

The Manger

Connecting Lives to Christ

The monthly newsletter of Immanuel Lutheran Church, ELCA

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About Us

Our purpose as a faith community is connecting lives to Christ, serving God and neighbor, and living our faith. We exist to connect people to Jesus, his message of hope and his saving love.

Because we believe that the power of God's love transforms us, Immanuel seeks to be a place that welcomes, nourishes and empowers all people to grow in faith. Join us each Sunday at 10 a.m. for worship.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
517 S. Clinton Street
Grand Ledge, Michigan 48837
517.627.6310 • www.immanuel-gl.org



FOOD FOR THOUGHT...*a note from your Pastor*

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.
 ~ Howard Thurman

Christmas is certainly a wonderful time of the year. Sometimes it feels like the world pauses its normal being for one more aligned with Silent Night. There are places in the world where guns fall silent, where war ceases for a day or so, where neighbors are neighbors again. People can be quite generous and considerate and you can sometimes sense a spirit of love swirling around. Yes, Christmas can be the most wonderful time of the year.

Not to dampen this hallmark moment for anyone; but isn't this what we are to be striving for all year long, all life long? However, we cannot merely pray for peace on earth at Christmas and not work for it all year long. We cannot wish for all children to be safe and properly nourished and expect it will be done by others. We cannot expect change in our systemic societal troubles without actively advocating for those it affects the most. The lost and broken are among us, the prisoners weep for redemption, the nations pick up their weapons of violence and the innocents suffer. The poem by Howard Thurman speaks to the reality of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ, all life-long. Our calling is not to abide in the glow of the candlelight, but to bring that light to those who yet dwell in darkness.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT continued...

This is not really anything new, is it? You have heard me say these things and I would guess that sometimes you tire of the message, perhaps especially in this season of Christmas and the promise that the New Year holds. But this, I believe, is the message of scripture and following the teachings of Jesus. When we take up the cross of Christ, we agree to take up the mission that Jesus began and handed on to his disciples. The Gospel, the good news, that we share is not just about eternal life and things being better in the by and by when we die; on the contrary. The GOOD NEWS is that life can be different NOW. And as ones who claim Jesus as savior and follow as disciples, we are tasked to carry on that work, not just in prayer, but in word and deed. In loving and caring, in our speech toward others and about others, in posting on Facebook, in working for peace. Our relationship with God should not only inform but direct everything we do, all the time. A tall order? Maybe. But God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called and God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit and the strength to do what God has asked of us.

May this New Year find us more courageous, bolder in our outreach, more willing to listen and slower to disagree and seeking the wholeness of God for all people.

Shalom,

Pastor Chuck



Council Corner

“There’s a reason the windshield is larger than the rearview mirror”

I read this recently and thought about the approaching New Year. We often reflect on where we have been and where we want to go. What do we want to change? What do we want to continue to support? How can we be a more active presence in our community and beyond? Whatever comes to mind for you, please share with the council so we might be supportive of your efforts and endeavors. Together, we walk gently, and maybe a bit uncertainly into a New Year. We are faced with an abundance of opportunities to do the right thing. To do good things. To show mercy and love for one another in ways that speak louder than words ever will.

May God Bless your New Year with good health and hope.

Blanche Schaudt-Council President

Gordie Larkins-Vice President

Cindy Smith-Council Secretary

Barb Jetmore (Thank you, Barb for your dedicated service on council these past 4 years)

Chris Polley

Melissa Kingsley

Ron Hoornstra

Sarah Larkins

Pastor Chuck Foerster

News from the Serving Team

Our December 8th noisy offering for the **Grand Ledge Food Bank** was \$199.98. The number of food bank clients has been increasing recently. Support from the community continues to remain necessary as the food bank office staff continues to be good stewards of community donations. The January 12th noisy offering will be for Blessings in a Backpack which is currently packing approximately 175 backpacks every two weeks. Thanks for your donations to Immanuel's noisy offerings!



