



THE MESSENGER

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

726 Fuller Avenue, Big Rapids, MI 49307

Website: www.immanuelbr.com

Phone (231) 796-8273 Fax (231) 796-9599

Sunday Morning Worship Service 9:30 am Live and on Facebook

Office Staff: Linda Obermier, Office Manager. Cindi Morris, Office Assistant.

The Church office is open Tuesday-Thursday 9am—4pm and is closed on Monday and Friday.

MISSION: To inspire members to grow in loving devotion to Jesus Christ, caring concern for one another, welcoming outreach, and loving service to our neighbors.

VISION STATEMENT: Immanuel Lutheran Church will be known for welcoming hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.

APRIL 2025

Pastoral Schedule

(in-person) (Live stream on Facebook)

April 6, 2025 Rev. Kristine Hahn

April 13, 2025 Pastor Dan Ward

April 20, 2025 Pastor Bob Garrels

April 27, 2025 Pastor Dan Ward

Please call the church office (231) 796-8273 in case of an emergency.
The referral will be passed on to a leader of the church.

2024 Council Members

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Phyllis Cousineau, President | (231) 796-9574 | <u>Intentional Faith Development</u> |
| Tammy Lindsey, Vice Pres. | (231) 519-1212 | <u>Social Concerns (Risk-Taking Mission and Service)</u> |
| Judy O'Dell, Secretary | (231) 349-2795 | |
| Nedra Neumann, Treasurer | (231) 796-0956 | Roger Barr, Chairperson (231)972-8276 |
| Steve Neumann | (231) 796-0956 | Lee Wolken –Habitat/Humanity (586)634-9941 |
| Melanie Richardson | (231) 357-0863 | |
| Carol Wilson-Jungck | (231) 670-3220 | <u>Stewardship (Extravagant Generosity)</u> |
| Carol Zimmerman | (231) 796-2152 | Lee Wolken, Chairperson(586) 634-9941 |
| <u>Council Liaisons:</u> | | David Scott (231) 250-5067 |

Office Staff

Linda Obermier, Office Manager T-W-Th
Cindi Morris, Office Assistant T-Th
Phyllis Lindsey, Parish Nurse (schedule varies)

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Robert Schweitzer | 1st |
| Beth Windquist | 4th |
| Allison Conley | 17th |
| Tammy Lindsey | 28th |

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Gilbert & Deborah Flores | 13th |
| Richard & Betty Jo Brown | 15th |



Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of Immanuel's Founding

Ron Decker and Carol Zimmerman are taking the lead in preparing for the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the founding of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Saturday/Sunday anniversary events are being planned during fall 2025 such as a time for present and past members to share memories, a historical photo display, a PowerPoint presentation on key historical milestones, a Saturday evening celebration dinner, and a special Sunday morning worship service. Also being considered is a brochure on the history of Immanuel Lutheran Church, an event that focuses on the future as well as the past of Immanuel, a special 80th anniversary community service project, and a community-based event featuring cooperation with the other mainline Christian churches in the Big Rapids area. Certainly, Immanuel has a history that is worthy of celebration: *In 1945, 80 years ago, three Swedish and Danish churches (Swedish: Evangelical, Augustana; Danish: St. Ansgar), plus the transferred members of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran that had closed in 1933, merged to form Immanuel Lutheran Church. The merged congregation worshipped at St. Ansgar until 1956 when the new church on Linden Street in Big Rapids was completed. In 1974, a fellowship hall was added to accommodate membership growth. As the congregation grew, it welcomed members from all ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds, and its membership came to reflect the rich diversity of the Big Rapids. In the year 2000, the Immanuel congregation decided to create the opportunity for expanded ministries by building a larger church on a beautiful 12-acre wooded site on Fuller Avenue in Big Rapids. The first worship service at the new church was held in 2005. In 2015, the congregation dedicated a bell tower that featured the "heritage" bells from the original Scandinavian churches as well as beautiful liturgical glass panels. Since the move to Fuller Avenue, Immanuel has become known as a "opening doors" church, a community musical and cultural center in cooperation with Tuba Bach and other community organizations, and a community-based church with ministries such as the "Dump and Run" ministry with Ferris State University.*

