

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever... (Hebrews 13:8)*

September 2024 marks the month of our grand celebration. And, indeed, we have much to celebrate! Thousands of Baptisms and Confirmations. Hundreds of weddings. So many opportunities to lay our Christian brothers and sisters to rest on the days of funerals and committals. Youth events. LWML gatherings. Choir performances. Children's Christmas programs. Graduation celebrations, wedding rehearsals, and baby showers. Harp programs and hymn festivals. Visiting orchestras and choirs. The list goes on, and on, and on – we can never thank God enough for all his good and gracious gifts to us!

There are certainly a lot of gifts over 150 years, yet much has changed in that time. We currently worship in a building dedicated 100 years ago, 50 years after the founding of the congregation. My family and I live in a parsonage that was built some 70 years ago. Our education wing was built 50 years ago, and our fellowship area within the last generation. Our paved parking lot is only 6 years old! Yes, it's obvious that those who have the blessing of many years have seen a lot change in this place. But, even those who are still in school have seen plenty of changes at Immanuel.

Yet, there are things that will *never* change. We teach the same doctrine that we did 150 years ago, because it is based in God's Word. We worship the same God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We might eat different bread or drink different wine, but the Lord is still present with his body and blood in the Sacrament. We might have running (city) water in the building instead of using individual wells or water from the river, but each Baptism is still the same Sacrament with the same gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. We might do Confirmation differently, but children and adults alike both answer the same questions of faith in Christ. We might speak English and not German, but we sing the same songs and liturgy, confess the same Creed, and pray the same Lord's Prayer. Most of all, our Lord himself never changes. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8).

Change can bring with it much anxiety and fear, and our world is full of both. But, we have the eternal reassurance that our Lord will never change – not in his essence, neither in his Word and promises. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. Our families might look different as people age and go to be with the Lord, but Christ is always with us. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. The world might change its tune on this or that, but God's Word continues to bring us truth and life. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. People may come and go, numbers ebb and flow, the sun rises and falls, moons wax and wane – but our God stays the same. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!*

-Pastor Squire

“Christ yesterday, today, the same, to you all might and pow’r belong. Ceaselessly may we praise your name, as we raise up our endless song. Fix every eye, that we behold, the joy and rest of saints foretold.

(“Christ Yesterday, Today, Always,” v. 6)