Immanuel's next **Community Meal** is scheduled for Monday, January 13, 5:00-6:00p.m. All are welcome! Invite a friend! If interested in making sandwiches for this meal or helping out by providing cookies contact Annette Ryan (231) 331-3248.

Immanuel's **Teddy Bear Ministry** offers cuddly bears available in the pews for anyone to take as a gift to someone that could use a hug, friend or comfort. Thanks to everyone who has been donating teddy bears. If interested in donating to this ministry please leave donated teddy bears on the pew in the narthex, they will be tagged and put in the sanctuary. Thank You!

The Serving Ministry Team is looking forward to the new year as we reach out to each other in our church family and continue to reach out to support both community and global ministries.

Community Connections

A Community of Believers, Movers and Changers

The Community Book Read for this year is actually taking place in January. The group who put this schedule together represent the Grand Ledge Schools, the Library and area Churches. We will be participating again, and the book we will be reading and discussing is **"The Firekeeper's Daughter"**. If you are interested in reading this book and discussing it with others, I have included the schedule below:

St. Michael's: Will hold two sessions between the masses at St. Michael Catholic Parish (345 Edward's St.).

Sunday, Jan. 12th: 9:45 - 10:45 am, St. Michael's Fellowship Hall

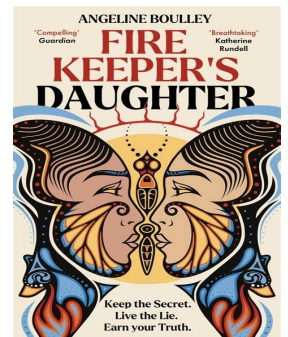
Sunday, Jan. 26th: 9:45 - 10:45 am, St. Michael's School - Siena Room

Both held in the Fellowship Hall (lower level of the church - handicap accessible).

Refreshments served. (Contact is Cathy Wilhm: miwilhm@gmail.com)

First Congregational UCC: Contact their office: office@grandledgeucc.org

Wednesday evenings, January 8, 15, 22 & 29. 7-8pm



Immanuel Lutheran: Zoom option on Wednesday mornings, January 8, 15, 22 & 29, 10:30-11:30 Call the church for more information: 517-627-6310. Books are available at the GL Library as well as on Libby. We hope you can join us.

Prayer for the New Year

Give us kindness to hear with compassion, to offer support, loving comfort, and care.

Give us courage to do what is needed,
the wisdom to choose what is right and more fair.

Give us the vision to see what is possible

Give us the faith that will help pave the way
for a present that's hopeful,

a future that's peaceful-

Give us the heart to bring joy to each day.



Coming Up....

Chili Cook-Off

January 18th, at 5 pm.

Please email Gordie Larkins (papagass@gmail.com) to indicate if you are plan to provide a chili, if you plan to attend or if you have any questions.

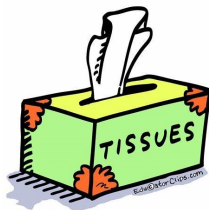
Welcoming Everyone

Accommodating, according to Miriam Webster, might mean to provide space for something or someone. This is to let you know that in the coming weeks there may be some arrangement changes to provide a space for those using a wheelchair, and those with young children. Support, Council and Gathering will be looking at ways to make our worship space and church building as a whole truly welcoming for everyone.



'Tis the Season!

To be mindful of others, when gathering for meetings and church services. We have several members who are medically fragile, right now. So, if you are coughing, sneezing or just not feeling well, please consider staying at home and live streaming the service. Or if you need to be around others, please wear a mask. Caring for each other is what we are called to do.



Free Community Meal

**Monday, January 13th,
5-6pm**

All community and Immanuel folks are welcome to this monthly meal served in our fellowship hall on the second Monday of each month.

We offer a specialty soup as well as sandwiches, drinks and desserts.

