



# Immanuel's Story

## February 2026

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We turn  
to Jesus,  
who brings

*beauty from ashes.*





If you're looking for a worthwhile read during these cold winter nights, I highly recommend ***Becoming God's Family* by Carmen Joy Imes**. Whether you read it for personal reflection or as part of a group Bible Study, this book offers profound insights. While it can be a challenging read at times, discussing it together provides a wonderful

opportunity to clarify thoughts and build closer relationships. There are questions at the end of each chapter that are not specific to an interim process so a series of relevant questions that are focused on our needs can be picked up, along with the book, at the church office. Reading this book will provide encouragement during the interim process, as it directly addresses the theological and relational hurdles churches face during seasons of transition

## Reasons for Reading This Book

### 1. Stabilizes Identity in times of Transition

An interim period is often marked by identity confusion, grief over the past minister, and anxiety about the future. This book counters that instability by providing a stable, biblical foundation. It shifts the congregation's focus from **who is leaving or arriving** to **who they are in Christ**—a family defined by God's covenant, not by human leadership. This promotes **stabilization** and grounds the church in eternal truths.

### 2. Promotes Unity and Heals Dysfunction

The book's unflinching look at Israel's failures (dysfunction, exile, family drama) gives the congregation a theological framework to process its own **past hurts, conflicts, or necessary changes** without shame. By emphasizing **covenant love, forgiveness, and reconciliation** (Chapters 7 & 8), it prepares the congregation to present a **unified and healed body** to the incoming minister, fulfilling a primary goal of the interim process.

### 3. Creates Objective Criteria for the Call

The book is structured around ten key theological concepts (covenant, grace, mission, presence, commitment). By studying these themes, the congregation collectively develops a **shared vocabulary and clear vision** of the biblical church. This translates directly into **objective criteria** for self-evaluation and discernment ensuring they choose a minister whose theology and philosophy align with the church's core identity, rather than just subjective personal preference.

*Continued on page 3*

#### 4. Empowers Lay Leadership

The book stresses that the Church is the **Body of Christ** and the **New Temple** where God's presence dwells in **all** members (Chapter 6). This directly challenges the common “**pastor-as-performer/CEO**” model. It validates the gifts and responsibilities of the laity, equipping

the congregation to be **active participants** in ministry. This ensures the next pastor inherits a **committed, engaged, and ready-to-serve** church, reducing dependency on a single figure.

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#### Birthdays

2	David Merta, Carol Pundt
5	Wyatt Holmes, Colten Perpich
6	Anabel and Casidy Duerr
8	Carolyn Mogen
9	Marsha Larson
12	Wade Burlet
13	Rich Aulie, DeeDee Frahm, Tom Jann, Karen Palmer
16	Gayle Hanes, LaVonne Kompelien
17	Bill Bongs, Helen Oman
18	Paula Kovatovich
19	Kasen Nixon
20	Beryl Foote, Brian Marquart
21	Kim Marquart
23	Terri Wisniak
24	Sylvia Graff, Darlene McNally, John Rinde
26	Johnna Johnson, Dale Klungness
27	Nancy Evans, Melva Panitzke
28	Barb Hakes, Dennis Henrichs

#### Anniversaries

14	Bill & Jody Bunio (1989)
14	Jim & Paula Traylor (1987)
17	Gary & Sandi Erickson (1974)
21	Greg & Kay Jarvela (1969)



#### ATTENDANCE

December 21	116
Christmas Eve 2pm	129
4pm	213
December 28	65
January 4	110
January 11	128
January 18	95

#### MEAL WITH A MISSION, 2026

*If you or your organization would like to provide a Meal with a Mission in 2026, please call the church office and speak to Deb Eatros.*



Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:8

### GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET REPORT

	<u>DECEMBER - 25</u>	<u>DECEMBER- 24</u>	<u>YTD 2025</u>	<u>YTD 2024</u>
BUDGET	35,848	37,553	430,176	450,637
GENERAL FUND GIVING	40,708	64,102	379,090	424,189
GENERAL FUND EXPENSE	27,522	25,609	361,078	408,895
NET INCOME	<b>13,186</b>	38,493	<b>18,012</b>	15,294

