



Jesus “frees” ... so what?

Thoughts from Pastor Scott

“For you have been called to liberty; only do not let your liberty be an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”. – Galatians 5:13

Freedom is a concept that has lasted through the ages. A central human cry is to be free to live as we want. Today it pretends to be our right to choose to live as we want – regardless of whether it follows God’s ways

or not. The strange thing is that true freedom only comes through Jesus and our free will is a part of it.

Jesus came to set free those who are imprisoned by “sin”. Sin is missing the mark of God’s intention for our life to be all that He created us to be. All of us deal with that imprisonment because God has given us free will. We have a choice as to whether or not we will exercise our freedom to become more or become less of what God created each of us to be on this earth. The problem is that we don’t fully understand what spiritual freedom in Jesus really is.

Too many Christians wrongly think that just because Jesus died on the cross for us we have an eternal “get out of jail free” card to live as we wish. Nothing could be further from the truth. To follow Jesus means to live as He did – in surrender and obedience to the will of God our Father in all things that he might be praised. The ministry of Jesus can be summed up in one word – servanthood. It means laying down self, crucifying sin and all that diminishes who we are as God’s children, throwing away our personal agendas and living as a servant of our Most High God. That’s an idea that’s all but lost against today’s “me, myself and I” appeal in today’s world.

We are only truly “free” when we surrender to God in servanthood. We are here to serve others, not ourselves. The pursuit of our self will only gets us into trouble through broken relationships, damaged health, financial crises and a multitude of other things that bring us pain and stress. That’s not to say that we won’t experience those troubles when we follow Jesus but they will be less or we will overcome them much sooner when we live in the true freedom Jesus offers us.

As we go through July – this month of celebrating freedom – let’s remember where true freedom is found. It’s found in the abundant life that Jesus offers us when we serve others, whether that’s in our families, our church, our community or world. We have many opportunities to serve in the name of Christ Jesus. Let’s use them to experience the joy of true freedom this month.

God is with us... Pastor Scott



OUR NEXT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS) PLANNING MEETINGS ARE 'WORKING' MEETINGS AT IMMANUEL.

JULY 12TH AT 7:00 P.M.

We have many registrations coming into Immanuel through the mail and e-mail and we're looking forward to July 19-22 when we welcome our community's children to be back in person with us at the church building. Thank you to the many members and friends of Immanuel who have been with us on Monday evenings to prepare the VBS decorations, lessons, and other details for a fun week of experiencing God's love.

Questions? Contact Pastor Scott (402.499.4444) or Hailey Drahota (402.499.8222)



CERESCO DAYS FLOAT DECORATING PARTY – WEDNESDAY, JULY 7TH AT 7 PM AT IMMANUEL

Come join the fun at Immanuel as we decorate this year's church float with our Vacation Bible School theme of "In The Wild". We'll need help on July 7th setting up the palm trees, stuffed animals and other "wild" things to promote this year's Ceresco Community Vacation Bible School during the Ceresco Days parade.

Plan to join the float the evening of Friday, July 9th as we hand out VBS flyers and other things to parade attendees.



JUNE 26TH CANVASSING WAS A CHANCE TO MEET OUR NEIGHBORS

Saturday morning, June 26th, eight of us gathered at Immanuel to go door-to-door for a couple hours on the north side of Ceresco to meet our neighbors and visit with them about the possibility of a new carillon (recorded bell system) being installed in Immanuel's steeple. The overwhelming majority of all those we visited (and we got a chance to talk with over 50 households) were positive or very positive about the carillon. Each household was given a small brochure that introduced our church family plus some information about the carillon system. Thank you to those who were able to join us for this event.

COME SUPPORT THE 33RD ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION AT CAMP CAROL JOY HOLLING

July 31

(SOUTH OF ASHLAND)



Camp Carol Joy Holling (27416 Ranch Road) is just south of Ashland and is the Bible Camp that a number of Immanuel's children have camped at over the years. Each year, the camp has an auction of quilts that people have made in support of the camp's ministry and this is the 33rd year for it.

The tentative schedule for this year's quilt auction will be:

- 9:00 a.m. Quilts on display
- 9:30 a.m. Live Auction starts
- 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch served
- 1:30 p.m. Silent Auction Closes
- 2:30 p.m. Specialty Items Auction Starts

Quilts in the past have auctioned for \$25 to \$20,000. Lance Larsen, a professional auctioneer from Cordova, NE is volunteering his time to auction the quilts. Depending on the number of quilts donated, a selected group will be sold through a silent auction. Bidding will open at the silent auction at 9 a.m. and close at 1:30 p.m. with the winning bids for the day released at approximately 3:00 p.m.

You won't want to miss the lunch with dessert! It will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. and costs \$7 for adults and \$4 for kids (4-12) and free for children 3 and under.

Questions? Contact Heather Abbott by email at HAbbott@NLOM.org or by phone at 402.944.2544.



