



IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH-AND-SCHOOL PERRYVILLE, MISSOURI 63775

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Church Location & Information

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“THE MESSENGER” MAY-JUNE 2012 NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT/SIGNIFICANT UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS ...

- Wed., May 2** = Jr. Confirmation Public examination/Review @ 7:00 p.m.
- Thu., May 3** = Day of Supplication and Prayer (National Day of Prayer) Service @ 7:00 p.m.
- Sun., May 6** = Jr. Confirmation @ 10:00 a.m. worship service.
- Mon., May 14** = Quarterly Voters Assembly (Leadership Elections & Budget for fiscal year Aug. 1, 2012-July 31, 2013) @ 7:00 p.m.
- Thu., May 17** = “The Ascension of Our Lord” Divine Service with Holy Communion @ 7:00 p.m.
- Fri., May 18** = Last day of this 2011-2012 School Year with Chapel Devotion @ 8:15 a.m. followed by special presentations/awards
- Sat. & Sun., June 9 & 10** = Summer Missions Emphasis Weekend promoting Lutheran Family & Children’s Services of Missouri. Door offering after all three worship services to support LFCS.
- Mon., June 11-Sun., June 17** = Pastor Marks on vacation.
- Sat. & Sun., June 16 & 17** = Door offering after all three worship services to support LFCS.
- Wed., July 4** = Patriotic Prayer Service @ 11:00 a.m. (sanctuary) followed by special lunch & program (ILS gymnasium)
- Thu., July 19-Wed., July 25** = Pastor Handrick on vacation.

CHANGE IN “NEWS & INFORMATION” BULLETIN COVERS

The Board of Elders approved a recommendation to begin printing our own “News & Information” bulletin covers when the present subscription of CPH bulletin covers is used up

(sometime after the upcoming summer months). The self-printed covers will most often have an illustration of our church and school on them although on special liturgical celebrations it will emphasize that occasion, and sometimes we will invite artists from our Lutheran school and general membership to submit illustrations for use. The yearly \$\$\$ savings will be in the thousands. More about this later.

ANNUAL YOUTH AUCTION DATE SET

Please reserve **Sat., Sep. 29**, for the annual Immanuel Lutheran Youth dinner and auction at the K of C Hall, and gather a table of friends for a fun evening of fellowship, a delicious steak dinner, and an opportunity to bid on/buy some fabulous items. More information will come this summer.

ANNUAL DINNER & BAZAAR

The Immanuel Lutheran Church annual dinner and bazaar will be held on **Sun., Oct. 29**, with dinner (fried chicken, chicken & dumplings, and all the trimmings) served at 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p. m. All donations of craft items and baked goods for the bazaar will be greatly appreciated.

“BABY GRAND” PIANO RETURNED TO ST. LOUIS STEINWAY STUDIO

By the time you are reading this Messenger, the wonderful Steinway piano that greatly increased the beauty of our worship services since last fall will have been returned as the result of having received pledges for less than 1/3 of its cost. Some have suggested to look into the purchase of a used similar instrument. In the meantime and until the indefinite “whenever” we will again use the upright piano that was formerly in the sanctuary.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

