

IMMANUEL SPEAKS

JULY 2020

July 

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Immanuel Lutheran Church, PO Box 236, Clara City, MN 56222

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

After much prayer and deliberation, Immanuel will begin in-person worship beginning this Sunday, June 21st. For your safety and the safety of others we are implementing these guidelines based upon the recommendation of the CDC, MN Department of Health, and ELCA church wide office.

1. Members over the age of 65 and those with underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged **NOT** to attend the church service due to health risks. Services as always will be live on local cable access, facebook, and radio.
2. Anyone who is sick, has a fever, coughing, sneezing or feeling fatigued should **NOT** come to worship.
3. Hand sanitizer will be located at the back of the sanctuary.
4. Masks are strongly recommended for everyone in attendance. If you do not have a mask the church will provide one.
5. 6 feet social distancing.
 - Pews have been taped off for social distancing. Families may be seated together.
6. At this time there will be **NO** communal praying, responsive reading, or singing
 - Darci and song leaders will lead the music
7. At the end of the service, you will be ushered out and as you do so you will receive the all in one communion cup. When done place the empty cup in trash can in the entry way.
 - As you come to receive the communion elements please have your palm out so that pastor can place the cup and wafer in your hand.
 - Please maintain 6 feet between families/households as directed.
8. Offering plates will be placed in the rear of the sanctuary.
9. There will be **NO** coffee and fellowship at this time per guidelines.

In Christ,

Pastor Joel Gueningsman

Dearest Friends in Christ,

In a few days we will celebrate the 244th anniversary of our country's independence. Now as we celebrate this event I would like to ask you a question. Who is the freest person in the world? Now I think many of us would say it would be us, the American citizen. We have so many freedoms, that we can do just about anything within reason. As Americans we have: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom to bear arms, freedom to assemble, the right to equal justice, the right to own private property and the list goes on and on.

However, I believe the answer isn't Americans. Rather the answer is Christians. Now, some people might say that Christians are not free, that we have to live by a certain set of laws and do the right things to please God or to get to heaven. However, that is not the case. We do not have to do anything for our salvation, there are no points to earn or score sheet in heaven to see if we have done enough. In fact when it comes to our salvation we find that we are powerless. The apostle Paul in Romans chapter three tells us that we cannot earn our way into heaven, that "All have sinned fallen short of the glory of God." Later in Romans chapter six Paul would put it this way, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." There is nothing we can do for our salvation because we are sinners. However, the good news is that God in divine mercy has given us freedom! God has redeemed us and set us free.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through his life, death, and resurrection has given us freedom from sin, death, the devil, and those forces that seek to keep us from God so that we might have live with him both now and forever. Because of his work and love shown through his life, crucifixion, and resurrection we are free; free from sin, death, and the devil and will live eternally.

Luther would put it this way in his explanation to the 2nd article of the creed; "We believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be wholly His own, and live under him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true." There is nothing we can do or that we have to do. Dead in sin, through Christ we have freedom! Dead in sin, through Christ we know live as God's chosen and beloved!

And just as we have our freedoms in this country such as the right to bear arms, free speech and many others, we as Christians have been freed by God to be his own and to be who we are created to be. We remember God's original command to Adam and Eve as he called them to be fruitful and multiply, and to be stewards, partners with God in caring for all of creation. We are freed from all that separates us from relationship with God, and we are freed to care for God's creation and the world around us.

Martin Luther would write in *The Freedom of a Christian*, “We are perfectly free lords of all subject to none, and yet at the same time dutiful servants of all, subject to all.” This is the freedom God has given us as he has rescued us from sin; called and claimed us as his own for all eternity. This is the freedom that God has given us as he sends us as his beloved people into the world so that others might know the love of God. We are freed from all that separates us from relationship with God, and we are freed to join in God’s mission for all of his creation!

My friends as we celebrate our independence day, and give God thanks for all of the wonderful liberties that we have; let us also take time daily to give him thanks for the greatest independence day that happened two thousand plus years ago in the life, death, and resurrection of our savior who has freed us from all that separates us from life with him. Let us give thanks that God has freed us to be who we are called to be; disciples sharing his love and caring for his creation.

