

IMMANUEL'S INSIGHTS DECEMBER 2020

Iowa Community Kitchen – December 15

Immanuel will be serving the Iowa Community Kitchen Christmas Feast for our 6th year. We are looking for volunteers to help with cooking and serving and cleaning up on Tuesday, December 15. We also need individually wrapped Christmas cookies. There may also be a need for delivery help. If you are interested in helping or baking, let the church office know.

Christmas at Immanuel

Christmas Eve is one of the highlights of the year at Immanuel. Because of the pandemic, we will be adjusting our celebration to keep everyone safe. We are scheduling 3 worship services at 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 to try to spread out the crowd. There will be no Holy Communion this year although we will have the candle lighting ceremony. We have enough candles that none will be reused.

We are asking folks to fill out a brief survey to give us an idea of how many people we need to prepare for at each service. The survey can be found in this newsletter. It can be filled out and returned to the church office or you can fill it out online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SWMY2RP>. If you are on the church email list, you will receive this link in an email.

As is our practice, public health measures will be observed. Masks will be available and we encourage folks to use them. Please don't shake hands or approach anyone closely that you didn't come to church with.

Worship in December

| | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| Advent 2 December 5-6 | Psalm 139 The Incredible Mind of God | |
| Advent 3 December 12-13 | Psalm 146 God Is Good | Communion |
| Advent 4 December 19-20 | Matthew 1:18-25 Christmas Pageant | |
| Christmas Eve December 24 | Luke 2:1-20 Face to Face | Candlelighting |
| 3 rd Day of Christmas December 26-27 | Luke 2:22-40 Opening the Gift | Communion |





Dear Friends in Christ,

It's Advent and we are in our 9th month of exile from what we used to call normal life. But normal in this broken and sinful world was not the ideal either. In our normal life, children went to bed hungry and afraid. In our normal life, many families were filled with tension and anger. In our normal life, our politics were full of corruption and deceit. In our normal life, minorities experienced racism. Our goal is not really to get back to normal. Our goal is to be faithful no matter what life throws at us.

We have entered the season of Advent. One of the main themes

of Advent is waiting. We remember the Old Testament waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise of a Savior. And we wait for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God in the final Revelation of our Lord Jesus. This Advent we find ourselves waiting for the arrival of vaccines that promise to save us from this pandemic. In fact, in a lot of ways it seems that our life is on hold until we can get through this pandemic.

Another theme of Advent is hope. What is hope? It is the power to go forward even when life seems impossible and meaningless. During this pandemic, depression and despair have been epidemic. But the promise of a vaccine has brought hope to many. So it is in life. Life can be very hard and depressing. What gives us the hope to go forward with courage? The promise of the Kingdom inaugurated in Jesus' death and resurrection.

This pandemic has caused a lot of controversy as some people refuse to take it seriously. They think that science has all the answers and therefore if there is confusion in science, there must be a conspiracy. But actually, we are all making this up as we go along. There is no conspiracy. Science is still a work in progress. And no one has all the answers. Not even Google.

I am grateful that we still have the opportunity to worship in person. Of course, there are risks. Nothing is 100 % safe. Even people who have been very careful have contracted COVID. But we have a huge sanctuary and we are being very careful about physical distancing and wearing masks.

That brings us to the problem of Christmas. Usually we have a packed house at Christmas and it includes many guests from out of town. That can't happen this year. But we are still looking for ways to celebrate Christmas safely. You will have an opportunity to respond to a questionnaire to help us make plans for safe worship at Christmas.

I've heard that some people are staying away from worship simply because they don't want to wear a mask. Some people feel that a mask mandate is an infringement on their personal liberty. As Lutherans we are all about freedom from legalism. However, as Lutherans, love for the neighbor is always more important than personal liberty. No matter how effective or ineffective our masks are, they are an honest attempt to protect our neighbors. They show that we care about those around us.

Throughout history and throughout the world today, Christians have gathered for worship in spite of all kinds of obstacles – threats of imprisonment and worse. Christians in many countries are shocked that anyone would let discomfort with masks keep us from bearing witness to Christ in public worship. Jesus said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me." If he calls us to do that, then we can certainly deny ourselves, take up our masks, and follow him.

Yours in Christ, *Phil Nielsen*



Immanuel Lutheran Church Special Congregational Meeting November 22, 2020

A special congregational meeting of Immanuel Lutheran Church was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President John Taggs. The meeting was held in the sanctuary to allow for social distancing. 37 voting members were in attendance which satisfied the quorum of 28.

John Taggs presented the Church Council resolution to amend the constitution of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Copies of the proposal were distributed.

