

# THE LINK

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

### **Facing our Fears with Faith and Joy in Christ**

Dear fellow redeemed,

As we cross the threshold of a new year, there is often a sense of relief as we leave our regrets and mistakes from the previous year behind. For Christians, this is especially true because we have real forgiveness and real separation from our sins and failures in the blood of Jesus. It is not just a feeling, but a reality through faith. As we read in Isaiah 38:17: *Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.*

We also may look forward in hope to what the new year will bring. A new girlfriend or boyfriend? A fiancé? A new job? A new addition to the family? Endless possibilities! Not everyone looks to the new year with joyful hope and anticipation, though. Many of us take that step into the new year with a bit of fear and trepidation. The question, "What will the new year bring" can be thought of in a negative sense, as in, "What mistakes and failures will I make THIS year?" or "What trials or calamities will come upon me this year?"

Fear is a many-headed serpent, to be sure. There are many sources and causes for fear in our lives. Here are just a few examples:

Fear of the unknown – Just the thought of not knowing what will happen in the future can create fear and anxiety in many people. This is especially true for those who have, by God's grace,

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**IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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broken the cycle of addiction or slavery to sin. Freedom can be a scary thing, even though it is far better than slavery.

### **Fear of Failure/Making mistakes**

Knowing that there will be regrets and failures can cause people to be fearful of trying new things or starting new projects. This can be a paralyzing fear, keeping us from achieving our full potential.

### **Fear of Illness**

For many people, fear of illness is something that they live with constantly. Especially if they have experienced severe illness in the past.

### **Fear of Forgiving Past Sins**

When we have been wronged, it can be very traumatic to let go of the other person's faults and sins against us, because we are afraid that if we forgive them, they will take that as a green light to repeat their actions. Or, we fear that they will think we no longer care. So, we hold on to their sins in our hearts as a way of controlling their behavior.

### **Fear of Financial Failure**

This is a fear that grips many people, believer and non-believer alike. After all, there are bills to pay, mouths to feed, repairs to be made, and on top of it all, we still have to save up for retirement! Many people step into the new year with fear of a business venture falling through or not being able to find a job.

### **Fear of the Fight**

We are, by nature, creatures who crave ease rather than pain and suffering. We crave the "path of least resistance." So, when it comes to fighting against our sinful nature, our natural inclination is to "just go with it" rather than to fight it. In fact, we fear the fight because it means that we have to admit that we are flawed human beings. So we rationalize our sins and pretend that we can indulge in them without damage to our faith or our relationship with God and others.

These are just a few examples of the fears that we carry with us into the new year. Perhaps you can relate to one (or more) of these fears. I certainly can! My heart is constantly afraid. Afraid to admit failure; afraid to change my habits; afraid to address this or that situation in the Church; afraid to approach someone about his or her sin; and the list could go on.

To those who live in fear for one reason or another, I offer the following words of counsel and consolation from holy Scripture. God's Word has much to say about fear and anxiety. Believing men and women of all times have struggled with doubt and fear, just as we do. But they found joy and comfort

in the God whose love is all-encompassing, who does not fail, as we see in the following verses:

### **Romans 8:15**

*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*

### **Psalm 27:1**

*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

### **Psalm 56:3-4**

*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?*

### **1 John 4:18**

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

Over and over again in the Scriptures we hear of the God who is our "helper." He is the one who knows us intimately, even down to the number of hairs on our heads. He has redeemed us from slavery to sin, made us His dear children in holy Baptism, and has become our heavenly Father. This does not mean that he will keep us from making mistakes or even from having a failing business. It does not mean that we can expect perfection in all that we do.

It does mean, however, that we will not be alone as we face our fears. God is with us! He came to us as true man and dwelt among us in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. And He also has made a home with us, abiding with us through faith in our hearts.

Whatever fears you may have to face in the coming year, know that God your heavenly Father will not abandon you or forsake you. And also remember that Jesus has gone ahead of you to the cross. Because of the joy of your salvation, He endured the pain and the affliction of the holy cross, so that your crosses and trials might be sanctified and beneficial for your faith. He has turned your sorrow into joy.

Let us, therefore, cast all our fear and anxiety on Him because He cares for us. Let us face our fears not with despair and hopelessness, but with faith and joy in Jesus Christ.