Immanuel Lutheran School Building Fund

- † *In memory of Milton Fritsche* from Curtis & Charlotte Hadler.
- † *In memory of Earline Leible* from the Perry County Sportsman's Club, Don & Betty Bishoff, MM Gary Schumer, Lutesville Motors, Harold & Lillian Bohnert, Perry County Sportsman's Club Auxiliary, MM Allen Weibrecht, Carl Suhr family, MM Ken Baer, Elmer & Velma Oswald, MM Paul House, Dennis & JoAnn House, Nancy House, MM Gib Triller, MM Vince Leible Jr., MM Deric Brown, Brenda Wichern family, MM Tom Piva, MM Brian Brown, MM Bruce Brown, MM Gerald Brown, Jim & Carole Brown, Allyn & Christie Steffens, Matt & Brandy Neal, MM Tim Baer, Pastor & Sally Handrick, Anna Weibrecht, Debbie & John Gahan, MM Mark Gremaud, PES Staff, and Wm. & Pat Unzicker.
- † *In memory of Sandra Ehlers* from Allyn & Christie Steffens, Sylvia Meyer, and Kevin & Gail Weinkein.
- † *In memory of Velva (Davis) Lorenz* from Irma Hoffstetter.
- † *In memory of Leona Lintner* from Wayne & Janette Bohnert, Ruby Schubert, and Allyn & Christie Steffens.
- † *In memory of Erwin Lorenz* from Ray & Ruby Bohnert.
- † *In memory of Eleanor Degenhardt* from Ruby Schubert
- † *In memory of Melvin Prevallet* from Wayne & Joyce Schremp, Ladonna Oliver, Rev. Kenneth & Kathie Kaufmann, Stanley & Susan Galeski, Bill, Paula & Amy Jones, Ralph & Mary Walther, Norma Bauwens, MM Kenny Kiefer & family, Kevin Schad, Jason Welker, Ed & Ruth Daume, Kaye Peak, Kay Woody, Annette & Jeremy Quiroga, Dorothy Weinhold, Curtis & Sharon Ochs, Gilbert Hoffman & Linda, Donald & Ann Welker, Charles & Alice Hacker, Ramona Dunn, Howard & Charlotte Krauss, Anita Morrison, Tom & Diane Bierk, Lovaira & Karen Bock, Gerald & Sandra Fritsche, Ray Rudert, John & Diane Bolen, Craig & Stephanie Brown & family, Kim & June Moore, Tina & Keith Boxdorfer, Allyn & Christie Steffens, Richard & Margaret Weber, MM Roger Kemna, Chris & Greg Baer and family, Raymond &

Tammy Pecaut, Shorty & Lois Bohnert, Ladonna Oliver, Tim & Angie Brewer, JoJo & Sandy Stuart, Brad & Jessica Krauss, and Mississippi Lime Co.

- † *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Pastor & Sally Handrick, Carl & Marian Bergman, Clint & Martha Haertling, Charles & Alice Hacker, Kevin & Gail Weinkein & family, Charles & Danny Weinrich, Ray & Gloria Brown, Reeve Feltz, Marlene Williams, Dale & Karen Bronenkant, Keith Schuessler & Nancy, Scott Bronenkant & Stephanie, and Greg, Dalton & Garrett Bronenkant.
- † *In memory of JoAnn Reiss* from Jim & Charlene Eddleman.
- † *In memory of Doris & Ralph Bergman* from Jerry & Clare Bergman.
- † *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from Pastor & Sally Handrick and Allyn & Christie Steffens.

Immanuel Lutheran Church

- † *In memory of Earline Leible* from MM Leonard Raines, Lovaira & Karen Bock, MM Bob Heien, and MM Mike Pecaut.
- † *In memory of Louis Lix Jr.* from Joyce & Robert Wilde, Sabreliner friends, the Boyer family, friends at Chaumette Winery, and Vernon Boehme
- † *In memory of Leona Lintner* from Lovaira Bock and PCMH Hospital Auxiliary
- † *In memory of Eleanor Degenhardt* from Allyn & Christie Steffens.
- † *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from Wm. & Sandra Shaw.
- ☺ *In celebration of Irma Hacker's 90th birthday* from Steve & Donna Young.

Immanuel Lutheran Food Pantry

- † *In memory of Earline Leible* from MM Esmond Steele.
- † *In memory of Louis Lix Jr.* from Brad & Jan Smith and Valerie & Monika.
- † *In memory of Don Kelp* from Dean & Gail Kimmich.
- † *In memory of Leona Lintner* from Jean Zoellner.
- † *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Marvin & Sandi Meinz.

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Immanuel Lutheran Radio Broadcast

† *In memory of Fred Pick who passed away April 13, 1999* from Jerri Pick.

† *In memory of Earline Leible* from VFW Post 4282 Ladies Auxiliary, Lorna Gerler, Don & Diann Mueller, MM Leo Balsman, MM Bob Clements, Ruth Basler & Rachelle Vinson, MM Melvin Brown, MM Jerry Ernst, Wayne & Dianna Kirn, MM Wayne Bohnert, Margie Wehmeyer, MM Ken Wehmeyer, Oliver & Alice Bachmann, and Scott & Yvonne Spears.

† *In memory of Louis Lix Jr.* from Curt & Linda Buerck, Charles Picou, Donze Communications, Joan & Kelly Carson, Jamie Miller, Mike & Beth Yamnitz, Gary & Betty Statler, and Sheila Wibbenmeyer.

† *In memory of Alma Dippold's birthday on March 3 and who passed away 1 year ago on March 17* from Carol Kaufmann and Diana Nations & family.

