

IMMANUEL SPEAKS
DECEMBER 2025



In St. Luke's telling of the Christmas story we hear these words spoken by an angel to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause you great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10). Fear I think it is one of the constants of life. In fact, fear is so common that we hear the phrase "Do not be afraid" or one of its variants 119 times in Scripture. To put it simply, our world is filled with fear.

Now one of my favorite presidents FDR in his first inaugural address would share these words, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." I have to admit that while I understand what FDR was talking about, I find it very difficult to do. When we look at the world around us and see everything that happens there is a lot that we are or can be afraid of. There is sickness and death. There is violence, bloodshed, poverty, injustice, and war. There are broken relationships and broken families. There is the fear of being alone, or being unloved by others and by God. And the list of things we fear can go on and on.

In the end no matter how brave a front we put on, I think we all have fears and it is hard to overcome them. It is easy to let them dominate and control our lives. However, as we gather here during this advent and Christmas season, we hear these joyous words from the angelic host, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause you great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

The message from the angel is that fear will not dominate our lives. Fear will not have the final say or control our lives, for a Savior has been born for you. As our reading from the gospel of John will say on Christmas day, our savior, the Word of God, Jesus Christ became flesh and dwells among us. He comes to calm our fears and to wipe away our tears. Like a parent he comes to comfort us in his arms and reassure us of his everlasting love which is stronger than any fear the world can throw at us.

Amidst the fears of life, do not be afraid is the angel's message, for Christ has come to save you from sin, from death, and from all those things that seek to separate you from life with him both now and forever. My friends, this is the good news of the Christmas story. Our God is not a God who is far off. Rather our God is a God who loves us so much, that Jesus leaves the glory and splendor of heaven and enters our world as a one of us with a grace that is filled with the cosmic energy of God. Christ comes to us with a grace that is filled with the cosmic energy of God that seeks to reach into every corner of our lives and heal that which we find hardest to believe can be healed...to comfort that which we believe cannot be comforted...and to bring hope to those places within our soul that we imagine to be hopeless.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, as we enter into the joys and wonders of the Advent & Christmas season may the words of the angel give you great joy and quell your fears. "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." He is Immanuel, God with you, now and always!

Blessed Advent & Merry Christmas!

Pastor Joel

Pastor's Report to Council (October 6, 2025 to November 9, 2025) Rev. Joel Gueningsman

November 9, 2025

1. Pastoral Acts

- 51 pastoral visits

2. Worship

-Clara City Care center

- Oct. 8th & 22nd; Nov. 5th

-Affirmation of Baptism, Oct. 26th @ 9am

-congregational confirmation party following worship

-All Saints Sunday, Nov. 2nd @ 9am

3. Education/Youth

-Sunday School

-No Sunday school on Oct. 19th??? (MEA)

-Trunk or Treat Oct. 26th @ 4pm

-Christmas program practice is underway

-Confirmation/Youth

-Started Unit 2 & entered the Catechism (10 Commandments)

-No confirmation on Oct. 15th (MEA)

-8th-12th graders, haunted hayride on Oct. 25th

-Nov 1st, Youth Luncheon & bakesale

-Jr. High Youth Gathering in Willmar Nov. 21st & 22nd

4. Mission & Outreach

-community meal continues to move along like a well oiled machine!

-Looney Lutherans (community ed. Scholarships) on Oct. 18th; raised 2,223.06 for community ed scholarships.

-Trunk or Treat on Oct. 26th; roughly 100 people attended, looking forward to next year!

-Spoke with members of St. Martin's board & Heritage Haven in Montevideo about transitional housing. More information to come.

5. Continuing Education/Pastoral Self-Care

-faith+lead course



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES AT IMMANUEL

Sunday School Christmas Program – Sunday, December 21st, at the 9:00 a.m. Worship Service.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship Service with Communion – Wednesday, December 24th at 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship Service with Communion – Thursday, December 25th at 9:00 a.m.

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2025 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

All 2025 financial contributions need to be in the church office by December 30th. Thank you for all your financial support this past year!

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DECEMBER COMMUNITY MEAL

The Community meal will be on Sunday, December 7th from 5:00-6:00 p.m. The menu is: egg bake, muffins and fruit. We will be serving in the Fellowship Hall and also to go meals in the alleyway. The meal is free and everyone is welcome! Please let us know how many meals you need by calling the church office at 847-2138 or signing up on Immanuel's Facebook page.

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WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR DECEMBER 2025

Sunday, December 7	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Paityn Colby
	Lay Reader:	Annette Rosen
	Altar Guild:	Sara Sabe
Sunday, December 14:	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Landon Emkes
	Lay Reader:	Carissa Pederson
	Altar Guild:	Ken & Jan Beyerl
Sunday, December 21:	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Greta Johnson
	Lay Reader:	Volunteer Needed
	Altar Guild:	Michele Shubert
Wednesday, December 24:	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Jana Rand (5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve)
	Altar Guild:	Judy Gosseling
Thursday, December 25:	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Tia Schwitters (9:00 a.m. Christmas Day)
	Altar Guild:	Carissa Pederson
Sunday, December 28:	PowerPoint/Acolyte:	Hudson Hansen
	Lay Reader:	Gary Meyer
	Altar Guild:	LuAnn Kruger



Sharing Your Poinsettias

It is that time of year again! If you have a poinsettia plant or other Christmas plants that you would like to share with us throughout the Christmas holidays, please fill out the form below. You can put the form in the offering plate, give to Kathy Speiser or Pastor Joel, bring to the church office, or mail it to Immanuel. **Please have the information to the church office by December 16th.**

Please fill out the following information:

Given by _____

In loving memory of _____

In honor of _____

Thank you for sharing your beautiful poinsettias with Immanuel.



