

July 1, 2013

# IMMANUEL MONTHLY



## From Pastor's Desk God's Gift of Marriage: Speaking the Truth in Love

By Rev. Dr. Peter J. Scaer

We are greatly saddened to hear that the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, has struck down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). This is yet another example of our nation's moral blindness and our fallen culture. The days ahead look to be difficult, and we must again dedicate ourselves to God's Word and to God's will, trusting always in the mercy and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we meditate on God's Word, we recognize that the issue of same-sex marriage takes us back to creation. Having created the earth and all that is in it, God then created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26). God first formed

man from the dust of the ground, and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, Adam became a living creature (Genesis 2:7). Seeing that it was not good for man to be alone, He then formed Eve from Adam's side. Adam immediately saw that Eve was like him, and yet, in a wonderful way, different. Therefore, Adam offered up a word of thanksgiving, saying, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23).

So it is, Adam and Eve were made for each other, and from their complementary differences, the human race has come into being. From this special union alone, two become a creative whole. The

creation of Adam and Eve became God's model for marriage. As we read in Genesis, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). From this one flesh union God continues His glorious act of creation, bringing children into the world and then providing for the care of those children. Indeed, marriage reminds us that fathers and mothers are wonderful, but not interchangeable, gifts from God. Through marriage, God provides the best way for children to grow, thrive and prosper.

As our society moves towards the endorsement of so-called same-sex marriage, it needs to be said that the biblical witness against homosexuality is clear. The book of Leviticus speaks to this fact, (Lev. 20:13). St. Paul also calls homosexuality a sin (1 Cor. 6:9) and sees it as an example of our sinful, fallen nature (Rom. 1:18-32). The truth of marriage is expressed by our Lord Jesus Himself, who said, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate" (Mark 10:6-9).

In the face of opposition and ignorance, we are bound to confess the truth of marriage. And we must do so in charity and love. For we know that no sin is greater than another. We also know that the institution of marriage has long been under assault. Divorce is far too common, also among us Christians. It is also far too common for Christians to live together apart from marriage. There is much sin, and we all have reason to repent. We also recognize that all sins are forgiven and have been paid for by Christ. Therefore, as a church, we will continue to be a

place of welcome for all sinners, knowing that one common sin infects us all, and knowing that our Lord's death is the payment for all the wrongs we have committed.

And so, we speak with charity and mercy. But we will not be silent. We will continue to proclaim God's truth. Admittedly the task is formidable. Our people are being bombarded daily with lies. Many, even

Christians, have never heard the truth of God's good gift of marriage. So, we will speak the truth and as we speak the truth, we will proclaim the Gospel, the good news of salvation. If we deny Christ's words, we deny Christ Himself. But when we confess the truth of marriage, so also do we confess the greater truth of Christ's love for His bride the Church. Indeed, heaven is a wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-14), and the Church is the bride, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9). This is wonderfully good news, tied up in God's glorious act of creation and the new creation which we have in Christ.

What the days ahead will bring, we do not know. We should prepare ourselves for difficult times. Christians supporting the biblical understanding of marriage should expect to be branded and slandered. This should come as no surprise, as we remember the words of our Lord, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely for My account" (Matt. 5:11). Yet, by God's grace, we will continue to be salt for the world and pray that Christ's light of love and mercy would continue to shine through us and in our church.

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# From the President Preparing for This Summer's Convention

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

A rookie pitcher was throwing poorly. In fact, the opposing team had jumped to a significant lead already in the first few innings. The frustrated catcher finally walked to the mound. "I've figured out your problem," he said to the rookie. "You always lose control at the same point in the game." "Really? When's that?" the young pitcher responded. "Right after the national anthem!"

It's been quite a process getting ready for my first convention. In fact, unless one's been through it, I don't think the enormity of the task can be comprehended. The prospect of taking the famous LCMS gavel for the first time (as a rookie!) is quite humbling--especially knowing that we've had such capable convention chairs, including most recently President Kieschnick, whose parliamentary capabilities are legendary. And I'm guessing that if you're a first-time delegate, you may be feeling a bit like a rookie, too, as the mountain of documents you've been receiving gets taller and taller. But we'll make it through together. We're baptized for this moment!

