



“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.”

ST. MARK 16:6

FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL FOR THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD—EASTER DAY

Esprit

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Christian Virtues

by Philip Meyer, Pastor Emeritus

It's only the second day after Ash Wednesday as I begin to write this column. It will be published on the first of April, still nearly three weeks before we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord. So, there is still plenty of Lent to occupy our thoughts.

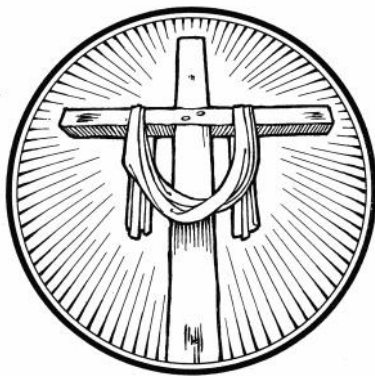
What kind of lives should Christians be living? During Lent we should give attention to our lives over against what God's Word says. That seems like an easy statement to make, and it is, but the practice of Christian virtues is much harder these days than previously. Many of us remember a time when Christian virtues were part of the public square. People practiced them even if they did so hypocritically. I have no illusions that not every one did so for the right reason, but these virtues were accepted as a kind of standard.

Little remains of "standards" which have been blown apart as if by a nuclear bomb. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes as Solomon wrote, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" . . . [Proverbs 12.15]. The fool is one who does not listen to God but goes his own way to destruction.

These destructive ways crash head on with Christian virtues, and it seems that Christian virtues lie in the critical care unit of the hospital. I collect essays and news articles that I think are significant for the Christian. I print them and then review them after a short time. I throw some of them away but some stand out. Our Synod's official magazine, *The Lutheran Witness* [which should be in every home in our parish! Copies are available on the table in the Parish Center.] has been highlighting many of these stories in recent issues. In the February issue it noted a few. The Canadian government has banned any therapy called "conversion therapy," that is, trying to pull individuals back from same sex attraction. The Apostle Paul would have faced jail time in Canada for the conversion of homosexuals in the Corinthian congregation! See 1 Cor. 6.11, where Paul says the such individuals in the congregation were once slaves to such vices. Satan does not want such individuals to be converted and find forgiveness. Tarot cards are once again big business among people who have no religious affiliation. These are the "elemental spirits of the universe" that Paul describes. Just across our state line in Illinois, the governor repealed a law [1963] that require a parent to be notified if an abortion was to be performed on a minor child. A minor can now get an abortion without her parents ever knowing about it.

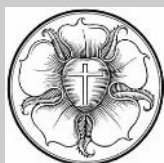
Another disturbing story I found was about the University of Pittsburgh's federally funded research on aborted babies. Much of this is hard to write. Researchers published pictures of babies' scalps grafted on the back of rodents. Pitt requires half of the babies being experimented on

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Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

IELCTH.org

 ielcth

 @ielcth

 @ielc_th

645 Poplar Street
Terre Haute, IN 47807-4203

Phone: 812.232.4972

Fax: 812.234.3935

Rev. Jacob R. Sutton, *Pastor*
pastor@ielcth.org

Philip G. Meyer,
Pastor Emeritus

Paul D. Norris, *Vicar*
vicar@ielcth.org

Stacy Gibbens,
Administrative Assistant
stacy.gibbens@ielcth.org

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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to be minorities. Babies have organs harvested while still alive. All of this is funded by the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a group run by Dr. Anthony Fauci. Heard of him? One hundred members of Congress have asked for information about this, but very little, if anything, is reported. Pitt stonewalls any questions.

Persecution continues in our world. I mentioned Canada above. In Finland, two confessional Lutherans, Bishop Juhana Pohjola and Dr. Päivi Räsänen, a medical doctor, have been on trial for speaking the biblical truth that God created male and female. The trial began 24 January and resumed on 14 February. If convicted they could be imprisoned for speaking the truth. Christianity is being called a "hate crime." It is happening more and more. Europe and Australia lead the way with Canada close behind. How soon will it be true of us?

