

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER



MAY 2025
Volume 39, Issue 8



From Your Pastor

I'm sure you have noticed there is a great deal of discouraging news that floods into our lives. While there are, indeed, many problems in our world, our nation, and our own personal lives which threaten to overwhelm us and drive us to despair, shall we not still respond to every threat to our peace in faith? Yes, in faith, for our faith is in our great Savior, Jesus, who "upholds the universe by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3), our Savior who "works all things according to the counsel of His will . . . so that we . . . might be to the praise of His glory"? (Eph. 1:11-12). In every trouble the Holy Spirit calls to us that God is for us, and, "if God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32). The prophet Habakkuk, in the face of a tremendously uncertain and troubling future proclaimed the truth that God's people can not only face troubles with faith, but also with joy! Habakkuk said, "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vine, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the deer's; He makes me tread on my high places" (3:17-19). Surely, Habakkuk's encouragement to faith and joy resounds in the words of St. Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:4-5).

One of my favorite sights on the farm, one of my fondest memories, is when we would let the calves out from their stalls in the barn and onto the pasture for the first time in the spring of the year. Now, these calves had been born through the late fall and winter and had never been "set loose" on fresh dirt and green grass in their young lives! They would run and jump and into the air! They would "beller" and run just as fast as they could

with their tails high in the air! What joy!

You know what, when God's people encounter the amazing grace and working of God in the Bible, they run for joy! The waiting father in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son saw his "lost" son returning on the road and ran to meet him with a heart so filled with joy it must have almost burst! A sinner named Zachaeus heard Jesus was coming and he "ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Him" (Luke 19:4). The women "departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples" that He had risen from the dead (Matt. 28:8)! But Jesus' parable of the prodigal son provides the grandest sprint ever recorded. It unveils for us the heart of God the Father in Christ Jesus our Savior. Our God rejoices over sinners—like you and me—and sprints to show it!

Martin Luther wrote about our faith and joy, no matter what our troubles in this way: "'He [The Lord] will rejoice over you with gladness' (Zeph. 3:17). All these things signify that their consciences would experience that fatherly sweetness of the kingdom of the Lord. The sense is this: You will feel in your conscience that the Lord is kindly disposed toward you, that He surely is a kind Father to you in all things. You see the Lord is said to rejoice over us when He causes us to sense His favor. . . . For thus it happens to the righteous that He allows them to be attacked . . . in various ways, and to be troubled by many evils, so that they may be conformed to their King. Yet He adds that feeling of joy, that security of heart, so that all things may become sweeter, so that nothing can separate them from the love of God" (Romans 8:39).

My brothers and sisters, allow our Lord Jesus to fill your heart with faith and joy! Rejoice in the Lord always!

Your fellow-servant for Christ,

Pastor Mahnken



May 1.....	Barb Ernst Ryan Morgan
May 3.....	Brittany Rogers
May 4.....	Jason Voss
May 5.....	Karsen Bruhn Nathan Teut
May 7.....	Destry Beeck Jolene Streck
May 9.....	Josie Bekkerus
May 10.....	Vern Wood
May 11.....	Ashley O'Brien Keith Petersen Christina Riessen Delores Schultz (91)
May 12.....	Theodore Cruz
May 14.....	Cathy Bubke
May 15.....	Tanner Schultz
May 16.....	Kayla Miller
May 17.....	Eli Rohlf
May 18.....	Damon Schultz
May 19.....	Tim Bubke Brad Detlefsen Jennifer Doxsey
May 20.....	Hadley Nahnsen Mitch Schwarz
May 21.....	James Hill Jamie Jepsen Brandon Meseck
May 22.....	Kay Wilken
May 24.....	Austin Aldag
May 25.....	Mark Beeck Mike Beeck Brandon Wigg
May 26.....	Austin Korner Ian Weber
May 27.....	Melanie Hargens Abigail Schmidt
May 28.....	Kara Harm Kelsi Jepsen Nakia Zavitz
May 29.....	Jaden Petersen
May 30.....	Jac Friedrichsen Gene Haberberger
May 31.....	Stacy Jepsen Sarah Vandevanter



Jerod & Kim Petersen.....	May 9, 1992
Dave & Jac Friedrichsen.....	May 13, 1972
Doug & Christi Fredericks.....	May 16, 1996
Rev. Steve & Susan Schulz.....	May 16, 1987
Zachary & Rebecca Rohlf.....	May 22, 2010
Trevis & Laura Beeck.....	May 26, 1990
DeWayne & Denice Schultz.....	May 29, 1972

Please notify the office of any omissions or corrections.