This issue of The Lutheran Witness gives you a peek into convention matters, delegate or not. For those who are interested, the convention may be viewed live, in its entirety, at [www.lcms.org/convention](http://www.lcms.org/convention).

Allowing one's name to stand for president of the Synod is a unique experience. It's extremely humbling when congregations nominate and place your name on the ballot. It's also a rather significant risk, especially for one's

family, as comments good, bad and ugly are circulated about the media. I know Herb Mueller and David Maier well. Herb is truly "an Israelite in whom there is no guile." David loves the Scriptures and applying them

to real people in real life. They, at the will of the congregations of Synod, are standing for election because they believe deeply in the Gospel, and they live to serve for the sake of Jesus and His message of salvation. They want the very best for the Synod. They are fine men who would bring many gifts to the office. They and their dear wives and families deserve our thanks.

Of the many significant issues that will come before the convention, none is more important than a fairly simple overture that Floor Committee 6, Administration and Finance, is likely to bring forward. We are expecting a convention affirmation of a Synod-wide effort, launched during the next triennium, to endow our two seminaries. Both seminaries are in good financial order, thanks to the great leadership of Presidents Meyer and Rast, and to generous donors. But it's time now to take an exponential leap in assuring the stability of these assets and affordable seminary education well into the future. Nearly thirty seminary placement calls went unfilled this spring, and we are now entering the years of very large classes of men retiring from the ministry. International requests for teaching and assistance grow by the week. We envision a multi-



faceted approach that includes dollars from the Global Seminary Initiative, which was established to bring future international leaders of world Lutheranism to study at our seminaries. We will also be placing more pastors (and deaconesses) right out of seminary into international mission work in years to come. It's time to act!

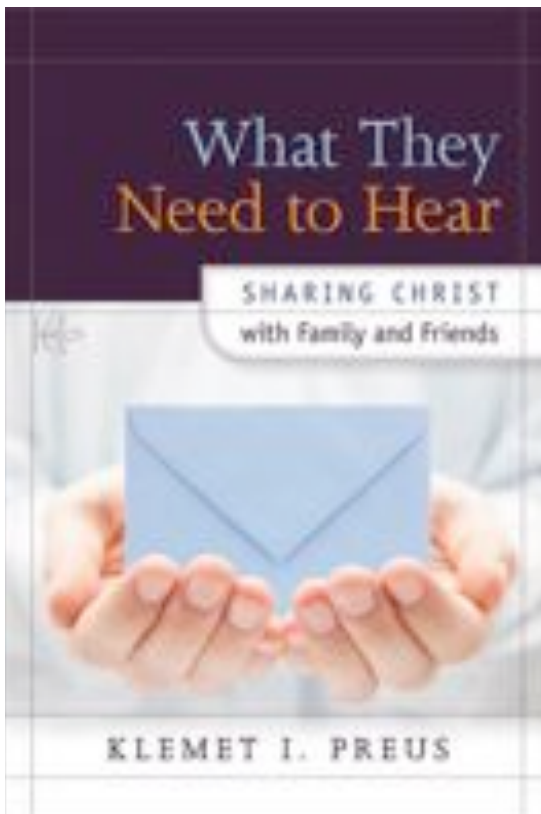
Long ago, a Synod and seminary president summed it up this way:

God could indeed let ready teachers and preachers fall from heaven without any doing on our part. Who will put boundaries on His might? But He has not promised to do so. He has, in fact, ordained another way. We are to prepare and call into the ranks future teachers and preachers through instruction. This is what the Lord Himself did. He took His disciples into a special instruction for three years. . . . In short, God gives workers for the harvest in the way of education and instruction. Thus the prayer for workers includes support for our teaching

institutions. When we plead and cry out from our hearts, "Lord, send workers into the harvest," at the same time, we get to work. [Excerpted from Francis Pieper, "Why Should We Very Faithfully Support Our Synodical Teaching Institutions," 1905; from *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (CPH, 2011), page 622.]

Indeed! Rookie or not, let's "get to work."

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### **The Book of the Month** **What They Need to Hear: Sharing Christ With Family and Friends**

Most everyone knows a family member or friend that is not a Christian. How to reach out to these loved ones and share Christ can be a struggle. Many people don't know how to share their faith and are unsure if they are saying the right words.

