



And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

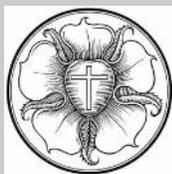
ST. MATTHEW 2: 11

FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL FOR THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



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# Esprit

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## Hidden From View: The Blood That Speaks a Good Word

by Pastor Sutton

IN the last three months, we have covered six hidden realities from heaven that the inspired writer of Hebrews tells us are present at the Divine Service of the New Testament. You are in Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, with the angels as your assisting liturgists and choir, with the great congregation of all believers in Christ of all places, with the unseen Judge of all who speaks words of grace and good tidings for the sake of His Son, with all Christians who have left this life and are with the Lord, and with Jesus, the heavenly liturgist and mediator of a new covenant.

**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12.22-24).**

The **seventh** hidden, unseen part of Hebrews 12's description of the Divine Service is that **in you is the blood of Jesus Christ that speaks a good word to you.** "You have come... to the blood for sprinkling that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

Many people do not have a real sense of the transcendent, or the things of God which exist apart from and not subject to the limitations of our physical human existence. The philosophers of the Enlightenment in the 1700s simply ruled out the supernatural. Modern culture seeks a scientific explanation for everything. If science cannot figure something out, it does not happen.

Not surprisingly, many modern Christian denominations do not take seriously these unseen realities of the Divine Service. Many do not believe that the risen Lord Jesus is really, substantially present in the Lord's Supper. Many mistakenly think that the bread and wine merely symbolize Jesus. Reason might lead one to think that nothing is really happening in the Lord's Supper because reason says it cannot prove that Christ is present. We just see bread and wine with our eyes.

Therefore, how many Christian churches today are merely theatres? So many worship in sterile, antiseptic places that have a stage, designed **Continued on page 3**

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*Esprit* is the informational and educational newsletter of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church.

*Esprit de corps* indicates a sense of union and of common interests and responsibilities, as developed among a group. Our community of Immanuel is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to us in the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

**Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church** is an historic and centrally located parish—called, gathered, and strengthened by Christ's Word and Sacraments—confessional in doctrine, evangelical in orientation, orthodox in liturgy, cosmopolitan in membership; serving the Terre Haute community and the students of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and reaching out to the nations since 1858 as a parish of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## Winter Tuesday Evening Class: Male and Female, He Created Them

THE world says all sorts of things about what masculinity and femininity are, but the Bible says something quite different. God gave men responsibilities that are distinct from those He gave to women. Godly men and women rejoice in their responsibilities to care for others, to sacrifice themselves for the ones they love, to support and nurture their spouse and children as God gives them these gifts. Finally, we remember that we follow the Man – Jesus Christ – who gave Himself up for His bride, the Church, making her spotless and presenting her radiant to the Heavenly Father.

Class begins on Tuesday evening, January 29, at 7pm, and will continue every Tuesday until the beginning of Lent. ✕

## Sunday Afternoon Theology

OUR Adult Catechesis class on the Augsburg Confession will begin on Sunday, January 20, after Divine Service and lasts through the Lent season. Class meets for one hour, and you're invited to bring a lunch. This class is for anyone desiring a deeper look at our Lutheran Confessions and liturgy, and for anyone who may be interested in joining our congregation as a communicant member. ✕

## Young People of Immanuel (YPI) Bowling



THE Young People of Immanuel will be bowling at the Terre Haute Bowling Center on Springhill Drive on Saturday, January 19, at 11am. Bring money for shoe rental and for lunch. Sign up by contacting Janet Crucitti or Karie Sutton. ✕

**Continued from page 1** to entertain and excite through energetic music and morally therapeutic talks that give people something to accomplish in order to feel better about themselves. There is no Christian artwork, no altar, no pulpit, no font, no sense of the transcendent, and no sense that heaven meets earth in the Divine Service.

But the inspired writer of Hebrews paints a different picture! A vivid picture! The heart of Christian worship, the “saving the best for last” of his list of unseen realities, is the blood of Jesus for sprinkling that speaks a good or better word to you. This is the gift of Jesus’ holy, precious blood given in the Sacrament. By His blood, Christians have safe access to all the other things of heaven described so far.

The phrase, “blood for sprinkling” points our thoughts to the Old Testament services at the tabernacle and temple. Only the Levite priests were allowed to approach God and officiate the divine services there. Before they could officiate, they had their bodies sprinkled with blood at their ordination. The blood of an animal cleansed them from impurity and made them holy and able to serve in the temple. The right ear of the priest was smeared with blood – so he could hear God’s holy Word. The right thumb was smeared with blood – so he could handle the holy things of God. The right big toe was smeared with blood – so he could walk on holy ground. Then blood mixed with holy anointing oil was sprinkled on the priest and on his vestments to consecrate them. God ordained this way of purifying the priest and sharing His holiness with him.