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Pastor Mahnken will be starting an adult confirmation class, beginning sometime in May. If you or someone you know are interested in becoming communicant members of Immanuel, please contact Pastor Mahnken.

The class consists of 11 sessions. The length of each session is 90 minutes or less.

The dates and times of the classes will be flexible to meet the needs of those attending.

We use Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation for our classes, so this is an excellent opportunity for those who are already members to review the main teachings of Biblical truth given to save us & guide us in following Jesus our Savior!

Vacation Bible School is Coming!

Sessions for children that just completed
Preschool-6th Grade



Sunday-Thursday
July 13-17

This summer, we're going on an *epic* adventure through Australia, and you're invited! We'll encounter amazing animals, lush landscapes, stunning sea life, and wondrous wilderness.

And most importantly, we'll be guided by our Savior, Jesus, who tells us, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" in our theme verse, John 14:6.



Calling All Ladies for a Saturday morning time to study the Life of Joseph and Romans 8:28!

We will meet May 3rd in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00-11:00 am. Coffee and rolls will be provided. The study will be led by Peggy Wunschel. Hope to see you there!

CONGRATULATIONS!



Immanuel's 2025 High School graduates will be honored at a reception on Sunday, May 4 following 9 a.m. worship.

Everyone is invited to enjoy donuts and juice and greet our graduates: Kamden Bruhn, Josie Jepsen and Savannah Steinkuehler.



MOVING VETERANS FORWARD: From now until May 31 the Schleswig VFW Auxiliary will be collecting donations to help the *Moving Veterans Forward* project. Donation boxes have been placed in United Bank of Iowa, Bank Iowa, KCK's and Dollar General. We appreciate anything you can help us with. Some items needed are: new socks, new t-shirts, razors, shampoo, hygiene products, TP, Swiffer cleaning products, detergent, Comet, toilet bowl cleaners, trash cans, mops, brooms, dust pans, pizza pans, pizza cutters, pots & pans, crockpots, toasters, 7-inch electric skillets, mixers—just about anything—just no furniture. Gently used items will be accepted. Thank you for helping our Veterans!!



As You Spring Clean ...



Please consider donating any unwanted items to our church garage sale held in conjunction with Schleswig City-wide Garage Sales May 29, 30 and 31. The proceeds help support our Mission projects.

Items can be brought to the church garage between May 15 and May 28. We are grateful for your support!

~The Mission Board

SPECIAL ASCENSION SERVICE



At Mission Central on
May 29, 2025.

5:00 p.m. Meal

6:30 p.m. Worship

What a JOY and BLESSING to have the privilege of having Pastor James Sharp, our newest missionary to Puerto Rico, as our guest speaker for the Ascension Worship Service at Mission Central on May 29th, 2025!

A wonderful meal will be provided at 5:00 pm and then Rev. Sharp will have a very, very special message for everyone, sharing the exciting work that our Lord Jesus is doing in the mission fields of Latin America.

Please mark your calendar for this special event at the world-famous Mission Central just 2 miles east of Mapleton, Iowa. It will change your life and it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to hear these amazing stories from the Lord's mission field.

Collecting Pill Bottles Reminder



Only washed prescription bottles with the labels off and no residue left on the bottles will be collected. They are no longer taking over the counter bottles, like vitamin, aspirin etc. Recycle those and the prescription ones that the residue won't come off. Thanks for saving and bringing the washed, residue free prescription bottles.

Monthly Food Distribution in Mapleton



The monthly food distribution in Mapleton has been re-established. Distributions will occur the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. The next distribution will be Wednesday, May 14, at the Harvey Hanson Memorial Open Cupboard, located in the Mapleton Community Center, 511 Main Street. Food may be picked up on the east side of the community center by parking in the alleyway. You may only pickup food for the household in which you reside, not for anyone else. They are open to volunteers ages 18 and over. For more information call 712-267-0056 or email hmmopencupboard@gmail.com.