Immanuel as a Community Cultural and Activity Center

When the planning for Immanuel's building and site took place 25 years ago, one of the objectives of the congregation's planning team was to create a sanctuary with flexible seating so that the space could be used both as a place of worship and a community cultural and activity center. With the support of a liturgical consultant, several sessions involving members of the congregation were held to review options, and there was enthusiastic support for moving away from fixed pews to moveable seating that could be adaptable for use for worship services, musical and art performances, and other community programming. The wisdom of this decision is demonstrated by the seventeen programs of the February 2025 Festival of the Arts performances being held at Immanuel and the year-long series of musical programs of Tuba Bach in collaboration with the School of Music at Michigan State University and Ferris State University. Most importantly, these community-based ministries contribute to Immanuel's mission of welcoming outreach and loving service to our neighbors as well as Immanuel's vision of welcoming hospitality. These activities also relate to one of Immanuel's value statements: *We reach out in love and service to the community. We are defined by our caring concern for our neighbors, serving them and inviting them to join our fellowship of faith.*

March 2025 Update of the Vision Committee

- * With thankfulness to Roger Barr for his years of leadership of the Dump and Run ministry, a new leadership structure is being formed in preparation for collecting clothing and other reuseable items from the Ferris dormitories during the departure of Ferris students at the end of the spring semester and distributing those items to various local charities.
- * Phyllis Cousineau, Lee Wolken, and Gunder Myran are working on redesigning Immanuel's approach to financial management and long-term financial strategy. Phyllis and Lee are assessing all financial management and decision-making processes with the goal of streamlining and simplifying the basis on which the Church Council makes decisions. Lee and Gunder are reviewing Immanuel's long-term financial strategy, including how finances will impact decisions about Immanuel's long-term future (Currently, Immanuel is falling short of matching current revenues to current expenditures, a financial approach that is not sustainable.) At a Saturday workshop in the spring, the Church Council and the Vision Committee will review Immanuel's alternative futures and develop recommendations on shaping Immanuel's best future and the related financial strategy. Immanuel today faces future-shaping decisions at a fundamental level that parallel the decision Immanuel leaders made 80 years ago when they decided to merge Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish congregation to form the Immanuel Lutheran Church we know today. Assuming continued paying down of Immanuel's mortgage debt at the current pace, the final payment will be made in 2032—seven years from now. How will we shape our future during those seven years, and what will the future look like after the debt is fully paid? Is it possible to pay off the debt in less than seven years? These are the questions to be addressed at the spring workshop and later with the congregation.
- * The need for a year-around ministry to complement the Dump and Run ministry and our current efforts to support local food pantries: We discussed a statement by Pastor Jeremy Wicks of the First United Methodist Church: *Faith that doesn't call us to action isn't faith at all; it is apathy dressed in religious language. It is a theology of passivity that has nothing in common with the gospel of Jesus Christ.* Also, Isaiah 6:8: Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" **And I said, Here I am, Lord, send me, send me.** We discussed ways to celebrate what community outreach ministries Immanuel and individual members are currently doing to "feed the hunger, welcome the outcast, heal the wounded, and enable justice to roll down like a river." We discussed several year-around ministry options such as expanding our ministry to single low-income moms with small children who attend Brookside Elementary School (and possibly the Morley schools), a ministry partnership with Angels of Action, and a ministry with the nursing home across the street from Immanuel. At the Saturday workshop mentioned above, we will prepare recommendations on a new year-around ministry to the church council and the congregation.

SOCIAL CONCERNS – PLANS FOR 2025

Dump and Run time is closing in and we have decided that a trifecta of leaders will coordinate events. Lee Wolken, who has been a lynch pin for D & R since its inception and, along with Phyllis Cousineau and Carol Wilson, will coordinate the D & R efforts this year. Dump and Run is scheduled to begin the week of May 4th, which is Ferris exam week. Sign up sheets and signs, etc. will be available.