☺ *In celebration of the 71st wedding anniversary of Don & Viola McNew.*

† *In memory of Emma W. Schrumpf* from Donald E. Prevallet.

☺ *In celebration of Paul Kasten's 94th birthday* from Lowell & Diane Mangels & family.

† *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from her brothers & sisters, Laverne, Ruby, Eugene, Dorothy, & John.

† *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Danny & Darlene Kiefer, Roger, Connie & Hannah Bergman, Ms. Carolyn Bergman, and Dennis & Carol Lorenz.

United In Christ Lutheran School

† *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Marie, Rick, & Rod Katt.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

† *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from Roland & Barbara Lovstad.

Immanuel Lutheran Chancel Guild

† *In memory of Earline Leible* from Bernice Schnurbusch.

Immanuel Lutheran School Tuition Assistance

† *In memory of Earline Leible* from Sandy

Vinson, Ramona Dunn and MM Stan Berkbuegler.

† *In memory of Melvin Prevallet* from Roger & Connie Bergman, Earl & Brenda Kirn, Andrew & Amber Buchheit & family, Chad & Kara Ball & family, Mark Buchheit, Shirley Courtois, Larry Grass, Bud & Judy Bohnert, Brian & Michelle Mueller, Wm. & Pat Unzicker, Bonnie Phillips, MM Andy Krauss, and John & Cheryl Hagan.

† *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Jay & Peg Lottes.

† *In memory of Eleanor Degenhardt* from Waldemar & Lorna Bergdolt.

Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery Fund

† *In memory of Melvin Sandler's birthday* from his wife Hazel.

† *In memory of Leona Lintner* from Dennis & Karla Dolan.

† *In memory of Melvin Prevallet* from Roger & Connie Bergman.

Lutheran Hour Ministries

† *In memory of Ruth Verseman* from Eilert & Erna Mahnken.

Immanuel Lutheran Church Debt Fund

† *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from Nancy Ochs.

Saxony Lutheran High School

† *In memory of Eunice Koenig* from Kelly & Jane Short.

† *In memory of Jeanette Bergman* from Herb & Ruth Weinrich.

URGENTLY NEEDED: GENTLEMEN (HIGH SCHOOL AGE AND ABOVE) TO SERVE AS USHERS

In an effort to spread the amount of worship services among a larger number of ushers, we need more men to serve in that role. If you will do so please indicate such on your "Worship & Holy Communion Attendance" card ... and designate which worship service(s) you can/will serve. The more ushers there are, the fewer worship services each one has to work.

A SPECIAL REQUEST REGARDING WORSHIP ETIQUETTE

Please do not enter the sanctuary during the “Invocation” through the “Collect of the Day” so as to not disturb/distract worshippers during this highly reverent time. Kindly enter before or during the “Hymn of Invocation” or wait at an entrance until after the “Collect of the Day” then enter before the pastor begins the “Bible Readings.” Thank you very much for your courteous cooperation.

SPIRIT WITHIN SERIES COMMITTEE UPCOMING EVENTS

The Spirit Within Series Committee will once again host the Independence Day Luncheon on Wed., July 4, 12:30 p.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran School Gym to honor military veterans. Tickets will be free to veterans and active duty military personnel and guests. Seating will be limited so we encourage those who want to attend to pick up their tickets after Tue., May 15, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church office, American Legion, VFW, or Am Vets.

This event will follow the Patriotic Prayer Service to be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 11:00 a.m. Volunteers are always welcomed. Please speak with Carol Taylor (846-7178) or Sharon Hoff (517-3000)

Immanuel Joybells

Acts 2:21 “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Joybells is an outreach effort designed after the prayer canvasses of decades ago, when Christians would take the Word to the streets and in the neighborhoods, seeking prayer requests from residents in surrounding neighborhoods of respective parishes.

Joybells is **NOT** a church growth program. It is a simple way to reach out to our community members and ask if they have any prayer requests that we can pray for them back at church.

Anyone can participate in Joybells. A long-term commitment is not required. Just show up when you can.

Here’s the script: “Hi, I’m Sally and this is Jeff. We’re from Immanuel Lutheran Church here in Perryville. We’re just going through the neighborhood asking people if there is anything for

which we can pray for them back at our church.” It’s that easy!

