

IMMANUEL'S INSIGHTS**FROM THE**
Pastor's Desk

May 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

Immanuel Lutheran Church has called Jared Walters to serve as our pastoral intern for the next one to two years. He will be working with us half-time as he continues his studies at the Institute of Lutheran Theology Christ College.

There has been a lot of discussion among church leaders about the growing shortage of pastors. Retirements and resignations have outpaced ordinations for quite a few years. It seems that professional ministry in the Church has become less attractive to people.

However, I have found the calling to be a pastor to be very rewarding and enjoyable. Pastoral ministry is full of great variety and opportunities for creativity. There is great pleasure in studying the Scriptures both with others and for sermon preparation. There are meaningful conversations with people about the real issues of life. There are opportunities to be part of big moments in life – baptisms, weddings, funerals. And there is the opportunity to mentor those who are interested in serving the Church.

I served as a pastoral mentor to a seminary student before I came to Immanuel, but this is the first time I have had the opportunity to work with a pastoral intern. I am excited that Immanuel has stepped up to do our part to encourage the next generation of pastoral leaders for the Church. I look forward to Jared's ministry with us at Immanuel.

I am also excited that Evan Nielsen has recently enrolled at another LCMC-affiliated seminary called The Master's Institute. As I move toward my own retirement, I am greatly encouraged by the young pastors that I have met who are stepping up to lead in LCMC. The Church has a great future, and I am pleased that Immanuel has encouraged young people toward the ministry of the Gospel. Thank you for your part in making Immanuel a hopeful and encouraging congregation.

Yours in Christ, Phil Nielsen

**Greetings!**

There should not be much need for an introduction, but I am the new Pastoral Intern here at ILC. I am delighted to serve you all after returning from a combat deployment with the U.S. Army. On my deployment, I visited Ireland, Kuwait, Iraq, and Syria. During my deployment, I was a heavy-weapons infantryman running combat missions from Iraq to Syria. Alongside the missions, I was elected as a Distinctive Faith Group Leader for the Lutheran body. With that, I provided liturgical and sacramental services in Iraq every Sunday. With my very busy schedule, I wanted to keep my mind sharp and continue to take 1 class every semester. I learned about Anthropology and am currently working on a research paper called *"Iraq, Syria, and Jesus: An Experience of War and Theology."* Now that I am back here, I am continuing my classes at the Institute of Lutheran Theology and am dedicated to you as your pastoral intern. Thank you, and God bless you all!

Yours in Christ,

Jared Walters