

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

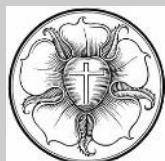
ST. MATTHEW 25: 13

FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL  
FOR THE  
LAST SUNDAY IN THE  
CHURCH YEAR



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## Do These People Have Souls?

by Pastor Meyer

THERE was an interesting story in The Federalist on 01 July 2021 about a Chinese billionaire named Jimmy Lai. He’s sitting in a Chinese prison in Hong Kong because he is a Christian and has dared to criticize the Chinese Communist Party. He said that since he was a young boy the persecution by the CCP has been constant.

His story is intriguing. He was born two years before the CCP came to power. His father fled the country after the Nationalists were defeated. His mother ended up in a labor camp. He began work carrying bags for train passengers and selling things as a street vendor. He stowed away on a ship and ended up in then free Hong Kong, still a British colony. His story sounds very American: a young man working hard, saving money, seizing economic opportunities when they came, and finally making clothing for middle class people. After the Tiananmen Square massacre, he sold his mainland business and started a tabloid magazine that focused on corruption and scandal in the CCP. Following continual persecution, car attacks, intimidation, and arrest, all of his company's assets were seized in the name of national security.

In an interview with Clyde Berkowitz of the Economic Strategy Institute, he said:

*The Communists think they can buy and or intimidate everyone off, create their own reality, and write their own history. Effectively, they assume the role of God. They are kind of a religion or an anti-religion.”*

*“They have initiation into the party as a kind of baptism. They have self-criticism as a kind of confession of sins, re-education as a kind of penance, and elevation to hero of the party as a kind of sainthood. And, of course, at least Mao [Zedong] has a kind of everlasting life as a photo smiling down on Tiananmen Square and as an embalmed corpse in a casket in the square.*

*But the party and its members do not have souls. In fact, they are dead men walking, because the truth is not in them.*


I would disagree that these people do not have souls, but their souls are dead in trespasses and sins. It is only in Holy Baptism that we are reborn by the Holy Spirit’s life-creating work that we have living souls. Those without Christ are dead in sin and will remain that way for eternity unless converted by God the Holy Spirit.


In 2019 he reflected on what it means to confess the Christian faith in a godless society: “I have a soul. Prison life is the pinnacle of my life. I am completely at peace.” He firmly believes that his life has meaning. He fears for his family, for the citizens of Hong Kong, for his loved ones. It isn’t easy, but as he reflects on Christ he agrees with St. Paul who says that when we suffer for Christ’s Name, Christ accompanies us in our suffering. Lai says it has defined him as the person he is be-


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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.

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coming and he's at peace with that. The Apostle wrote in Philippians 4.11-13:

**Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**

Another news article further upped the ante on dissent in Hong Kong as a pro-democracy newspaper was shut down. The Apple Daily was shutting down in order to protect its workers' safety. Seven employees have been arrested in recent weeks.

Just the day before I received this article, another website concluded a discussion of the "woke" culture and its strident propaganda for "Pride Month," which is nothing more than a celebration of perversion and abhorrent behaviors, many of which never get mentioned. It was from Soviet dissident, political prisoner, Christian, and well known author Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, whose writings continue to be spot on target in an increasingly tyrannical world:

*"Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, and at the heart of their psychology, hatred of God is their principal driving force, more fundamental than their political and economic pretensions."*

It always comes back to the rebellion against God in Eden. First Commandment stuff. It certainly seems that the rebellion has gotten louder and more violent especially as one observes what Fascism and its kissing cousin Marxism have done to our world in the past one hundred plus years. Totalitarianism is on the rise in many places in this world, perhaps even our own nation. This fist shaking against the God they claim doesn't exist will not go on forever. They will not destroy what God has established. He who sits in the heavens laughs at the puny efforts of such usurpers to His throne. Our Lord Jesus reminds us:

**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (St. Matthew 10.28)**

As Jimmy Lai reminds us, we have souls. We have bodies, too. We are blood bought persons, body and soul, purchased with the blood of Christ. We belong to Him body and soul, and are in the hand of God. It would be good to remember that every day and be at peace/contentment as the blessed Apostle Paul has testified. ✠

## The Vocation of Law Enforcement

by Vicar Norris

**T**HE Fourth Commandment: Honor your father and your mother.

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Today in the United States, and spreading across the world, there is a popular movement known as "Defund the Police." This has been fueled by reports of police brutality and unjustified deaths of civilians. Indeed, we all want our public servants to be held accountable for their actions, especially when they are performed incorrectly or negligently. The proper execution of their vocation is not in dispute. God expects that all people, no matter their vocation, to perform their God-given vocations on earth to the best of their ability, and in a godly manner. However, as noble as these people think they are, the sentiment of "Defund the Police" is nothing short of a denial of God, and the Fourth Commandment.

