



The Gleaner

Immanuel Lutheran Church

December 2023

The Gleaner is a publication of:

Immanuel Lutheran Church

320 S. Bradley St.
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

Phone: (989) 773-4204

Email: office@immanuelmp.com

Website: immanuelmp.com

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 9am-3pm

**The office will be closed
December 25-26 & Jan 1-2**

Pastor: Dana Hendershot

Layout and Editing:
Andrea Redmond

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.**



Sunday, December 3- 10:00am service

Cocoa, Cookies & Christmas Decorating following

Sunday, December 10 – 10:00 am (Children’s Program)

Youth Bake Sale following

Sunday, December 17- 10:00 am service

Sunday, December 24- 10:00am service (ONLINE)

7:00pm Candlelight Service (IN-PERSON)

Sunday, December 31 – 10:00 am service

****Advent Devotionals are available in the narthex****

News from the Synod

In the October Gleaner, Sarah Gilbert and I wrote about staying steadfast during Pastor Dana's illness and treatments. We must be doing okay because Pastor John Soyster says he does not see signs that we are panicking or are in despair.

Seasons are changing, trees have changed and lost their leaves, we've celebrated the Reformation and now we're racing towards Christmas. But first we should take time to pause, reflect and to give thanks. This month Sarah and I are writing about giving thanks with Sarah concentrating on our Immanuel family while I update you about happenings in our Synod.

I am a member of the Synod Council and the Executive Committee and I am also team leader of the Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance program. Our Synod is thankful for many things, especially the generosity of our members. Their steadfastness and commitment to our youth and our pastors and deacons is admirable.

~Linda Wicander

Providing for our Youth

Immanuel's youth, Beth Mundwiler, and Thomas Strandskov are busy fund raising for the 2024 Youth Gathering in New Orleans (the rummage sale in October raised over \$700 and anticipation is building for the bake sale on December 10). Similar activities are taking place across the Synod as congregations, youth and their leaders are preparing for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering. The cost for the gathering can be prohibitive for some congregations (the total cost for the event including registration housing, transportation and food is estimated to be \$1,600 per individual). In fact, several pastors in our Synod share stories of their congregations being unable to send their youth to the gatherings. To overcome some of this problem, Synod Council recently approved creating the North/West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA Youth Gathering Fund, which seeks to make the ELCA Youth Gathering more accessible for families and congregations in our synod. The aim is to provide 100 \$250 scholarships for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Synod Council is very thankful that over \$11,000 of the \$25,000 goal has been raised and we will be able to provide for our youth.



News from the Synod

Providing for our Pastors and Deacons

The Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance Program assists our pastors and deacons in reducing their Seminary debt. In Synod Council for the past year, we've been talking about our favorite Jesus stories. My favorite parable is from Mark and Matthew in which Jesus tells the apostles the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed; it's a very small seed yet when it is full grown it is larger than all the other plants. My aunt died suddenly when she was 29, which was devastating for our family. When we cleared out her belongings my grandmother gave me my aunt's charm which contains a mustard seed. Whenever I hear this parable, I think of my aunt. It's one way we keep her memory alive.

The Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance Program is like a mustard seed. According to Luther Seminary the average student indebtedness is \$62,000. It is extremely challenging for pastors and deacons to repay their loans because of the compensation they receive. The North/West Lower Michigan Synod decided we would help pastors and deacons reduce their seminary student debt. We started very small in 2019, hoping we would have enough money to fund us for a few years. Thanks to very generous donations we have awarded 18 grants of \$2,000 to 8 rostered leaders for a total of \$36,000. Our tiny mustard seed has grown into a large and successful program that we will continue as long as we have available funds and the need continues. This fall we have \$28,000 available to award. Depending upon the available pool of applicants we will award a minimum of \$2,000 with a maximum of \$4,000 awarded. I am very grateful for committee members Rich Weingartner and Assistant to the Bishop Christina Bright for their hard work and commitment to this program. It's a time-consuming project but it's certainly rewarding and fun to give away money!

Our Synod is very thankful and grateful that we can provide for both our youth and our pastors and deacons.



News from the Synod

Winter 2024 – Six Women from Church History that You Need to Know About

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod announces the next session of our Adult Theological Education program: Six Women from Church History that You Need to Know About. Join the Rev. Dr. Joy Schroeder for a six-week study of Christian women through the ages starting on January 16, 2024!

