



The Gleaner

Immanuel Lutheran Church

August 2024

The Gleaner is a publication of:

Immanuel Lutheran Church

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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.



Mark your calendars!!!

Sunday, September 22, 2024
immediately after worship
with a picnic to follow!

A letter from Pastor Dana...

Friends in Christ,

Over the past month, I've naturally been reflecting a lot on the past year. I recently had my 6-month post-chemo checkup and received the best news—my scan was still free and clear of cancer. Although the cancer permanently stretched a few of my lymph nodes, and I'm left with a random swollen pinky toe (truly a mystery), I'm doing very well!

Then Dr. Sahay said, "Let's take that mediport out!" Those words were music to my ears. Every oncologist handles things differently, and with my kind of cancer, it's rare to have the port removed before the 2-year mark. According to the Facebook forums, it usually happens around the 5-year mark. A small part of me wondered if she knew what she was doing (so far she has been 100% on point), but the larger part of me heard, "I'm so confident we got it all, let's get that port out."

On July 17, 2023, my port was placed, and on July 31, 2024, I had it successfully removed. One year. I had it for only one year.

I planned to celebrate! What an amazing freedom. But what shocked me was how intensely emotional I felt after the procedure. It was as if I was experiencing all of my feelings about cancer in a single moment—the determination, the resilience, the fear, the dread, the pain, the unknown, and yes, even the happiness. The procedure reminded me that the body remembers. That poisonous lifeline, which I had dearly called "Elixir Bay," was the entry point for a lot of suffering. And my body remembered.

Now, the plan is to trudge through all these emotions. My continued follow-up includes blood work every six weeks and a PET scan once a year for five years. It's comforting to know they're monitoring me.

I can't help but think about the number of people who are quietly dealing with trauma on a daily basis. Our demons may be different, but we each have a body that remembers our trauma. In *Psychology Today*, I read, "Most researchers agree that there is a significant mind-body connection, and some people go so far as to say that what the mind forgets, the body remembers," (Raab, 2017).

The fact that we have a God who chose to enter into the world in a body just as human as you or I brings me to my knees in awe. We have a God who enters into the trauma—God does it for us and with us.

If given the choice to experience trauma or not, I'd lean towards, "No, thank you." Yet, I also believe I would enter into trauma for a loved one in a heartbeat. That's what profound love does—it always puts the other first. How many of you have had a loved one with cancer or some other ailment and thought, "I wish it were me and not you"?

But Jesus showed us that the cross we each bear is not the end of the story. So, while my body is remembering all the suffering right now, I also know it will remember this resurrection I'm experiencing.

Thanks be to God.

In Christ,
Pastor Dana Hendershot

NWLM Synod Assembly

NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD

MAY 11, 2024

On Saturday May 11, Pastor Dana, Beth Mundwiler, Linda Wicander and Sarah Gilbert attended the Synod Assembly virtually from Pastor Dana's comfortable and recently remodeled home.

After a greeting from Bishop Eaton, we listened to an opening address from Bishop Craig Satterlee in which he expanded on the assembly theme of "Salt, Light and Leaven". Bishop Satterlee also recapped several of the initiatives and actions taken across the synod during the previous year.

Ministry Committee reports were shared; most importantly the report from the financial committee. This is the committee that provides the suggested compensation guidelines for ordained clergy and deacons. These guidelines are then passed along to Immanuel's personnel committee and are used for salary recommendations for our Immanuel personnel.

Several elections needed to take place; first Karen Bird was elected Synod Treasurer. Also, six positions were elected for the Synod Council At-Large. Seven synod voting members were chosen to represent the synod at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in July 2025 which will take place in Phoenix.

Additionally, several churches shared videos of how their congregations were reaching out and serving their communities, ranging from providing meals both in-house and delivered, to projects geared to improving homes for those needing repairs. Immanuel's video was not chosen, but we were pleased with our submission.

The Assembly was closed in prayer.

Attending virtually was very different from attending in person; there was much less discussion on issues presented to the assembly.

Submitted,

Sarah Gilbert



New ELCA Social Statement

The ELCA is developing a social statement on civic life and faith, the relationship of church and state, and related matters, as called for by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Pastor Dana would like to offer a time to review this so we may offer our feedback as Immanuel Lutheran Church. We will meet following worship at 11:30 AM (give me some time to greet people) on **Sunday, Sept. 8, 15 & 29** (the 22nd is our annual meeting). No need to do research ahead of time unless you'd like to.

Social statements are the ELCA's primary documents to address significant social issues. They are intended to aid reflection, shape conscience and set forth the ELCA's teaching and policy on the major social issues and questions of contemporary life. Social statements are developed by task forces, using an established process of study and widespread participation across the church to guide theological and moral deliberation.