Why do we even need police? Since sin entered into the world at the Garden of Eden, the world is filled with sinful people who desire to disobey God and harm others. But God is a God of order, peace, and justice, and has given the vocation of law enforcement in the earthly kingdom. God has placed the men and women of law enforcement over us. The vocation of law enforcement is ordained by God, and it is for our safety and protection that they serve in this capacity. The servants of law enforcement in essence act in God's stead here on earth to uphold the laws and protect the citizens. Police officers wear a "mask of God" as they perform this vocation. Martin Luther wrote about law enforcement:

"Where a law is enacted, the sword must be drawn at the same time, so that the law may teach what is to be done and left undone, while the sword executes it and punishes those who either do what is forbidden or fail to do what has been commanded. For without the sword a law is useless and only tends to multiply criminal offenses."

Earthly laws are created by men, whom God has ordained to hold these positions. In the earliest recorded human history, all ancient civilizations record the vocation of law enforcement in some capacity. Usually, this was accomplished through military soldiers, and later with the establishment of a civilian police force.

This divine ordinance not only extends to law enforcement but also judges, government officials, all the way up to the President of the United States. God is at work on earth in all of these vocations and offices. It may seem antithetical to say this about the government, especially to Americans as we have a culture of self-reliance and individuality. But the truth remains that God works (instrumentality) through the means of people here on earth. We may say things to one another like "so-in-so is not my president." But God has set them as your president, governor, senator, etc. God has placed them in that vocation for his purposes here on earth. It might be difficult to see God's purpose in everything, but if God can use Pontius Pilate to facilitate Jesus' death on the cross for our salvation, then God can use anyone he chooses in those offices for our good.

The fourth commandment also extends to anyone who is placed in authority over us. This includes our employer, board of control, boss or supervisor. God, in the fourth commandment, requires you to obey them unless that person compels you to do something against God's Word. We don't always understand the reasons, and we don't always like it,

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but we should trust that God is looking after us by placing these people in authority over us.

Therefore, we should not despise law enforcement but value highly those whom the Lord has appointed to the vocation of law enforcement. We should view them as God's good servants, doing his will to serve us, protect us, and maintain good order here on earth.

St. Paul writes: "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13.3-4). ✕

## Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship

by Leslie Bilyeu

THE Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship would like to share upcoming dates of activities with hopes you are able to attend as many as possible. The season of Advent will be soon upon us and you won't want to miss out! Watch for more details as we get closer to the dates. If you have any questions or would like volunteer with any of these events, please contact Leslie Bilyeu at 812.249.5671 or leslie@ielcth.org.

- ✕ **First Sunday Refreshments:** hosted by members and served by Immanuel's youth. If you are interested in donating refreshments, please contact Erin Wineinger at mrs\_wineinger@yahoo.com. All you need to do is drop off 60+ servings of refreshments in the kitchen and the youth will take care of the rest!
- ✕ **Reformation Celebration:** October 31 following Divine Service. The usual delicious German menu will again be served in the Parish Center. If you have not made reservations to attend, please call the church office to do so.
- ✕ **Ladies Christmas Tea and Luncheon:** Sunday, December 12th following Divine Service. All ladies of Immanuel and their guests are invited to join the Christmas festivities with a light lunch and a variety of teas. This event will include a gift basket fundraiser in support of the Sutton family. Donations of gift-filled

baskets with a \$25 minimum value are needed. Youth-themed baskets with a \$10 minimum value are also needed. Gather your friends to create a basket or make it a fun family event!

- ✕ **Advent Mid-Week Meals:** Wednesdays, December 1, 8 and 22. Meals with fellowship are served from 5:30-6:30pm. Please make your reservation on the Sunday and Wednesday bulletin inserts.
- ✕ **Children's Service:** Wednesday, December 15 with a reception following.
- ✕ **Decorating the Church:** Friday and Saturday, December 17 and 18.
- ✕ **German Christmas Service:** Sunday, December 19 at 4pm.
- ✕ **Undecorating** will take place following the Epiphany Divine Service on Thursday, January 6.
- ✕ **Valentine Bake Sale:** Sunday, February 13 following Divine Service. Proceeds to help support the Sutton family's needs.

The OAF Board hopes you have enjoyed attending events these past months and we thank our many members who volunteered to make them all successful: the ice cream socials, Ladies Night Out Luau, and the church picnic. We hope to see you at our upcoming events! ✕

## Beauty: A Review of the Lutheranism and the Classics Conference

by Conner Walts

ON September 30 and October 1, Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne hosted the Lutheranism and the Classics Conference. This year's topic was "Beauty." Professors, pastors, and scholars presented on some aspect of Lutheranism by relating or contrasting it to: Homer, Cicero, Confucius, Augustine's *Confessions*, St. John Chrysostom, and more.

