

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

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

ESPRIT DEADLINE for October is September 15.

PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION is offered by appointment by calling Pastor Meyer at 812-232-8341.

"WORSHIP ANEW," produced by Lutheran Media Ministries of Fort Wayne and supported by Immanuel's special gift collection, airs every Sunday

Financial Update

by John Schulz, Deacon of Finance

The receipts for the General Fund for July bounced back to a better level after June saw a large drop off. Total receipts year to date are back to levels that are ahead of last year through the end of July. Remember that the work of the church continues while families are out of town or are unable to attend. As always, gifts can be given in the offering plate on the table in the narthex, online using the Vanco Mobile app, or mailed to the church office. Thank you for your continued support of your time, talents, and treasures. ✠

Schedule of Divine Liturgies for September

Sept 4	Twelfth Sunday after Trinity 10:30am	Divine Service
Sept 11	Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity 10:30am	Divine Service
Sept 18	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity 10:30am	Divine Service
Sept 25	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity 10:30am	Divine Service

Serving in September at Divine Service

Altar Guild

JoAnn Beleslin and Sherril Porter

Tellers

Kris and Leslie Bilyeu; Paul and Kathy Danielsen

Ushers

Matt Mathias, Terry Cummings, James Wiesneth, Jared Gibbens, Kris Wineinger

Acolytes

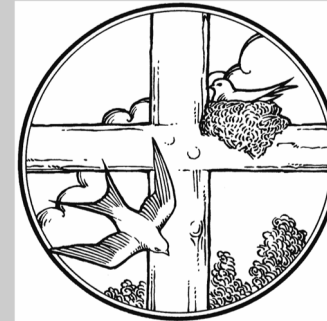
Sept 4	Connor Howard, Drew Wiesneth
Sept 11	Adam Sutton, Levi Sutton
Sept 18	Noah Schulz, Levi Altvater
Sept 25	Jace Bays, Eli Gibbens



"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

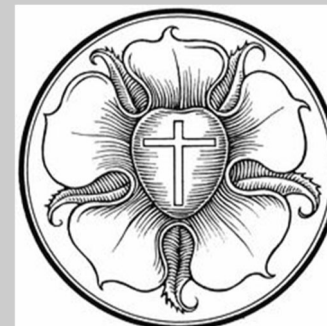
-St. Matthew 6.33

FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL FOR THE FIFTEEN SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY



Inside This Issue

Pastoral Update	5
OAF Upcoming Events	6
Immanuel Book Club	6
Adult Bible Class and Children's Sunday School	7
Financial Update	7
Schedule of Divine Liturgies	8
Serving in Divine Service	8



Esprit

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September 2022

MELIORISM, THE NEW RELIGION?

by Pastor Meyer

Some years ago I wrote an Esprit article about the failure of optimism. I went looking for it in the volume of selected articles published on the anniversary of my 40th year in the Holy Ministry but couldn't locate it there. What triggered the search was an article was an essay by Dwight Longenecker, a convert to Roman Catholicism from an Evangelical Church in Pennsylvania. He's a good writer and a deep thinker. He wrote "On the Dictatorship of Optimism." He and I agreed on many points.

He began by quoting the philosopher William James [d. 1910] whom I had read in my undergrad days while thinking I should minor in philosophy [I later changed my mind about that and found a home for my minor in German literature. I enjoyed that much more.] In part the quote read:

But in that "theory of evolution" which, gathering momentum for a century, has within the past twenty-five years swept so rapidly over Europe and America, we see the ground laid for a new sort of religion of Nature, which has entirely displaced Christianity from the thought of a large part of our generation. The idea of a universal evolution lends itself to a doctrine of general meliorism and progress which fits the needs of the healthy minded so well that it seems almost as if it might have been created for their use. [William James, Varieties of Religious Experience]

Meliorism isn't a term many know. The dictionary definition is quite simple:

"The belief that the world can be made better by human effort." [New Oxford American Dictionary]

This belief goes back farther than Darwin. It goes back to Eden and the Fall. Adam and Eve had perfection yet they coveted a lie which Satan was happy to tell to them. "You'll be like God."