At this time the task force encourages you to study and give feedback on a [draft version of the social statement](#). They provide us a way to share our feedback after discussing this draft statement.

To download the draft in Spanish, please [click here](#).



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

**Faith in Action at
Immanuel**

March
We put together 44 Spring Break food care packages. These items served those families in need during time off from school.

April
We hosted Community Family Reading Night featuring Dominic Thrasher!

May
We took part in painting a community banner for Art Reach. It is currently hanging on Main St. in downtown MP.

May
We hosted a HUGE community job fair!

June
We hosted our 3rd annual Community Family Fun Day! This event was open to all in the community. It was an afternoon of fun.

Children & Youth

Vacation Bible School

A Sincere **Thank you!**

We would like to personally thank everyone who made “VBS SCUBA – 2024” such a success! It took a village to make it happen and it was a great week for everyone.

We are already looking forward to “**VBS TRUE NORTH - 2025**” as we trek to Alaska to see the northern lights! We are going to use an evening format next year that will include a light dinner with the closing in the pavilion. By moving to evenings, we hope to get more children that are in the daytime peak programs. **Please place August 3 – 8, 2025 on your calendars** as we hope to have your children and your grandchildren! The hours will be 5:30 – 8:00pm!



Starting Sunday, September 8, 2024 our church nursery will be back up and running! Your child/infant (newborn to 4 years old only) will be cared for every Sunday by two students from Central Michigan University who are majoring or minoring in Early Childhood. The nursery is maintained (cleaning & supplies) according to the State of Michigan 2024 guidelines. For more information, please visit the nursery! The Nursery hours are 9:30 am – 11:30 am unless otherwise posted.

Children & Youth (continued)

ELCA Youth Gathering- New Orleans

Thank you for all of your participation in supporting our youth through fundraising efforts as well as your prayers! It was HOT in the crescent city, but worshipping with 16,000 young people from around the country was a God experience. We heard from speakers such as Austin Channing Brown, Pastor Sally Azar from Palestine, Micheal Chan, to name a few. We heard music from the worship band, Blessing Ofor and Blanca. For our synod day we were able to worship with our Michigan folks as well as our region including 1300 of our new friends. We did get caught in a rain storm on the way, but we didn't let that stop us from worshipping, We explored the French Quarter and the Garden District including a ride on the Street Car! Don't forget the food, especially the beignets! We were tired when we returned, but God was working in our youth!



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 73 years-old

If you are over 73 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 June 30, 2024

Spending Plan 2023-2024:
\$384,308

Actual Expenditures:
\$245,354

Giving To Date:
\$257,231



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 _____

Worship Ministry

A graphic for 'Outdoor Worship' featuring the words 'OUTDOOR' and 'WORSHIP' in large, blue, sans-serif capital letters. The text is set against a background of a bright blue sky and a field of tall green grass.

**OUTDOOR
WORSHIP**

Sunday, August 18

(weather permitting)

Bring your lawn chairs!!



Join four local congregations—First Church of the Nazarene, First Presbyterian Church, Immanuel Lutheran Church, and St. John’s Episcopal Church—for a joint worship service at Island Park on August 25 at 10:30 AM.

We look forward to stepping out of our buildings, celebrating our theological diversity, and sharing a potluck meal together! We will meet at Island Park rain or shine, but if storms arise, we will relocate to the First Church of the Nazarene. Let's pray for good weather!

A graphic for 'Volunteer' with the word 'VOLUNTEER' in purple, sans-serif capital letters. Below the text is an illustration of several hands of different colors (blue, green, yellow, orange, red, purple) raised in a gesture of offering or service.

VOLUNTEER

WE have many opportunities to volunteer and get involved at Immanuel. Some direct opportunities to help with our Worship life are through signing up! A job summary is on each page...

Assisting Minister [Immanuel Lutheran Church: Assisting Ministers \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

Altar Guild [Immanuel Lutheran Church: Altar Guild \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

Coffee host [Immanuel Lutheran Church: Coffee Hosts \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

Greeter/Welcome Center [Immanuel Lutheran Church: Greeters \(signupgenius.com\)](#)



Ministry with Each Other

Adult Confirmation Class

Calling everyone from the lifetime Lutherans to the brand new ones! Curious what the middle schoolers are being taught in confirmation class these days? Pastor Dana is planning to lead a confirmation class for all ages this year.

The classes will be held on the **second Sunday of every month from September 8 – March 9 from 1:30 PM – 3 PM**

Sign up in the Narthex by the end of August if you'd like to join.