The take away is this: Christ is the true Beauty. In our discussion of *The Abolition of Man* this summer, C.S. Lewis speaks about capital 'T,' Truth. The idea that there is an objective and real Truth, only found in Christ. Truth is one of the three divine adjectives: Truth, Good, and Beauty. This trinity of adjectives is meant to describe the Holy Trinity. Thus, the question is asked, "How is Christ the capital 'B,' Beauty?"

First, we must distinguish between the Beauty of the Law and the Beauty of the Gospel. As Lutherans, we understand the dichotomy of Law and Gospel. This gives us an edge up on other Christians or non-believers in re-

gards to discussing Beauty. The Beauty of the Law is this: that it reveals the wrath of God upon the sinner, and in turn it reveals to the sinner his own ugliness. (Ugliness is the opposite of Beauty). But, how is this beautiful? The Beauty of the Law only exists in the Beauty of the Gospel: that the wrath of God upon the sinner is fulfilled in Christ, and that His Beauty is bestowed upon the sinner. Conversely, Christ takes on our Ugliness. This is stark!

God gave us His Beauty and became Ugliness... and yet, that is true Beauty. Jesus bleeding on the cross is true Beauty. Our Lord, suffering in body and spirit, is true Beauty. The Law and Gospel are a beautiful dichotomy, in which the ugly is made beautiful, in which the sinner is made a saint in Christ.

We can consider Law and Gospel in the light of Beauty. The Law cuts down and the Gospel raises up, but can't we just skip the cutting down part? No, of course not. That would rob the Gospel of its Beauty!

Understand that the Law is beautiful because Christ is beautiful in fulfilling it. And, by fulfilling it He declares to you, "In your Baptism, you are beautiful." ✠



### Church Picnic 2021

WE had excellent weather for the annual church picnic on September 12. Delicious food and games were enjoyed by everyone. Thanks to those who brought food and those who set up and cleaned up. ✠

## School Research Committee Report

by Emily Eckardt

THE School Research Committee recently heard online presentations from two headmasters of Classical Lutheran schools to gain information and perspective on how similar schools are administered and how the curriculum is taught. On Tuesday, September 28, we heard Nathaniel Pullman from Redeemer Classical School in Fort Wayne. On Tuesday, October 12, we heard Rev. Steve Keiser from Faith Lutheran School in Plano, Texas. Audio recordings of these presentations are available, and we invite you to listen to them.

The committee is continuing to read excerpts from "Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education." We have continued to develop our mission and vision statements as we consider the next steps to take in the feasibility study for our school. We invite Immanuel members to join us for upcoming meetings as announced in the *Parish News*. ✕



## Fifth Annual Brat Trot

BEAUTIFUL blue skies greeted the 116 runners who participated in the fifth annual Brat Trot on Saturday, October 16. Thanks to everyone who participated, and to all the volunteers for planning and helping with the event. The sixth annual Brat Trot is scheduled for October 15, 2022. ✕



## Financial Update

by John Schulz

WE have finished the third quarter of 2021. We are still running behind funding the General Fund in order to cover our normal expenses. We have already had to use some of the money in the Immanuel Fund to keep us afloat.

We are in the process of preparing the budget for 2022 and our annual Congregational Assembly Meeting in December. Remember that offerings can be given either in person in the offering plate, by mail to the church office, or electronically using the new Vanco mobile app. All offerings of time, talents, and treasure are greatly appreciated.

**New Mobile App for Online Giving:** Vanco has changed their Mobile App for online giving from GivePlus to Vanco Mobile. Anyone that has used GivePlus in the past can now use the same login information on the new Vanco Mobile App. All reoccurring gifts are still active with the new system. ✕



## Immanuel Book Club

JOIN us on the second Monday of each month from 10am to noon in the Parish Center. In November, we will read "The Crossing Places" by Elly Griffiths. ✕

## Council of Deacons Report

by Richard Monday

**A**FTER opening with prayer on September 11 and October 2, the deacons continued the study of the Book of Concord, Formula of Concord on "Church Practices" and "God's Eternal Foreknowledge."

**Pastor's Report:** Divine Service, Sunday School, and Catechesis have been continuing as usual. Pastor Meyer will attend his alumni reunion in St. Louis in October. Pastor and Vicar will attend the Indiana District Pastors' Conference in Noblesville in October.