One would have thought that Meliorism would have died after the 20th century and two devastating World Wars and countless other smaller conflicts. How many millions of people

Continued on page 2-4

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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.

(Continued from page 1)

died as a result of these wars is a guess. Things did not get better, they got worse.

Longenecker points out that the religion of optimism has its own watchdogs. Anyone who dares to point out that the Emperor has no clothes [children's book] gets canceled. The thought police are no longer characters in Orwell's book 1984. I love this line by Longenecker describing the Meliorists:

"You will be happy, and those who dissent will be removed, leaving only the people who agree to be happy! The beatings will continue until morale improves!"

I used to have a T shirt with that last sentence on it. I loved it! I think I wore it out!

Meliorism is an heresy. It masquerades as "spirituality" but the only spirit in there is a demonic spirit. This heresy seeks to separate the world from God. Everything has a natural cause and a natural solution. Mankind simply has to work at it to fix every situation and there will be Eden again, albeit an Eden without God. Nothing is said about sin and its consequences.

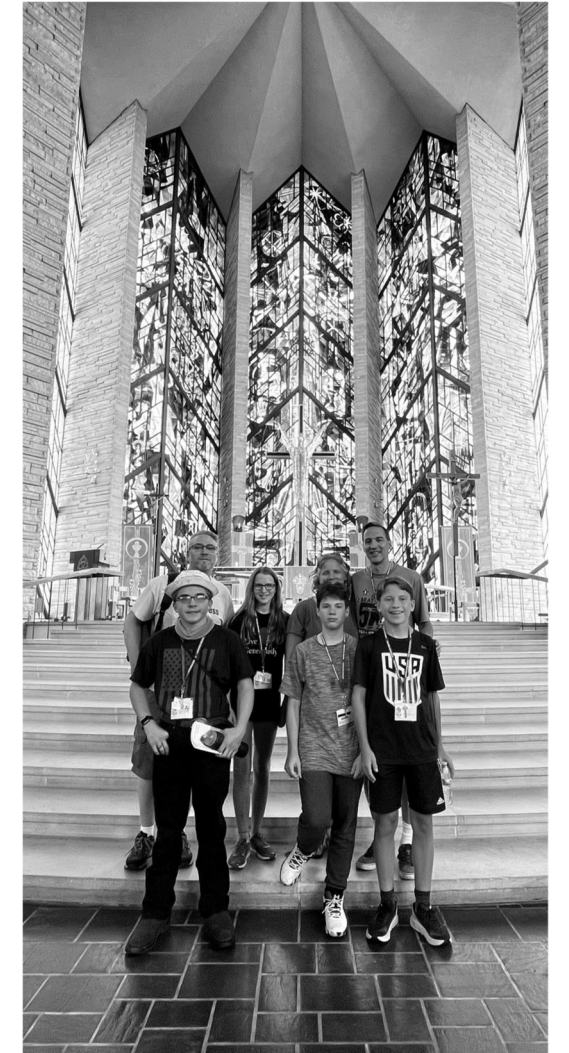
Even corporate America has jumped on this train by telling us how they are "saving the planet" by becoming self-sustaining. I'm puzzled by that phrase self-sustaining. Is this like the mythical perpetual motion machine?

We are told that mankind can save the planet, but from what? The past week or so [last week of July and first week of August] the news has been full of the storms and floods in many places, especially to places south of us. Pictures of Knox County melons floating in water next to washed out roads brings it close to home. The media make it seem as though such things have never happened in the past. Imagine what they'd do with the Flood of Noah! Of course, they would all have drowned.

As I was looking for that article on optimism in my anthology I came across one of mine from August 1993. "Floods and the Power of God" was what I called it. It was about the flooding at St.

