

## September letter

### Learning the Word of God at Immanuel

In my letter to all of you this month, I wrote about how God's Word forms the center of our lives of faith and love. Since this is so, we should always be seeking to read, hear, learn, and commit to memory what God has revealed to us in his Word. Learning the Word of God should always begin at home. Whether you live alone or together with your family, there are many opportunities to be in God's Word. Personal devotions can look differently based on your experiences and preferences and there are many different resources that are available to all of you. Iowa district East put out a weekly guide - called **Bring It Home** - for daily reading of the Scripture. Many of you receive **Portals of Prayer** in the mail (and if you do not, the church can arrange for you to). There is the **Treasury of Daily Prayer** - a resource that leads you through the daily lectionary with prayers and hymn verses, as well as through the Lutheran Confessions, available for purchase at Concordia Publishing House. Many online resources are also available, including the Morning Devotions I record Monday - Thursday and upload to the congregations' YouTube page. And never forget the Small Catechism itself, which is set up as a way to review daily the chief articles of the Christian Faith through questions and answers. Obviously, there is no dearth of resources and opportunities to be in God's Word at Home. The hard part, most often, is being disciplined enough to sit down and read, sing and pray.

Being immersed in God's Word also happens together as a congregation. During 'normal' times, there are any number of opportunities to gather together with your brothers and sisters in Christ to hear and learn the Word of God together. the coronavirus pandemic has complicated all of that, but for now, has not made it impossible. As the fall approaches, I encourage you to review and consider the many different ways that God can and does feed you with his Word at Immanuel Lutheran Church:

- I encourage all of you to join us for **corporate worship** in the sanctuary. During the pandemic, we are offering two services each week, one on Sunday morning (9:00 AM) and one on Wednesday evening (6:30 PM) in order to help spread out attendance to aid in physical distancing. Masks are required for those who are old enough and able to wear them, since they reduce the spread of the droplets that carry viruses. Other precautions are in place, including increased sanitation, that have allowed us to gather for worship. As you are able, take advantage of the opportunity to hear God's Word read and proclaimed and to receive the body and blood of Christ for your forgiveness, life and salvation!
- **Confirmation** instruction begins with appropriate precautions, following the Labor Day holiday. Please pray for the confirmands as they continues to learn God's Word as it is summarized in the Catechism.
- The teachers and I have begun discussion what **Sunday School** might look like this fall. As you might imagine, a lot remains up in the air. While we will not be able to meet in classrooms like usual for the near future, we want to do something whether it is during or whether it is following the Sunday service. Please stay tuned for more details.
- I continue to be available to hear individual confession for those desiring to hear in a personal setting the comforting word of God's forgiveness in Christ. (See p. 292 of Lutheran Service Book for the outline of Individual Confession and Absolution)

I ask that you pray for our congregation, our town, our state, country and world as we continue to face the many challenges in front of us. While we certainly need prayers regarding the coronavirus, we also need prayers for those who are struggling with loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Most of all , we need prayers that people receive the Word of God with open hearts, that there might be repentance from sin and faithful reception of God's forgiveness in Christ!

Pastor Squire