**Board of Education:** Joe Eckardt reported that the School Research Committee is hosting two guest presentations about Classical Lutheran education. Nathaniel Pullman from Redeemer—Fort Wayne will present on September 28 at 6:30pm, and Pastor Steve Keiser from Faith—Plano, TX will present on October 12 at 7pm.

**Board of Finance:** John Schulz gave the financial report. A letter was sent to the parish members about how Pastor Sutton is being compensated during his disability leave, and how Pastor Meyer is being compensated for his service to Immanuel during Pastor's absence. Money from the fundrais-

er to help the Sutton's with a broken refrigerator have been dispersed.

**Board of Outreach, Assimilation, and Fellowship:** Upcoming events were announced as planned at the meeting on October 13, which are outlined in the OAF Report in this issue of the newsletter.

**Board of Property and Grounds:** Plans are being made to repair the steeple bells. A work day was held to complete the picnic shelter. Volunteers are needed from the parish to help with repair work. The Parish Center windows have been re-sealed. Vicar Norris completed several repairs in the vicarage.

**Old Business:** During his medical absence, the parish will compensate Pastor Sutton the balance of his salary that is not covered by disability insurance.

**New Business:** The church office computers will be upgraded to Windows 365.

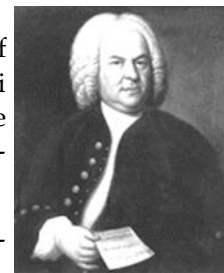
The next regular meeting of the Council of Deacons is Saturday, November 6, at 7am. Other communicant members who wish to meet with the Council of Deacons to discuss special concerns, needs, or requests should make arrangements with the Chairman of the Council of Deacons prior to a scheduled meeting. ✕

## Bach and Roll

by Kantor Schultz

**T**HE great Lutheran composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) wrote a series of cantatas for each Sunday and festival of the liturgical year. Bach's cantatas are multi-movement compositions based on the theme of each Sunday proclaimed in the Scripture lessons of the day. These compositions are musical masterpieces that express Christian teaching through the church's calendar.

Join us on Fridays in November at 7pm in the Parish Center as we listen to recordings of these compositions for the end of the church year.



November 5 | You Prince of Peace, Lord Jesus Christ BWV 116  
*For the Third-Last Sunday in the Church Year*

November 12 | Watch, Pray! Pray, Watch! BWV 70  
*For the Second-Last Sunday in the Church Year*

November 19 | Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying BWV 140  
*For the Last Sunday in the Church Year*

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

**DIVINE OFFICE: LAUDS** (MORNING PRAYER) and **VESPERS** (EVENING PRAYER) are prayed as announced in the weekly *Parish News*.

**PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** is offered the fourth Thursday of the month from 5-6pm (November 18; December 23), or anytime by appointment.

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

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT BIBLE STUDY** with dinner is on Sunday at 6pm.

**ADULT CHOIR** rehearsals are Thursdays from 7-8:30pm and Sundays from 9:45-10:20am in the Parish Center.

**"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.

**YOUTH CATECHESIS** is on Saturday at 9am.

**ESPRIT DEADLINE** for January/February is Wednesday, December 15. Volunteers are needed to help with the mailing. Watch the *Parish News* for the date.

### Serving in November and December at Divine Service

Altar Guild – November: Kelly Bays; Pam Anderson; Hannah Wineinger  
December: Faith Fenner; Janet Crucitti

Tellers – November: Rich & Deb Bucy; Jack & Pat Casassa  
December: Kathy Taylor; Jamie Thomas; Barb Seliger

Ushers – November: John Voigt; Cale Bays; Jim Haas; Joe Eckardt  
December: Brad Bilyeu; Jeff Allen; Cam Casassa; Kris Wineinger

### Schedule of Divine Liturgies for November and December

November 1	(Monday) All Saints' Day, 7pm	Divine Service
November 7	Third-Last Sunday in the Church Year, 10:30am	Divine Service
November 14	Second-Last Sunday in the Church Year, 10:30am	Divine Service
November 21	Last Sunday in the Church Year, 10:30am	Divine Service
November 28	Ad Te Levavi – First Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 1	Wednesday of Ad Te Levavi, 7pm	Vespers
December 5	Populus Zion – Second Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 8	Wednesday of Populus Zion, 7pm	Vespers
December 12	Gaudete – Third Sunday in Advent, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 15	Wednesday of Gaudete, 7pm	Children's Christmas Service
December 19	Rorate Coeli – Fourth Sunday in Advent, 10:30am 4pm	Divine Service German Christmas Service
December 22	Wednesday of Rorate Coeli, 7pm	Vespers
December 24	Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve, 7pm Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Midnight, 11pm	Divine Service Divine Service
December 25	Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Day, 10:30am	Divine Service
December 26	First Sunday after Christmas, 10:30am	Divine Service