In *What They Need to Hear* author Klemet I Preus shares the ninety letters he wrote to his dying father-in-law, Lloyd, who was not a Christian.

Thankfully the Lord worked through these letters and Lloyd became a Christian before his death. The short devotional in nature letters in this book can be used as a template for you to follow with your own Lloyd—that person in your life who is questioning God and the Church. Includes a topical index.

*What They Need to Hear* also includes:

- two inspirational postcards to send out to people in your life that need to hear God's word
- an eCard website to send cards via email (FREE)—Visit eCard site now!

## In the News

# What's Next for Marriage? After the Supreme Court

By Dr. Russell Moore

The Supreme Court's Defense of Marriage Act decision is the flower girl in the wedding march of same-sex marriage. Here come the brides, and the grooms, and a whole lot more.

The same logic that led from *Griswold v. Connecticut* to *Roe v. Wade* will lead from the expansive language of equal protection in this ruling to the push for same-sex marriage in all 50 states. With that will come, I predict, the most protracted contest over religious liberty and freedom of conscience since the First Amendment disestablished the state churches.

Despite this rather gloomy forecast, I don't take a "slouching toward Gomorrah" read on our marriage future. This is partly because I believe in the resilience of natural marriage, and partly because I think the push for same-sex marriage isn't really about marriage at all, at least not marriage in anything but name. Putting aside the professional activist community for a moment, most gay and lesbian Americans really believe legal recognition will grant them the same sort of union their parents had. Because I think sexual complementarity is of the essence of the one-flesh union, I don't think this will happen. In the aftermath of the disappointment sexual libertarianism brings, there will be a time for a new word about more permanent things, such as marriage as a permanent, conjugal, one-flesh reality between a man and a woman.

The marriage debates will prove trying for those of us who believe marriage is something other than a civil contract and a "celebration of love." Catholic and Evangelical and Orthodox Christians, along with Orthodox Jews and Muslims, will seem increasingly freakish in American culture. But with that comes the

opportunity to turn back from our own slow-train sexual-revolutionary ways.

The Bible Belt marrying parson who marries whosoever will show up and rent his church, his day is over. The gelatin-spined neighborhood priest who hitches the cohabiting couple and hopes to see them at church for their children's first communions, his time is up. In a day when churches must fight for the cultural freedom to define marriage, laissez-faire wedding policies, and the nominalism that goes with them, are done for, and good riddance.

Sure, there will be some nuns-on-the-bus types calling for marriage equality. And we will always have those mainline Protestants who dress up as Evangelicals in order to reach a marketing niche. But the churches won't capitulate, because we can't. To dispense with marriage is to dispense with a mystery that points to the Gospel itself, the union of Christ and his church, as the Apostle Paul says to the church at Ephesus.

Again, this will seem freakish and nasty and bigoted. Marriage will decline, and children will be hurt, because the marginalization of marriage always empowers predatory men. But the Gospel flourished in places known for temple prostitutes and gladiator fights, and it still stands. As churches recover healthy marriage cultures, and contrast these with the sexually libertarian carnival around them, there will be a time for a new conversation about men and women, and mothers and fathers, and the meaning of sex and life.

Our task, between now and then, is to keep lit the way to those old, old paths.



# Education Corner

## Youth Off to Higher Things Conference “From Above”

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

### Where Immanuel’s Youth are going.

The youth of Immanuel will be heading to West Lafayette, Indiana, on the campus of Purdue University, July 9–13. Together we will grow in the knowledge and understanding of what it means to be Lutheran, especially as a teenager. For four days, we will “Dare to Be Lutheran,” which is the motto of Higher Things. It’s a motto that we will then bring home with us as we “Dare to Be Lutheran” in our daily lives.

### Why Higher Things Conferences?

The mission of Higher Things is to assist parents, pastors, and congregations in cultivating, encouraging, and promoting a distinctively Lutheran identity among their youth and young adults. The most direct way we do this is through our annual youth conferences. Over the last 12 years, Higher Things has hosted a total of 22 Lutheran youth

conferences! 2013 will add three more conferences to that list. Higher Things holds multiple conferences each year, in different areas of the country. While the conferences are essentially the same in schedule, programming, and worship, they’re spread out in an attempt to make it easier for groups to travel to them by van or bus without having to pay for expensive airfare. And if a group wants to go to a conference farther away from home, they can do that too!