~ THE LWML INVITES ALL LADIES ~



We enjoyed a little “Springtime” at our April meeting with tulips decorating our tables, thanks to Cheryl and Marlene.

We also were reminded that our Spring LWML Rally will be on April 24th at St. John’s, Kiron. It is hosted by St. John’s and Faith Lutheran, Deloit. The speaker will be Jarryn Wiley-Pearce, director of Christian education at Our Savior Lutheran. Registration begins at 9 AM.

Peggy shared information on the upcoming National LWML Convention being held in Omaha June 26-29.

Becky and Marlene reported on the past month’s visits they made to Immanuel members in care facilities.

We concluded our afternoon with dessert, a time of fellowship, and preparing Easter cards for several Immanuel members.

Donna Harm, Secretary

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Join us at Heritage Heights Senior Living Apartments!

Looking for worry-free living at an affordable cost? Consider our low income apartments at Heritage Heights. On top of the stress free lifestyle, enjoy the cost savings! Heritage Heights apartments are income based, helping you to stay within your means while living in a relaxing and social setting.

Find out more at (712) 263-6631
118 South 20th Street, Denison



Here, for the members of Immanuel, is a bit of info regarding the many activities of the LWML in your church. LWML stands for Lutheran Women’s Missionary League—except we do more than missions.

For starters, we have donated over \$600 to state and district conventions, have collected over 650 pounds of clothing for Orphan Grain Train and some members have sorted and put in hours working at the Ida Grove location. To Immanuel’s Preschool we have given graduation and Christmas gifts to the students and gifts to the graduating seniors of our congregation.

We have given cash donations to support two seminary students at Concordia University, St. Louise, and Unity Ridge Lutheran School at Denison. Organizations outside the church, Gracewell Lutheran Nursing Home, Mission Central, Camp Okoboji, St. John’s Lutheran Church in Kiron, Lutheran Family Services, and Crawford County Crossroads have received over \$2,000 in donations.

Within our congregation we have purchased chairs for the Sunday School rooms, a computer for the church library, and tables for the Fellowship Hall, totaling \$3,200.

Other miscellaneous donations involving LWML members are 49 quilts and lap robes for those in need. And eyeglasses, ink jet cartridges, and empty pill bottles to St. John’s, Kiron, for their mission goals.

The hours worked include quilting, visiting shut-ins, nursing homes, Silveridge, and Heritage House, Vacation Bible School and Sunday School. Activities both in church and outside our church total over 1,500 hours (not even close) and they are hours given freely. (As you can see, we are not just hostesses at funerals.)

In recent years, the Project Committee handled the Sub Sandwich sales, Moving Vets Forward, the Veteran’s Appreciation Meal, the Octoberfest Meal (that experienced a city-wide power failure), supplies to the Siouxland Women’s Shelter.

We have been so blessed with the support of the members of this congregation and it is hoped that by reading this article you can see that we work willingly and often joyfully and we have FUN. If there is anyone young, old, married or single that would like to join this group, we will welcome you — think about it!

Do you recall the mite box in the narthex of our church on select Sundays? That is another story.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
Voter's Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry Riessen with 28 members present.

I. Opening Devotion and Prayer

Pastor opened the meeting asking us to have a productive meeting. He also discussed how many critics of the church question the accuracy of The New Testament.

II. Reading/Approval of Minutes and Agenda

The minutes from the January 12 Voters' meeting were shared and approved by the voters.

III. Reports of Officers and Boards

A. Elders (Curtis Korner)

Elders continue to seek out the delinquent members and contact them. If you know anyone who is delinquent, please reach out to them, encourage them, and pray for them. Kent Bornoff's second term ends at the end of 2025. Curtis Korner's second term ends at the end of 2026. Pastor Mahnken has announced that he will retire at the end of 2026.

B. Trustees (Ryan Ernst)

Welcome aboard to the new trustees, Zach Bielenberg and Bruce Paulsen. A ceiling fan was removed and for a variety of reasons, a new one will not be installed. Thanks to Dave Friedrichsen who fixed a water leak. There are leaks in the roof on the west end of the church as well as around one of the windows. An exterminator will need to be hired to treat the church for Asian beetles and boxelder bugs. Orchid Cleaning from Carroll has been hired to replace Jolene Whiting. There is an issue with the furnace in the narthex. Candle soot is still a problem in the church. A quote is being sought for air duct cleaning in the church. Carpeting and flooring quotes are being sought.