YPI/Higher Things Article by Kristin Schulz

DURING the last week of July, a group of YPI students and parents led by Vicar Norris attended the Higher Things Youth Conference in Valparaiso, IN. The days were packed full of opportunities for worship, learning, and fun. Valparaiso University features a stunningly beautiful chapel. Perhaps one of the most memorable and moving experiences of the conference was hearing the voices of nearly 1,000 youth, leaders, and pastors singing our rich Lutheran hymnody together in this house of worship. In between services, youth attended breakout sessions covering a wide span of topics including, "Why are You Lutheran?", "Is Dating a Sin?", "Angels: An Introduction", and "When Doubts Rise". All the worship services, plenary sessions, and breakaway sessions thoroughly emphasized the conference's theme "For You" - preaching the Gospel message that Christ is "For You", he died "For You", and he gives his body and blood in Holy Communion "For You". YPI would like to sincerely thank the congregation for continuing to support the endeavor to attend this yearly conference. ✖



2022 Board of Outreach, Assimilation and Fellowship

By Leslie Bilyeu

THE Board of Outreach, Assimilation & Fellowship is cooking up a few fun events. Put these dates on your calendar and watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.

Saturday, September 24

Men's Gemütlichkeit. CALLING ALL MEN for an evening of fellowship in the vicarage yard. We will provide the meat to grill, you bring a dish to share. We will start around 6:00pm.

Friday, October 21st

Ladies Night Out- Chili and S'mores Bar! Enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship around the campfire in the Vicarage yard. The fun begins at 6:00pm but come when you can.

Sunday, October 30th

Reformation Mittagessen (Noon Dinner) following Divine Service. Please join us for our traditional German meal. Our various Boards will also host an activity fair. Please check out how you can help with the various activities that keep our church running smoothly and get your picture taken for our new Church Directory! We will also be conducting a food drive, collecting food for our local food pantry.

5th Sunday Fellowship Lunches

Beginning in 2023 every month that has a 5th Sunday we will gather for lunch in the Parish Center following Divine Service. The first, January 29, will be hosted by Immanuel's youth group, YPI. April 30 will be our annual Chili Cookoff, July 30 will be the Church Picnic, and October 29 will be Reformation Mittagessen.

If you would like to help with any of the above activities or have questions, please contact Brad Cress, Deacon, Board of OAF. ✂

Sunday Adult Bible Study and Children's Sunday School

JOIN us each Sunday at 9am for Adult Bible Study and Children's Sunday School. Beginning September 11, the opening will return to the Sanctuary, then Adult Bible Study will meet in the Parish Center, 4th grade through 12th grade Sunday School will meet in the library with all younger children meeting in the nursery.

Sunday, September 11 is Sunday School Rally Day. The Board of Education has special activities planned for our children on that day. Please make sure you bring your kids for all the fun.

It's time for you to recommit to the study of the Scriptures. BE a good example to others while feeding yourself with God's Word. ✂

Immanuel Book Club

PLEASE join us on the second Monday of every month in the Parish Center for delicious snacks and a lively discussion of our monthly book choice! In September, we will discuss *The Fifteen Wonders of Daniel Green* by Erica Boyce. ✂

Louis. "The Mighty Mississippi" was 16 miles wide in some spots across Illinois and Missouri. There were accounts of how man has tried to tame this mighty river. Dams, flood walls, levees, and other devices had been built to contain the mighty river but most of them gave way under the hydraulic pressure of the river. One account said that some 7 million gallons of water flow per second past St. Louis. At that rate, it would take less than a minute to fill the old Busch Stadium.

Optimists believe that we can somehow get control of climate, that by lowering our carbon footprint we can slow down hurricanes, tornadoes, and other storms. I quoted columnist George Will [an avowed agnostic even though he was raised in a Lutheran parsonage, not LCMS] wrote on 18 July 1993:

Today, while deeply regretting the material damage and mourning the human tragedies the river is causing, it is difficult to suppress a secret exhilaration about the way the river casually shrugs off the restraining hand of man. We need recurring reminders of how little mastery our species has—of itself, of event, of nature, of the present of the future. [quoted in the Indianapolis News, July 18, 1993]

As I said, Will is no longer a Christian but he is certainly no optimist when it comes to these things. He recognizes something greater at work than man's efforts to tame the created order.