But in heavenly Jerusalem, each Christian can do what no priest ever did in Old Jerusalem. You can approach God the Father in heaven itself and serve there together with Jesus.

How is this possible? Jesus does not just sprinkle your bodies with His blood. Better than that,

He sprinkles it on your hearts, your conscience. He gives you His blood to drink in Holy Communion. At the altar and rail, Jesus cleanses you entirely from all the sins you have committed, and from all the sins that others have committed against you. He shares His own holiness and purity with you, makes you holy through and through. You are consecrated to serve as holy priests with Jesus, before the Father, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, where you can bring others and their needs to the Father, so that you, in turn, can also bring the Father and His heavenly blessings to the people around you as you go about the daily work you are given to do.

The blood of Jesus speaks a great and wonderful word to you. It doesn’t speak of revenge and judgment, as the blood of Abel did to his brother Cain who had murdered him. The blood of Jesus speaks of grace, pardon, and acceptance: it speaks forgiveness into your heart. Now, by this blood and its good word, we have access to all these unseen, heavenly realities in the Divine Service.

*O Lord, our hearts awoken  
to know and love you more,  
In faith to stand unshaken, in spirit to adore,  
That we, through this world moving,  
each glimpse of heaven proving,  
May reap its fullness there.*

*O Father, here before you  
with God the Holy Ghost  
And Jesus, we adore You, O pride of angel host:  
Before You mortals lowly cry,  
“Holy, Holy, Holy,  
O Blessed Trinity!”  
(LSB 402, stanzas 3-4)*

Join us in our ongoing study of the letter to the Hebrews at 9am every Sunday morning!

A blessed and happy Christmastide and Epiphany season to you all! ✨

## Speaking Up for Marriage

by Vicar Cornwell

WE live in a hyper-sexualized culture, so much so that one must actively take strenuous efforts if they desire to stay unstained by it. Pornography is everywhere, from the movies and television shows that so many love, to billboards on the highway. Yes, these may be in varying degrees, but they are nevertheless, pornographic.

As parents, we may wonder how to keep our children free from the harmful effects of these evils. As children, we may be so wearied by their attacks that we simply do not know where to turn.

Though we may not like to hear it, the fact is that we all, in some way or another, have been affected by this hyper-sexualized society. So what do we do? How do we fight back against it, as Christians are called to do (Galatians 5.16-24)?

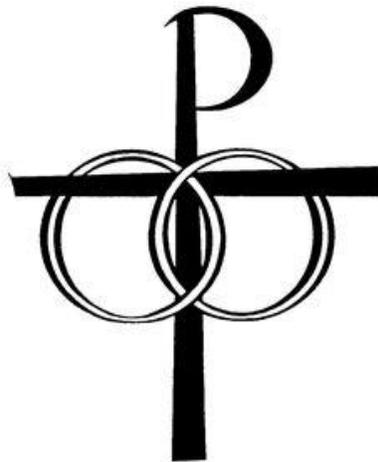
First and foremost, we need to talk about these things. Often times with topics that are uncomfortable, we avoid them altogether. How dangerous this is! The hard-to-swallow truth is that if we refuse to talk about these things, only one voice will prevail: a hyper-sexualized culture telling our children and us that we can sleep with whomever we want. That sex before marriage is not so bad after all. That using others as objects is fun.

If we do not speak up, this voice will inform our children and us.

But speak up about what? How can we encourage our children to actively avoid these traps?

The answer? Talk to them early about marriage from a scriptural viewpoint!

Now I know that some are ready to stop reading, but hear me out.



One of the reasons God has given us marriage is so that there is a healthy, God-pleasing way out of the temptation of lust. When we are tempted by this, as with any temptation, God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10.13). This way of escape is not in pornography, which morphs people into objects for one's self-seeking pleasure, but marriage.

Saint Paul exhorts the Corinthians that if they cannot control this desire of lust, they should marry, for it is better than to burn with passion (1 Corinthians 7.9).

Yes, there is the gift of celibacy and it should be highly cherished in the Church. However, this gift is extremely rare. How evident is this as we look at a society that has pushed aside marriage, and so revels in all sorts of sexual immorality! Such is the sad result when marriage is debased in order that we can travel the world, get "financially stable", or work on ourselves in any other way.

