



The Gleaner

Immanuel Lutheran Church

November 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.



Reminder:
Daylight Savings Time ends on November 3!



Thank you to all who helped with our Fall Clean Up day last weekend!
With your help, we were able to get trees trimmed, gutters cleared and so much more!
Thank You! Thank You!

A letter from Pr. Dana...

Friends in Christ,

On Sunday, November 17, we'll gather for a special "Worship with a Twist," a unique service designed to celebrate our past and envision our future as a church community. As we look toward our 50th anniversary, just three years from now, I have been inspired by the story of our church's early days. The hymn 'Lift High the Cross' was sung as our prominent front cross, which towers over the memorial garden, was raised—a cherished memory for our founding members. The spirit of that moment is the same inspiration we want to carry forward as we dream for our next 50 years.

This 1.5-hour service will include a 45-minute breakout session for brainstorming and visioning. The Strategic Planning Committee—Sarah Gilbert, Rachael Nelson, Beth Mundwiler, Linda Wicander, and myself—have been preparing for this important day, including recruiting and training facilitators and note-takers for each group. This is not meant to be a forum for grievances or problem-solving. It is a time to think creatively and openly about the future of our church and where God may be leading us. It is a time to vision and dream together!

During the service, we'll break into smaller focus groups led by our facilitators, who will capture key thoughts and insights. For those participating online, one of our focus groups will remain in the sanctuary, where a livestream will allow our online community to join in, with comments shared by Thomas. Some parents, visitors, or others may prefer not to join a focus group, and Linda Wicander will lead a Lectio Divina session on the day's Scripture as an alternative.

Our younger voices will also be heard. Karen Graef will lead the young children, and Rachael and Josh Nelson will engage college students and younger adults in their own breakout group.

At the conclusion of the smaller focus groups, we'll return to the sanctuary. I will gather us together with the sound of a bell as we lift our voices to sing 'Lift High the Cross,' offer prayers for our community, and celebrate Christ's Holy Supper.

We hope this service will honor our history, engage our community, and open the way for God's vision to shine as we plan for the years to come. Join us in this inspiring time!

In Christ,
Pastor Dana Hendershot



Pastor Dana will be on vacation
November 18 – 24, 2024
(She'll be celebrating her birthday with
family and will officially be one year
out of chemo!!!)

A Letter from the Council President....

Last year Sarah Gilbert and I wrote about the hard work everyone did to keep Immanuel robust, healthy and welcoming but we also knew it hadn't been easy. We reflected on looking out on a pond watching a duck float by. We see a placid surface but the duck's feet are moving like crazy to keep it afloat and moving forward. We said that's Immanuel. Not every duck is alike, sometimes there are even geese and swans in the pond. That's Immanuel...each of us is different but we've done our best to continue to move forward.

I wondered how we would respond when Pastor Dana returned from her long battle with illness. We would all say hallelujah but then what? Would some of us say "well I've done a lot and now it's someone else's turn to do more"? Would some of us say "what more would like you me to do"? And, would some of us say, "let's build on that excitement and take Immanuel new places"?

I am happy to say that almost everyone has remained steadfast and faithful and we've taken it to a new higher level. I think we're still like those ducks, geese and swans on the pond, we're still paddling like crazy only this time we've taken off like a rocket. The energy at Immanuel is amazing and contagious. We had a very successful VBS, our youth had an amazing time at the Gathering in New Orleans, we've resumed mid-week programs, we have about 20 women attending the book groups that meet on Monday nights and Thursday mornings, we have Sunday morning nursery (now called the Kid's Zone), we hired CMU students as interns to staff the nursery, we hired an intern to help Thomas and we hired Abbie Powell to assist with children in the Sunday service. We had a successful Beer, Brats and Hymns in our fellowship hall that was festive and joyful.

The ICRH had planned that renovations to their new building would be completed in time for housing the homeless this fall. Renovations are not yet completed and Immanuel has stepped up to the plate to house the homeless the last week of October. Nicole Ferguson and Steve Podolsky have taken on new responsibilities. A huge thank you to Ryan Douglas and Sarah Gilbert for serving in these roles for several years.

Our members dug into their pockets and made generous donations and we're going to get new bathrooms! Our members have also made generous donations to help offset our budget deficit.

At our annual meeting we awarded service excellence awards to Chuck McCollom, Kathy Gallaher, Gail Mitchell, Shirley Howard and Natalie Douglas.

Beth Mundwiler completed two terms on Congregation Council, serving as president for two years. She helped keep us on the straight and narrow (more of that steadfastness stuff) during Pastor Dana's illness. Beth continues to serve faithfully on the Worship and Music ministry, is chair of the Ministry with Each Other, is youth coordinator, plays in the band, is a member of the Strategic Planning Committee and will lead a woman's retreat in November.