Strategic Planning

It is time to look at our current ministries and set some goals for our future! To start, Immanuel Lutheran Church Council created a survey for congregational insight on the current and future direction of our ministry. The goal of this survey is to get your perspective on what Immanuel Lutheran Church is called to do. Please know that this survey includes open-ended questions that require thought and prayer to answer fully. Consider reading through a paper copy of the survey (available at church), taking notes, and then filling out this survey (or just turning in a paper copy). Feedback from the congregation will go a long way to help guide decision making (e.g., budgetary decisions



1	Barb McCollom
6	Jan Podolsky
7	Helen Leemaster Jeanette Noch
8	Kara Watters
10	Sarah Keller Larry Leemaster
11	Daniel Keller Steve Podolsky
13	Pam Fultz
14	Tom Mueller
16	Abbie Powell
17	Sophia Powell
18	Thomas Ferguson
19	Shirley Howard
22	Audrey Douglas
26	Cheryl Geisthardt
30	Charlie Burke

Save the Date!!

Women's Retreat on Nov. 1 & 2

Visitation Ministry

At the recommendation of the Stephen Ministers, the council agreed that our congregation would be better served by a caring ministry program that offered more flexibility and timeliness to meet a variety of needs.

Thus, our Stephen Ministry is transitioning into a visitation ministry, and everyone is welcome to participate. If you are interested, please speak with Pastor Dana.

We still have our trained Stephen Ministers among us even though the program is inactive with no one currently serving. I, Pastor Dana, want to give a heartfelt shout-out to them for their faithful care, listening, and learning. They have truly been an amazing gift to us all. I also want to recognize Gail Mitchell and Denise Kaiser who are heading up the visitation ministry. Thanks be to God for their service.

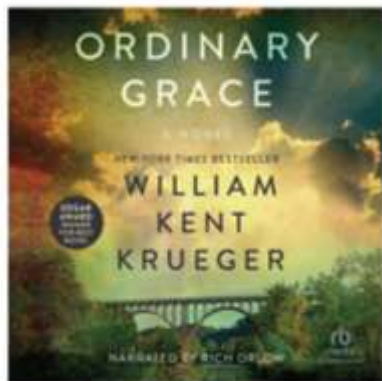
Ministry with Each Other

BOOK CLUB!

Attention all book-loving ladies! Join our monthly gatherings for engaging discussions on new books and great companionship. Each session lasts 90 minutes. If you can't make one meeting, drop in at the other since both groups cover the same read.

- 1) First Monday of each month: 6:30-8:00pm at Karen Graef's. Enjoy charcuterie, desserts, and wine.
- 2) First Thursday of each month: 10:00-11:30am with Linda Wicander at the church, serving coffee and treats.

OCTOBER -



Description

Award-winning author William Kent Krueger has gained an immense fan base for his Cork O'Connor series. In *Ordinary Grace*, Krueger looks back to 1961 to tell the story of Frank Drum, a boy on the cusp of manhood. A typical 13-year-old with a strong, loving family, Frank is devastated when a tragedy forces him to face the unthinkable - and to take on a maturity beyond his years.

NOVEMBER -



Following in the footsteps of Brian McLaren and others, Marcus Borg – popular scholar and author of Jesus Seminar fame – has written a novel. *Putting Away Childish Things: A Tale of Modern Faith* (Harper, 2010) tells the story of professor Kate Riley, a liberal Christian in an academic setting. Her secularist constituents (including some of her colleagues) view her as too religious, while her conservative students (and their parents) view her liberal beliefs with suspicion.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES
MAY 16, 2024

PRESENT: Diane Thomas, Staci Couch, Linda Wicander, Sarah Gilbert, Gabe Goodrich, Beth Mundwiler, Rachael Nelson, Rose Prasad, Mark Strandskov, Pr. Dana Hendershot

Guests: Steve Podolsky, Jan Podolsky, Denise Kaiser

April Minutes – There was not a quorum in April, so minutes were not taken. Some notes were taken, but not distributed. *Denise will send notes to Sarah.

Consent Agenda

Worship and Music's report was reviewed

Tech coordinator/youth coordinator report

Pastor's Report

Dana explained that she will be out of state for part of VBS, attending a family graduation

*Dana will talk with Ministry with Each Other about selling the bounce house/slide

August 25th will be an ecumenical Church in the Park, with a picnic

Linda attended the Synod's 6-week class on Historical Women in the Church. The Synod has given us permission to use the class at Immanuel. Dana and Linda will lead the program which will be available to all (both men and women) for 6 consecutive Weds beginning July 24th. These will be held from 5:30-7:30, with a meal provided.

Financial Report

Report was reviewed. Jan said that the Money Market account has made \$457.18 since it was started in March.