We will continue to collect for Manna Pantry, Project Starburst, the 3 area grade schools, and the pantry at Third Avenue UMC. Bins are in the Narthex and indicate what is needed, but food-wise anything is acceptable as long as it is not out dated.

**Social Concerns cannot exist without more members,
please consider joining the committee!**

The Lenten Season is upon us.

Please plan to join us for this most important series, “Spiritual Disciplines and Desires”. A soup and bread meal will be ready at 6p.m. along with some fellowship and perhaps even dessert! Service will start promptly at seven, and will be utilizing the Holden Evening Prayer booklets.

Holy week is in the planning stages; as of the printing of this newsletter, it had not yet been decided which church would be hosting the Good Friday service. But keep your eyes and ears open for that decision, because it should be made soon.

Easter Sunday Service at Immanuel will be led by Pastor Bob Garrels, with an Easter brunch following the service. The church ladies will be providing egg casseroles, and a sign-up sheet will be placed in the Communications Center of the Fellowship Hall for other delicious items needed/wanted for this brunch.

There will also be sign-up sheets in the Communications Center for purchasing Easter lilies or for making a donation towards the cross on the altar.

YTD through February

Ministry Fund

Giving..... **\$ 17,430**

Expenses..... **\$ 26,397**

Average Attendance: 28

Building Fund

Giving..... **\$ 11,517**

Expenses..... **\$ 13,844**



AIDING THE PANTRIES—ARE WE GETTING “STALE”?

At our Congregational Conversation there was a lively discussion regarding how to be helpful to our neighbors. Is there more to be done? Absolutely! Can Immanuel do more? Well... and the discussion fell back into the lack of leadership and willing, able hands. We are older. We have “done that”. Week after week our bins in the narthex for various pantries and school requests sit rather empty and neglected—part of the problem is we “forget” what is being collected when we go to the store, are not used to shopping for shelf stable items, live on fixed incomes where it becomes difficult to spend extra dollars even for good causes. But some of it is that we have quietly grown “stale”, the need has been so great for so long that we have become rather desensitized.

Taking on a new community effort seems like a huge undertaking. Where do we see the most need? Since we are few but mighty, perhaps we should refocus on those community activities we have already committed to!

What IF:

- * Rather than focusing on certain items each month (which we have done the past two years), how about focusing on things that might make a meal come together? For example, mac and cheese needs milk and butter, unless you buy the box with the premade cheese sauce. There is boxed, shelf stable milk. There is pancake mix with eggs and milk already in them, just add water. Syrup is shelf stable. Provide a can of frosting along with a boxed cake mix. Canned tuna works well with Tuna Helper. Think back to what worked for you when you were young and raising a family. We’ve all been in the situation where a jar of spaghetti sauce with meat and some macaroni or noodles made a great meal to fill little tummies.
- * Look for buy one, get one 50% off or free. Pay the extra and donate that to the pantries. If you see a great sale on green beans, buy a few cans, or fruit, or cereal.
- * Laundry soap and other cleaning supplies are always in need.

Project Starburst provides a wide variety of support, including clothing, paperwork assistance, pet food, and other household products beyond food. Drop in and say hello to the willing workers there, a tour is eye opening.

Thank you Immanuel for all that you do to support our community. It is time to take a step forward once again. We can use ideas and extra hands on the Social Concerns Committee—right now we are gearing up for Dump and Run, come and join us!



We are having Easter Breakfast on Easter Sunday, April 20th!

Plan to attend our Easter Breakfast with your family following the service on Easter Sunday! The sign-up sheet is on the counter in the narthex—please sign up so that we can determine how many people to expect, and indicate if you would like to bring a coffee cake/donuts, mixed fruit, or juice, or an egg dish.



APRIL 2025

Continue to prepare yourselves during this Lenten Journey with Easter arriving soon! Spring has arrived and the robins and spring flowers have returned. Are you taking advantage of the warmer sunny days?

Our Health News for April:

1) April is **National Donate Life Month**. About 121,000 people in the United States are awaiting an organ/tissue donation in order to survive. One organ donor can save 9 lives. If you have not signed up yet to be an organ/tissue donor (after you have no longer any need for them), go to the Secretary of State office to get a "heart" on your drivers' license.