C. Treasurer/Stewardship/Finance (Larry Abbe)

Immanuel is currently ahead \$21.77 for 2025. Jodi Lorenzen has been hired to replace Val Teut as one of Immanuel's secretaries.

D. Education/Youth (Deb Green)

Deb reported that there was a meeting with the Prayer Team dinner held. A Passover Seder meal for Lenten service was held. 60 signed up but 80 attended! VBS materials have been ordered.

E. Preschool (Larry Abbe)

The Preschool held a carnival for a fundraiser. 210 steak sandwiches were served in addition to a lot of hot dogs.

F. Mission/Fellowship (Chris Mahnken)

Thanks to those who supported the Soup Dinner, the Lenten meal, and the upcoming garage sale in May.

G. Memorial Committee (Lodean Voss)

Lodean shared the drinking fountain/filling station has been installed and that new chairs for the Fireside Room will be ordered.

H. Pastor's Report (Pastor Mahnken)

The bulk of Pastor's report such as church data and statistics will be available elsewhere in this edition of The Immanuel Messenger. Pastor spent considerable time discussing the Persecuted Church. Incidents of a church bombing in Indonesia in addition to Islamic persecution of Christians in Kenya and Algeria were shared. Please pray for these people to remain strong despite the daily challengers to their faith! The annual Ascension Day celebration service will be held at Mission Central on May 29. A meal will be served at 5:00 and the service will be held at 6:30. Missionary James Sharp will be speaking that evening.

IV. Old Business

A. New Constitution for Immanuel

Pastor has kicked off the process of revamping Immanuel's Constitution. It will be pruned down and streamlined. A policy manual will be created to accompany the Constitution. Constitutions are hard to amend and adjust whereas policy manuals are easier to make changes to. Sandy Bubke and Nancy Bielenberg are assisting in this endeavor.

Pastor also discussed the text of Philippians 1:9-11 which expresses Paul's prayer for the Philippians: *that their love may grow with knowledge and discernment, enabling them to discern what is excellent and be pure and blameless*. He prays that they be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Pastor encouraged us to do the same for fellow members of Immanuel.

V. New Business

A. Request Voters for Subsidy from Home Mission Fund (\$175) to assist in covering the cost of the meal at the Ascension Day Service at Mission Central. All the congregations of the Denison and Mapleton Circuits are asked to contribute.

Since there was not a quorum, the donation will be made because of Council approval with no vote being held.

VI. Adjourn With Prayer

~Submitted by Craig Bogatzke, Secretary

"Everyone should be eager to advance the teaching and study of the Word for his own salvation and the glory of God."
Martin Luther

Pastor Mahnken's Report Voters' Meeting—April 13, 2025

We began 2025 with 615 baptized members and 515 communicant members on the books. In 2025 two of our members died—Lainey Naberhaus and Bernie Petersen. Four members were added by baptism; the Naberhaus twins were baptized by a hospital chaplain. We have transferred one communicant member to another LCMS congregation. As of today we have 615 baptized members and 513 communicant members on our roll.

Our average attendance to date is 142.2; a year ago it was 147.8. Our average Midweek Lent attendance for the Wednesdays when weather was not a factor averaged 75.3; last year it was 73.

I want to thank especially those who prepared and served our Lent suppers. It takes extra work and it is a blessed service. I want to especially thank Angela Korner and Nancy Bielenberg for their service in preparing and serving our Passover Seder meal. I make special note of their service because of the many hours of planning and preparation. Many others helped and we are thankful for them all. It was a very special evening. We had not held a Passover Seder for 14 years.

I also want to thank all our members who volunteered for our Preschool's fundraiser this past Thursday late afternoon and evening. It takes many people to pull off such a special event. We especially thank our merciful Father in heaven for giving us spectacularly beautiful weather. Considering the wind yesterday, the event would probably have been canceled. Such an event not only aids our Preschool but it gives us all greater visibility in our communities.

