

IMMANUEL'S INSIGHTS

AUGUST 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Who is to blame for this mess we find ourselves in? We humans have always been looking for someone to blame for our problems. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. The serpent blamed God. And they all blamed God.

Genesis makes it clear that all of our problems are really of our own making. God intended life to be a beautiful walk in the garden. But we chose to rebel against God because we believed the lie that we couldn't trust God's love for us.

God could have protected us from the consequences of our treason. God could have allowed us to continue to live in paradise. But God wanted to restore our relationship with Him and with each other by leading us to faith and repentance. And the only way we could find repentance was to see our treason for what it actually is. And the only way we could see our treason for what it is was for us to experience the consequences of our treason. So God allowed us to rebel and turn away from the source of our life and healing. That is when our immune systems slowed down and we became vulnerable to threats like viruses.

The lie the serpent told us was that we would not die. But we soon learned that was a lie. Previous generations knew death as a real part of life. Every family knew what it was to lose someone to death at a young age. And still today, people in the poorer two-thirds of the world know what it is to lose someone because of a lack of basic health care, good nutrition, or safe water. They know that their life can end quickly and easily.

But we in 21st century America have been able to pretend that life is pretty secure and stable. We have been able to pretend that death only comes to those who are unlucky or foolish. We generally expect to live a long life. When someone dies young, we are shocked. Even when we know death is coming, it still seems to catch us by surprise.

So we should not be surprised that the coronavirus caught the Chinese government, our government, and world leaders by surprise. We had plenty of warning that something like this could happen. But we live in denial, always thinking that we can handle whatever comes our way. And still people are in denial thinking that the virus must be a big hoax, or a human engineered disaster, or a political conspiracy. They refuse to believe that our lives can be so fragile. We like to think that life and death are more controllable and that nothing can stop human progress.

We want to blame someone for the mess we are in. We want to blame our leaders but they were as unprepared for this crisis as we are. Our leaders are really just a reflection of us. So then we want to blame God. God is in control of all things. God could stop this virus. According to Genesis 3 it was God's choice to make us face our mortality.

The psalms are full of prayers complaining that God has let us down by failing to come to our rescue. The psalm writers are sometimes angry at God. Why? No religion in the world gets angry at its gods. People are afraid to be angry at their gods because they are trying to persuade their gods to help them. So they are full of flattery for their gods. But the ancient Hebrews got angry at their God because they knew that their God is good. They didn't have to persuade God to be good. They had to simply pour out their anguish and trust that God will do what is good for them.



We blame God for our problems in this world. So when God gave us Jesus to live among us, we naturally judged him as the source of our problems. We judged him as guilty of making our life miserable. We nailed him to a cross. And God said, "Go ahead and blame me. I can take your anger. And I will give you forgiveness in return." The "blame game" comes to an end at the cross of Jesus.

So if God is trying to make us face up to our mortality and our treason, why would God answer our prayers to end this pandemic? If our problem is that we believe the lie that we don't have to die, how can we expect God to go ahead and encourage our delusions by ending the pandemic? If we could bring this pandemic to an end by getting our act together and stopping the spread ourselves, what hope do we have of God stepping in to end this pandemic? We have the same hope we have always had: the compassionate grace of God. Jesus healed people because even in our delusions of immortality and our denial of death, God wants us to know that He loves us.

We all want life to go back to normal. Not God. Normal is not good. Normal is us living in rebellion against God. Normal is us taking life for granted. God wants to get us to a new normal, a realization that every day is a gift. God wants us to know that our real hope is not found in trying to be the gods of our own lives, but in trusting the one who loves us better than we love ourselves.

This pandemic and economic upheaval will come to an end. This too shall pass. I am praying that it will pass soon. But I am also praying that it will not be wasted. That the hardships of these days will help us get to a new normal that is far better than the old normal.

Yours in Christ,

Phil Nielsen

Worship in August 2020

August 1-2	Feast or Famine	Matthew 14:13-21	Communion
August 8-9	Eyes on Jesus	Matthew 14:22-33	
August 15-16	Offensive Jesus	Matthew 15:10-28	Communion
August 22-23	Bedrock Truth	Matthew 16:13-20	
August 29-30	Stumbling Blocks	Matthew 16:21-28	



We're sorry to report that there will be NO Harvest Bazaar this year. Since the income from this event is mainly how we are able to contribute to our mission projects we are inviting you to participate in a "BAKELESS BAKE SALE". You will not need to buy ingredients or turn on your oven. Think of the money you would spend on baking and purchasing items from the bake sale. Please send that contribution to Kathy Block, 1091 Kingwood Rd., Harlan or leave it at church. Checks should be made out to ILCW. If you have any questions you can contact Sandy Nelsen 755-7373.

