

IMMANUEL SPEAKS  
NOVEMBER 2021



Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the month of November I have a question for you; what are you thankful for? As we gather on Thanksgiving Eve for worship we will hear the familiar story of the ten lepers. Leprosy was a dangerous skin disease where a person basically rotted away. It was also very contagious. To protect the community from spread those who had leprosy were forced to live outside of community. The only problem in Biblical days was that diagnosing leprosy wasn't that easy compared to today with modern science. And so in the end if you had a skin condition that didn't clear up you were considered a leper and cast out of the community.

Imagine no longer being able to live amongst family and friends; it doesn't sound too great does it. Now imagine that one day you see Jesus walking by. Having heard of his power and ability to heal diseases and cast out demons what do you do? You would cry out to him wouldn't you? That is exactly what the lepers do in the story and Jesus responds by healing you. So what do you do know? Well, nine of the lepers return to their old lives immediately. Who could blame them? I would be excited to be able to see my family and friends again. However, one response is different. The tenth leper when he notices he has been healed immediately turns around and worships Jesus and give thanks. The tenth leper recognizes where his healing has come from and praises God.

And so I ask again, what are you thankful for? This story serves as a reminder for us of the many ways God provides for us. Luther in his explanations to the three articles of the creed sums it up nicely. What do we have to be thankful for? From the first article we find that we are thankful that God provides for all of the physical needs of this body and life. From the second article we find that we are thankful because of God's free gift of love, grace, and forgiveness. Lost and dead in our sin, our Savior Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the powers of sin, death, and the devil and has named us as God's beloved children. From the third article we find that we are thankful for a God who continues to work among us through scripture and the sacraments bringing and keeping us in relationship with God. I encourage you as we enter the month of Thanksgiving to dust off those catechisms and read through Luther's explanations to the creed and see the many things that we have to be thankful for.

There is also one more theme of this familiar passage that I would like to highlight as we travel through the month of Thanksgiving and that is how Jesus acts with compassion upon those in need. Jesus was well aware of the risk of interacting with lepers and yet he is willing to take it. He doesn't see them as contagious people, as outcasts who are shunned or to be avoided.

Rather he sees them as children of God in need so he acts. The question is are we moved with the same compassion for those around us.

As we sit down to feast on Thanksgiving, the fact remains that for many there will be no feast. Whether it is the lack of food, homeless, no family or friends, or the loss of family members or friends, and the list can go on and on; for many Thanksgiving isn't a joyous time. So what can we do to show compassion and love like Jesus? As we prepare our Thanksgiving grocery list maybe we could pick up a few items so that someone can enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. Maybe we could send some money to support communities and groups that sponsor a Thanksgiving meal. Maybe we pick up the phone and call or invite someone to be a part of our Thanksgiving and the list can go on and on. This story also reminds us that as God's people here on earth we are called to be faithful stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us. From the call to Adam & Eve to care for creation to Jesus' call to love one another as he has loved us; we as God's people are called to be a blessing!

Happy Thanksgiving,

Pastor Joel

## **Pastor's Report to Church Council (Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> to Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>) Rev. Joel Gueningsman**

### **October 11, 2021**

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#### **Pastoral Acts**

- **45 in person/phone pastoral visits; presided at one baptism: Laiken Kendall Johnson; presided at one wedding: Kaitlynn Zetah & Ross Anderson; presided at one funeral: Lowell E. Anderson.**

#### **Worship**

- **Reformation & Confirmation Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> @ 9am.**
- **All Saints worship Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9am.**

#### **Education/Youth & Family**

- **Confirmation & Youth Group**
  - **Two weeks left in first unit for confirmation**
  - **Sunday night movie & conversation on "The Shack"**
  - **16 kids attended Valley Scare**
- **Adult Bible study beginning Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>**
  - **7 sessions on "Making sense of Scripture"**
  - **Will meet in the youth room**

- **WELCA Bible Study @ PPP;**
  - **waiting to hear back from PPP about rules and then will contact circles about resuming if they would like to.**

**Mission & Outreach**

- **Community meal Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, served 170**
  - **Next community meal scheduled for Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>. Menu to be determined**

**Wider Church**

- **Installation of Bishop Dee Pederson 10/9 at Granite Falls Lutheran**
- **Continuing Education/Pastoral Self-Care**
- **SWMN Fall theological conference Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**
- **Vacation October 20<sup>th</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Gary leading worship, I will record the sermon**

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 Immanuel Lutheran Church Council

October 10, 2021

Attending: Gary Meyer; Duane Jaenisch; Pastor Joel; Michelle Shubert; Harold Goedgedrag; Josh VanderPol; Ross Pederson; LuAnn Kruger

Others attending: Carissa Pederson

Absent: Jim Jaenisch; Isaac Gosseling

Prayer was led by Gary Meyer.