Happy Independence Day,

Pastor Joel



Our mid-week Drive-in Services will continue for the month of July at 7:00 p.m. Please remember to enter the parking lot using the entrance towards 1st Ave.

Council Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2020

Attending: Josh VanDerPol; Duane Jaenisch; Kathy Fritz; Gary Meyer; Ross Pederson; Pastor Joel; LuAnn Kruger

Absent: Sandy Scanlon; Jim Jaenisch

Meeting was called to order by President Ross Pederson at 7:30 p.m.

Devotions were based on Exodus 19. Pastor Joel stated this is a beautiful picture of the true grace of God. After moving the Israelites out of Egypt, God told Moses that he wanted if the Israelites followed his rules, he would make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The people agreed, but shortly after built idols to other gods and rejected the God who had saved them. In spite of their faithlessness, God continued to come after them and offer them his grace. Likewise, God continues to look for us and offer us his grace.

Agenda: Additions were made to the agenda. Council then M/S/P to accept the agenda with those additions.

Reports:

Secretary Report: Minutes from the council meeting held on April 26th were reviewed. No corrections were identified. Minutes were M/S/P.

Treasurers Report: Kathy provided a treasurer's report at this meeting. Accounts have remained stable with some giving still occurring during this time. Current checking account balance is \$38,750.58; savings account balance this date is \$115,119.66. Council M/S/P the report.

Committee Reports:

Media: Continues to work on updating some equipment.

No other committee reports were available.

Pastor's Report: Pastor's report for dated April 25th was available.

Old Business:

-Council discussed the fading of the Immanuel sign on Highway 7. Council members present are not familiar with where the previous signs were obtained or how they were made. Gary will stop on Highway 7 to see if there is a builder's 'signature' of some kind on the sign; Duane will check on the one on County 2 to look for the same.

New Business:

-Council M/S/P Michelle flexing her time to work at the scale house during fall harvest.
-Currently, Kathy has limited access to information regarding the accounts of the church. Council members discussed and felt it is important that, as treasurer, she have on-line access to view activity of all the accounts including committees, Sunday, school, Endowment, Youth, etc. for Immanuel Lutheran Church. She would not be added to signature card for the accounts. Council voted, M/S/P supporting that access.

-The lighting in the west bell tower was changed to more of a yellowish color. Somehow, the hatch door in the east tower was left open allowing access for pigeons. Quite a mess and odor has occurred up there. Unfortunately, like in the west tower, the ladder in that tower is no longer safe. As this seems to come up often in the last couple of years, it may be time to see about replacement. This will, however, be a very difficult task. It may be necessary to have a new ladder built for each and fastened to the tower walls. Ross will make a contact to see about some assistance with this.

-How to proceed with worship services given the recommendations of the Synod and the CDC, was discussed. It was suggested that many members are missing attending. Although a very difficult decision, the council decided to continue with current plan until July, when council will discuss again. June 10 will be a drive up service with individuals remaining in their cars; July 17 participants can bring a lawn chair and sit with others demonstrating social distancing. Sunday services will remain virtual at this time.

-Because minimal money was collected for Lutheran Disaster Response due to current circumstances, council agreed to move collections for this to the 3rd quarter (July, August, and September).

Council M/S/P to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, LuAnn Kruger

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**Pastor's Report to Church Council
June 8, 2020 (Apr. 26th-June 8th)**

Rev. Joel Gueningsman

Pastoral Acts

- 78 in person/phone pastoral visits; 2 funeral services @ nursing home with memorials to be planned at a later date: Rosie Boike (Apr. 27th), Carol Fritz (May 20th).