Higher Things does all this because it is convinced that youth need solid teaching and experiences that will nurture lasting Christian faith. Rather than treating youth as an adolescent subculture and confusing them with once-in-a-lifetime “mountaintop” experiences that cannot be replicated outside the conference events, Higher Things believes in challenging youth to learn the pure doctrine of the Christian faith. By teaching



them the same message that they are already hearing at home and at church, youth grow in the fullness of the Christian faith as they come to appreciate historic liturgical practice and its unique focus on God's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation for us delivered in Word and Sacrament.

### **What does the 2013 conference theme mean?**

Jesus answered Nicodemus, “. . . unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – St. John 3:3

You have been born of water. You have been born of the Spirit. You have been born From Above! You were born of God, born anew, born from above in the Baptismal Font. You are alive now, eternally alive, never to die ever again for you already died in Christ. As surely as He is risen from the dead, you will rise from the dead. In fact, you already have risen from the dead, by faith. Now, you live eternally From Above, in service to others, just as God in Christ has saved you.

At the 2013 Higher Things Conferences, we'll be rejoicing in who you are in Christ: You are born From Above.

### **What should I expect at a Higher Things conference?**

You should expect to spend four days immersed in the Gospel. You'll hear about Jesus, and what He's done for you. A lot. You'll do this by participating in the many worship services in which we join our voices with those of the historic Christian church through liturgy and hymns, and hear the Gospel preached in its purity. You'll learn, in much greater depth, about your faith—not just what we believe, but why we believe it and why it's important. All this will equip you to talk about your faith to others. And you'll do plenty of that as you get to know hundreds of other Lutheran youth just like you throughout the worship and catechesis sessions—and especially during the fun free time activities each evening. Because Hight Things conferences are held every summer, you'll really have an opportunity to build life-long friendships as you worship, learn, and have fun together if you're able to attend year after year!



# Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

## Greeters List

7 July	Ruth Sims (West) Tim & Teri Pollock (East)
14 July	Donna & Gunnar Campbell (West) Harold & Irene Wattjes (East)
21 July	Jim Dyer (West) Joan Vukelich (East)
28 July	Laverl Byers (West) Ruth Sims (East)
4 Aug	Jim Dyer (West) Joan Vukelich (East)
11 Aug	Laverl Byers (West) Ruth Sims (East)
18 Aug	Tim & Teri Pollock (West) Donna Campbell (East)
25 Aug	Harold & Irene Wattjes (West) Jim Dyer (East)

## Coffee Committee

July	Harold and Irene Wattjes
Aug	Ruth Sims

## Funeral Committee

July	Wanda Long
Aug	Tammy Kresin

## Altar Committee

7 July	Holly Wikoff
14 July	Holly Wikoff
21 July	Holly Wikoff
28 July	Wanda Long
4 Aug	Wanda Long
11 Aug	Wanda Long
18 Aug	Sherrie Hoel
25 Aug	Sherrie Hoel

## Elder On Duty – Communion

7 July	Josh Whitson
14 July	Josh Whitson
21 July	Jack Appleby
28 July	Jack Appleby
4 Aug	Josh Whitson
11 Aug	Josh Whitson
18 Aug	Geof Danielson
25 Aug	Geof Danielson

ATTENDANCE				OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Special	General	Missions	Building
6/2	20	85	0	\$3,636.50	\$79.00	\$0.00
6/9	24	68	0	\$1,753.30	\$200.00	\$0.00
6/16	20	82	0	\$2,281.87	\$0.00	\$20.00
6/23	25	79	0	\$2,161.64	\$0.00	\$0.00
6/30	22	69	0	\$2,050.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal	111	383	0	\$11,883.81	\$279.00	\$20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>494</b>			<b>\$11,883.81</b>	<b>\$279.00</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>