TRIBE MEMBERSHIP FOR JANUARY 2026

Below we have printed the Tribe Membership for January 2025. The chairperson will be calling or texting you in the near future, asking you to serve Immanuel in some small way. Start thinking today what you can volunteer to help with....oh, and please say yes! If everyone takes a job, the needs list will be filled. Thank you so much!

Issachar Tribe

Diane Koenen
Harold and Megan Goedgedrag Family
Bob and Sharon Jaenisch
Keith and Sarah Rand Family
Jeff and Cari Stager
Barry and Katherine Schwitters Family
Kathy Speiser
Derek and Amanda Bluhm Family
Kyle and Desirae McNeil Family
Andrew and Tracy Neville Family

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OPEN RADIO BROADCASTS FOR 2026

Listed below are the open radio broadcasts for the year of 2025. If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast, please contact the church office at 847-2138, stop in the church office, or talk to Kathy Speiser or Pastor Joel. The cost for each broadcast is \$100. Thank you to everyone that has supported this outreach of Immanuel.

January 4, 11, 18	February 1, 8, 15, 22	March 1, 8, 15, 29
April 5, 12, 26	May 10, 24, 31	June 7, 14, 21, 28
July 5, 12, 26	August 2, 9, 23, 30	September 13, 20, 27
October 11, 18, 25	November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	December 6, 13, 20, 27

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"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN"

ONE DAY CHRISTMAS VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Immanuel is having a one day Christmas Vacation Bible School on Sunday, December 7th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will have the Bible story, crafts, games, lunch and a movie!! ALL ARE WELCOME!!

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NOTES FROM THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

A new columbarium was purchased and installed in the vault building at the cemetery. The columbarium is a 78 double niche (meaning two urns per niche). The purchase price is \$47,672.00. We also have a bid of \$1,000.00 for solar lighting to be installed. We would like to add a window on the north side but the price was too costly at this time (a bid of \$12,000). The niche sizes are: 14" wide X 14" high X 23" deep. There is a 14" X 14" granite stone face.

Price for purchasing a niche:

	<u>Top 2 Rows</u>	<u>Middle 2 Rows</u>	<u>Bottom 2 Rows</u>
Active Members:	\$1,600.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,200.00
Past or Non Active Members:	\$1,800.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,400.00
Non Members:	\$2,000.00	\$1,800.00	\$1,600.00

Add the cost of opening/closing at \$150.00. More than two urns will be half of purchase price. Etching will be purchaser's cost.

Any questions, contact a Cemetery Committee Member: Lonnie Hansen 320-226-3842, Keith Harms 320-979-0714, Andrew Neville 507-430-4039, Keith Rand 320-220-1069.

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:00 Family of Promise Meeting	2	3 6:00 Confirmation Meal 6:30 Confirmation	4	5	6 Basement Rented
7 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 SS/Coffee 11:00 -2:00 VBS 5:00-6:00 Community Meal	8 1:00 Quilting	9	10 6:00 Confirmation Meal 6:30 Confirmation	11	12	13 Wedding
14 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 SS/Fellowship Hour	15 1:30 Joy Bible Study CCCC Birthday Party	16	17 6:00 Confirmation Meal 6:30 Confirmation	18	19	20
21 9:00 Sunday School Christmas Program No Sunday School 10:00 Fellowship Hour	22	23	24 5:00 Christmas Eve Worship Service	25 9:00 Christmas Day Service Merry Christmas!	26 Office Closed	27
28 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 Fellowship Hour/No Sunday School	29	30	31 No Confirmation			

3 Ways to Give Online-NEW to Immanuel!

Safe, Secure, and Convenient!

1. Download the FREE Vanco app to your phone.

- Search **Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement** on your app store.
- Search for **Immanuel Lutheran Church of Clara City**. (Make sure you choose **CLARA CITY**-there are many different ILC's)
- You will need to sign up to create a login. Then, you can give from the app anywhere...anytime!



*****OR*****

2. Scan the QR code below with your phone camera to give to General Fund, Building Fund, Sunday School kids, or Youth (7th-12th) Fund.

- Scroll to choose your desired fund.



-You can give once or set up recurring gifts. You may use credit/debit card (3% charge that you can choose to pay or take off of your offering) or via your bank account at 1% charge.

*****OR*****

3. Church Website. (NOT FACEBOOK). Visit us at: <https://www.ilc-claracity.org/>

- Click 'Online Giving' at the top of the page and choose your desired fund. Follow the instructions online.

We want to make church giving convenient for you. If you have any questions, please contact Kat Schwitters at (320)-894-2658. Please consider giving to Immanuel in order to continue the work we do here.