I have been encouraged by the attendance of our Young Adults & High School Bible Studies. We have been viewing and reviewing the video series, *Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith To be An Atheist* by Dr. Frank Turek. The series addresses four major questions: 1) Does Truth Exist? 2) Does God Exist? 3) Are Miracles Possible? 4) Is the New Testament True? The series provides valuable insights in helping us as Christians to defend the unfounded criticisms of our Christian faith and worldview. We spend quite a bit of time examining Divine Design as the origin of all things and how it supports the Biblical view of Creation over against the Theory of Evolution and a solid examination of support for the accuracy of our New Testament text over against criticisms of its unreliability.

Please make plans to join us for our Ascension Day worship at Mission Central. We have supper at 5 p.m. in the Ministry Center. The service begins at 6:30 p.m. in the barn. Preacher for the service will be Pastor James Sharp, who is now a missionary serving in Puerto Rico, after serving many years in Uruguay.

Our Iowa District West Convention will be held June 8-10 at Camp Okobojo. Leroy Hight will be our voting, lay delegate and will join me. The theme of the convention will be *One Generation Commends Your Mighty Acts to Another*, based on Psalm 145:4-7. Our congregation's costs have been significantly reduced as an Immanuel family is graciously allowing us to stay at their lake home while we are at the convention.

I encourage you to support the Staley's drive-through fundraiser by Unity Ridge Lutheran School in Denison on Thursday, April 24. Serving will be from 4:30-7 p.m.; \$13/person.

Zion Lutheran Church in Denison will have a call meeting on Sunday, April 27. Please pray the Lord to mercifully send a new shepherd for Zion. By the end of April it will be a year since Pastor Bill Wrede, their Intentional Interim Pastor moved on from Zion. Continue to pray also for our Lord to call more men into the pastoral ministry and more men and women into all areas of full-time church work. We are desperately short of workers.

Finally, I ask that you please continue to pray the Lord would bless us with the working of His Holy Spirit through His Word—all of us, no matter what our age. Pray for your spouse, pray for your children and grandchildren, pray for one another as fellow members of Immanuel, and pray for those you know who do not have saving faith. Pray as St. Paul prays in Philippians 1:9-11, *"This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."* This is another wonderful example of how we can take a prayer found in the Bible and easily adapt it for use in our own prayers.

Chris and I thank you for your prayers on our behalf. We continue to pray for us all.

Passover Seder

On April 9 we held a Passover Seder Meal and Lenten service. We had over 80 in attendance! Thanks to all those who helped prepare for this special time of service.



From Your library . . .
“Have we got a book for you!”



Capture The Wind For Me by Brandilyn Collins

After her mama's death, sixteen year old Jackie Delham is left to run a household for her daddy and her two younger siblings, Robert and Clarissa. When Katherine King comes back to Bradyville and tries to steal her daddy's heart, she knows she has to put a stop to it. She knows Katherine can't be trusted. Jackie knows no one can take her mother's place, especially Katherine.

When Jackie falls into her own love, how can she deny her daddy the happiness she now feels? Katherine's past holds many secrets, she also learns her daddy had some mistakes in his early life also.

God's promise unfolds, He can turn the most devastating mistakes into victory. He allows the wind of the past to blow us into the wisdom of our future.

This is another one of our books that has never been checked out. There is a lot of good reading on our library shelves. Enjoy!

—Submitted by Carol Neddermeyer



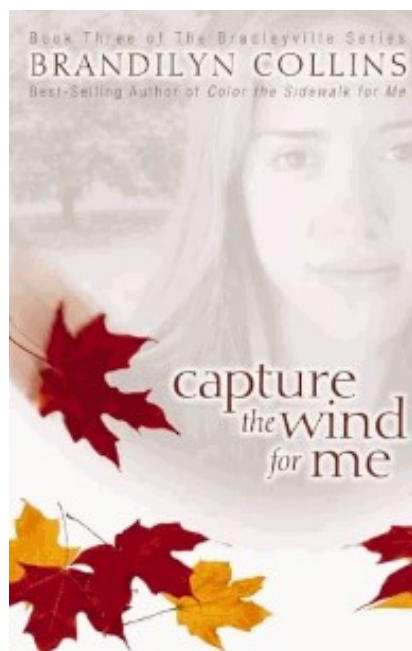
THANK YOU to everyone who joined us for our annual Sr. LYF Easter breakfast.

We served over 125 this year and enjoyed the fellowship that the morning provided as we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord. Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



above: several, but not all, of our Sr. LYF members that were up bright and early ready to serve breakfast.

right: Brody found Pastor's apron.





