our home.

Dominican Republic Local Mission Updates

On Easter Sunday we celebrated two new confirmations at our congregation in Pueblo Nuevo. Victor is the father of one of our Venezuelan members, also named Victor. We praise God for this faithful family who has become very active and supportive in our church. Also confirmed was Altagracia. She is part of the community of El Congo, near Pueblo Nuevo (PN). We continue to visit this area regularly and the Lord is providing a steady stream of new catechumens from there.

Just before I was reassigned to the PN mission in 2018, Pastor Maita baptized four young boys from a local family. Since then, I am privileged

to have confirmed Dayana, the mother, on Easter 2019. Miguel, the father, always kindly receives us, but has never committed to attending church or confirmation. We still include this family in our regular visits in the community. A couple of months ago while visiting them, Miguel broke down sobbing, confessing the need for Jesus in His family. Since then they have barely missed a Sunday. Miguel now wants catechesis to grow in faith and **to be able to receive the Lord's Supper** with his wife and church family. Praise God! Please keep this family in your prayers!

Fritsche Family Updates



The boys are doing well, and God continues to shower us with blessings. Viktor was able to travel with Joel in January and get his Texas **driver's** license, meet with an Army recruiter and take the

ASVAB. He was officially sworn into the US Army on March 16. He graduates from Wittenberg Academy in May and will report for basic training on August 1.

Sergei continues to study and do well at St. Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, MO. He works in the cafeteria, sings in the chorus, and runs cross country. We are excited for him to join us for the summer on May 14. It will be great to have the whole family together for one last summer.

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Mission Report Cayman Islands Rev. Dr. Gerald and Heidi Paul

[Excerpt from the April 2022 newsletter, for the entire issue see <https://mcusercontent.com/3573a0179fdb41755877e1d5/files/3626c13e-6851-c299-aea3-70165f27cb2a/April2022.pdf>]

Cruise ships return to Grand Cayman!

What a surprise when rounding the corner to the harbor one morning, to find a cruise liner filling up our field of vision! They bring excitement to the island.



Waterfront stores that had been shuttered for two years are open for business again, and little open-aired markets have sprung up to peddle their wares to rubber-necking tourists. The beaches are strewn with bodies of varying shades of pink and the waters are bobbing with snorkeled heads! Traffic has picked up, and restaurants and bars are bustling with way more activity than before.

Safe Harbour has even seen several couples join us for a Divine Service since the re-opening. All this is very exciting, and we look forward to what the next few months will hold in store for us all.

See the Insert for information on how you can support these missions.

Family Reunions in South Africa

We hadn't seen our families in three years!

Another sibling turned 70 and a few of our siblings recently had had major medical issues which prompted us to tackle the 14-hour trans-Atlantic flight to spend some quality time with them. Because our connecting flight from Cape Town to Durban had been canceled with all other flights fully booked for a week, we ended up renting a car and driving 17 hours, stopping in the Karoo **at Heidi's brother's farm for a nap, breakfast and a shower!** We spent two **wonderful days with Heidi's other three** brothers and their spouses on their farms in Paddock. Each one hosted us all for dinner those three nights – a recipe for good food and amazing catchup conversations! We also met our newest great-niece for the first time. We then drove 6 hours to Mahlalela, a wildlife **ranch where Gerald's 5** siblings with spouses got together for a family reunion. The three days there with them were amazing! Thanks be to God for family!

*~Your Partners in Mission,
Rev. Gerald and Heidi Paul*



Fritsche Report . . .

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Andrei is doing well; he had a great visit with the pediatric endocrinologist who continues to be impressed with his response to the growth hormone injections. He has grown 12½ inches since beginning treatment 3 years ago and has gained over 30 pounds.

~Pastor Joel and Deaconess Clarion Fritsche

Support Our Missions

Dominican Republic Ministry - Rev. Joel & Deaconess Clarion Fritsche

Send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Mission Central P.O. Box 66861
OR
40718 Highway E16 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—**Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Joel and Clarion Fritsche."**

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on the online giving page at <http://www.lcms.org/fritsche>.

Dominican Republic Seminary

Donate online: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support>.

By mail, make a check payable to Lutheran Church—**Missouri Synod, specify "Dominican Republic Seminary" in the memo line. Mail to:**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Mission Advancement
PO Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Cayman Islands Ministry - Rev. Dr. Gerald and Heidi Paul

Send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Mission Central P.O. Box 66861 OR 40718 Highway E16
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and marked **"Support of Gerald Paul."**

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on the online giving page <http://www.lcms.org/gerald.paul>.

Serving Immanuel May~June 2022

	Sunday May 1	Sunday May 8	Sunday May 15	Sunday May 22	Ascension Thursday May 26	Sunday May 29
Elder	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.	Ray T.
Usher Team	#1 Larry G. Gerald O. Max B.	#2 Steve H. Lane H. Robert B.	#3 Ray T. Cory S. Joe M.	#1 Larry G. Gerald O. Max B.	#2 Steve H. Lane H. Robert B.	#3 Ray T. Cory S. Joe M.
Media	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.	Jackie A.	Melissa T.	<i>No Media</i>	Barbara S.
Audio	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.
Altar Guild	Carolyn B. & Maria O.	Carolyn B. & Maria O.	Carolyn B. & Maria O.	Carolyn B. & Maria O.	Carolyn B. & Maria O.	Carolyn B. & Maria O.

	Sunday June 5	Sunday June 12	Sunday June 19	Sunday June 26
Elder	Phil N.	Phil N.	Phil N.	Phil N.
Usher Team	#1 Larry G. Gerald O. Max B.	#2 Steve H. Lane H. Robert B.	#3 Ray T. Cory S. Joe M.	#1 Larry G. Gerald O. Max B.
Media	Jackie A.	Melissa T.	Barbara S.	Jackie A.
Audio	Ray T.	Max B.	Gerald O.	Ray T.
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.

Immanuel Lutheran Church

May 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Usher Team #1</i> 1 <i>Installation</i> 9:00am Divine Service 11:00am Luncheon	2	3	4	5	6	7 9:00am Facility Rental (Gym)
<i>Mothers' Day</i> 8 <i>Usher Team #2</i> 9:00am Divine Service 10:30am Adult Bible Class & Sunday School	9	10 Church Council 7:00pm 7:30pm Facility Rental (Gym)	11 5:00pm Facility Usage (Gym)	12 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym)	13 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym)	14 9:00am Facility Rental (Gym) 2pm Facility Rental (Gym)
<i>Usher Team #3</i> 15 9:00am Divine Service 10:30am Adult Bible Class & Sunday School	16 7:00pm Bible Study	17 7:30pm Facility Rental (Gym)	18 5:00pm Facility Usage (Gym)	19 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym)	20 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym)	21 9:00am Facility Rental (Gym)
<i>Usher Team #1</i> 2 9:00am Divine Service 10:30am Adult Bible Class & Sunday School	23	24 7:30pm Facility Rental (Gym)	25 5:00pm Facility Usage (Gym)	26 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym) <i>Usher Team #2</i> 7:00pm Ascension Day Divine Service	27 6:00pm Facility Rental (Gym)	28 9:00am Facility Rental (Gym)
<i>Usher Team #3</i> 29 9:00am Divine Service <i>Social Ministry Door Offering</i> 10:30am Adult Bible Class & Sunday School	Memorial Day 	30 7:30pm Facility Rental (Gym)	31			