We “joybell” on the second Saturday of each month, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This year’s dates are, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, and November 10. We meet in the Fellowship Room at 10:00 a.m., and then go out into the neighborhoods asking for prayer requests. At approximately 11:30 a.m., we meet back at church and pray the specific prayer requests. We are finished at 12:00 noon. It is a rewarding and spiritual two-hour event. If you have any questions, please speak with Sally Werner (517-2430).

Please prayerfully consider becoming a “Joybeller”. It is truly a wonderful way to work toward Immanuel’s mission statement of “bringing people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.”

LUTHERAN WOMEN’S MISSIONARY LEAGUE NEWS

The ingathering for the LWML district convention to be held in St. Charles, Mo. June 5-10, is: **FIRST-AID KITS** (available at Wal-Mart for less than \$10.00), **MONETARY DONATIONS** (for the purchase of Bilingual Bibles), checks made payable to: “Missouri District LWML,” or **GIFT CARDS** to **SCHNUCKS, WALMART, TARGET, LOWES, or HOME DEPOT.**

Make sure you write the value of each on the back of the card. They will be given to **LYDIA’S HOUSE** to help abused women and children. Please drop off your donations in the Food Pantry and mark them “LWML”.

Thank you!



SAVE THE DATE!!! for the 2012 Immanuel Lutheran Church Summer Vacation Bible School (age 3-6th grade completed)

Mark your calendar and

come join the fun on July 22-27 for an **AMAZING DESERT JOURNEY!**
At 5:30-8:00 p.m. Immanuel Lutheran School will be transformed into a desert of fun and games!!! It will be a great time for children to grow in faith as they explore God's Word. **REGISTRATION FORMS IN BACK OF CHURCH Or register on line at: <http://bit.ly/vbs2012>.**

Immanuel does not charge for VBS but obviously we do have considerable cost for this ministry. We welcome donations to offset our cost. Any amount will be appreciated.

_____ Yes, I _____ will donate to VBS to help a child/children learn and grow in their faith in Jesus. Donation amount \$ _____ Thank you.

PLEASE MAIL ALL DONATIONS TO:

Beth Anderson

Immanuel Lutheran Church

453 N. West St, Perryville, Mo. 63775

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS PLANNING A CHURCH WORK CAREER

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Missouri District has study grants available for the 2012/2013 school year. Applications are available in the church office or may be downloaded from the Missouri District web site at lwmlcwstudygrant@att.net. Completed applications must be received by Mon., Apr. 30, 2012.

SUMMER SONSHINE CLUB

Summer Sonshine Club will again be offered this summer. This daycare program for children ages 3-12 provides a safe and loving Christian environment. It will begin on Mon., May 21, and end on Tue., Aug. 14. Hours will be 7:00 a. m. - 5:30 p. m., Mon.- Fri. The older children will attend programs and movies at the Perry Park Center. We look forward to serving many families at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School. If you have any questions, please speak with Beverly Buerck at 547-6161.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

are available in the church library for the 2012-2013 school year. There are 3 different ones with different requirements. You must be a member of Immanuel to apply. The deadline to return is May 24, 2012.

IMMANUEL SCHOOL NEWS

We are into the fourth quarter. Where has the time gone? We have had a very productive and successful year.

We began March with National Lutheran Schools Week. Our opening at Saxony on Sunday was highlighted by AirSon. This is a Nashville based Christian, song-leading group. The students had a great beginning for their week. At Immanuel, we celebrated our mission to the world, our missions in America and locally. 'Families' of students from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade worked and played together each day. We concluded the week with the faculty-eighth grade volleyball game ... most successful in the fact that no one got hurt!

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March 2 and 16 the PTL Fish Fries were held. These were both very successful. The PTL will issue a check for \$5,000 to the School Building Fund for the eighth straight year and there will still be funds for further “improvements” for our students’ instruction. Thanks to so many of you who attended and enjoyed the food at these events.

March 15 was the Open House for our Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten classes for next school year. The evening was well attended. There are a few spaces in our three and four-year old program and several spaces in Kindergarten still open. Come join us!

On March 23 over 100 people enjoyed the PTL March Mayhem. Wide-screen TV projections of the two regional NCAA basketball games, our own “slam dunk” competition, three-point shooting, and knock-out games as well as “walking tacos” were the features of the night! We look forward to doing this again next year. Stay tuned!