The agenda had only 1 item on it today, Pastor Joel’s notification to the council of his decision to activate his call papers.

Gary reviewed the role of a pastor as described by the ELCA. All agreed that Pastor Joel has met the requirements as stated. Pastor Joel stated that he is feeling ‘broken’ and no longer is able to serve this congregation effectively. Emotional testimonials were given by council members stating how they felt about his service and their desire for him to stay. A sabbatical was suggested, which he agreed to think about. No time frame was discussed.

Council members stated that Immanuel has a history at the synod of being difficult. It will likely be a long process to call another pastor. Some members stated their fear of who the next pastor would be as well as their apprehension to call another pastor to this congregation. It was discussed that a better system of complaints or concerns about a pastor must be developed, as the voice of a few does not represent the voice of all. The council agreed that all concerns by parishioners should be brought to the council first. Suggestion was made that education occur with council and parishioners about what the mission and position of the ELCA is on issues.

Duane provided a written treasurer's report with no discussion occurring.

Gary said he would not be at the service on the 17<sup>th</sup> because his son is getting married. He will lead worship on the 24<sup>th</sup> while Pastor and family are on vacation.

Respectfully Submitted, LuAnn Kruger

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**Our Next Community Meal is Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-6:00 p.m.** On the menu is Scalloped potatoes and ham, corn, bun and apple pie. We will be serving to go orders in the church alley way and also serving in the church basement. Please comment on the church's Facebook page or call the office at 847-2138 with the number meals you are wanting.

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Please join us for our **Thanksgiving Eve Service** with Communion on Wednesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

The office will be closed on Thursday, November 25<sup>th</sup> for Thanksgiving and also Friday, November 26<sup>th</sup>. Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

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**Tribe Up for December 2021**

- Allen Dieken
- John and Kathy Fritz
- Randy and Traci Grussing
- Lonnie and LuAnn Hansen
- Keith Harms
- Dale and Diane Koenen
- Cody and Trista Rand
- Jim and Lori Schmaedeka
- Jack and Donna Sparks
- Josh and Cindy VanDerPol

Above we have printed the **Tribe Membership for December, 2021**. The chairperson(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! If everyone takes one job, the needs list would be filled. Thank you!

**Offerings Collected for the Month of October 2021**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offering</u>
October 3	\$2393.00
October 10	\$2130.00
October 17	\$1215.00
October 24	\$1975.00
October 31	\$1761.00

**Donations for MACPAC**

MACPAC is a weekend food program open to all MACCRAY students. Non-perishable food is discreetly sent home in each student’s backpack. Currently, 100 students are assisted per weekend at an average cost of \$2.70 per child. For longer breaks such as Thanksgiving or Christmas the cost averages is \$4.50. This program’s sole source of funding is donations. Would you think about helping please? Consider a donation to MACPAC as a Christmas gift for someone who “already has everything”. Checks may be made to MACPAC and dropped in the collection or mailed to MACPAC c/o Gary Meyer, 1131 2<sup>nd</sup> ST. NE, Clara city, MN 56222. Questions? Call 320-894-6649. Thank you for your generosity and heart for children.

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**WELCA Volunteer Handbook**

Ladies, looking ahead to the 2022 WELCA Volunteer Handbook! Please look at the 2021 Volunteer Handbook. If you feel a change needs to be made as far as working ability – day vs. weekend circle, please contact Ann Hovda before December 1<sup>st</sup> at 320-841-0144. Thank you!

Also, if you have a change in a telephone number, home or cell, please let Kathy know in the church office. I will be working on the 2022 WELCA Volunteer handbook soon.

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**Thanksgiving Donations**

There is a box placed in the back of the sanctuary, for donations for food, for a Thanksgiving meal. Please consider donating non-perishable food items that can be given to a family in need, for a Thanksgiving meal. Monetary donations are always welcome!

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**HANGING OF THE GREENS DAY** – is Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. It is hard to believe but the season of Advent, preparing for our Lord, is coming the end of this month. That being said, it will be the time to decorate Immanuel into it Christmas Season finery. **Everyone** is invited to come help decorate on Saturday morning, November 27<sup>th</sup>, starting around 9:00 a.m.

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**Attention Quilters: Quilting has started!** We will be meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Are all welcome!!

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**Sunday School Christmas Program**

Volunteers are needed to help plan the Sunday School Christmas program. If you would like to help, please contact LuAnn at 320-905-4195. Thank you

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