Rose made a motion to authorize Steve and Jan Podolsky to manage accounts with Isabella Bank on behalf of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Diane seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Steve explained that since he and Jan took over the financial duties 15 months ago, they are still learning. When people present payment requests, they specify which fund to take it from. Steve had assumed that the folks making requests knew the funds had enough dollars to cover requests. It has turned out not to be the case. Three funds are over budget. Steve requested that Council consider using \$1000 from the Thrivent Fund to cover the mix-up.

Following discussion, Mark made a motion that Council grant the request and move \$1000 from Thrivent Fund. Staci seconded, and motion carried.

Old Business

Audit – Sarah asked for help in finding an auditor. *Dan agreed to call Mike Kostreva.

Child Protection Policy 2024

Rachael made a motion for the 2024 Child Protection Policy to replace the 2013 policy, Rose seconded, and motion carried.

Council Retreat – Sarah distributed minutes from the retreat and asked Council members to review and make her aware of any corrections or additions. These will be brought to next month's meeting.

Synod Assembly Report –* Sarah volunteered to complete this report for this year.

Linda wrote thank you notes providing feedback on the Assembly meeting. She said that the format was good, and the time spent watching this virtual meeting was worthwhile.

Sarah reiterated the importance of next year's **Synod Assembly** meeting which will be held in person in Mt. Pleasant. **The date is May 18-20, 2025, with the election of a new Bishop.**

New Business

Budget

Pr. Dana said that the Personnel Committee is recommending a 3% increase for staff.

Dana explained that there will be budget deficit.

*Dana will email Council budget showing said deficit.

Excellence in Service Award

Name of recipients must be given to Sarah as they are chosen by each ministry.

Next meeting June 20th

Assignments

*Denise will email Sarah notes from the get together in lieu of Council meeting from April

*Pr. Dana will ask permission to sell the bounce house/slide.

*Sarah will write Synod Report

*Pr. Dana will email budget

Gabe made a motion to adjourn, Mark seconded, Sarah adjourned the meeting at 7:30. Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer and a singing of Happy Birthday to Gabe.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Kaiser

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 20, 2024

Present: Rachael Nelson, Dan Digmann, Gabe Goodrich, Linda Wicander, Sarah Gilbert, Rose Prasad, Diane Thomas, Pastor Dana Hendershot

Absent: Mark Strandskov, Beth Mundwiler, Staci Couch

Guests: Steve Podolsky, Jan Podolsky, Denise Kaiser

MAY COUNCIL MINUTES

Accepted as written

CONSENT AGENDA

Community and the World minutes – accepted as written

Youth and Tech Coordinator – accepted as written

Pastor Report – accepted as written

FINANCIAL

Accepted as written

OLD BUSINESS

Immanuel Village – Sarah contacted Chuck McCollum to ensure that the impending construction at the Village would not interfere with VBS. Chuck said that it should have no effect on VBS week. He also invited Council to tour the Village after construction.

Excellence in Service Awards – Pr. Dana said they have all be done.

Letter to Congregation – There has been no feedback regarding said letter. Discussion took place regarding other ways to communicate budget issues with congregation. Please see Strategic Planning for further details.

Budget Vote – Sarah reported that she and Team Podolsky have spoken to Dan Eversole regarding a new statute by the Federal Department of Labor. The Fed has set new salary guidelines to be implemented July 1, 2024. This will affect Pr. Dana and Thomas. The base salary is to be \$43888 beginning July 1st, then go to \$58656 January 1, 2025. If this is not met, we must pay staff time and a half, which necessitates keeping a time sheet. This information was new to the Synod and they recommended to seek our own legal assistance. This new federal edict remains unclear as to our real life obligations. Dan and Jan and Steve will be seeking information and bring to our July Council meeting.

Rose motioned to pay Thomas time and a half, up to \$1000 for the remainder of this fiscal year to accommodate this new federal requirement. Rachael seconded, motion passed.

Gabe motioned that we raise Pr. Dana's base salary to \$44,000, if necessary for the remainder of this fiscal year to accommodate this requirement. Rose seconded, motion passed with one abstention.

NEW BUSINESS

Strategic Planning – Discussion about seeking congregational input on the future of our church. Pr. Dana said that upon her hire she was given a list of questions, which she thinks could prove useful in helping the congregation to brainstorm the direction(s) the church may take in the coming year(s). Decisions made – Pr. Dana will send the list of questions to Dan D. who in turn will make any modifications and send on to Council by July 13th. After any further adjustments, Dan will then send to Rachael by July 23rd. Rachael will put together an email, QR code and survey and bring to Council by our next meeting on *July 25th.

*Our regularly scheduled Council meeting was to be on July 18th, but it was clear we would not have quorum, so meeting was moved to the 25th

Dan motioned to adjourn meeting, Diane seconded, Sarah adjourned meeting at 7:35. We closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Denise Kaiser