Sarah Gilbert served the Congregational Council as president during a very hectic/pivotal year. Pastor Dana was seriously ill, Pastor Soyster served faithfully as our main supply pastor, with wonderful support from Pastors Margaret and Ron Vredevelde and others. Sarah kept us on track, found ways to keep us all involved and I think she probably wrote 200 thank you notes last year (Sarah says it was only 50 but I think she is being modest) and she personally delivered boxes of donuts around town. Sarah understands that it is important to give praise, recognition and rewards to people. I am very grateful that Sarah will serve as Past President this year.

Dan Digmann was elected vice president to the Congregational Council. I am looking forward to his steady insights and good sense of humor. Sarah, Dan and I will make a great team to serve the Congregation and the Council.

We also welcome Dianna House as our new Council member. Dianna has been a faithful member of the Altar Guild and she continues that role by bringing home communion to our shut-ins. She brings good insights and good experience to our board. We are lucky to have her.

And lastly, we have started a Strategic Planning process that will position us for the future. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this past year successful. I look forward to working with everyone this next year.

Yours in Christ
Linda Wicander

Ministry with Community & World

Christmas Outreach of Isabella County

MUST LIVE IN ISABELLA COUNTY TO PARTICIPATE

**COATS, HATS, MITTENS, BOOTS, LINENS,
CHILDREN'S BOOKS, CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS,
STOCKINGS & HOUSEHOLD TOTES**

REGISTRATION DATES

Mon - Fri Oct 28 - Nov 1

Mon - Wed Nov 4 - Nov 6

Registration is Open 8am-4pm

TO REGISTER CALL

989-773-4204

PLEASE NO EARLY CALLS

**DISTRIBUTION
WILL BE BACK AT**

**MOREY
COURTS**

**NEXT TO ICE RINK
& CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

**SHOPPING
DAYS**

DEC 13 & 14

5175 E REMUS RD • MT PLEASANT MI

Ministry with Each Other



WE have many opportunities to volunteer and get involved Immanuel. Some direct opportunities to help with our 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 \(signupgenius.com\)](#)

Sign up through Christmas!!!



- 6 Jennifer Digmann
- 6 Deb Reimer
- 7 Matt Keller
- 11 Ted Tuma
- 12 Harry Plouff
- 14 Dan Eversole
- 14 Alana Piatek-Jimenez
- 15 Alicia Podolsky
- 16 Jeff Reimer
- 18 Marcilyn Barnard
- 19 Shenan Davidson
- 19 Ben Ferguson
- 22 Pr. Dana Hendershot
- 24 Whitnee Foote
- 26 John Foote
- 26 Amy Powell
- 30 Martha Goodrich



Youth Group

November 8-10th - The Charge at Great Wolf Lodge (6-12th Grade) Talk to Thomas or Beth for more information (thomas@immanuelmp.com)

November 24th - Youth Group (Making Tie Blankets)

December 8th- Decorating the church for Christmas



Thank you to who all who volunteered their time and/or donated food throughout this past week. We couldn't do this without you!

Worship Ministry

Advent Study

Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent

Pastor Dana will lead an Advent study following worship services throughout December, beginning December 1. Childcare can be arranged—please speak with Pastor Dana if you would like to make childcare arrangements for the study sessions.

Using the video Bible study **In the Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent**, Professor Amy-Jill Levine will guide us through a thoughtful exploration of the history and significance of Christ's birth. This four-session series examines the biblical stories surrounding Christmas with fresh insights.

Sessions include:

1. The Meaning of Memory
2. The Promise of Potential
3. The Journey to Joy
4. The Gift of the Gentiles

Blue Christmas Service

Thursday, December 17 – 7:00 PM

This special worship service is for anyone who finds the holiday season emotionally challenging. Many people face this time with feelings of grief, stress, or isolation, often due to the loss of a loved one, health struggles, financial pressures, or strained family relationships. While the world around us is filled with lights, celebration, and joyful music, those facing sorrow or hardship may feel out of sync with the season's cheer.

We invite you to join us for this Blue Christmas Service, a gathering designed to provide comfort, hope, and a safe space for reflection. This tradition, sometimes called the Longest Night Service, acknowledges that joy and sorrow often coexist.

Special Sunday Worship Times

Mark your calendar!

Sunday, November 3 – 10:00 am (All Saint's Sunday)

Sunday, November 17 – 10:00 am (Worship with a Twist – Strategic Planning)

Sunday, December 8 – 10:00 am (We will be doing Holden Evening Prayer during service)

Sunday, December 15 – 10:00 am (Children's Program)

Sunday, December 22– 10:00 am (Lessons & Carols)

Sunday, December 29 – 10:00 am

Ministry with Each Other



CALLING ALL BAKERS

IMMANUEL YOUTH WILL BE SELLING BAKED GOODS AT THE SANTA'S WORKSHOP CRAFT SHOW (HOSTED HERE AT IMMANUEL). WE ARE IN NEED OF BAKED GOODS TO SELL!

WILL YOU HELP US?

DROP OFF ITEMS TO THE CHURCH KITCHEN BY 12/6
SANTA'S WORKSHOP CRAFT SHOW IS 12/7 AT IMMANUEL

PLEASE DONATE FLEECE



THE IMMANUEL YOUTH GROUP WILL BE MAKING FLEECE BLANKETS AND DONATING THEM TO THE COMMUNITY.