John Taggs introduced the Constitution Review Committee of Vicki Carstens, Kayla Jacobs, Phillip Nielsen, Craig Olson and John Taggs. John Taggs asked for questions regarding the proposal. He highlighted the most significant changes being proposed: simplifying from 30 pages to 20 pages, removing ELCA provisions that are no longer needed, downsizing the church council from 14 to 12 members, electing members to council for 3-year terms, having the council elect its own officers and committee members and combining the Fellowship and Education committees.

The vote was called for and the resolution passed unanimously by a show of hands. Meeting was adjourned. The constitution now needs to be ratified by a 2/3 majority vote at the annual meeting in January.

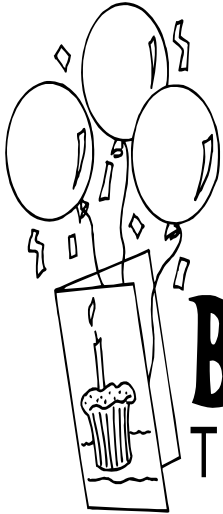
WORSHIP SERVICES at Immanuel are recorded for viewing on HMU channel 15 (9:00 a.m. Sunday and 6:00 p.m. Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday) and on FMCTC channel 48 (4:00 p.m. Wednesday). Our worship services are also posted on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ilcharlan) and on our website (www.harlanimmanuel.org/sermons.html).

VOLUNTEERS are needed to serve coffee & donuts, to read Scripture texts and to assist with Communion set-up and clean-up. We are not assigning these duties this year. If you can help, call the church office to let us know when and how you can serve.

LC CLINIC will be having "One Last Rummage Sale for 2020!" on Friday, December 11, 9am-6pm and Saturday, December 12, 9am-1pm at 1818 Chatburn Plaza. All proceeds go to support LC Clinic and its new Atlantic Clinic opening soon. Donations of saleable items in good condition are needed, sorry no clothing donations please. Bring donations to the sale location on Tuesday, Dec. 8 11 am-1 pm or Wednesday Dec. 9, 4-6pm. With questions or to volunteer: call Lori Hlavac 712-579-9531 or Dottie Krogh 712-249-9084.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: Thanks all who participated in packing a gift box for a child in poverty. This year we sent 40 boxes filled with toys, shoes, flashlights, school supplies, hygiene items, clothing, and more. Thank you to all who donated and helped. We pray that 40 children will be introduced to the greatest gift of all through our gift boxes.

BATTERY CANDLES will be available for children at the Christmas Eve candlelight service. These have been provided so that parents, if they choose, can give their young children a safe alternative to the open flame candle. We are trying to make things easier for parents with young children and also to prevent wax spills which have been hard to clean up.



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Happy Birthday to the following:

Marlene Sondergaard who will be 90 on December 1.
 Jackie Larsen who will be 83 on December 2.
 Jonne Carlsen who will be 81 on December 5.
 Harold Peters who will be 94 on December 8.
 Doraine Wigg who will be 91 on December 9.
 Patti Kumm who will be 86 on December 16.
 Christine Jones who will be 82 on December 25.
 Judy Chickering who will be 81 on December 28.
 Joan Lauritsen who will be 84 on December 29.
 Ken Hursey who will be 83 on December 30.
 Joanne Ernst who will be 90 on December 31.



ON OUR PRAYER LIST: Ken Olsen, Bryan Kaster, Nancy Christensen, Jon Burmeister, Shawn Havick, Marlys Moore, Connie Benson, Callie Wiltse (daughter of Scott & Jean Whitfield) and Kaylee Havick.

Please Pray for:

COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY November 10, 2020—7 pm

The Immanuel Church Council met November 10 with 11 of 14 members present by video conferencing. Becky Chipman shared devotions from Psalm 46. Ivy Nielsen will share devotions in December.

Steve Allen, John Taggs, Ivy Nielsen, and Kayla Jacobs will continue to cover council duties at our worship services.

Treasurer reported October income of \$17,701 and October expenses of \$18,564. Year to date income is \$220,426 (\$2000 less than 2019). Year to date expenses are \$198,382. Our general fund account ended September at about \$48,872. Our capital project savings are at \$25,927. Tanzania Projects Fund is at \$10,708. Thanks to all who have continued to support the ministry of Immanuel.

Executive committee recommended we keep the 2020 budget for 2021 except for 3% raises for the pastor, the music director and pianists, and the bookkeeper. Motion carried.

Outreach – Immanuel has given 1,095 pounds to the County Food Pantry. The Sharing Table has not seen much demand. Committee recommended November Mission Partners as Open Door Mission (\$500), Lutheran Bible Translators (\$500), Prison Ministry (\$500), and Operation Christmas Child shipping (\$250). December Mission Partner will be Iowa Community Kitchen (\$1000).

