



The Gleaner

Immanuel Lutheran Church

January 2023

The Gleaner is a publication of:

Immanuel Lutheran Church
320 S. Bradley St.
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

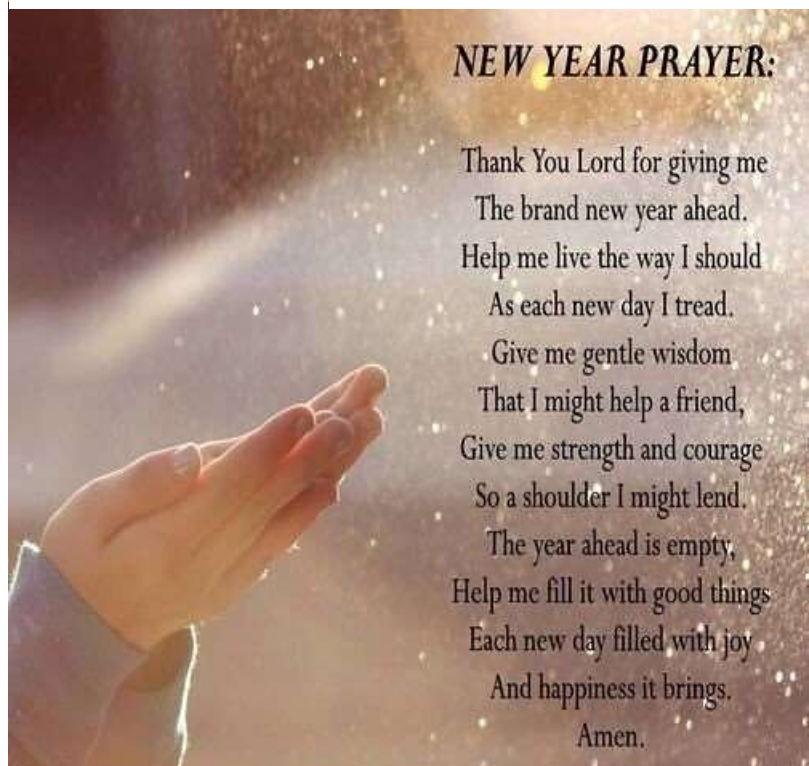
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Immanuel has an online church directory. Visit our website and check it out!
Contact the office for your username and password.

Mission
Joyfully Christian.
Humbly Serving.
Boldly Loving.



NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me
The brand new year ahead.
Help me live the way I should
As each new day I tread.
Give me gentle wisdom
That I might help a friend,
Give me strength and courage
So a shoulder I might lend.
The year ahead is empty,
Help me fill it with good things
Each new day filled with joy
And happiness it brings.
Amen.

A Letter from Pr. Dana.....

Friends in Christ,

Since the Gleaner is arriving on Epiphany, I wanted to share with you a devotional by Diana Butler Bass that inspired me this week. I pray it blesses you too:

January 5 is the twelfth and final day of Christmas. On January 6, the Christian calendar turns to a new season: Epiphany.

The origins of Epiphany as a church festival are somewhat vague; as is the very definition of the word. “Epiphany” can mean manifestation, revelation, appearance, insight, enlightenment, or a shining forth. Epiphany begins with the story of the Magi, three astrologers, who follow a brilliant star to the place of Jesus’ birth and honor the child with gifts. Upon seeing the baby, they were “overwhelmed with joy,” and fell on their knees.

The wise men awaited a sign in the sky — a star — to guide them on this journey. Revelations break in, light shines forth, and glory appears. Such things are from the realms of mystery, awe, and wonder. They surprise and disrupt the normal course of existence. Epiphanies are not of our making, but it would be a mistake to believe that we are only passive recipients of epiphanies. We need to be alert for their appearance and search out the trailings of their presence. Revelations can be missed if one isn’t attentive or attuned to the possibilities of sacred surprise.

The Magi, of course, were looking for a sign. They were professional spiritual seekers, but they weren’t content just gazing upon the star. They didn’t remain in some distant locale and admire its glory from afar. They got up and followed it to its source. Their journey even involved danger — as a treacherous king attempted to use them to manipulate this manifestation for his own evil purposes, but they kept going.

We may not create epiphanies, but we respond to them. Epiphanies grab a hold of us; we can’t shake them. Epiphanies ask something of us. The star is an invitation, a calling to do something — to act. These verses from Isaiah, traditionally read at Epiphany, underscore this:

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*

We arise; we shine — glory entices us, woos us, into the light. We don’t just observe. Epiphany embraces and vivifies us.

Epiphany is a manifestation, the mystery revealed, and an invitation to discover grace, goodness, and God. It is neither a magic fix nor a moment when utopia arrives, but the birth, the star, and heavenly glory don’t eliminate the darkness. Rather, such revelations cast the light that we need to see the way. Epiphany beckons us to pay attention and participate in widening the circle of light in the world — to push back against all brittle injustice and brutality. Whether a babe in Bethlehem or a burning bush, epiphanies are guide stars on a longer journey toward healing, liberation, and peace.