The great Flood of Noah quieted the world completely. Man, in his sinful pride, believes he can sit on God's throne and control the created order. God continues to show us otherwise! Man does not have very much power at all! Just contemplate filling up Busch Stadium with water in less one minute! Nothing stands in the way of such torrents. They should remind us that God has promised not to destroy the world again by a great flood. They should remind us that we are indeed puny and all our efforts at usurping God will fail. Optimists cannot cope with that truth. Indeed, they continue to rebel against it.

On the one hand there are the alarmists who make every rainstorm an evidence of climate change, whatever that definition happens to be! We Hoosiers have a way of describing it: "If you don't like the weather wait 15 minutes; it'll change." The weather is always changing, one season to the next. Many of the problems have been caused by man himself, like building on flood plains or not clearing out underbrush where fires begin. Some of it is self-evident. Some of it not.

In these catastrophic events we see the awesome power of our Creator. Yet, these events should serve to call us to repentance. Meliorists think repentance is too dark, too self-deflating. When these catastrophes occur our sinful egos should be deflated!

(Continued from page 3)

We should repent! [We don't have time in this column to get into theodicy, i.e., defending God for what he does].

And then, there is the Gospel! Floods should also remind us of another flood, Holy Baptism. So wrote the Apostle Peter:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a

good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. [1 Peter 3.18-22]

What a marvelous picture this is! That rushing torrent of Christ's forgiveness washes over us so completely that nothing can stand in its way. All sins are swept away in that divine torrent of grace and we are rescued eternally, kept safe in the Ark of the Holy Christian Church.

Optimism? About this created order, no. On that subject I'm a pessimist. Mankind isn't going to fix what is wrong with this world because he dabbles in things too large for him to understand. He doesn't want to deal with sin and so God has destined it for destruction so that the new heavens and the new earth come into being for eternity where no sin, no crying, no death, no sorrow remain. ✕

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. ✕

Pastoral Update

by Kris Bilyeu

To the members of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church

An update on our Pastoral situation.

Sunday July 31, Vicar Norris concluded his vicarage and joined a celebrated list of outstanding Immanuel vicar "alumni." After Divine Service, we were able to thank him for all the extra duties he carried this year, and his services will be missed.

Now we start a period of time where we will not have a vicar and will be without a full time Pastor. The Council of Deacons has accepted Pastor Meyer's offer to continue to provide his services as needed while the Council continues the call process.

As most of you know, in May, The Council of Deacons started the process of the Divine Call according to our Constitution and By-laws. This is not a quick process. A list of names provided by the Council and other members of our Congregation were submitted to the Indiana District. The Council is patiently waiting for the District to vet and return our list along with additional names for our congregation to consider. The Indiana District office has been busy with the District convention and the election of a new District President. This has not stopped the process, but it is taking longer than expected. The Council of Deacons does keep in contact with the President's office to monitor the progress.

While all of this is happening, we also need to update the status of Pastor Sutton. Pastor Sutton asked the Council of Deacons to allow his return to work in a part time arrangement as of August 1st. The Council of Deacons voted to not act on this while the call process continues. He has been working very hard in his rehabilitation and continues to improve. If it is determined that Pastor Sutton can return in a full capacity in regards to all duties of the Pastoral Office he could be included in the call process. We pray for him and his family that he continues to improve and will, at some time, be physically able to return to full time ministry.

We also ask you to pray for our Council of Deacons as they have to make difficult decisions while making sure our Congregation is served faithfully now, during the vacancy, and for years to come.

Let us pray for God's wisdom and his will to be done.

Kris Bilyeu
Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Assembly Chairman ✕