

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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I am writing about Ethan. Ethan is 11 years old. Ethan has an incurable brain tumor. He has had extensive surgery three times (1st in 2003; 2nd in November 2005 and 3rd this year), including a bone marrow transplant. He is now being treated with chemo therapy. No further procedures can be performed. It is unknown what benefit this new therapy might provide.

Ethan is a delightful young man who wins the friendship of all he meets.

As is always the case in these most distressful situations Ethan's condition has become the focal point of his family. He has two older brothers who do their best to live normal lives in the middle of continual medical treatments and family discussions. As Ethan's health changes he is more and more faced with palliative therapies that mostly treat his symptoms. His parents and two brothers, meanwhile, do all they can in order to keep themselves together emotionally and financially.

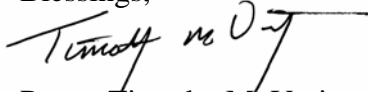
The toll, however, is great. Two major brain surgeries in 4 years have drained the family of resources. Insurance covers something but, as we all know, not every expense. And those expenses continue to mount. Ethan's mother works at her own child care agency. His father is employed as a personal trainer. The whole family chips in. But as summer approaches the business goes into a natural slump. Ethan's parents are worried what will happen to their house, and their two older teen aged sons who want what other children take for granted.

Ethan and his family are members of *Immanuel Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids*. The good folks of Immanuel are helping Ethan's family. But, indeed, more is needed.

No one knows how much time we have left on this earth. Certainly Ethan doesn't know. He wants to live. He's full of life. He has faith.

"Death Be Not Proud" is an old book that comes to mind as I think of Ethan. Just as the main character of that poignant story proudly defied the prognosis of his doctors, Ethan proudly and joyously lives his life. He fears not what frightens others into inaction. We know he'll not give up. He is a delightful young man who hopes for the best. If there is something that can be done to enhance this family's situation perhaps we can all pitch in and do a little, for Ethan.

Blessings,



Pastor Timothy M. Verity
Senior Pastor

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