Happy New Year!  
*Pastor Beisel*

# BAPTISM, EXORCISM, & PEACE IN CHRIST

## IMMANUEL MEMBERS WHO ARE HOME- BOUND OR SHUT IN

### SCENIC MANOR

Mavis Klein,  
Dorothy Barhite,  
& Ruth Pekerak

### HERITAGE

Helen Neubauer,  
Kermit Neubauer,  
Kathryn Rankin,  
& Muriel  
Muessignmann

### AT HOME in IOWA FALLS

Edward Ites,  
Gary & Sharon  
Groff, & Roy  
Hammarmeister

### OUT OF TOWN

Audrey Fleener  
Box 112, Alden

Vera Duit  
306 4th St.,  
Williams 50271

Louise Heller  
Graham, TX

Dwight Rogers  
Veteran's Home,  
Marshalltown

Baptism and exorcism have always been historically connected. Such a statement may seem strange. Traditionally, Baptism is understood to be the action of God that brings faith to the individual. There are two texts that show the connection between Baptism and exorcism. The first text comes from the Gospel of John:

*[Jesus said,] "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die. So the crowd answered Him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." When Jesus had said these things, He departed and hid Himself from them. Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him (12:31:37).*

In this text, Jesus points to His own death upon the cross as an act of exorcism. This exorcism is a culmination of all the other exorcisms found within the New Testament Scriptures. It is the ultimate picture of the spiritual battle being waged upon the earth. At the cross, Jesus will cast out (exorcize) Satan. The accuser of men will lose his power because all sin is exonerated in Jesus' death. The prince of this world is cast off his throne by the One who dies in the place of all humanity upon the cross. When this text is added to our next text, its connection to Baptism will become clearer.

One of the most vivid New Testament texts concerning Baptism comes from the writings of St. Paul in Romans 6. Paul writes:

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (vv. 3-4).*

When St. John connects exorcism with the crucifixion, St. Paul links the exorcistic work of the crucifixion to Baptism. In Baptism, the individual is connected to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, thereby receiving freedom from the devil and his demons. In Romans 6:13-14, Paul concludes:

*Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

. . . Luther recognized that Jesus is the only exorcist and that only Jesus can dislodge Satan and his devils. Both the Lord's Prayer and the hymn declare this truth as they both recognize the ongoing work of Satan, while at the same time recognizing that he is a defeated foe who has no power over the children of God.

. . . In his book *Mission from the Cross*, Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz provides a definition of the Church, connecting it with Baptism and Jesus' crucifixion. Schulz writes:

"The visible signs of the Church, around which believers gather, form the spiritual life of a Christian community. Particularly in the context of a dominant heathen culture, the Sacraments ultimately serve as a barricade against the perpetual onslaught of non-Christian elements on the believers. The gifts that began to shape the life of the community in Baptism continue to strengthen the fellowship through the Sacrament of the Altar. The Church is a sacramental community living in alien and hostile situations, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper affirms her as that. The Church of Christ thus lives in and from the Sacraments."

Jesus is present through His Word and Sacraments. Through these gifts, He provides life, forgiveness, healing, and protection from the evil one. Jesus is the only exorcist. Humanity cannot defeat Satan or his demons by the use of mere words or rituals. Through the gifts of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the power of Jesus' Word is attached to the elements of water, bread, and wine, therefore connecting Jesus to the individual . . . Where there is the forgiveness of sins, Satan has lost his stronghold, and peace is found (Acts 26:17-18).

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Excerpted from  
*Afraid: Demon  
Possession and  
Spiritual Warfare in  
America* by  
Robert H. Bennett,  
CPH, 2016;  
114-120.

## **DURING YOUR FALL CLEANING...**

PLEASE SET ASIDE CLOTHING,  
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, DECOR,  
AND MORE FOR IMMANUEL'S  
SPRING RUMMAGE SALE.  
ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO  
THE **CAMP IO-DIS-E-CA**  
**SCHOLARSHIP FUND.**



THANK YOU FROM THE  
BOARD OF EVANGELISM

**LADIES' BIBLE CLASS  
TUESDAYS AT 9 A.M.**

**EARLY RISER'S  
BIBLE CLASS  
WEDNESDAYS AT 7:45 A.M.**

**INSTALLATION OF CHURCH  
OFFICERS DURING THE SERVICE  
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 5.**

*On January 16, the Voting  
Assembly will vote on a  
Constitutional change for the  
term of congregational treasurer.  
(See wording of change in  
December newsletter.)*

## **BOOK STUDY**

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 16 ,  
WE WILL CONTINUE THE STUDY

**READING ROMANS  
WITH LUTHER.**

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE COFFEE ATTIC  
AT 10:30 A.M.

