

IMMANUEL'S INSIGHTS SEPTEMBER 2020

Homecoming Sundays

We are blessed with two great big beautiful worship spaces. One is indoors and it was dedicated 51 years ago. But there is also God's great big beautiful outdoors that can safely accommodate far more people with plenty of room for physical distancing.

Immanuel invites all of our members to come back to Church this September for 4 weeks of outdoor worship services beginning September 13. We will be worshipping on the east lawn of the property facing the southwest. Chairs will be spread out on the lawn. You are also invited to bring your own chairs if you like. Masks will be optional as long as people maintain appropriate distancing. Saturday evening worship will continue as an option for those who would prefer to worship inside and on smoother ground. If the weather threatens rain, then the worship gathering will have to move inside.

Worship in September

Date:	Message:	
September 5-6	Gathered in Jesus' Name (Matthew 18:15-20)	Communion
September 12-13	The Unnatural Act of Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35)	Outdoor Worship on Sunday
September 19-20	Jonah vs. God (Jonah 4:1-11)	Communion Saturday Evening Outdoor Worship on Sunday
September 26-27	Who Are You? (Psalm 8)	Outdoor Worship on Sunday

Fall Education Programs

We plan to begin Sunday School classes October 4. We are still looking for a new teacher for our 1st and 2nd grade class. Catechism classes are scheduled to begin Wednesday, October 7.

The Sunday morning Adult Bible Class continues to meet on Zoom at 10:30. If you have a smart phone or a computer with microphone & camera, you are welcome to join us for our discussion of 1 Corinthians 13-16.



Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the questions raised by the COVID epidemic is: "What are the essential services and businesses of our society?" People agreed that healthcare, utilities, and retailers of food, toilet paper, and gasoline were rather essential. Other services and businesses were considered not as essential and they were closed down for a while.

As Christians, we have to ask ourselves, "Is the Church an essential service?" Some governors decided that the Church was not essential. Some people argue that faith is essential but that people can find faith in other ways besides the Church. We often hear, "People don't need the Church to be Christians."

However, from the time of the apostles until now, Christians have always believed that the Church as the gathering of people in Jesus' name is essential. The Church is simply people gathering as a public witness to the Gospel of Jesus. Sure people can find the Gospel in other ways (books, radio, TV, the internet, neighbors, etc.) just like children can get an education apart from public schools. But as we saw last spring, for most children public schools are essential to their education and therefore to the long-term health of our community and nation. Martin Luther advocated for public education as a way to raise literacy rates. Without public schools, education becomes the privilege of a very few. And public education is essential to the promoting of public values and common social ground.

The Church is also essential. If the Church were to stop gathering and simply become a media company publishing and broadcasting a message, something vital would be lost. God didn't send the Gospel in a book or a radio program. God sent us the Gospel in a person – Jesus. And Jesus didn't write down the Gospel for future generations. He sent his followers into the world to be his Body, his physical presence, in the world. It takes a village of believers to reflect the grace and truth of Jesus for the world. Faith is relational and therefore faith is as much caught as it is taught.

The Church is essential because it is the one institution promoting the true meaning and purpose of life. Our political institutions claim that life is all about power. Our media claim that life is all about popularity. Our sports claim that life is all about competition. Our schools claim that life is all about knowledge. Our families come closest to the truth proclaiming that life is all about love. But family love is a private love for a limited circle. The Church focused on the Gospel of Jesus is the one institution promoting God's love for all humanity.

For those who have grown up in the Church, we can come to take the Gospel for granted. But the truth is that there are cultural and spiritual forces trying to uproot the Gospel from our society. We live in a world that is not good soil for the growth of faith in God. Some would say that the world is a spiritual desert. Others argue that it is more like a spiritual jungle. And we have a spiritual enemy who is attempting to sabotage faith in God. If left to ourselves we will not believe the Gospel and we will not have faith in God. Faith is a miracle of the Holy Spirit transmitted to us through the Word and through the love of the community of faith.

The Church is essential because the Gospel of Jesus is essential. The Gospel is the strongest foundation for human rights. Without the Gospel, there is nothing to prevent totalitarianism from taking over. The Gospel is the strongest foundation for morality and integrity. Most people want to be good, but only when it is convenient for them. Schools can teach ethics, but without the Gospel, we lack a real motivation for real integrity. The Gospel is the only foundation for real forgiveness.





Without the Gospel, our culture will continue to fall deeper into anger, bitterness, and polarization. The Gospel is the surest foundation for marriage and family as it teaches us to love one another sacrificially.