You can stop on by for take-out or stay and eat here.

If you are available to help serve on this evening, please call Annette Ryan at 231-331-3248 .



Luther League II Luncheon

Monday, January 13th, 1pm

Longhorn Steakhouse

608 Commercial Dr. in Lansing

Luther League II luncheons are open for those who would like to meet for lunch with our church friends. We usually meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at a local restaurant for food and fellowship. We take up a small collection (usually \$1.00 apiece) after lunch to be used, at Christmas, for a charity of the group's choice.

There are many new faces in our congregation and it would be fun to get acquainted and reacquainted. We would love to have you join in!

Coffee Hour Challenge



Last year it was shared with me that people would like to have more coffee hours offered. It made me think of 2 things:

- 1) Why not challenge the groups/people who were part of the Parade of Ministries on God's Work Our Hands Sunday?
- 2) Do you remember the story about the Little Red Hen and the Grain of Wheat?

It takes planning and volunteering to help, in order to share in the eating of the bread.

Tina and Rich Martzke began this ministry, and have placed a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for Coffee Hours in 2025. Please consider signing up for a Sunday this next year. The Preparing Team, party of 2, will sign up for January 12th. Anyone else?

Thank You

Thank you, Immanuel Family, for supporting Ken's Closet in November.

We collected 629 pairs of underwear toward the Grand Ledge Shopping Tour last month. Your generosity and kindness are more examples of being church outside our four walls.

Thank you for supporting this valuable community ministry.

Sincerely, Karen Ketola



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Ryan Dinsmore | 12 Levi Boyers |
| 2 Christine Wood | 17 Tom Blake |
| 3 Edward Hill | 19 Drew Karkau |
| 4 Mark Wolf | 19 Fred Koos |
| 6 James Ostler | 19 Tyler Schneider |
| 8 Donald Jubb | 20 Linn Smith |
| 9 Zachary Shilton | 23 Jo Long |
| 11 Conner Blake | 26 Lloyd Kleinhenz |
| 11 Lacy Boyers | 28 Bruce Williams |
| 11 Josh Hengeshbach | 29 Greg Ketola |
| 11 Britney Sullenberger | 31 Judy LaFay |
| 11 Teddy Williams | |
| 11 Edward Williams | |

Happy Anniversary!



Mike & Cheryl Pitchford ~ 1/7

David & Sheryl Kurtycz ~ 1/9

Dave & Barb Rinkey ~ 1/22

Joe & Patty Riley ~ 1/24

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>If you have any questions related to upcoming events, please contact Trisha at the Church Office at 517.627.6310.</p> <p>Trisha Office Hours: Mon & Fri, 9a - 2p, or Pastor Chuck at 989.750.4573.</p>			<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Quilters 9a-11:30</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>AA Support Group 8am</p>
<p>5</p> <p>First Fruits Offering</p> <p>Worship with Communion 10am</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Sewl Sisters 11am-3pm</p> <p>Serving Team 3pm</p> <p>Support Team 6:30</p>	<p>7</p> <p>MITM 7am</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Line Dancing 10am</p> <p>Preparing Team 10:30am</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Quilters 9a-11:30</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>AA Support Group 8am</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Worship w/ Comm 10am</p> <p>Noisy Offering:</p>	 <p>Community Meal 5-6pm</p>	<p>14</p> <p>MITM 7am</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Line Dancing 10am</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Quilters 9a-11:30</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>AA Support Group 8am</p> <p>Chili Cook-off 5pm</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Worship with Communion 10am</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Sewl Sisters 11am-3pm</p> <p>Council Mtg 6:30pm</p>	<p>21</p> <p>MITM 7am</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Line Dancing 10am</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Quilters 9a-11:30</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>AA Support Group 8am</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Worship with Communion 10am</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>MITM 7am</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Line Dancing 10am</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Quilters 9a-11:30</p> <p>Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm</p>	<p>31</p>	