2) April is **National Healthcare Decisions Day**. This day is a reminder to encourage the public about advance health care planning which involves decision making about medical treatment when and if one can no longer communicate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 70% of American adults are without an advance care plan. Think about it and if you do not have an advance care plan, ask your health care professional for the forms, then fill it out.

3) **April is National Foot Awareness Month**. Foot health is very important, especially for people who have diabetes. **1.** Check feet daily, especially between the toes to ensure that there are no blisters or cuts, **2.** Wash feet daily and dry thoroughly, especially between the toes, **3.** Apply lotion to the bottoms of feet and dry areas (but not between the toes), **4.** Cut toe nails straight across (if you can't reach, ask a family member or podiatrist to do this). If you do have diabetes, be sure to see your podiatrist yearly.

4) **April is Eye Health Safety Month**. Take good care of your eyes by: **1.** eating healthy—greens, eggs, nuts, beans, fish, citrus fruit, **2.** quit smoking, **3.** wear sunglasses, **4.** use safety glasses when working with tools, etc., **5.** look away from the computer screen periodically, **6.** visit your eye doctor regularly.

WORLD CONCERNS PRAYERS

PEACE for the WORLD – PRAY FOR USA IN THESE TRYING TIMES- Federal, State Leaders & Local officials

Climate Change all over world

Wildfires (especially residents in California)

Violent storms all over the country, especially the Hurricane Helene victims.

Young people protesting gun violence in schools

Homeless, hungry and homebound, those in prison, refuge

Racial Justice-W/ELCA

Healings for division in our Country

Prayer for separated families & displaced persons, & people in addiction

Those effected by the terrorist attack in New Orleans

Shootings & Suicides in returning veterans within the Military

and their families (general PTSD) (22 suicides every day)

For all the children

People of Ukraine

For all abused children

Pray for people in all foreign lands, for a reprieve for their problems



Healing & Health Concerns for: Nancy McReynolds, Jean Swarthout, Sally Barr, Helen Engstrom, Melanie Richardson, Marcy Nelson, and Helen Shotwell-Jones.

Comfort for the families of: Denny Greene, Beverly Gammon, Rev. Dennis Hahn, Don Nelson and Mary Sutherland.

Evergreen Terrace: Dorothy Burch, Bill & Flo Pemberton.

The Brook: Marcy Nelson

Mission Point: Ann Bird

Homebound: Leroy Larson .

COMMUNITY CONCERNS-NON-MEMBERS

All people having cancer treatment & surgery

All people that need support, work

People recovering from surgery

Prayers for Dementia Patients & families & caregivers

All families dealing with Pandemics

Guidance for: St. Andrew's - Pastor Radha (woman)

Augustana Lutheran in Tustin- has supply pastor Sharon VanDam

St. Paul's, RC - Supply pastors., is looking for full time Pastor; Contact person: Lori Grein

Immanuel Lutheran— Having supply Pastors

United Church - Looking for full time Pastor

St. Peter's Lutheran - Installed new pastor on 2-12-23

1st United Methodist has new Pastor

Rev. Jeremy Wicks (July 2021)

3rd Ave. Methodist Church—looking for new pastor.