The greatest danger is that we take the Church and the Gospel for granted. Apart from constant connection to Christ through the Word and through the Body of Christ (the Church), we are in danger of losing our faith without even realizing it. Down through history, Christians have seen weekly gatherings as a bare minimum for the sustaining of faith in a hostile culture. The Church is far more vital than sports. The Church is even more vital than education. Without the Gospel, education just produces smart sinners. Sure, parents can raise good kids apart from the Gospel and the Church. But they won't have the most valuable thing that anyone can have: a living faith that gives us purpose and hope to life.

Depression and despair are epidemic in our culture right now. Suicide rates have risen 35% in the past 20 years with 1.4 million attempts last year. I read that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Drug overdoses have skyrocketed. These are just symptoms suggesting that depression and despair are epidemic. Why? Because people have no meaning and hope for their lives. Does this have anything to do with the way that the Church has been marginalized in most people's lives? The Church is as essential now as it has ever been.

If the Church is essential and we are unable to do Church the way we have always done it, perhaps it is time for us to find new ways to do Church. Perhaps we can meet in small groups. Perhaps we can meet outside. Throughout our history as the Church, the most common way Christians gathered for worship has been in small groups outside. It may be healthier spiritually as well as physically. It may be the only way that the Church survives going forward. I'm just wondering.

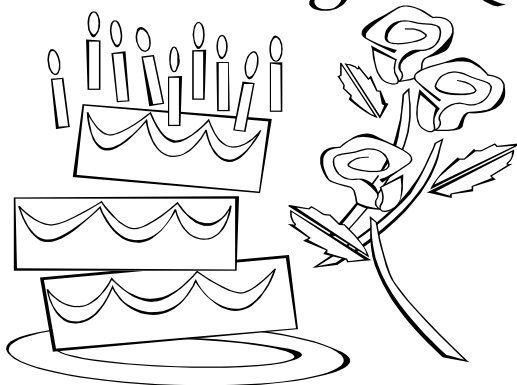
Yours in Christ, *Phil Nielsen*

WOW REMINDER: If you haven't made your "BAKELESS BAKE SALE" donation yet, it's not too late. Last year with our income from serving funeral meals and the Harvest Bazaar/Luncheon we were able to donate \$3,100 to our various mission projects. These were ILC Capital Improvement Fund, Salem Lutheran Home Activities, Riverside and Ingham camps, and West Central (meat certificates). Of course this year everything is different. We pray that we can continue to be generous to these projects, but that will require your help. Your donation can be sent to Kathy Block, 1091 Kingwood Rd, Harlan or left at church. Checks should be made out to ILCW. Thank you.

WOW will be gathering/social distancing in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, September 9th at 9:30 AM. The ladies have been enjoying this time together and we have each taken a few names of our homebound members to send them a greeting. Everyone is welcome. We will have a board meeting at 9:00.



Birthdays &



Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to the following:

John Haas who will be 92 on September 1.
 Roger Schwieso who will be 85 on September 1.
 W.A. 'Pat' Pattison who will be 88 on September 7.
 Delores Anderson who will be 87 on September 8.
 Roger Christensen who will be 81 on September 14.
 Kay Koos who will be 80 on September 25.
 Hertha Haas who will be 87 on September 26.
 Geraldine Swisher who will be 93 on September 29.

Happy Anniversary to the following:

Galan & Janet Johannsen who will be celebrating their 54th anniversary on September 2.
 Lyle & Connie Behrens who will be celebrating their 51st anniversary on September 20.

Our sympathy for Irma Pedersen at the death of her grandson, Daniel Pedersen.

Our sympathy for Amber Jacobsen and her family at the death of Amber's husband Tim Jacobsen.

*With Deepest
Sympathy*

MISSION QUILTERS will meet Sept. 28th. There is a real need to cut squares—so if you're not a quilter per say anyone can cut! Plenty of room at the tables for safe distancing. Hope to see many of you on Monday, Sept. 28 at 1:00. Also, thanks to Dolly Burgin for her supply of sheets and fabric donated for our mission work. Come & cut or feel free to take fabric home to cut 6 1/2 and 8 1/2 inch squares.



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

Please Pray for:

COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY August 11, 2020—7 pm

The Immanuel Church Council met August 11 with 11 of 14 members present by video conferencing. Ivy Nielsen led devotions from John 6:37. John Taggs will lead devotions in September.

Treasurer reported July income of \$19,364 and July expenses of \$21,152. Year to date income is \$162,133 (which is \$1359 ahead of 2019). Year to date expenses are \$143,345. Our general fund account ended July at almost \$47,370. Our capital project savings are at \$21,737. Tanzania Projects Fund is at \$11,462. Thanks to all who have continued to support the ministry of Immanuel.

Outreach – Immanuel has given 828 pounds to the County Food Pantry which exceeds last year's donations. Our September Mission Partner will be "Feed My Starving Children". The Tanzania Team decided to cancel the 2020 Soup Supper and Auction.

