



# The Gleaner

## Immanuel Lutheran Church

March 2025

*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.**



April 13- 10am  
Palm Sunday Service

April 17- 6pm  
Maundy Thursday Service

April 18- 6pm  
Good Friday Service

April 20- 7am  
Easter Sunrise Service

April 20- 8:30am  
Easter Breakfast

April 20- 10am  
Easter Festival Service

# A Letter from Pr. Dana.....

Friends in Christ,

This month, I place in your hands a big piece of me. I wrote our Lenten devotional, *Kalos Faith*. For those who have been part of this community since my arrival in 2011, you've likely heard or read most of it before. But if you're anything like me, you've gone back and reread an old sermon or journal entry and thought, *I don't remember writing that....* That realization always reminds me—it doesn't hurt to say it again.

I pray that while some of these stories may be familiar, they still meet you where you are right now, speaking to your heart in ways you might not expect.

Last month, I shared the history of how this devotional came to be. This month, I invite you on a journey of self-discovery—opening yourself to the infinite and embracing both the joy and the sorrow in your life.

I've said numerous times as a pastor, "The craziest thing I've learned is that everyone's life sucks." And every time I say it, I know it doesn't sound quite right. But the truth remains: there is pain in every human story. It is different for each of us. It is real.

Yet within that pain, we experience glimmers—glimmers of love, breath, and blessing. That is my hope for this devotional. That it may be for you a glimmer of life. A glimmer of hope. A glimmer of mercy.

Lent is a season of wilderness, but the truth is—we are already in it. Life itself is the wilderness. And yet, we get this sacred time—40+ days—to pause, to reflect, to refocus on who God calls us to be.

Jesus was driven into the wilderness for 40 days. The good news? He is already there. You are not alone.

Walking toward the cross with you,  
Pr. Dana Hendershot



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

## **New Member Sunday**

Please be sure to join us on Sunday, March 16 as we welcome new members to Immanuel!

# Lenten Opportunities at Immanuel

## *Lenten Small Groups*

We will be offering opportunities to join a small group. You are welcome to stick with the same one each week, or if your schedule gets crazy feel free to switch what time you attend. Each of the small groups will study the same weekly content. Sign-up at church or call of the office.

- Option 1:      Sundays after worship  
                    11:30AM-ish  
                    March 9 – April 6
- Option 2:      Tuesdays  
                    9:30AM: Led by Judy Emmons  
                    March 11 – April 8
- Option 3:      Tuesdays after the Lenten service  
                    6:30PM-ish: Led by the Burkes  
                    March 11 – April 8
- Option 4:      Wednesdays  
                    4PM: Led by Pastor Dana Hendershot  
                    Midweek Ministries dinner 5PM (Optional)  
                    March 12 – April 9



### Prayer Around the Cross

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall  
on Tuesdays during Lent at 6:00pm.

March 11, 18, 25 & April 1,8



### Lenten Almsgiving

Lutheran Disaster Response:  
California Wild Fires

Mission Endowment has  
agreed to match our alms  
giving up to \$2,000!

# Lenten Theme



When I was little my dad had a Jacques Cousteau encyclopedia collection. It sat on a book shelf around a big sliding glass door, offering an immense amount of natural light and a view of our wooded backyard. The encyclopedias were low on the shelves, just the right height for a little girl. I would flip through the underwater photos and escape into this beautiful new world to explore.

I grew up in Michigan with a family that didn't travel much outside of Michigan or Ohio. So, the first time I saw the ocean, it was glorious. I was in high school, traveling with my mother, who was in her forties. I was visiting a college out west, and she took me to the Pacific Ocean! It was her first time seeing it, too, and she shared my glee. I didn't want to just see it; I wanted to be out on it, so we went whale watching. It was like living the pages I had dreamed about as I sifted through the encyclopedias in that Michigan light.

What I didn't know about was seasickness. That reality wasn't in the pages of the books I had so adored! My dream world quickly turned green and nauseating. Surprisingly, it didn't stop my joy. In the midst of that suffering, I was still living a dream.