Worship

- Worship/Bible Study @ CCCC still on hold due to Coronavirus
- Worship will continue virtual on Sundays through the month of May
 - After reading through guidelines for returning to the Sanctuary at this time out of love for one another and the way the service would need to be altered virtual is still the safest way that allows for a complete worship service. Listed below are some of the factors that have led to this decision.
 - Anyone 65 or older or those who have pre-existing conditions are strongly discouraged from attending.
 - We are strongly recommended and discouraged from joint speaking and singing due to how the virus can remain and be transmitted through the air. This means a majority of the service would be cut out.
 - Everyone in attendance is strongly recommended to wear a mask to decrease the spread of droplets and aerosols in the air.
 - Cleaning; every place a person has been needs to be sanitized.
 - After consultation with the head infectious disease specialist at Rice Memorial in Willmar churches are still being urged to continue virtual as it is the safest form of worship.
- Drive-in Service added for the month of June, possibly into July depending upon the recommendation of local health officials
 - First service was June 3rd with 45 people attending

- After consulting with our synod staff and local health officials the next safest form of worship is the drive-in service.
 - We ask that people stay in their cars during the service
 - Enter the parking lot towards 1st Ave entrance and council members will direct you to your spot.
 - Council members will be wearing gloves and masks as they hand you a bulletin & all in one communion cup. As they give you the all in one communion cup we ask that you open your hand and let them place in in your palm instead of grabbing for it.
 - Tune your radio to 103.5 for sound or if parked 6 feet or more from the next car you can have your windows down as there are also speakers.

Education/Youth & Family

- WELCA Bible Study @ PPP still on hold due to coronavirus
- Daily devotions & virtual family Sunday school links have been posted on facebook page.
- With great sadness I was informed that Green Lake Bible Camp has decided to cancel the rest of their summer programming.
 - They are working on resources for an at home Bible Camp & VBS.

Mission & Outreach

- Community meal May 3rd served around 170.
- Community meal June 7th served around 160.
- Brought items from congregation members and on behalf of the congregation to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's pop up food shelf to assist Minneapolis residents in the aftermath of the riots.
- Attended to prayer vigils that same day, one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul

Wider Church

- Presiding Bishop Eaton prepared a sermon for June 7th to provide clergy a Sabbath day of rest amidst the busyness of ministering during this time.
 - That sermon was posted on facebook before Sunday's service on June 7th.

Pastoral Self-Care

- Looking into a possible week of vacation in northern Minnesota when we figure out some possible dates.

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Volunteers Needed!!!

The Clara City Care Center is looking for volunteers to help with the outdoor visits. The volunteer would screen our visitors outside and make sure social distancing is carried out. Each volunteer would be trained in taking temperature, going through policy with visitor, monitor while allowing for privacy and then sanitizing the visit area. The volunteers would need to have a background check, a Mantoux done, and will be training in infection control to properly screen visitors. Please call Kris at the Care Center if interested at 320-847-7217

Below we have printed the **tribe's membership for August, 2020**. The chair person (s) will be calling you in the near future asking you to help serve Immanuel in some way. Start thinking today what you can volunteer to help with...oh, and please say yes! We have been having a lot of trouble filling the few jobs we need help with each Sunday and if everyone takes one job, the 'needs' list would be filled. Thanks!

Tribe up for service in August 2020

Chairperson: Murlaine Rieger

- Marvin and Judi Boike
- Adela Fuls
- Dean and Judy Gosseling
- Chuck and Beci Hinderks
- Cory and Steffanie Janssen family
- Ron and Karin Koenen
- Gary and Lori Kruger
- Steve and Denise Miller
- Murlaine Rieger
- Tim and JoEllen Rosendahl



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2020 Offerings collected for the month of June: \$5,540.35

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Wednesday, June 3	\$2,350.35
Wednesday, June 10	\$420.00
Wednesday, June 17	\$330.00
Sunday, June 21	\$1,825.00
Wednesday, June 24	\$270.00
Sunday, June 28	\$345.00

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God's blessings to these couples on their special days:

- Dwight and Jan Mulder 43 years on July 22
- Larry and Janet Bosch 40 years on July 26
- Tom and Dawn Anderson 34 years on July 19
- Josh and Cindy VanDerPol 27 years on July 17
- Brian and Ronda Kimpling 26 years on July 9
- Bruce and Dianna Ellingson 14 years on July 29
- John and Kathy Fritz 8 years on July 7
- Travis and Marissa Jaenisch 3 years on July 8
- Brent and Brittany Karow 1 year on July 20