YOU will be helping WOW with our mission projects and YOU will save time and calories. THANK YOU.

WOW will also be gathering/social distancing in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday August 12 at 9:30.

MISSION QUILTERS: Due to the virus, we have not been meeting, however, we will resume September 28th. Looking forward to getting back to our mission!

PANDEMIC PROCEDURES: We ask all worshipers to continue to observe social distancing measures. Please do not sit with anyone who is not living with you. You are invited to take a mask and keep it as our gift to you.

WORSHIP SERVICES at Immanuel are recorded for viewing on HMU channel 15 (9:30 a.m. Sunday and 6:00 p.m. Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday) and on FMCTC channel 48 (4:00 p.m. Wednesday). Our worship services are also posted on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ilcharlan) and on our website (www.harlanimmanuel.org/sermons.html).

EMAIL LIST: Regular email updates are being sent to members and friends of Immanuel. If you are not receiving them and would like to, please email the church office at ilc@fmctc.com so that we can add your email address to our list.

ADULT BIBLE CLASS meets on Zoom Sundays from 10:30 to 11:30. We are discussing 1 Corinthians. All are welcome.

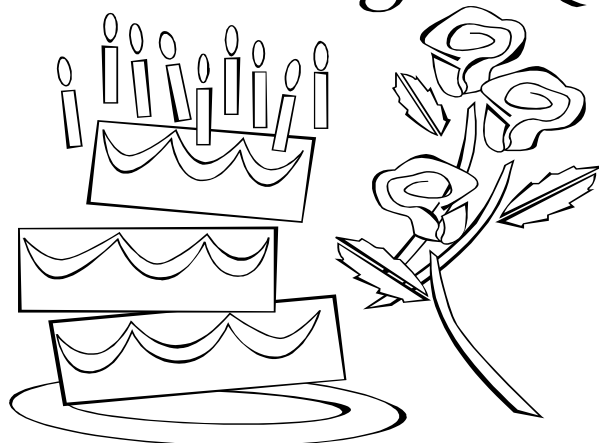
Due to the current situation, we are unable to have the 2020 Southwest Iowa MobilePack. **Hunger is still the major health concern.** Even though we cannot physically pack the meals, there is still a need to fund the meals that are being packed. FMSC is working with a prison to pack meals. Some meals are being bulk packed by machine. **Please consider supporting Feed My Starving Children first in prayer and also financially!**

If you would like to support the "Feed My Starving Children" effort for 2020 use the envelope in your Insights. Make your check payable to Immanuel Lutheran Church and note "**FMSC SUPPORTERS 2795570**" on the memo line (bottom left of check). WE are the hands of our Lord Jesus!

Thank you,

Southwest Iowa MobilePack for FMSC Core Team

Birthdays &



Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to the following:

Twyla Grabill who will be 89 on August 13.
Irene Hansen who will be 97 on August 13.
Della Holdsworth who will be 93 on August 17.
Maggie Hatcher who will be 82 on August 18.
Vernice Vrtiska who will be 86 on August 20.
John Christensen who will be 83 on August 25.
Marlys Moore who will be 89 on August 28.

Happy Anniversary to the following:

Mark & Linda Knoell who will be celebrating their 53rd anniversary on August 5.
Charles & Twyla Grabill who will be celebrating their 70th anniversary on August 14.
Allan & Sally Simdorn who will be celebrating their 51st anniversary on August 22.
David & Judi Pedersen who will be celebrating their 54th anniversary on August 27.

WE REMEMBER IN SYMPATHY Neil Ohms and family at the death of Neil's father, Amond Ohms, who died June 28.

WE REMEMBER IN SYMPATHY Scott Larsen and family at the death of Scott's mother, Verda Mae Larsen, who died June 29.

WE REMEMBER IN SYMPATHY the family and friends of Clarice Andersen, who died July 12.

WE REMEMBER IN SYMPATHY Patti Kumm and John Christensen at the death of Brittany, the granddaughter of their sister Mary Marsh in a tragic accident in California on July 24, 2020.