Who knew, three years later, I'd be studying in the Florida Keys for a semester. As part of our study, we went out on an oceanographic vessel for a few days in the Atlantic. It is probably one of the most profound experiences of my life, and I never would have gone if I'd let my seasickness hold me back.

Joy and suffering coexist. This book will take you on a journey through the playful theology of God at work in the ordinary, everyday things of life—from playing in the snow and the rain to the profound experience of being treated for Large Cell B Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. And yes, I found joy and insights into life and love on the darkest days. I hope you do, too.

Don't like what's going on? Change your angle, turn the wheel on the kaleidoscope through which you're viewing life, and God will transform the mundane and the suffering into joy—it is beautiful. *Kalos* is the Greek word for beautiful—it is a beautiful faith. We were created by the same God, and we each see her a little differently. I wonder what God will reveal to you in these pages.

~Pr. Dana

# Strategic Planning Updates

## Where's Waldo Immanuel Style?

The Strategic Planning Process began in August 2024 with a survey/questionnaire we asked the Congregation to complete and submit by mid-September. We want to keep you informed that although we started the process in Summer 2024, Council is still working hard on developing an effective Strategic Plan. Council members are overwhelmed and grateful for your response, interest and excitement in the strategic planning process. We can tell you are involved and engaged in Immanuel's future. We are thrilled with your commitment to ensuring Immanuel's growth.

Council continues to not only manage our present needs but we are also engaged in planning for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Adaptation is a key part of this process. As we journey through Lent, we will continue to work towards completing the Strategic Plan. After Easter, when the Strategic Plan is finalized, Pastor Dana along with the stewardship committee will bring the campaign forward.

## Time Line of Strategic Planning Process

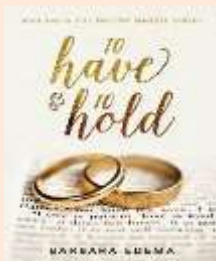
- Congregational Council brain storming and developing questionnaire – Summer 2024
- Evaluated responses and developed a plan for additional Congregational input – October, November
- Worship with a Twist – November
- Follow up opportunities – December
- Display of people's inputs - lots of leaves on trees in the building – November and December
- Compiling data – lot and lots of data – Rachael Nelson – December and January
- Constructing understandable segments – Rachael Nelson and Sarah Gilbert – January
- Identifying Stewardship Campaign members – February
- Council Retreat – Review of data. Review of mission statement – February 15
- Connecting the mission statement with the priorities revealed in the data – February 20
- Tentative priorities are to Increase community outreach, refine worship opportunities, expand member connections through fellowship opportunities to enhance a feeling of belonging - February
- Finalize the Strategic Plan priorities – March/April
- Finalize the Strategic Plan and present the Stewardship campaign – After Easter



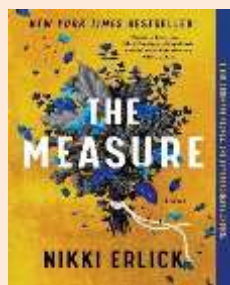
# Ministry with Each Other

## Immanuel Book Group

In **April** (April 7 at 6:30pm), we're reading To have and to Hold by Barbara Edema. This is the second book in the Pastor Maggie series. This is a feel-good novel set in Chelsea, MI.



In **May** (May 5 at 6:30pm OR May 8 at 10:30am), we're reading The Measure by Nikki Erlich. This was a New York Times Bestseller and Read with Jenna TODAY show book club pick.



## Sunday Helpers needed!!

Each Sunday, we need volunteers to serve in the following capacities:  
Altar Guild, Assisting Minister, Coffee Host, Greeters & Ushers.

Please sign up by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/?go=c.SignUpSearch&eid=08C6C8DCF5C8F6630C&cs=09CBBAD98FC58B167B0A640F5BC09BCDFDB5>

**Faith In Action  
at Immanuel**

### Para Professionals



95 Para Professionals are part of our community at our area elementary schools. They lead our kids and help our teachers. We know they are a gift to our community. We want to honor and show appreciation to each elementary Para Pro by giving a gift card.