Do you see the inherent selfishness in this mindset? All about me, me, me. As Christians, we are called to *selflessness*. To be willing to give up all, even our lives for others, as Christ did for us. To give oneself to another and open themselves up to the possibility of children is to let a significant part of oneself die. For now, they are forced to look to the needs of someone outside themselves.

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## Christmas Musical Treasures

by Kantor Schultz

EVEN as we are in the midst of the Christmas season, the world has packed up the decorations, marked the remaining stuff at the stores on clearance, and moved on to New Years' resolutions.

But for Christians, we are celebrating, having completed the penitential waiting of Advent. One of the ways to celebrate Our Lord's blessing of the Nativity of His Son is to sing from our treasury of Christmas hymns.

At our festival Divine Services for Christmas, we've sung these rich hymns. Continue to sing them in your daily prayer at home during this season. It works to continue these hymns into Epiphany, too! Sing them as part of your morning or evening prayers, or after dinner with your family. Read them as a poetic meditation. Play them on an instrument. Keep these hymns before your eyes, in your ears, and on your tongue to celebrate Our Lord's Incarnation.

At the center of our Christmas singing are Luther's hymns: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (358), and "We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth" (382).

"From Heaven Above" was written around 1535, originally for use in the home, to recall the simple facts and profound theological depth to his children. This is one of Luther's hymns that is not based on earlier hymn or chant, but completely original to him. He first used an existing folk tune, but wrote the current tune when it began to be used in churches.

Luther based "We Praise You, Jesus," on an existing German folk hymn that was sung in

response to the Latin sequence on Christmas.

He brings out the mystery of the Incarnation: Very God who created all sits as an infant in the arms of Mary: "The virgin Mary's lullaby, Calms the infant Lord Most High. Upon her lap content is He, Who keeps the earth and sky and sea."

The hymn connects Jesus' work of salvation to us Christians, the great exchange: "In poverty He came to earth, Showing mercy by His birth; He makes us rich in heavenly ways, As we, like angels, sing His praise."



Paul Gerhardt's "All My Heart This Night Rejoices" (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 77; abbreviated in *Lutheran Service Book* 360) is another unforgettable blessing in our repertoire for its clear and simple presentation of the purpose of Our Lord's birth.

One hymnologist provides this outline of the stanzas:

"First a trumpet blast: Christ is born; God's Champion has appeared as a Bridegroom from His chamber (1-2). The value of the Incarnation: Is it not love when God gives us the Son of His love (3), the Kingdom of Joy (4), and His fellowship (5)? It is indeed the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world (6). Now He places Himself as herald by the cradle of the divine Child (7). He bids as in St. Matthew 11.28, all men (8), all they that labor (9), all the heavy laden (10), and all the poor (11), to draw near. Then, in conclusion, he approaches in supplication, as the shepherds and the Wise Men (12-15). He adores the Child as the Source of life (12), his Lamb of God (13), his Glory (14), and promises to be ever true to Him (15). It is a glorious series of Christmas thoughts, laid as a garland on the manger at Bethlehem."

May the music of Christmas be part of your joyous celebration this season! ✠

(Continued from page 4)

To our sinful human nature, this is a fearful thing. For it always wants to look at how it can best serve itself, not others.

Marriage is an estate given and blessed by God (Proverbs 18.22). Therefore, any voice that disparages or discourages it is from Satan himself.

Therefore, my plea is that we begin discussing

this with our children and other brothers and sisters in Christ. Not next month, or week, but now! You could even start by stirring fellow Christians to read this article in order to get the ball rolling.

To that end, may God grant us zeal and boldness in teaching our children about His gift of marriage and encouraging them in it, that we may not fall victim to the deceptive lures of our flesh, this world, or Satan. Amen. ✕

## Scrip

THE Scrip Program allows you to purchase gift cards while earning money for Immanuel. The gift cards can be given as gifts or for your everyday purchases while donating anywhere from 1-13% back to Immanuel. Scrip orders are placed the first and third Sunday of each month and are available for pick up the following Sunday. Stop by the Church office anytime to pick up Scrip cards that are kept in stock; shopping, restaurants, gas and many more! Earnings from the Scrip program are designated to the mercy fund to help our neighbors in need.

Contact John Schulz at 812.299.1429 or johnschulz2@yahoo.com with questions, or visit 222.shopwithscrip.com to see what vendors are available. ✕

## 2019 Contribution Envelopes

PLEASE pick up your 2019 Contribution Envelopes in the Narthex by January 13. If you cannot pick them up Sunday morning, you may stop by the Parish Office Tuesday through Friday from Noon to 3pm. Please e-mail Stacy.Gibbens@ielcth.org with any questions. Thank you. ✕

## Music at Immanuel

THANK you to those who have enriched the music at Immanuel with their voices and instruments recently. Thank you to our choir members for their service on Sundays and festival days: Peter Bertermann, Colleen Davis, Joseph Eckardt, Faith Fenner, Rachel Gibbens, Arlington Hayne, Emily Royer, Kristin Schulz, Karie Sutton, Jodi Tate, Kathy Todd, Cassandra Toth, and Conner Walts.