Worship – New camera system is ready to be installed, but we are still waiting for an installation date. We are now recording the Sunday morning service rather than the Saturday evening service in anticipation of soon having our new system in place. These means that the Sunday morning broadcast on HMU will be from the previous Sunday. Discussed Christmas eve worship services with candles but no Communion. We have enough candles that we won't have to reuse any from one service to another. We are planning 3 services at 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00. A survey will be used to get information about possible attendance at the services.

Education – Discussed Sunday School attendance and welcome to guests.

Executive – Discussed congregational meeting on November 22. Appointed Kayla Jacobs and Becky Chipman to the Nominating Committee.

Pastor – Pastor reported a call asking about religious exemptions from mandatory vaccinations. Consensus was "love of neighbor" was more important than "individual rights." Religious exemptions would be contrary to our Lutheran theology and practice.

New Business -- Annual meeting date set for Sunday, January 24, 2021, at 10:15 a.m. Annual reports are due two weeks before.

| | WORSHIP & GIVING | | | | | <u>General</u> | <u>Building</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|----|---|-----|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | <u>Attendance</u> | | | | | | | |
| Oct. 31/Nov. 1 | 15 | + | 64 | = | 79 | \$ 5,541.00 | \$ 145.00 | \$ 5,686.00 |
| Nov. 7/8 | | + | 51 | = | 51 | \$ 4,076.16 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 4,126.16 |
| Nov. 14/15 | 18 | + | 87 | = | 105 | \$ 3,530.00 | \$ | \$ 3,530.00 |
| Nov. 21/22 | 18 | + | 58 | = | 76 | \$ 3,953.21 | \$ | \$ 3,953.21 |

Give a Gift



to Give

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA: Do you have a person on your Christmas list that you need an idea for a gift? How about helping an orphan in Kidugala, Tanzania with a uniform for school? For a donation of \$25, an orphan can have a uniform or for a \$40 donation a orphan can have a uniform and school fees for a year. Christmas cards are available to inform the recipient of your gift in their name. These cards are available during the month of December after church or in the office during the week. Checks can be made out to ILC Tanzania. Thank you for your support.



TANZANIA MISSION PROJECTS

Thanks to an energetic crew of pie makers, we have homemade pies available for you! They are \$12 and are delicious! In only a couple of hours of baking time you can have freshly baked pie with none of the hassle, perfect for the holidays (or any time). Stop by the church office and Joan will assist you.

Apple



Cherry



Rhubarb

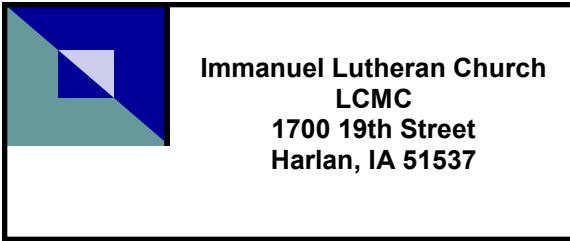


This project helps us continue our partnership in Kidugala, TZ, especially orphans. We currently fund 170 primary school orphans and over 200 secondary school orphans.

Thank you for your support!

December 2020

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | | 1 9:00 CF Quilters 4:00 HCS Mock Trial | 2 4:00 Women's Bible Study 4:00 HCS Mock Trial 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 LYO | 3 7:00 Ladies Homestead Mtg. | 4 | 5 10:00 Boy Scout Court of Honor for Eli Arnold (Nicole Williams) 5:00 Worship |
| 6 9:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Zoom Adult Bible Class | 7 9:30 OA 3:30-5 Girl Scouts | 8 9:00 CF Quilters 5:30 Worship Comm. 6:30 Executive Board 7:00 Church Council | 9 9:30 WOW 4:00 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 LYO | 10 6:00 MOPS | 11 | 12 5:00 Communion |
| 13 9:00 Communion 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Zoom Adult Bible Class | 14 9:30 OA | 15 9:00 CF Quilters 4-7 Iowa Community Kitchen | 16 4:00 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 LYO | 17 Newsletter Deadline 3:30-5 4-H | 18 | 19 5:00 Worship |
| 20 9:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Zoom Adult Bible Class | 21 9:30 OA 3:30-5 Girl Scouts 3:30-5 4-H | 22 9:00 CF Quilters | 23 Assemble Newsletter | 24 3:00 Christmas 5:00 Christmas 7:00 Christmas | 25 Merry Christmas Church Office Closed | 26 5:00 Communion |
| 27 9:00 Communion NO Sunday School 10:30 Zoom Adult Bible Class | 28 Church Office Closed | 29 9:00 CF Quilters | 30 4:00 Women's Bible Study | 31 | | |



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Office Manager: Joan Wehr
Custodian: Slava Aleev