*With Deepest
Sympathy*

CONGRATULATIONS to Mark and Kristah Nelson at the birth of a daughter, Opal Marie on July 2 in Omaha. Grandparents are Verne and Ilene Nelson. Opal is welcomed by siblings Oliver, Leota, and Hoyt. Opal's sponsors are Cari Nelson, Kim Johnette and Katie O'Neill.



Please Pray for:

ON OUR PRAYER LIST: Nancy Christensen, Faye Jacobsen, Jon Burmeister, Shawn Havick, Annette Anderson, Nancy Gessmann, Marlys Moore, Connie Benson, Curt Olson (son of Sue Olson) Sam Jacobs (chaplain at Salem Lutheran Homes), Callie Wiltse (daughter of Scott & Jean Whitfield) and Luke Chipman (grandson of Rick & Cheryl Chipman).

COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY July 14, 2020—7 pm

The Immanuel Church Council met July 14 with 8 of 14 members present by video conferencing. Mary Petersen led devotions. Ivy Nielsen will share devotions in August.

Treasurer reported June income of \$24,369 and June expenses of \$16,549. Year to date income is \$142,768 (which is \$6000 ahead of 2019). Year to date expenses are \$122,194. Our general fund account ended June at almost \$47,000. Our capital project savings are at \$20,227. Tanzania Projects Fund is at \$11,332. Thanks to all who have continued to support the ministry of Immanuel.

Outreach – Immanuel has given 734 pounds to the County Food Pantry. Tanzania team has sold out of their pies. Auction is still on hold. July Mission Partner is Shelby County Community Outreach and August Mission Partner is Salem Lutheran Homes.

Worship – After updating the camera system bid with Midwest Sound and Lighting, Council voted to approve the bid for \$6,185. We will consider some kind of outdoor or drive-in style worship gatherings in the fall. We will look into FM transmitter systems.

Education – Education team hosted a VBS drive-thru event giving out 50 meals and 25 “Camp-in-a-Box” kits. Discussion will be held about what to do with Sunday School in the fall.

Executive – Jason Ploen inquired about purchasing the desk that Pastor Heather used when she served here. As it is not being used now, Council decided to gift the desk to them.

Pastor – Recommended Linda Petersen for membership. The Constitution Review committee has almost completed its work. They will present their recommendations to the Council in August for a decision to be made in September. It could be presented to the congregation in November and ratified in January providing that congregational meetings can be held safely then. The question was raised about providing for congregational meetings during a health emergency. Pastor has had 3 funerals in July and all were held at the cemetery. Pastor has 2 weddings in September, one at Immanuel and one at another location. Pastor was invited to consult with an ELCA congregation considering membership in LCMC.



WORSHIP & GIVING										
<u>Attendance</u>						<u>General</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Total</u>		
July 4/5	10	+	25	=	35	\$ 3,810.00	\$ 105.00	\$ 3,915.00		
July 11/12	17	+	25	=	42	\$ 6,544.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 6,614.00		
June 18/19	23	+	26	=	49	\$ 2,961.00	\$ 195.00	\$ 3,156.00		
June 25/26	24	+	22	=	46	\$ 2,664.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 2,764.00		

August Mission Partner

Our mission partner for August is Salem Lutheran Homes in Elk Horn, Iowa. Immanuel is part of the association of 14 congregations that owns Salem Lutheran Homes. We provide a Christian ministry of loving and quality care for aging and disabled members of our community. We provide a chaplain and various clergy and lay leaders provide daily chapel services. One of the residents wrote the following reflections for the monthly Salem messenger.

Salem is a Blessed Home

Article submission by Salem Resident Annie Davis

*The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the house of the righteous. –
Proverbs 3:33*

Salem Lutheran Homes is located in small town Elk Horn, Iowa. That doesn't really sound right to me. How can a retirement home be successful in a town of less than 700 residents and 70 odd miles from a city, either Omaha or Des Moines. You'd think a retirement home would need the support of a metropolitan center. You'd be wrong.

Part of what makes this home special is where it is and the residents who live here. My mom was in this same home for a few years before she died. She felt superior to most of the residents, and most of the staff as well. Those people didn't play bridge; they got a charge out of playing Bingo for bananas or snacks. She chose to isolate herself in her room and read romance novels from the home's library. She never got how special this place really is.