Dr. Schroeder is the author of five books on the history of how Christians and Jews have interpreted scripture. Her most recent book, co-authored with Marion Ann Taylor (University of Toronto) is *Voices Long Silenced: Women Biblical Interpreters through the Centuries* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2022).

Dr. Schroeder will discuss these women's inspirational lives and writings.

1. Perpetua (d. ca. 202), North African martyr and visionary writer
2. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), Saxon nun and theologian
3. Argula von Grumbach (ca. 1492-ca. 1554), Bavarian Lutheran reformer and pamphlet writer
4. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695), Mexican nun and poet
5. Jarena Lee (1783-1864), African American preacher
6. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), Indian Bible translator and founder of women's shelters

The class will meet on six consecutive Tuesday evenings: January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2024 from 7:00 – 8:15pm ET via Zoom. This course is open to all adults, both laypeople and rostered ministers, and is free of charge. Sessions will be recorded and available to registered participants. Registration is required and will close on January 5 2024. To register for the class go to Synod website <https://www.mittensynod.org/events/adult-theological-education/>

Additional information, including Zoom links, will be sent via email closer to the start of the course. If you have additional questions, please contact communications@mittensynod.org.

Thinking about contributing to one of Immanuel's endowment funds?

While you can write your check to Immanuel, writing the check instead directly to either the Immanuel Mission Endowment Fund or the ILC Endowment Fund will better ensure your donation goes to the proper place. These checks can be given to Dave Simon or placed in his church mailbox outside the office. You will still get credit for your donation on your church giving statement. If any questions, please contact Dave, or Steve or Jan Podolsky. And thanks for your generous donation!

Ministry with Each Other



Poinsettia Order forms

If you would like to order a poinsettia for our Christmas Eve service, order forms are available in the narthex. Please turn your order form and payment into the office no later than Sunday, Dec. 17th.



Tree Dedication

A crimson red maple tree was planted out back near the giant boulder in honor of Jim Hageman's birthday, as a gift from his sister and brother-in-law, Peggy and Charlie Burke.

Happy Birthday Jim and thank you to The Burkes!

Lonely? Sad? Discouraged?



**Going through a tough time---emotionally or spiritually?
Struggling with a crisis in life? 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 Gail Mitchell.

Ministry with Each Other



Visitation Ministry

In 2019, Immanuel began a visitation ministry, and people signed up to help with visiting shut-ins, making hospital visits, welcoming new members and so on. These folks had the option of signing up for only what they felt called upon to do.

Shortly after the inception of this ministry, we were faced with a pandemic and weren't able to utilize these gifts as planned.

This year, with Pr. Dana's absence, we have really begun utilizing this ministry and would love to GROW it even more!

In addition to the needs listed above, I have found that there is a rather simple need that we have, which I would like to find a solution. In the office, I frequently get phone calls or emails of members looking for help with an errand or a quick ride to an appointment.

I am looking to create a list of people that I could contact via email for sudden requests that are made by other members to run these quick errands or to give someone a lift to the doctor.

Please email me if you are willing to be added to my "Quick Trips" list!!
Thank You!~Andrea



- 1 Kathy Wyman
- 6 John Lorand
- 8 Annette Foster
- 10 Lorraine Tubbs
- 12 Ruth Magnell
Amelia Gaken
- 16 Luke Douglas
Laney Douglas
- 18 Syd Smith
- 20 Carter Hoffman
- 21 Diane Clise
- 22 Chuck McCollom
Sandy Warriner
Billie Plouff
- 23 Emma Muniz
- 27 Kip Ferguson
- 28 Emily Little



Ministry with Community & World



Immanuel will host the ICRH rotating homeless shelter from February 4-11th.

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

Watch for sign-ups coming in January!

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.

Christmas Outreach

On December 15 & 16 Christmas Outreach will hold their Distribution dates at Morey Courts to almost 600 families in need.

Volunteers for escorting are still needed on these dates.

Please visit their Facebook page Christmas Outreach of Isabella County if you are able to come help out!

Business Ministry

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 years-old

If you are over 72 did you know that you can give directly from your retirement account to Immanuel Lutheran Church and pay no taxes on the gift? Due to the tax changes that include a higher standard deduction and the elimination of the personal exemption, you may receive the best tax benefit if you donate directly from your retirement account.

Financial Monthly Report- YTD as of 10/31/23

Spending Plan 2022-2023: \$384,308
Actual Expenditures: \$16,457
Giving to Date: \$23,764

2024 Offering Envelopes

Offering Envelopes will be available in the narthex on Sunday, December 10th. Please remember to stop by and pick up and help us save on postage!

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 _____