I can hardly believe I am preparing the students for our end of the year goodbyes. The afternoon class has grown and matured and are almost ready to move on to the next step of their educational journey. We are officially under a month until summer nights filled with chores, t-ball games, soccer, and chasing fireflies are upon us. I know we're hearing a bit of spring fever in the volume and enthusiasm (which is very common in April) of the children. I can't blame them. We are all up later and excited with the fresh air and new life budding around us.

I want to begin by saying thank you. The support from the congregation and community for our fundraiser was amazing! I haven't heard a final total of funds raised for the preschool, but I know it was so well supported we ran out of steaks! As I walked through the parking lot that evening and had the joy of engaging with current families, future families, and past families my heart was filled with joy. What a blessing to see all the lives God has sprinkled His love into. The corner was filled with kids on bicycles who had come to check things out and the weather was perfect. God's love is so incredibly vast that He even gives us nights where He fills our bucket just because. If you assisted by volunteering, eating supper, or praying for the evening, thank you, thank you, thank you. You are a blessing!

Preschool will host their graduation on May 14 @ 6:00 p.m. Please pray for your students as they make the transition into TK or Kindergarten. Also, as the Lord prompts you, prayers would be appreciated for our incoming students. A large majority joined us for Open House last Friday and then got to enjoy the carnival. I am hopeful they won't be disappointed in the fall when they arrive and there are no bouncy houses in the yard!

I pray you will each have an amazing summer spent cherishing the gift of God's love. I would encourage you to slow down long enough to watch a sunset, hang out at the ball field, or smell the corn grow. Life is full of blessings. God is constantly revealing His heart of love for us. We need to only ask for the eyes to see and the ears to hear as He does it.

Thank you for allowing me to serve Him with you,
Mrs. Gustafson

Immanuel Lutheran Preschool is now accepting registrations for the 2025-26 school year. If you know of anyone interested in enrolling their child, please have them email Mrs. Gustafson at lesliegustafson@schleswig.k12.ia.us or call the Church Office 712-676-2235.



Would you love to be a part of helping children grow in their faith? Come join our team!

Immanuel Lutheran Preschool is accepting applications for a part-time associate for the 2025-2026 school year. Please contact the Church Office or text Leslie at 712-854-0104 with any questions.



For over 124 springs, people like you have answered the call of the Lord to serve His children in partnership with Lutheran Family Service. This spring, LFS is responding to the needs expressed by more pastors and churches, as we prepare to **Go & Grow** by increasing our ministry of counseling, support, and love in new states and communities.

The Spring 2025 Grow & Go Challenge

You love your pastor, and so do we! Today, we invite you to join us in a fun way to show your support for him, as you partner with LFS to grow our network of care to your neighbors. We will present your pastor with a giftcard for a night out when at least 10 new partners from your church step up between May 1 and June 30, and each make a gift of at least \$10 to support those in need who are served by LFS.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City & State: _____

☐ Count me in as one of the 10 new partners from my congregation!

Church Name, City, State: _____

☐ Keep me informed about how LFS is Growing in my area!

Here's my email: _____

My gift to enable LFS, and those they serve, to **Grow & Go**: \$ _____

Please include cash or check with this paper in your offering plate.

or three ways to partner online!



Network
for Good.



venmo



PayPal



Come join us for

VOLUNTEER WEEKEND May 2 & 3:

An opportunity to share your time and talents to assist in preparing Camp for the summer. Room and board provided for volunteers! Please contact the office, 712-337-3325 for lodging arrangements and sign up to help.

THANK YOU to volunteers and groups who give so generously of their time and talents in serving Camp Okobojo. A BIG thanks to a wonderful group of students from Concordia University, Nebraska for staying with us and spending part of their time with us volunteering around Camp to help get us ready for the upcoming events!

HELP WANTED AT CAMP

- **Discipleship Director:** We are looking for our next Discipleship Director. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please have them contact Adam—adam.campokobojo@gmail.com or call 469-964-8165.
- **Medical Staff:** Preferable an LPM or RN; must be able to dispense meds and administer first aid, have malpractice insurance and be able to use the computer program connected with the camp software "CircuiTree." While this is a volunteer position, meals and lodging will be provided. A small stipend is negotiable to cover your expenses.