**Remembering
Our Homebound Members**

Please remember Immanuel's homebound members in your prayers:

John Christiansen

1509 County Rd. B – Ceresco, NE 68017
402.429.6475

Marie Johnson

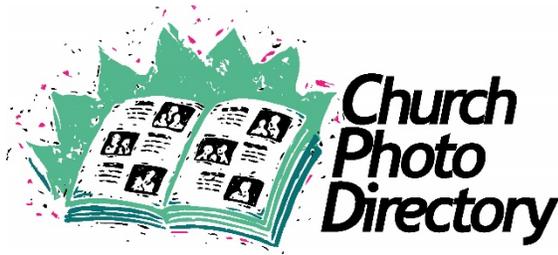
2425 Folkways Blvd, #336 – Lincoln NE 68521
402.438.5618 (home) 402.417.9537 (cell)

Dale Rexilius

c/o Tabitha GracePointe
4620 Randolph St, #203 – Lincoln NE 68510 402.484.9318

July 2021 Immanuel Calendar

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i> | <i>Tues</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thurs</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|--|---|--|---|--|----------------------------------|------------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Pastor Scott will be in Seattle for his work with the Eastmont Foundation from July 5 th - 8 th but you can reach him on his cellphone at 402.499.4444 while he's there. | | | | | | |
| 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time | 5 | 6 | 7 7 pm Decorating our Ceresco Days float with the VBS theme at Immanuel | 8 | 9 7 pm Ceresco Days parade | 10 |
| 11 10 am Breakfast fundraiser at the City park for the new Splash Pad 11 am Community Worship at the City park (Pastor Scott is giving the message) | 12 7 pm Vacation Bible School working session at Immanuel | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time | 19 6:15 – 8 pm Vacation Bible School | 20 6:15 – 8 pm Vacation Bible School | 21 6:15 – 8 pm Vacation Bible School | 22 6:15 – 8 pm Vacation Bible School | 23 | 24 |
| 25 9:30 am Worship with Communion 10:30 am Coffee and Fellowship time | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |



Save the date for Friday, September 24th and Saturday, September 25th for photos to be taken at Immanuel.

The Huskers have an “away” football game with Michigan State that weekend so mark these dates on your calendar and watch for more information as we get ready to have a new church directory of our members and friends for Immanuel. Universal Church Directories will be working with us on this project. We had to postpone the directory photography last year due to the pandemic.

Heartland District Annual Conference

Our conference was held in Omaha at the Lutheran Church of the Master. Pastor Scott, Janis Bible, and Fran Freeman attended this conference on June 19, 2021. The Keynote speaker was Kent Hunter with Tracee Swank who runs a nonprofit organization, “Church Doctor Ministries.” The topic of their message was Post – Covid – 19: A season of opportunity! Ask yourself, why was Jesus born in Israel at that specific time? Because it was the promised land and the people were under great stress from the Roman occupation. People are highly receptive during and after a macro event. The pandemic is another macro event which we need to use by reaching out to the lost, bringing them back to the church and God. We need to be the good news and then pass it on. The power of hope comes from Jesus who bought us by faith. Our troubles produce endurance which brings God’s approval, and His approval creates hope. We all need hope in this day and age. Remember, God does everything for our good – God brings hope – God brings grace - God brings forgiveness. We need to project these same qualities in our lives. Research showed that after WWII (a macro event) that people who attended church went from 73% to 76% and stayed in the 70% range until the year 2000. Now we are at 47%. This is very disturbing, as Christians, we should be alarmed. What we can do and how, is described in communication strategies internal and external. Outreach should be pioneering by getting to know our community and meeting their needs. Communication should be current, consistent, and clear. We need to expand our online|digital ministry, and check out new resources. Post – covid strategies to help us are, reconnect – renew – reach out. Everyone has been under great stress during and after the pandemic. Many are looking for hope and are seeking reassurance. Who better than God can give them that hope, assurance, and peace. It is up to us to see that message of hope and love emanates from our church.

Submitted by Fran Freeman

Prayer List

Christie Bevington (Health – member)
Matthew Weaver (Health – member)
Judy Nord (cancer)
Renos Kuntz (Health)
Bill Bohling (Cancer/Heart - Crystal's Dad)
Gary & Rhonda Westendorf (Health – Wischhof)
Amanda Ray (Cancer – Hedges)
Lani Swanson (Covid – L Pearson)
Makena Garrison (17 yrs old – Neurofibromatosis – Bevington)
Belinda Basel (Cancer – Otto)
Lora Robinson (Health – Fran's sister)
Mike Hnizda (Health – Fran's brother)
JoAnn Koepke (Health & Safety – Janis' sister)
Andrea Christensen (Health – J Christensen)
Rob Bonow (Throat Cancer – Otto)
Heather Lucht (Health – Hanson)
Ron Weltruski (Bone cancer – Hedges)
Kim Pearson (Health – L Pearson)
Tracy Doten (Health)
Larry Russel (Health)
Elaine Groathouse (Health)
Connie Hansen
Mike Wright & Family (Comfort as they mourn the loss of his dad)
Sydney Kenning & Family (Strength & comfort)
Health & Protection of Everyone

JULY USHERS

July 4 - Barb & LeRoy Hanson
July 11 - Community Service
July 18 - Justin & Kristi Badberg
July 25 - Doug & Shawn Rudeen

JULY LECTORS

July 4 - Donna Hanson
July 18 - Kristi Badberg
July 25 - Hailey Drahota

JULY
Food Pantry
Peanut Butter
Jellies