## **THE EPIPHANY: WISE MEN STILL SEEK JESUS THE CHRIST**



**VOTER'S ASSEMBLY**  
JANUARY 16  
7:00 P.M.

**ADULT BIBLE CLASS**  
**SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 8:45**  
**"JOYFULLY LUTHERAN"**  
NOT PIE-IN-THE-SKY  
MAKE-BELIEVE JOY... BUT REAL JOY!  
NOT PRETENDING I'M OK, SMILE-ALL-THE-  
TIME JOY, BUT JOY IN JESUS!

# JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

1 THESS 5:16-24

## DOES "JOYFULLY LUTHERAN" MEAN I HAVE TO SMILE ALL THE TIME?

Many people shy away from the Church because they perceive Christians as fake and hypocritical. Being joyful does not mean being happy all the time. Nor does it mean pretending you are always okay. Joy can exist amid sorrow and struggle. Honesty about our struggle with sin and its effects in our lives drives us to the One who can and will aid in every trial and temptation, our Lord Jesus Christ. His love and His promises are our joy, even when happiness may remain beyond our grasp. Find out more at [joyfullylutheran.org](http://joyfullylutheran.org).

THANK YOU TO THE TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS, MUSICIANS, AND ALL WHO HELPED MAKE THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE THE "OH HOLY NIGHT" IT WAS! **WE ESPECIALLY THANK MARGARET WOSEPKA FOR HER FAITHFUL AND SELFLESS LABOR IN PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER.**



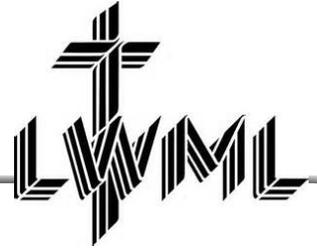
Announcements, current news, links to articles, prayers, and Words of Scripture are regularly posted on the Facebook page of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. If you would like to be part of this "group" page, please notify Linda Bartlett.

# BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Joslyn Lubbers
- 2 Maison Warschkow
- 2 Andrew Bartlett
- 4 Laura Thies
- 5 Kathy Dougan
- 9 Jean O'Malia
- 10 Marlene Carr
- 12 Amy Beisel
- 14 Michael Beaupain
- 14 Jesse Ostheimer
- 15 Paul Irwin
- 19 Alice Herrold
- 20 Kurt Kasischke
- 21 Lisette Pieper
- 21 LaVelle Richmann
- 22 Mike Aldinger
- 24 Shirley Baumann
- 29 Muriel Muessignmann
- 31 Norman Fiddelke

# ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 Jerry & Jean O'Malia
- 19 Michael & Dixie Beaupain



## LWML

### Assignments

**Altar:** Christy Brinkley,  
Teresa Windelow

**Coffee:** Margaret Wosepka

### Rebekah Circle

**Thursday, January 2 - 1:30**

Topic: Floris Beisel

Hostess: Carolyn Eness

### Thriftshop

9:45 a.m. Friday, January 10

9:45 a.m. Saturday, January 11

## Greeters

- 5 Janet Lambertsen,  
Marilyn Kinney
- 12 Ron & Carol Warschkow
- 19 Brian Balvanz
- 19 Marlyn & Linda Balvanz
- 26 Bruce & Laura Thies

## Welcomers

Steve & Sandi Ites  
Bruce & Charisse Off  
Rick & Kathy Silvest

## Videotapers

- 5 Scott Wosepka
- 12 Jon Bartlett
- 19 Gene Ritland
- 26 Jaden Bartlett

## Video Showing

- 5 Gene Ritland
- 15 Lance Barhite
- 22 Earl Fey
- 29 Gene Ritland



## ACOLYTES

- 5 Collin Pieper
- 12 Ben Hoekstra, Crucifer
- 12 Andrew Bartlett,  
Torchbearer & Acolyte
- 12 Will Hofmeister, Torchbearer
- 19 Zach Rodamaker
- 26 Kyler Patton

## ELDER

Marlyn Hofmeister

*The people that in darkness sat  
A glorious light have seen;  
The light has shined on them who long  
In shades of death have been.*

*Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,  
And make us Thine alone,  
Who with the Father ever art  
And Holy Spirit, one.*

LSB 412:1, 6

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