Friends of Journey Club, Hope House, Forgotten Man Ministries, Salvation Army

Our Brother's Keeper

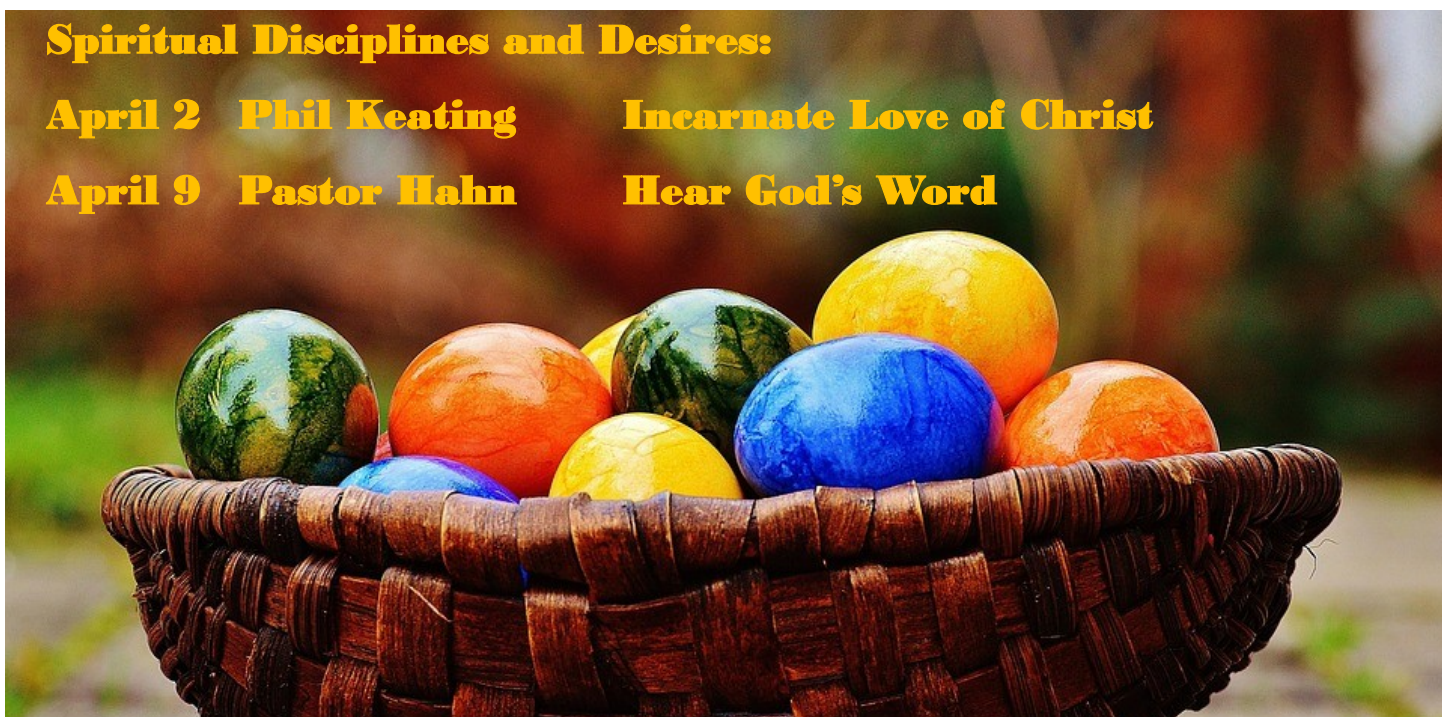
Spiritual Disciplines and Desires:

April 2 Phil Keating

Incarnate Love of Christ

April 9 Pastor Hahn

Hear God's Word



APRIL MSU CONCERT SERIES

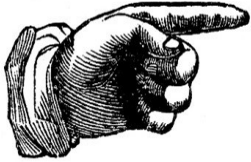
April 6th

Tuba Bach

MSU String Quartet

4:00 pm

Please Notice This



People are needed to provide soup and bread for the Wednesday SOUP AND BREAD SUPPERS FOR THE LENTEN SEASON SERVICES. Each week, two or three soups and 2 or 3 loaves of bread will be needed. There is a sign up sheet in the Congregation Information Center located in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up if you are able!

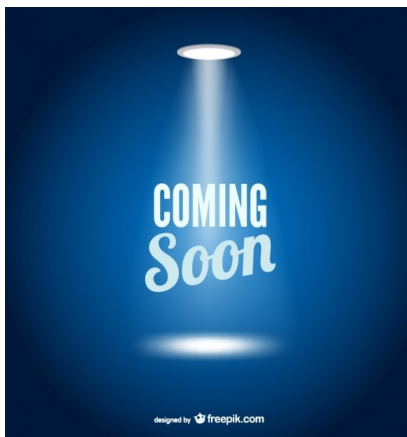
PLEASE NOTE:



The WELCA N.W. Synod Women's Spring Gathering is on Saturday, April 26th at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Reed City from 9am to 3pm. Please join us!