July 2013 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:30 PM Elders Meeting John & Dawn Stokes Teresa Pollock	<b>2</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting	<b>3</b> 7:30 AM Matins Eric Alonzo Mark Whitson	<b>4</b> Church Offices Closed Ryan & Jami Bowles	<b>5</b> Pastor's Day Off	<b>6</b> 8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion LMS Convocation
<b>7</b> 8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class 11:15 AM Church Council 11:30 AM Awareness Class	<b>8</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Elders Meeting Bruce Rubin Hermin Oye	<b>9</b> Marlyn Mann	<b>10</b> Highway Through Youth Conference/Pastor Goss	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Chad & Haley Ely Rita Welton Pastor's Day Off	<b>13</b> 8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Gunnar Campbell Jack & Mary Appley
<b>14</b> 8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class	<b>15</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Board of Education Meeting 7:30 PM Visitors	<b>16</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Thomas Fields	<b>17</b> 7:30 AM Matins Tonia Timin	<b>18</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Richard & Jill Zarbar	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Jason & Dede Everside LMS Convocation/Pastor
<b>21</b> 8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Cody & Thomas Fields Wayne Arthur LMS Convocation/Pastor Goss	<b>24</b> James Harbaugh	<b>25</b> 1:30 PM Ladies Aid Lutvina Hony David Wondell Nicholas Appley	<b>26</b> Michelle Stumser Pastor's Day Off	<b>27</b> 8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion Cindy Ekstrom John Stokes
<b>28</b> 8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:30 AM Bible Class Megan Hopkins 7:00 PM Youth Group	<b>29</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Jason Rubin	<b>30</b> 7:30 AM Matins 8:00 AM Staff Meeting Roland Spomer	<b>31</b> 7:30 AM Matins Evan Hochback Glen Stumser Jason Everside			

August 2013 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>8:15 Monthly Missions/SAM's Prambly</p> <p>9:30 AM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>Children's Activities (by)</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>8:00 PM Elders Meeting</p> <p>Chris &amp; Diana Stevens Glen &amp; Janet Stumister</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>Courtney Actur Joseph Dyer</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>Leonard &amp; Karen Romtz Margaret Cleveland Tim &amp; Ruth (B of)</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Patron's Day Off</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>Guy &amp; Margie Stevens</p>
<p><b>11</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>Men's Eventide</p> <p>Children's Service Day</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:00 AM Circuit Pastor's Conference</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>Diane Stevens Jan Strick</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>Patron's Day Off</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>Kenny Krozin</p>
<p><b>18</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>Children's Activities (by)</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>8:00 PM Board of Education Meeting</p> <p>Ryan Bowles</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>Sharon Allen</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Patron's Day Off</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>
<p><b>25</b></p> <p>8:00 AM Divine Service/Communion</p> <p>10:30 AM Bible Class</p> <p>3:00 PM Church Picnic</p> <p>7:00 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>7:00 PM LWBILL</p> <p>Tammy Krozin</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>11:30 AM T.A.M.A. Meeting</p> <p>Rene Etzheim</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>7:30 AM Matins</p> <p>8:00 AM Staff Meeting</p> <p>12:00 PM Ladies Aid Luncheon</p> <p>12:00 PM Ladies Aid Bible Luncheon/Bible Study</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Patron's Day Off</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>8:30 PM Divine Service/Communion</p>



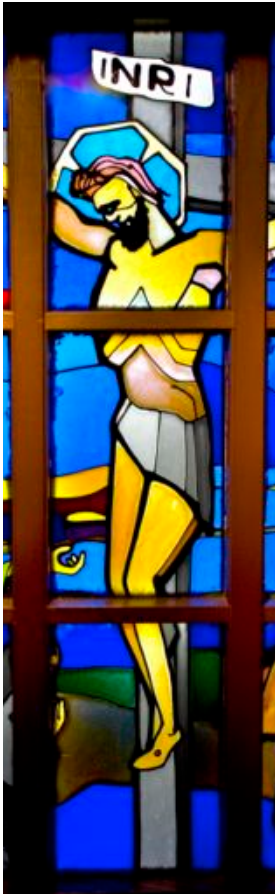
# VBS: Mighty Samson



For more pictures, go to Immanuel's website: [http://immanueltuscola.org/Site/Photos/Pages/ILC\\_VBS\\_2013.html](http://immanueltuscola.org/Site/Photos/Pages/ILC_VBS_2013.html)

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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.

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