Swiss inventor Philip Nitschke announced that he had invented a "suicide pod" that allows individuals to take their own lives by slowly replacing the oxygen with nitrogen inside the pod. Slow suffocation is what happens. It is aimed at disabled and elderly people. All is aimed at ending life prematurely. In an even stranger story German euthanasia clinics have required COVID vaccinations for patients who want assisted suicide!

The list goes on until our heads swim. How does one practice Christian virtues in the midst of an hostile culture? Many of the Epistle readings on the Sundays in Lent focus on Christian virtues and living. We are directed back to the Word of God. We are to listen to God and not to the voices of those who hate Him. We are to learn wisdom from the Scriptures so that we can discern the spirits as the Apostle John writes, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." [1 John 4.4]

This means that you need to be in the Word! The Word is the Holy Spirit's sword. It is his armor that protects you. If you have not been in Bible class, if you have not brought your children to Sunday school, then now is high time you did it! Do not leave your children defenseless in this world! Do not just hope for the best! Bring them to the place where they hear God's Word, where they are taught Christian virtues. You need this, too! Laziness is no excuse. God won't think highly of excuses. If you are going to "test the spirits" you will have to have knowledge. That takes some effort.

Effort is what Lent calls for. Getting out of a rut is hard. Combatting bad habits is hard, but God promises grace and every blessing for those who listen to him. ✕

The Denial of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus

by Vicar Norris

Today many in the world doubt the bodily resurrection of Jesus. This is not a new assertion and it was first alleged in the New Testament. Luke 20 tells us about a group of Sadducees, specifically, "those who deny there is a resurrection" and they came to question Jesus. The notion of resurrection was an integral part of Old Testament teaching. Even Job says, "And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh, I shall see God" (Job 19:26). Later in the apostles preaching they would disturb the Sadducees again by preaching the resurrection (Act 4:2).

In our modern world science says that resurrection is not scientific or intellectual. Using scientific observation, mankind observes that all things die, and after death, the body decays and returns to its "natural" state. The world concludes that death and decay is a "natural" process, that is physical reality, to which resurrection is not possible and unnatural. This conclusion is inevitable in the modern era with the rise of Darwinism and Atheism which removes the creative force of God from the world. This is the denial of the original state of mankind which is without death. Atheism and science have reversed what is natural and unnatural, as it is death which is truly unnatural.

A more common tactic by modern skeptics is to demythologize the scriptures and thereby describe them as symbolic alone and make them a fairytale. This has the end goal of changing the scriptures from a historical narrative in which God reveals his salvific love for mankind in his Son and instead lets the reader morally interpret the scriptures to say whatever they may want them to say.

The first accusation that was thrown at the early Church is that the body of Jesus had been

stolen from the tomb. (Matt 27:63-66) Jesus' opponents alleged that someone, namely the disciples and followers of Jesus, would have stolen the body to claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. At the request of the Jewish leaders the Romans would not allow this, and they would guard the tomb with their lives. They had sealed the tomb and were there to protect it against theft. The Roman guards would have been put to death if they had failed in their duty of guarding the tomb, thus their vigilance in this task cannot be questioned.

The likelihood of the timid and scared Galilean disciples stealing the body of Jesus out from under the noses of a guard of highly disciplined and skilled Roman soldiers while they all slept is preposterous. In trying to prevent the resurrection the Romans and the religious leaders gave more credibility to the claim of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. According to Matthew 28:11-14, some of the soldiers were witnesses to the events of the resurrection. We do not know of the consequence of these soldiers' failure to keep Jesus in the tomb. However, verse 14 says that the Jewish religious leaders would provide cover for them.

The notion that the disciples had stolen the body is even more improbable because after the arrest of Jesus the disciples fled the scene. They would not have been able to steal the body because they were scared, scattered (Mark 14:50, Matt 26:56), and huddled together in hidden rooms. (John 20:19). Two had even left town and were on their way to Emmaus when the bodily resurrected Jesus appeared to them. The disciples at this point were dejected, scared, and scattered, and were in no way organized to affect the theft of the body of Jesus.