Suggested gift card amount is \$10. Give a gift card to your favorite coffee shop, cafe, store or even a gas card. Cards can be dropped or mailed to Immanuel Lutheran Church 320 S. Bradley St. Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. **DEADLINE: MARCH 15th**

Mail your donation, bring it to service or drop it in Sherry's work mailbox.

**DONATE** 

Questions? Contact  
[sherry@immanuelmp@gmail.com](mailto:sherry@immanuelmp@gmail.com)



# Ministry with Each Other

## Youth Update

Hello everyone! The youth have been busy this last month. Earlier this month, we went on our winter retreat to SpringHill. We had lots of fun worshipping and having fun together! From tubing, to gameshows, to regularly scheduled shenanigans, to a semi-final placement in Broomball (couldn't be prouder as a coach!), we bonded and grew together in an amazing space. It was several people's first time to SpringHill, and I can already tell that they're excited for next year!

Later in the month, we stopped by and visited with some of our homebound congregants and delivered some blankets that we made for them. It was great to sit down and chat with those that we don't get to see at the church as often as we'd like.

For any youth in middle school or high school that would like to join us, we have youth group Sundays March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2-4pm as well as Midweek Ministries at 5:30pm on Wednesdays where we are watching and diving into "The Chosen".

Thomas



# Ministry with Community & World



Just a reminder that Daylight Savings time begins on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Don't forget to spring forward!

## 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.

The logo for the ICRH Party, featuring a green house icon with "ICRH" inside, and the text "Isabella County Restoration House" and "PARTY FOR A PURPOSE!" in blue and green.

**PADDLE AUCTION • DINNER • CASH BAR • FUN**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 3RD, 2025**  
**DOORS OPEN AT 5PM • DINNER SERVED AT 6PM**  
**SACRED HEART PARISH CENTER**

A green circular icon with a white dollar sign and a blue paddle handle.A green circular icon with a white plate, fork, and spoon.

**WHAT IS A PADDLE AUCTION?**  
It's part raffle, part auction!  
Guests receive a numbered paddle they use to bid on incredible items using quarters.  
Bids range in increments from \$.25 to \$5.00.

**TICKET OPTIONS**  
\$50 General Admission: Dinner at our soup/salad/dessert buffet and auction paddle. Bring or purchase quarters to bid!  
Tables of 8 guests (\$400) or 10 guests (\$500) available.  
\$200 All-In Admission: Includes all general benefits plus bidding option on every item. No quarters needed!  
All-In Table: Includes all items above at a \$25 savings per guest. Tables of 8 guests (\$1,400) or 10 guests (\$1,750) available.  
*Register by April 1, 2025 to be eligible for dinner for two drawing at the event!*

A green rectangular icon with the text "ADMIT ONE" in white.A square QR code.

**TICKET, SPONSORSHIP, AND ADVERTISING OPTIONS**  
Credit/debit payments available via QR code.  
Cash or check payable to ICRH.  
More info by request at [icrh@icrhouse.org](mailto:icrh@icrhouse.org).  
Guests must be 18+ to attend.

## 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

## **Volunteers needed for Church Lawn Mowing**

For more than twenty years, members of the church have mowed the lawn. The church has several riding lawn mowers including two zero-turn machines. The front lawn is mowed about 25 times each season while the back lawn is mowed about 15 times.

We mow in teams. The front takes about two hours to mow and the back about the same two hours. A group of two people on riding mowers and one person doing the trim work can be done in an hour and a half.

A mowing schedule will be published in mid-April. We hope to assemble about six groups to do the mowing.

If you are able to help with the mowing, please contact Chuck Clise at 989 330-4751.

## **Financial Monthly Report YTD as of January 2025**

Spending Plan 2024-2025  
\$388,029

Actual Expenditures:  
\$127,869

Giving to Date:  
\$123,556

## **Easter Flowers**



If you would like to purchase Easter altar flowers, order forms will be available in the narthex and should be turned in no later than Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **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.