Worship – The new camera system has been ordered. Four outdoor services will be scheduled for September and October. They will be on the East Lawn of the Church property.

Education – Sunday School will not begin this fall until the first Sunday in October. We will wait to see how the public school handles things before we decide the format for Sunday School. Confirmation Classes will also not begin until October.

Executive – An interview team will be formed to interview a candidate for the custodial position.

Pastor – A funeral meal was requested. It was decided to arrange for a caterer to serve funeral meals with donations of desserts and salad from members of Immanuel. Tables will be spread out in the fellowship hall. A wedding is scheduled for September 5. Pastor would like to remove the tape from the pews and allow for the ushers to distance people when seating them.

Old Business -- The Constitution Review Committee completed its work and has come up with recommendations for revisions to the constitution. The summary of the revisions was reviewed and discussed. Major changes included downsizing the council from 14 to 12 members with 3-year terms instead of 2-year terms, combining the Fellowship and Education Committees, and electing council officers by the council rather than by congregational vote. Discussion was tabled until September.



WORSHIP & GIVING								
<u>Attendance</u>						<u>General</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Total</u>
August 1/2	25	+	36	=	61	\$ 5,945.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 5,975.00
August 8/9	20	+	34	=	54	\$ 5,940.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 6,060.00
August 15/16	34	+	24	=	58	\$ 2,519.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 2,769.00
August 22/23	25	+	35	=	60	\$ 2,996.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 3,026.00

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Prior to COVID-19, the Fellowship Committee had planned fun and meaningful gatherings each month for our Immanuel family. COVID-19 has put those specific plans on hold, and as a result we all, most likely, have found ourselves in an often troublesome, uncomfortable, and unfamiliar lifestyle the past several months. Regardless of circumstances, God's Word tells us to encourage and strengthen each other. And we don't have to be face to face to do just that.

**“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Be on the lookout for ways that you can be a blessing and an encouragement to others in need during this time. Here are a few suggestions of ways you can connect with members of our Immanuel family:

Call someone. This can be someone you know well, someone you haven't connected with for a while or someone you'd like to get to know better. (The church directory is a great place to start looking for people who would enjoy hearing from you and the church office can help if you have someone in mind but don't know how to contact them.) Reach out and let them hear your voice. Listen to them.

Who doesn't enjoy getting mail? Whether it is through emails, texts, or the postal service, consider writing someone a note or sending a card. The 'new' school year will look different than years past. Elementary, middle school, high school, college students, and teachers would appreciate your words of encouragement and your prayers.

Parents who are sending their children off to school need your compassion and supportive understanding that no matter what the circumstances, as parents they are doing their best, and they're never alone.

Shut-ins and those on our prayer list need us. Yet everyone would love to hear from someone! Children can get involved by writing letters, or drawing pictures – which can be worth a thousand words (or smiles).

Shop or do errands for those in need, or can't get out.

Drop off a snack or meal at someone's door.

Be creative and let the Holy Spirit guide you.

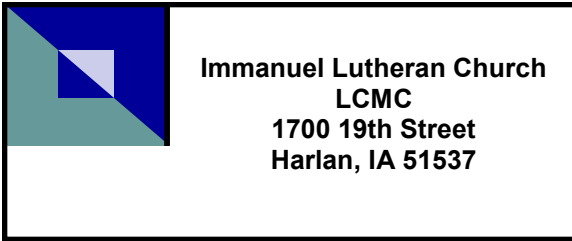
“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.” Romans 15:5

Pray. Make prayer a priority in your life during this time. Pray for our church family, Pastor Phil, and each of the individuals who make up Immanuel Lutheran Church. Pray that as members of Immanuel we continue the call and commission to give encouragement, show compassion, and love others as He has loved us.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:00 CF Quilters 6:00 Boy Scout Leaders	2 5:30 Education Committee	3	4 Greve/Boeke Rehearsal	5 3:30 Greve/Boeke wedding 5:00 Communion
6 9:00 Communion 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	7 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	8 9:00 CF Quilters 7:00 Church Council on Zoom	9 9:30 WOW 7:00 TZ meeting	10 1:00 PEO-Fellowship Hall Vicki Carstens	11	12 Ziola wedding in Denison 5:00 Worship
13 9:00 Outdoor Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	14 9:30 OA	15 9:00 CF Quilters	16	17 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 Ladies Homestead Gathering	18	19 5:00 Communion
20 9:00 Outdoor Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	21 9:30 OA	22 9:00 CF Quilters	23	24 Assemble Newsletter	25	26 5:00 Worship
27 9:00 Outdoor Worship 10:30 Adult Bible Class on Zoom	28 9:30 OA 1:30 Mission Quilters	29 9:00 CF Quilters	30			



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Custodian: Ed Wehr