What motivation did the disciples have to steal the body of Jesus? By proclaiming Christ had risen, they subjected

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themselves to beatings and jail. They eventually were martyred for their testimony. If they had stolen the body, they would have been liars as well as thieves. They would not only have lied for the cause, but they would also have died for their lie. What advantage would there have been for doing this? There was nothing to be gained for lying about Jesus. Their Lord's body had received a proper burial. They had nothing to gain and everything to lose by stealing His body. Jesus was buried by his disciples who were not expecting him to rise again in the tomb of a rich man.

Conclusion

The bodily resurrection of Jesus did happen. St. Luke proclaimed that after Jesus was crucified and buried in the tomb, he showed himself alive in the body "by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). The world will continue to question scripture and offer explanations that require more belief than God raising Jesus from the tomb. It is difficult for the world to be open-minded because Christ's

Resurrection is a miracle that demonstrates Jesus is the Son of God and is the Lord (Phil 2:10-11). This is a truth that is contrary to the atheistic worldview, which rejects miracles and the supernatural. Perhaps 1 Corinthians 15 gives the believer the clearest disposition on the resurrection. Paul builds his argument (1 Cor 15:1-11) on the bodily resurrection of Christ on the witness of many people including a crowd of 500. Paul continues with the assurances of Jesus' resurrection for us (1 Cor 15:12-34). He continues (1 Cor 15:35-49) on the nature of the resurrected body. In the last section (1 Cor 15:50-57) he assures us of the declaration of victory in the resurrection. No matter how many objections unbelievers raise, Christians can be confident there are no contradictions in the Word of God and that Jesus' body was physically resurrected just as the scriptures tell us.

"He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God". Acts 1:3 ✕

Who's playing the organ?

By Kris Wineinger

Deacon of Worship Support

We have partnered with a company called Church Music Solutions until the organist vacancy can be filled. The company is owned and operated by LCMS Lutherans that know and understand our services well. What makes this program unique is that it's not a recording, it's actually playing our organ! We simply email the company the order of our service and hymns, an organist plays our selections which are coded through the iPad, and the music is sent to us to be played through our organ. Immanuel has always been a singing congregation and sings well! With this program we will continue to use our organ in every service. An added benefit is there is no contract, so we can use the program anytime we need it, and we will never be without the organ playing. The cost to use the program is only \$45 per service or roughly \$3000 for the entire church calendar.

We are now in need of adult volunteers to help run the program. Volunteers should be communicant members of Immanuel, age 18 or older. For each service, we will need someone to sit in the choir loft and operate the iPad. If you are interested in volunteering, please email me, or call the church office to sign up. There will also be a sign-up sheet posted outside of the office. Volunteers will receive a brief training before their scheduled service. We will create a schedule and have several weeks scheduled in advance.

Meyer's Musings by Philip Meyer Pastor Emeritus

As I write these words for the April ESPRIT the war in Ukraine continues unabated. There were photos of victims in a maternity hospital bombed by the Russians. A woman was being carried out with a crushed pelvis and a detached hip. One columnist says she "was famous for a minute." She died. The savagery in which the Russians are engaged has been called "sub-human" savagery. We hear lots of talk of "humane treatment" of animals. As this writer cited about said, "Nobody talks about rattlesnakes or scorpions behaving in a savage fashion—nobody expects them to be anything other than what they are." They kill without remorse. It's what they do. But it strikes me that the term "sub-human," like "humane," are really wrong. To act in such savage ways is exactly what the Old Adam does. There are some people who expect better, that people will abide by the Law of God and treat their neighbors as themselves. Let's stop using terms like "sub-human" and call these actions what they really are—demonic. This comes from Satan, whom Jesus identifies as a "murderer from the beginning." [John 8.44]. These demonic acts should remind our world that the evil one still prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour anyone and anything. [1 Peter 5.8]

Climate change fanatics, few of which profess any belief in a higher being keep shouting that climate change is an "existential threat." In that term is the word "existence," and important word. While bombs are flying in Ukraine and other parts of the globe John Kerry [Climate czar—there's a pun in that term!] claims that the real threat to the

world is not Russian nuclear devices but climate change. Yet studies from 2015, 2021, and as recently as February 2022 explain that global warming has caused increased agricultural yields and that forests and grasslands are growing more than ever. An article by David M. Simon just published states:

A group of eminent scientists, including Richard Linden of MIT and William Hopper of Princeton, wrote in 2017 that "observations [over the last] 25 years, show that warming from increased atmospheric CO2 will be benign."