Our early spring included the drama production and the operetta. On Fri. and Sat., Mar. 30 and 31, the “Acts of Praise” performed “The Rockin’ Tale of Snow White.” The performances were well

attended and we are thankful for our students who shared their talent and the work of Ms. Roth and her ‘crew.’

On April 13, grades 3, 4, and 5 performed “Back at the Creekbank.” The students were wonderful and had a great time sharing songs about God’s gifts of fish, colors, and “fun.” A great time was had and enjoyed by a great crowd! Thanks to everyone for the great attendance and support of these two shows!

May Activities will include:

- Level 2 (8th Grade/Junior) Confirmation on May 6;
- National Junior Honor Society Induction on May 9;
- Kindergarten Graduation on May 10;
- Play Day on May 11;
- Eighth grade trip to Branson on May 14-16;
- Close of School year on May 18 (Chapel at 8:15 a.m.); and
- Eight Grade Graduation on May 20 (5:30 p.m. at Church).

The 2012-13 school year will begin on Wed., Aug. 15 at which time we will get to do this all again!

Mr. Unzicker, Principal

**CONCORDIA LADIES AID
100th Anniversary: 1912-2012**

On May 23, 1912, 17 women met to organize the Concordia Ladies Aid of Immanuel Lutheran Church. The purpose of the society was to aid and assist the congregation in the payment of debts as well as the maintenance and improvement of church, school, or other congregational property. Present membership dues are \$2.00 per year.

At one time there were 76 members. However, the current membership is 25, God having called many of the original and past members home. The CLA ladies are known for their quilting. Other projects have included cooking apple butter, rummage sales (Spring and Fall), and bazaars that included delicious baked and canned goods. Later a meal was added. The CLA ladies still have the meal and country store with the most popular item being the dried dumplings. The ladies now plan and host funeral lunches and continue to help with the Bazaar.

Current officers are Dorothy Flentge (President), Alice Hacker (Vice-President), Marjorie Walker (Secretary), and Barbara Rubach (Treasurer).

Some of the projects recently completed by the Concordia Ladies Aid:

Church Entrance Canopy and Bell Tower.....	\$149,004.57
Electric Doors for Church.....	\$8,365.00
Remodel Kitchen.....	\$18,640.48
Remodel Youth House.....	\$23,200.00
Replacing Furnace & AC.....	\$130,720.00
Other Items & Projects:	
Airline Ticket for Pastor Marks’ Philippines Mission Trip.....	\$1,136.00
Funeral Pall.....	\$700.00
Hanging Eternal Light & Candles in Chancel.....	\$684.25
China Dishes for church use/events.....	\$868.32
Missouri District Dues.....	\$50,000.00
Annual Assistance to Seminary & other Church Work Students.....	\$1,000.00
Annual Missions.....	\$600.00
Immanuel Lutheran School Building Debt Fund.....	\$100,000.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church Debt.....	\$100,000.00
Miscellaneous.....	\$2,830.05

If you or someone you know are interested in joining the Concordia Ladies Aid, please speak with a current member or attend a business meeting, usually held the first Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the church Fellowship Room.

CHURCH SHOPPING AND HOPPING + Rev. Ray Mirly, President of the Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod + February/March 2012 edition of “The Voice of Missouri”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you have been baptized and catechized in the Christian faith. At your baptism the Holy Spirit worked faith in your heart to believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. At the time of your confirmation you acknowledged that God, at your baptism, gave you faith in Jesus, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. You further confessed your faith in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You also confessed that “the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you learned to know them from the Small Catechism is faithful and true.” You promised, “by God’s grace, to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord’s Supper faithfully, to live according to God’s word and to remain true to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even to death” (see Rite of Confirmation, *LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK*, pp. 272-273).

There is a growing phenomena in the LCMS where confirmands who made these commitments are forgetting, minimizing, or ignoring their confirmation vows. It saddens me whenever I hear about someone who was taught the entire teaching of Jesus drawn from the Gospels in the Holy Scriptures leaving their LCMS congregation to become part of a congregation that denies the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus in, with and under the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper. I find it unfathomable that they learned from the Holy Scriptures that we are sinners from the moment of conception and that babies and young children are in need of the benefits and blessings of Baptism but choose to become part of a congregation that denies infants and children this Sacrament instituted and commanded by Jesus Christ.