Those were the tapes playing in my head when I got here; I quickly learned the lack of sophistication my mother accused Salem of was one of the things that makes it special. Imagine living in a Christian home where you can choose to go to devotions in the chapel every day, or not. And if you didn't want to leave your room but chose to worship, dial in to Channel 20.

At first I turned my nose up too. And then there was a pastor on staff who came to see me a lot. In the beginning, when I was pretty sick, I wanted nothing to do with him, thank you very much. That didn't stop him from visiting me. Then I noticed he was in the dining room for breakfast and lunch (or dinner as its called here) and he greeted every resident my name and with a touch on the shoulder. He led the prayer. He exuded love and goodness. Pretty soon I looked forward to his visits. We had a number of sparring sessions, no harm, no foul. They were friendly discussions.

The place began to grow on me. My room was decorated with my stuff. No one told me what to wear. If I didn't want to go to the dining room for a meal, I didn't have to. If I didn't want to eat what was served, I had a choice. It truly was a home in every sense of the word.

The most difficult part of living here is that we are all old and many of us don't have a lot of time left. So daily we see our dear friends go down hill. But we also see the special kindness of the staff for these residents. When a dear friend died, I was invited to attend a special service (I've now learned that it is done whenever a resident dies) at her bedside. Scriptures were read, but the most comforting thing was that nearly all of the staff were there. And we all told stores about our friend; we laughed and we cried. We left her room feeling so much better than when we went in. For the first time, I understood this home.

I told one of the staff, "I'm so glad I live in a Christian home," And she said, "That's why I work here."

In my almost 80 years, this is the first Christian home I've ever lived in. I thank God every day for this home and the staff. I pray that God puts his loving arms round each resident and their families and let them feel his love and know they are well taken care of. Salem is truly blessed and so are we who live and work here. Thank you God.

The Tanzania Committee is sorry to announce that there will not be a “Soup Supper and Auction” in 2020.



The decision to cancel this year's Soup Supper and Auction was made at the committee's meeting on July 22. There were various reasons for not choosing another date in the remaining months of 2020, but the possibility of exposing attendees to COVID-19 was the strongest influence in making the decision.

We were SO close to having this fun event on March 21st (only days away)BUT, the good news is, it's only 8 month until March 2021.

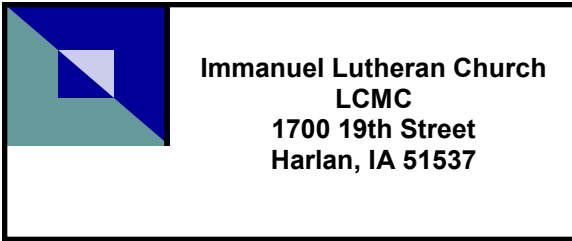


Note: As you know, the “Soup Supper and Auction” is one of the Tanzania Committee's biggest fund raisers. If anyone would like to donate toward the 2020 Soup Supper and Auction **that wasn't**, we welcome you to do so. Please note so on your check/with your cash.



CANS for TANZ

Redeemable cans and bottles keep coming in. We encourage you to drop your donations in the cage by the kitchen door. Let others know we are collecting from anyone in the community. Thank you for your support!



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Office Email: ilc@fmctc.com
Pastor Phil's Cell Number: 712-579-2098
Home Number: 712-766-3178
E-mail: peacephillip@gmail.com
www.harlanimmanuel.org

Staff:

Pastor Phil Nielsen
Music Director: Heidi Thies
Office Manager: Joan Wehr
Custodian: Ed Wehr

August 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 12:30-5 Baby Shower-Donna Nelson 5:00 Communion
2 9:00 Communion 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	3 9:30 OA	4 9:00 CF Quilters 6:00 Boy Scout Leaders 6:30 Home School Q & A Group	5	6	7	8 5:00 Worship
9 9:00 Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	10 9:30 OA	11 9:00 CF Quilters 7:00 Church Council on Zoom	12 9:30 WOW	13	14	15 5:00 Communion
16 9:00 Communion 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	17 9:30 OA	18 9:00 CF Quilters	19	20 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 Ladies Homestead Gathering	21	22 5:00 Worship
23 9:00 Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	24 9:30 OA	25 9:00 CF Quilters	26	27 Assemble Newsletter	28	29 5:00 Worship
30 9:00 Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	31 9:30 OA					