Perhaps these words, a seasonal benediction of sorts, from Madeleine L’Engle capture the fullest sense of Epiphany:

*This is my charge to you.
You are to be a light bearer.
You are to choose the light.
Arise. Shine.*

In Christ,
Pastor Dana Hendershot

Ministry with Each Other



We would like to thank you for the very generous Christmas bonuses that were given to us from the Immanuel congregation. We are all truly humbled! We wish you all a very Happy & Healthy New Year!

-Pr. Dana & the Staff of Immanuel

Theological Discussions with Pr. Dana

Join us on Thursdays at 11am
in the Capital Room OR by ZOOM!
(We will resume on January 8th)

The plan is to read *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr: Many of us feel disconnected by difficult times, longing for ways to awaken God's love in ourselves and the world. The reality we face is simple yet difficult – the healing of the world hinges upon honoring the inherent sacredness of the world and every one in it. We hope that as you rediscover Jesus and learn to experience Christ in everything.



10 Kevin Sullivan
13 Karl Mikko
Dan Hoffman
14 Debi Mikko
Jim Erickson
Bill Edmondson
15 Judy Ramsower
16 Danielle Sullivan
27 Dave Wyman
28 John Warriner
Judy Emmons
Joel Jurick
29 Bill Jensen

If you would like to
occasionally
receive
scripture/inspirational
texts
from Pastor Dana,
please text "Trinity" to
474747
to sign up.

Ministry with Each Other



Lonely? Sad? Discouraged?

**Going through a tough time--
emotionally or spiritually?
Struggling with a crisis or simply
feeling down?**

Consider letting a Stephen Minister help. A Stephen Minister is a member of our congregation who is trained to listen, care, encourage, pray, and walk alongside you during difficult times. It's confidential, free, and very helpful.

To learn more, talk with Pastor Dana, Chris Schuster, Fred Schuster, or Gail Mitchell.



January 8-

11am- All are welcome to un-decorate the church!

Please see Thomas or Beth for all other plans for January!!



Special Congregational Meeting

**Please join us on Sunday, January 15th
immediately following our worship service
to discuss a possible transfer of property to the ICRH.**

Ministry with Community & World

thrivent

It is with GRATITUDE that Thrivent donated more than \$750 to help with the purchase of warm children's coats, blankets, boots, mittens, etc. for Christmas Outreach of Isabella County this past December. Thanks to many, including the LaBlances.

If you are a Thrivent member, please support continued success by logging in to Thriventchoice.com. Choice Dollars lets eligible clients with membership choose where Thrivent distributes a portion of it's funding each year. Your eligibility is based on insurance premium values. If you prefer not to go online, you can call: 1-800-847-4836- when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice" or "Choice Dollars". A representative will assist you and you may qualify for free \$. The dollars can be directed to Immanuel Lutheran in Mt. Pleasant or a designated charity of your choice. The password of our church is "God with us".

-This request for Thrivent donation must be made by the end of March. If there are questions call Carolyn Hoffman at 989-506-3763.

The Care Store

is always in need of household items! When you buy one for your home, consider buying one for someone in need. Place these items on the shelf in the hallway by the office and we'll get them delivered to those who need them.



Immanuel will host the ICRH rotating homeless shelter from February 5th-12th

We will, again, need volunteers to help us make this happen!

Watch for sign-ups coming in January!

Community Input: Praises and Pinches

To be a healthy, faithful community, Immanuel needs to be open with what we expect in all areas of life. If there is anything in our community life that brings joy or causes concern, please share any feelings and questions. Thank you for taking the time to communicate ways we are doing well in our ministry at Immanuel and the areas that need attention. Your Mutual Ministry Team needs your feedback. If you would like a personal response to your "praise" or "pinch," please be sure to sign this form at the bottom.

To discuss a concern directly with the Mutual Ministry Team or one of the Team members, please indicate below.

Praises: _____

Pinches: _____

Desired Outcome: _____

Is it OK to publish in Gleaner? __Yes __No (Name must be posted if you wish for this to appear in Gleaner.)

A specific question I would like answered: _____

Name _____

Business Ministry

2022 Giving Statements

Your 2022 giving statements will be emailed. If we do not have an email on file for you, we be "snail-mail" it to you. If we send yours by email, but you would still like to receive a hard copy, please email Andrea at office@immanuelmp.com.

Financial Monthly Report YTD as of November 2022

Spending Plan 2022-2023
\$384,524

Actual Expenditures:
\$52,605

Giving to Date:
\$36,849

2023 Offering Envelopes

These are available in the narthex.
If you are able, please pick yours up on Sunday
OR
if you are not able, please contact the office and
we will mail yours to you!

Contributing Stocks or Bonds

To contribute capital gain property such as stocks or bonds to the church, per IRS Publication 526 you can deduct the Fair Market Value of the asset on your personal tax returns - not the basis in the asset. Immanuel has a brokerage account to facilitate the transfer of these assets directly. If you are interested, please contact the church for information or assistance.

Tax Break for contributions – people over 70 1/2 years-old

If you are over 70.5 did you know that you can give directly from your retirement account to Immanuel Lutheran Church and no pay taxes on the gift? Due to the tax changes that include a higher standard deduction and the elimination of the personal exemption it is possible the best tax benefit for contributions to the church is to give directly from your retirement account.