There are many rationalizations given by those who leave the LCMS to join congregations that do not preach, teach or practice all that Jesus taught and commanded. They say that the pastor is winsome! The music lively! The people are friendlier! They have a better youth ministry! But, these are not the most important reasons why one should join a congregation. Yes, worship should be edifying! Yes, the pastor should have a healthy relationship with his people! Yes, we should be friendly to all people who worship with us. But, none of this merits our salvation.

The difficulty today is that there are many pastors who use Jesus’ name liberally in their sermons and teaching. They tell people that Jesus is their Savior. They teach that only true believers in Jesus will go to heaven. This is all music to the ears of a Lutheran Christian. All of this is true! But ... and isn’t there often a but? But, what else do they teach? Do they:

- 1) Teach Law and Gospel correctly;
- 2) Administer the Lord’s Supper as instituted by Jesus, namely that “in, with and under the bread and wine” the recipients are assured that they are receiving the very body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, for life and for salvation; and,
- 3) Do they administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism to *all people*? Do they teach that when the water is connected to God’s Word that the Old Adam is drowned and dies and one is given a New Life in Christ Jesus?

The church shopping and church hopping occurring today is not new. Read carefully Paul’s words to the Galatian church: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9 ESV).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, there is only one Gospel, one Lord and Savior of us all, one Heavenly Father and one Holy Spirit. God has only one plan of salvation, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works” (Eph. 2:8-9 ESV) The Bible has only one teaching regarding the Lord’s Supper and Holy Baptism.

Cowboy churches may be folksy, relational and casual; Dr. Seuss liturgies (yes, they really exist) may be the current new idea; gender neutral language replacing the original words of the inspired, inerrant and revealed Word of God may be politically correct. Peter warns “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8 ESV) Luther encourages us to pray

“and lead us not into temptation,” explaining that this prayer is so important for us to pray “... so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.” (Explanation to the Sixth Petition, Small Catechism)

If you are tempted for any reason to leave your current LCMS congregation in order to join a different church, it is critical that you first check out the entire teaching and practice of that new church. Using your *Small Catechism*, compare what they teach and practice with what God’s word teaches and commands.

Jesus knew the temptations that you and I would experience. Therefore, He prayed to His Father in heaven, “I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.** [My emphasis.] As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” (John 17:14-19 ESV)

The Holy Spirit, working through the Means of Grace, keep each one of us in the true faith to life everlasting!

IT DOES MATTER! + Rev. Ray Mirly, President of the Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod + April/May 2012 edition of “The Voice of Missouri”

I received a number of emails and letters in response to my February-March President’s column on “Church Hopping and Church Shopping.” One writer felt that my message was that only Lutherans will go to heaven. Another stated that, although he attends his LCMS congregation every week and has excellent LCMS pastors, the non-Lutheran church he attends has an awesome pastor who uses the Bible when he preaches. Another individual could not understand why I found it “unfathomable” that a Lutheran would attend or join a church that does not baptize infants.

Let me be very clear regarding who will go to heaven. John 3:16 does not say, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him—and **is a member of an LCMS congregation**—should not perish but have eternal life.” This passage, along with Eph. 2:8-9, tells us that our salvation is God’s gift to us through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. And Rom. 1:16 tells us “the gospel is the power of God for salvation.”

Does it matter which church you attend? Yes, it does matter! It matters what is taught and practiced in the church. Some questions to ask:

Does the church practice infant baptism? Infant baptism is included in Christ’s command to “baptize all nations.” (Matt. 28:18-19) The word “nations” in the original refers to people, not countries.

What does the church teach regarding the Lord’s Supper? Does the church teach what Jesus said, “This is my body ... this is my blood, given and shed for you for the remission of sins?” How frequently does the church include reception of the Lord’s Supper in its worship services?

“Whose work is it?” This question asks whether faith is something that **I** do, God and I do together, or whether it is solely God’s work in me. Many churches teach that a person must “make a decision for Christ.” This would mean that my coming to faith in Jesus is based upon what I do. Read the following Bible passages that address this issue of “whose work is it:” “He (God) saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” (Titus 3:5 NIV ’84) “For by grace (undeserved love) you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God ...**” (Eph. 2:8) [emphasis mine]

What does the Bible teach about how I am personally saved? It teaches that salvation is by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It matters that the church makes it clear through its sermons, worship services and practices that “all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’” (Rom. 3:9-12)

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (payment) for our sins” (1 John 4:10)

It is not what we do for God but what God does for us that matters.