MONTHLY MATINEE

This month's matinee is '**This Land is Mine**' - a 1943 movie starring Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara. One of my absolute favorites for my 80th birthday!



Thanks to ingenuity and hard work, our next newsletter will be amazing, like nothing we've ever produced before!

Cindi was able to acquire the program **Canva** for our church (free of charge), and has been working diligently to learn everything about it, as we plan to use this software as the newsletter program for us going forward.

We promise you will be very impressed with our brand new format—stay tuned!

Committees and Teams

Audit Committee

Jim Lindsey (231) 796-6400
Tammy Lindsey (231) 519-1212
Lee Wolken (586) 634-9941

Church Life

Carol Zimmerman, Chair (231) 796-2152
Kitchen Coordinator

Finance

Nedra Neumann, Chair (231) 796-0956
Nedra Neumann, Treasurer (231) 796-0956
Roger Barr – Gifts/Memorials (231) 972-8276
David Scott-Council Chair (231) 250-5067

Nominating Team (2025)

Property

Tim Vogel, Chair (231) 796-3860
Heritage team:
Carol Zimmerman (231) 796-2152

Vision (and Ministry Leadership Network)

Gunder Myran, Chair (231) 972-7405
Lee Wolken (586) 634-9941

Church Partnership Team

Gunder Myran, Chair (231) 972-7405

Welcoming

Phyllis Lindsey – Prayer circle
(231) 796-6400
Dee Neumann-Prayer Circle
(231) 796-8385
Webmaster - Leah Monger
(231) 287-7022

Women of the ELCA

Dee Neumann, co-chair (231) 796-8385
Judy O'Dell, co-chair (231) 349-2795

Worship and Music

(Passionate Worship)

Carol Wilson-Jungck, Chairperson
(231) 670-3220
David Scott, A/V team (231) 250-5067
Dee Neumann, Altar Guild
(231) 796-8385
Carol Zimmerman, Altar Guild
(231) 796-2152
Readers (Volunteer)
Phyllis Lindsey, Parish Nurse /
Homebound visits (231) 796-6400



April 2025

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|---|--|--|-----|-----|
| | | <p>1</p> <p>OFFICE MTG 10:30am WORSHIP & MUSIC MTG 2:00pm</p> | <p>2 </p> <p>SUPPER 6:00pm SERVICE 7:00pm <u>Lay Leader</u> <u>PHIL KEATING</u></p> | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <p>6 <u>REV.</u> <u>KRISTINE HAHN</u></p> <p>WORSHIP 9:30 am HOSPITALITY 10:30am 80th ANN/VISION 10:45 TUBA BACH 4:00pm MSU String Quartet</p> | 7 | <p>8</p> <p>OFFICE MTG 10:30am</p> | <p>9 </p> <p>SUPPER 6:00pm SERVICE 7:00pm <u>REV.</u> <u>KRISTINE HAHN</u></p> | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| <p>13 <u>PASTOR</u> <u>DAN WARD</u></p> <p>WORSHIP 9:30am HOSPITALITY 10:30am COUNCIL MEETING 10:45am</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> | 14 | <p>15</p> <p>OFFICE MTG 10:30am KNITTING GROUP Noon</p> | 16 | <p>17 </p> <p>MOVIE MATINEE 3:00pm</p> <p><u>"THIS LAND IS MINE"</u></p> | 18 | 19 |
| <p>20 <u>PASTOR</u> <u>BOB GARRELS</u></p> <p>WORSHIP 9:30am EASTER BRUNCH 10:30am</p> <p>EASTER</p> | 21 | <p>22</p> <p>OFFICE MTG 10:30am</p> | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| <p>27 <u>PASTOR</u> <u>DAN WARD</u></p> <p>WORSHIP 9:30am HOSPITALITY 10:30am</p> | 28 | <p>29</p> <p>OFFICE MTG 10:30am HYMN PLANNING 3:00pm</p> | 30 | | | |