Again, to cite Genesis 8 after the Flood:

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." [Genesis 8.20-22]

I once said that every farmer should have that framed and hung in his barn, or maybe living room.

Moral Authority is something we should be asking from those who seek to lead the world. Our Constitution talks about the consent of the governed, but who elected most of those seeking to control our lives? We know who rules; it's

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those who hold power and this comes from money. Money and power have always gone together as a twist on the term “golden rule” is true: “He who has the gold, rules.” Big Tech tells us what we can say and what we cannot say online. We saw churches closed by politicians two years ago. They told us that we must have “virtual services,” no in person allowed. Yet, one cannot have the Blessed Sacrament virtually. This has raised a serious issue in our LCMS when our Synod’s leaders had to speak against it. One

must receive the elements in the mouth as our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded. Yet, some governors said that they didn’t care. They shut down churches and arrested defiant pastors. It happened in Canada and Australia as well. The only moral authority comes from the Author of all authority, God himself. It may very well be that very soon the only rightful place for Christians will be jail. If one thinks this is far-fetched then one has not really learned the history of the 20th century. ✕

Financial Update

by John Schulz
Deacon of Finance

Immanuel had another strong month of receipts in the month of February. Thank you for the continued support of Immanuel. With two strong months to start the year, we are now slightly ahead of where we were at this point last year! 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. ✕

Our Website: IELCTH.org

Our website is the best way to stay up-to-date with Immanuel news as we share our regular weekly and monthly correspondence and special events on-line! Visit the website for announcements and information about upcoming events, Divine Service, the church year, catechesis, and the *Parish News* which is published weekly. Share the website with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers as a way to spread the word about our confession of faith and activities at Immanuel. ✕

Immanuel’s Google Calendar

View the church calendar on our website. At the top of the page, go to “Events.” Click on the “click here” link to add the calendar to your own Google calendar to stay up-to-date on events at Immanuel. ✕

A Sweet Baby Boy is UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

We're gathering the crew to celebrate before the baby is due!



Ladies of Immanuel are invited to a Baby Shower & Luncheon in honor of Chelsea Ofsansky on Sunday, April 24th following Divine Service.

Watch for more information and to make your reservation to attend on upcoming bulletin inserts.

Immanuel Book Club

Join us on the second Monday of each month from 10am to noon in the Parish Center. In April, we will read *Little Fires Everywhere*, by Celeste Ng. ✕

YPI Spaghetti Dinner

Our annual Spaghetti Dinner was a great success! It was attended by many in our congregation and was enjoyed by all. The purpose of this fundraiser was to raise money for our Young People of Immanuel's Higher Things trip this summer. Thanks to everyone who helped and also to all who came out to support our YPI!



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

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION is offered anytime by appointment.

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

YOUTH CATECHESIS is on Saturday at 9am.

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

"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.

ESPRIT DEADLINE for May: Friday, April 15.

Schedule of Divine Liturgies for April

April 3	Judica – Fifth Sunday in Lent, 10:30am	Divine Service
April 6	Wednesday of Lent V, 7pm	Vespers
April 10	Palm Sunday, 10:30am	Divine Service
April 14	Maundy Thursday, 7pm	Divine Service
April 15	Good Friday, 7pm	Tenebrae
April 17	Resurrection of Our Lord, 10:30am	Divine Service
April 24	Second Sunday of Easter, 10:30am	Divine Service

Serving in April at Divine Service

Altar Guild

Sundays – Pam Anderson & Kathy Danielsen
 Midweek Lenten Services – Stacy Gibbens & Linda Haas
 Good Friday – Faith Fenner & Stacy Gibbens
 Great Vigil of Easter – Gloria Hayne & Pam Anderson
 Easter Sunrise – Leslie Bilyeu & Jan Crucitti

Tellers

Rich & Deb Bucy and Jamie Thomas

Ushers

John Voight, Jeff Allen, Terry Gibbens, Brad Cress

Organ iPad

Kris Wineinger, Scot Mullins
(volunteers needed)