We welcome more singers to join us. We rehearse on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Watch the Parish News for the dates of rehearsals in January.

Thanks to those who have played instruments, including Rigo Barrozo, cello; Ron Dunbar, Arlington Hayne, and Noah Sutton, trumpet; Conner Walts, flute; Karie Sutton, clarinet; and Pearson Tate, timpani. ✕

## Council of Deacons Report

by Richard Monday

THE December 1 meeting opened with meditation on the Word of God, in which Pastor led a prayer for the congregation, followed by the study of the Lutheran Confessions. We are studying the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII on the Lord's Supper.

Pastor Sutton reported on membership changes in November, and new people attending the Divine Service. Pastor attended a community "round table" meeting for local clergy hosted by the Vigo Co. School Corporation. Pastor indicated he would be away on Sunday, December 23, to attend a surprise wedding anniversary party in Tennessee for former members Lee and Eileen Ziegler. Pastor reported on the progress for signing up youth to attend the Higher Things conference in July at Concordia—Mequon, Wisconsin. Pastor Sutton and Pastor-emeritus Meyer would also be attending the installation of the new pastor at Advent—Zionsville.

### Board Reports:

**Finance:** Budget for 2019 would be presented at the Congregational Assembly meeting the following day, December 2. Offerings were healthy in November.

**Outreach:** Brat Trot profit was outlined. October 19, 2019 is the date of next year's Brat Trot.

**Property and Grounds:** Discussed the picnic shelter plans and donations. Enough donations through memorials have been obtained, together with Brat Trot profits, to build the picnic shelter. Planning is underway for a build this spring. Location and design possibilities were discussed. Discussion of security camera bids was also continued.

**Annual Congregational Meeting:** is scheduled for Sunday, December 2nd, following Divine Service. Chairman Kris Wineinger passed out the proposed agenda and reviewed who was to give each report.

The next regular meeting of the Council of Deacons is Saturday, January 5, 2019 at 7am in the Parish Center. Other communicant members who wish to meet with the Council of Deacons to discuss special concerns, needs, or requests should make arrangements with the Chairman of the Council of Deacons prior to a scheduled meeting. ✖

## Immanuel Parish Membership

### Baptism:

Simeon Benjamin Mullins, son of Kyle and Nicola Mullins—December 9

### Wedding:

Alexander and Kristen Merchant—December 15

### Funeral:

Barbara Bilyeu—died December 18

**DIVINE SERVICE** is celebrated every Sunday at 10:30am and on Feast Days as announced.

**DIVINE OFFICE: LAUDS** (MORNING PRAYER) is prayed at 9:30am Tuesday – Thursday, and Feast Days as announced; **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) is prayed at 4:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and at 6:30pm on Wednesdays.

**PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** is offered the third Thursday of the month (*this month, the fourth Thursday, January 24*) from 5-6pm, or anytime by appointment. Vespers is prayed at 4:30pm prior to Confession.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT BIBLE STUDY** are at 9am.

**ADULT CHOIR** rehearses on Wednesdays from 7-8:30pm, and on Sundays from 9:45-10:20am.

**“WORSHIP ANEW,”** produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel’s special gift collection, airs every Sunday morning on WTWO at 8am.

**WESTMINSTER BIBLE STUDY** meets on the last Friday of the month at 1:30pm except when there is a holiday at the end of the month. All members are invited to attend. The next meeting will be January 25.

**ESPRIT DEADLINE** for February is Tuesday, January 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing on Wednesday, January 23.

### Serving in January at Divine Service

Altar Guild – Beth Gibbens; Gloria Hayne

Ushers – *Volunteers Needed*

Tellers – Kris & Leslie Bilyeu; Jodi Tate

Acolytes – January 6: Tony Altvater; Connor Howard; Levi Altvater; Noah Schulz  
January 13: Ian Crucitti; Evan Pound; Eli Gibbens; Adam Sutton  
January 20: Austin Fitzgerald; Adam Sutton | January 27: Eli Gibbens; Kole Mullins

### Schedule of Divine Liturgies for January

January 6	Epiphany of Our Lord, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 13	Baptism of Our Lord, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 20	Second Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30am	Divine Service
January 27	Third Sunday after Epiphany, 10:30am	Divine Service