Important dates to remember:

Volunteer Work Weekend – May 2-3

Kids Camp – May 30-June 1

Camp Okobojo Quilt Auction – Saturday, June 14-
 Craft Fair & Lunch 11 am – free will donation,
 Auction starts at 12:30 pm.

Some pictures from the Preschool Carnival held Friday, April 11.



Sacrificial, Unconditional, Incarnational: A Biblical View of Marriage

By Pastor Todd Biermann

I recently began a wedding sermon addressing the couple, “Your marriage is going to be tough! It’s going to be filled with conflict and suffering and sorrow and pain. And, if you do it right, you’ll eventually get to watch each other get old, have more pain, carry more grief and watch each other move toward death.”

Their eyes got as big as saucers, and their huge smiles started to waver. I paused for a bit with a very serious look on my face, because it is all, sadly, true. I then continued, “*However*, you’re about to enter one of the most beautiful experiences you can ever have on earth. You’ll have glimpses of heaven that most will never see. You’ll delight in the love of Jesus overflowing to you from your spouse. When you fall, you’ll have each other to speak words of forgiveness and renewal. Your joy will grow and overflow to everyone. And I can say this with certainty.”

Is there such a thing as a perfect marriage? Absolutely! The marriage between Jesus and His Bride, the church. At least it is perfect from the side of the husband. And it is also perfect in that He forgives the faults of His Bride to make her perfect too. That is what St. Paul is talking about in Ephesians 5:32: “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

Jesus has claimed all Christians collectively as His beloved Bride. He has loved us with perfect love. In Genesis 2:24, the Lord said of this newly created union, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Jesus reinforced this as the perfect way for marriage by quoting Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:5 (see also Mark 10:7). The perfect love described in this key passage is sacrificial, unconditional and incarnational. To “leave his father and his mother” requires great sacrifice of selfish desire. To “hold fast to his wife” requires a husband to make an unconditional choice to never break the commitment of love. To “become one flesh” requires a union of the flesh that is uniquely incarnational and possible between one man and one woman.

We look to Jesus, the perfect husband, as the illustration of such love. Jesus showed perfect sacrificial love for us as He left His Father to offer Himself as the complete sacrifice for our sin on the cross. He passed through hell so we will never have to go there. Jesus shows perfect unconditional love as He chooses to forgive us again and again even though we regularly play the unfaithful bride. Jesus shows us perfect incarnational love in a way that surpasses the sexual union. He gives us His body and blood to touch, taste and ingest in His Supper on a

regular basis. It unites us in an intimacy that bridges heaven and earth.

When one man and one woman unite in marriage following the model of Jesus and His Bride, they approach the bliss of a perfect relationship. Jesus empowers His forgiven children to live in His kind of love. He commands in John 13:34, “Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

The first part of such love is beheld when both husband and wife sacrifice their own selfish desires for the good of the other. They are willing to die for one another. And, even more difficult, they give up their own life for each other on a daily basis.

The second part of such love is enjoyed over the long haul as both man and wife choose to stick to their marriage vow unconditionally, “till death us do part.” No running away for greener pastures when fire burns across the meadow. Instead, there is the eager anticipation of new life sprouting from the ashes. The final part of such love is manifest when a husband and wife care for each other incarnationally in every aspect of that word. They touch, eat, sleep, intimately unite as one, care in times of illness, kneel at the Lord’s Table and grow in a oneness of flesh that only Christ can give. As a couple grows in showing these three parts of love taught by Jesus, they grow in a deep joy that the world cannot give. They catch a beautiful glimpse of Jesus and heaven in each other.

This points to another aspect of the joy that comes to a married couple living out the sacrificial, unconditional and incarnational love of Jesus. They are a living witness of Jesus and His Bride for all the world to see. Even when they fail, they are able to point to Jesus. As they confess to one another and grant each other forgiveness in the name of Jesus, they receive new life that overflows in exuberant joy. Such reconciliation by Jesus’ power is a beautiful witness to the world. When a married couple lives together in this forgiveness, they fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in a way that will impact those who know them. Their living, lasting, authentic love will draw others. And their joy grows as they share the perfect love of Jesus with all who ask, “How can your marriage be so great?”