PLEASE HELP BY DONATING FLEECE BY NOVEMBER 24TH

SEE THOMAS OR BETH IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS



*Christmas Eve
Candlelight
Service*
DECEMBER 24TH
@ 7PM
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Immanuel Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 15th
during church service

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 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 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.

Immanuel Offers Electronic Giving

Immanuel Lutheran Church is pleased to offer an electronic option for making regular or special offerings.

Visit our website,
www.immanuelmp.com click “Give”.

Financial Monthly Report – YTD as of September 30, 2024

Spending Plan
\$384,308

Actual Expenditures
\$334,447

Giving to Date
\$323,567

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 _____

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

September 19, 2024

Present: Sarah Gilbert, Linda Wicander, Pr. Dana Hendershot, Diane Thomas, Beth Mundwiler, Dan Digman, Mark Strandskov, Beth Mundwiler, Rachael Nelson

Absent: Gabe Goodrich, Rose Prasad, Staci Couch

Guests: Dianna House, Jan Podolsky, Steve Podolsky, Denise Kaiser

July Minutes – accepted as written

CONSENT AGENDA

Business Ministry Report

Ministry with Each Other Report – see attached

Worship and Music Report – see attached

Community and the World Report

Coordinator for Youth and Faith Development Report – accepted as written

Pastor Report – accepted as written

Consent Agenda – accepted as written

FINANCIAL REPORT

Steve reported that we are in the red \$8,575, as he Jan and Dana predicted. However, since March when we invested in a CD and a Money Market Account, we have made \$4,986, between the two investments.

Jan stated that we have several dormant accounts that are no longer used. She asked Council permission to move some money in these dormant accounts into other Funds that need money. These are as follows: Folk Choir Fund which has \$336.09 in it, would be moved into Drama Ministry; Wrapped in Love Fund which has \$43.62 in it, would be moved to the Prayer Shawl Ministry Fund; Thanksgiving Fund has \$701.21 and the LWR Coffee Fund has \$444.30, totaling \$1,145.51 which would be moved to the Midweek Fund.

Beth made a motion to move above Funds according Jan's statement, Diane seconded, motion passed.

Jan further relayed that the electrical bill ran very high for a couple of months and after some investigation, found it was due to a fan that had been inadvertently turned on and was running constantly.

Financial report accepted as written.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget – Pr. Dana added in funds for an Intern, who will work with children on Sunday and during Midweek, and two nursery workers. She also added an Intern from CMU who will work and learn from Thomas in the tech booth. Dana explained that she took all the money for above positions from the Campus Ministry Fund.

Comprehensive review of Immanuel's financial records – Sarah informed Council that Ted Tuma contacted Dorothy Howard, CPA. Dorothy gave us a \$2,500 bid. She will bill separately for any extraneous needs (eg., travel). Rachael made a motion agreeing to Dorothy's terms taking the money from the Undesignated Fund, Beth seconded, motion passed.

Reconciling in Christ was tabled until October.

Child Safety Policy was thoroughly reviewed page by page by Council. Mark volunteered to meet with Dana to complete the document with additions/corrections.

NEW BUSINESS

Nursery – Pr. Dana presented the idea of a nanny cam in the nursery as a security precaution. Discussion ensued and council agreed that a nanny cam would be ok especially if it is hardwired. Less access to be hacked. Nursery Policies and Procedures will be brought to council in the near future.

Intern for tech booth – Pr. Dana reiterated that a CMU student will shadow Thomas, with the expectations she will be able to fill in for Thomas when he's gone.

ICRH – Immanuel will host the shelter residents from October 27 – Nov 3. Nicole Ferguson has taken over for Ryan Douglas as the lead organizer. Steve volunteered to step in for Sarah as coordinator for the meals.

Campus Ministry and Synod support – Pr. Dana explained that the grant for this ministry used to be one application. However, churchwide would like more of say in how their portions of funds are used, so they are requesting separate applications (one from Churchwide and one from Synod). Thus, necessitating writing two grants. The churchwide grant has been completed and submitted for the 2025 fiscal year.

Land Acknowledgement – Pastor shared a letter from Vance Blackfox, ELCA director for Indigenous ministries and tribal relations, inviting us to be a leader in respect and gratitude for land and our Indigenous neighbors by adapting a ritual of land acknowledgment. Discussion took place. Sarah will inform the congregation of this request at the Annual Meeting.

Strategic planning – Rachael and Dana put congregational input into a video which will be played during the Annual Meeting. Council reviewed the video.

Naming the Memorial Garden, the Robert E. Hoffman Memorial Garden.

Linda made a motion to name the garden the Robert E. Hoffman Memorial Garden, Mark seconded, motion passed.

Dan made a motion to adjourn, Diane seconded, meeting adjourned with The Lord's Prayer at 7:30.

Next meeting is October 10th at 6 pm, because Beer Brats and Hymns will take place on October 17th, the usual date for Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Kaiser