Back to my wedding sermon. What you have just read is what I reviewed with that couple and their guests. As I spoke about the perfect love of Jesus that would flow into and through them, their worried eyes ignited with Holy Spirit fire. Their nervous smiles for the day were transformed into joyous smiles for the life that lay ahead. That is the confident beauty of marriage in God’s way.

This article originally appeared in the January 2022 issue of The Lutheran Witness. The Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann serves Faith Lutheran Church, Grand Blanc, Mich.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div><div>Preschool</div><div>Mon., Tues., Thurs.: 8 a.m.—3 p.m. Wed.: 11:45 a.m.—3 p.m.</div><div>Confirmation</div><div>5th & 6th grade: 3:30 p.m.—5:15 p.m. 7th & 8th grade: 6:30 p.m.—8:15 p.m.</div></div>			<div>June</div> <div><div>S</div><div>M</div><div>T</div><div>W</div><div>T</div><div>F</div><div>S</div></div> <div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div><div>4</div><div>5</div><div>6</div><div>7</div></div> <div><div>8</div><div>9</div><div>10</div><div>11</div><div>12</div><div>13</div><div>14</div></div> <div><div>15</div><div>16</div><div>17</div><div>18</div><div>19</div><div>20</div><div>21</div></div> <div><div>22</div><div>23</div><div>24</div><div>25</div><div>26</div><div>27</div><div>28</div></div> <div><div>29</div><div>30</div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div>1 <i>National Day of Prayer</i></div> <div>9 a.m.—9 p.m. Church open</div> <div>Preschool</div> <div>1:30 p.m. LWML</div> <div>6:30 pm Bible Study</div> <div></div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div> <div>9 a.m.—11 a.m. Ladies Bible Study</div> <div>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</div>
<div>4</div> <div>9 a.m. Worship w/HC 10:15 SS & BC</div> <div>10:15 Graduate Reception</div> <div>1 p.m. Schleswig Sharks 4-H</div>	<div>5</div> <div>Preschool</div>	<div>6</div> <div>Preschool</div>	<div>7</div> <div>No Bible Study</div> <div>p.m. Preschool</div> <div>Confirmation</div>	<div>8</div> <div>Pastor @ IDW Board of Directors in Fort Dodge</div> <div>Preschool</div> <div>9 a.m. Quilting</div> <div>6:30 pm Bible Study</div>	<div>9</div>	<div>10</div> <div>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</div>
<div>11 <i>Mother's Day</i></div> <div>9 a.m. Worship 10:15 SS & BC</div> <div></div>	<div>12</div> <div>Preschool</div>	<div>13</div> <div>Preschool</div> <div>8 a.m. Pastors' Conference @ Our Savior</div>	<div>14</div> <div>6:30 Bible Study</div> <div>Confirmation</div> <div>6:00 p.m. Preschool Graduation</div>	<div>15 <i>Peace Officers Memorial Day</i></div> <div>6:30 pm Bible Study</div> <div></div>	<div>16</div>	<div>17 <i>Armed Forces Day</i></div> <div>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</div>
<div>18</div> <div>9 a.m. Worship w/HC 10:15 SS & BC</div> <div></div>	<div>19</div>	<div>20</div> <div>6:30 p.m. Library potluck</div> <div>Messenger Deadline for June/July issue</div> <div></div>	<div>21</div> <div>6:30 Bible Study</div> <div>Confirmation</div>	<div>22</div> <div>9 a.m. Quilting</div> <div>6:30 pm Bible Study</div>	<div>23</div> <div>Last Day of Public School</div> <div></div>	<div>24</div> <div>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</div>
<div>25</div> <div>9 a.m. Worship 10:15 SS, HS & BC</div>	<div>26 <i>Memorial Day</i></div> <div>Church Office Closed</div> <div></div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div> <div>6:30 Bible Study</div> <div>8:45 a.m. Newsletter Assemblage</div>	<div>29 <i>Ascension Day</i></div> <div>Special Ascension Service @ Mission Central</div> <div>5 p.m. Meal 6:30 p.m. Worship</div> <div></div> <div>Schleswig City-wide Garage Sales May 29-31</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>31</div> <div>5 p.m. Worship w/HC</div>

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Sunday School and Bible Classes at 10:15 a.m.

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**OUR MISSION
STATEMENT:**

*"Together in Christ,
we grow through the
Word and
Sacraments, serving
our Lord and
sharing His saving
grace with all
people."*