### Major Capital Improvement Fund

12/31/2025

December 1, 2025 **Balance:** **\$22,243.72**

**Deposits:** \$671.24

**Reserve:** \$250.00

**Withdrawals:** \$0.00

December 31, 2025 **Ending Balance:** **\$23,164.96**

### Immanuel Forward Mortgage

12/01/2025 **Balance:** **\$92,751.65**

**Monthly Payment** \$722.16 \$163.92 – Principal

**Principal Payments:** \$3003.66

12/31/2025 **Ending Balance:** **\$89,584.074**



## February 2026 Worship Service Schedule

Altar Guild – Pat Neros  
SRT Group No. 1 - Elaine Karel & Vi Klungness



### February 1

Greeters: Gary & Sandi Erickson  
Lector: Jeanne Kurtz  
Offering Counters: Sandi Erickson & Bonnie Goshey

Ushers: Pat Neros & Karen Palmer  
Communion: Paula Traylor  
Tech: Jack Schubert

### February 8

Greeters: Leif & Melissa Gustafson  
Lector: Jeff Olson  
Offering Counters: Paula Traylor & Elizabeth Mattson

Ushers: Ken & Barb Moe  
Communion: Bonnie LaPierre  
Tech: Jack Schubert and Terri Wisniak

### February 15

Greeters: Mark & Nicki Bjornstad  
Lector: Nancy Heise  
Offering Counters: Erinn Hoyt & Darlene McNally

Ushers: Nick Zilmer & Dan Beseman  
Communion: Peter Nordell  
Tech: Jack Schubert and Terri Wisniak

### February 18 Ash Wednesday

Ushers: Joe & Darlene McNally  
Offering Counters: Deb Eatros & Paula Traylor

Communion: TBD  
Tech:

### February 22

Greeters: Youth  
Lector: Jack Shubert  
Offering Counters: Pam Ballard & Marian Freese

Ushers: Carl & Jeanne Kurtz  
Communion: Char Kinzer  
Tech: Dave Peterson and Jack Schubert

### February 25 Lent

Ushers: Youth  
Offering Counters: Deb Eatros & Paula Traylor

Communion: TBD  
Tech:





## Youth Ministry Update from Nancy Heise



Time is flying as we prepare to celebrate Lent. We are looking for adults to act as Faith mentors with our confirmation students. Each student and faith mentor pair will meet following Lenten worship and review some discussion questions. This is a great opportunity to build connections between the generations within our congregation.

In January, I met with 8 students and their families and led a class in beginning bible exploration. Each of the students will be presented with a NIV Action Bible on February 1<sup>st</sup> during the church service. These bibles are written in easy-to-understand words. Study panels help clarify the text in terms the students are more familiar with to build understanding. The bibles have great graphics, maps, and anecdotes about the context of the passage and how it would have been viewed at the time it was written.

The Sunday school lessons are currently following [Truewaykids.com](http://Truewaykids.com) lessons focused in January on Jesus presentation at the temple, childhood, baptism and start of his ministry. All children ages 4-11 are welcome to join us for a lesson following communion. February lessons are the temptation of Jesus and continuing his early ministry and choosing the Apostles.

In confirmation, we have completed the first 7 commandments and are working on memorizing them. A group of students attended Camp Shamineau January 23-25<sup>th</sup> with time spent worshiping and enjoying a variety of crafts and the great outdoors.

The senior high bible study is continuing to meet weekly on Wednesday evenings in the fireside room. Thanks to Kevin Martini for leading this group.

Some more ways to model bible study and pray for our children and grandchildren are:

Perseverance. "Lord, teach my children perseverance in all they do, and help them especially to run with perseverance the race marked out for them" (Hebrews 12:1).

Responsibility. "Grant that my children may learn responsibility, for each one should carry his own load" (Gal. 6:5).

Gratitude. "Help my children to live lives that are always overflowing with thankfulness and always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20, Col. 2:7).

### February Lectionary Texts

Feb 1	Micah 6:1-8	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12
Feb 8	Isaiah 58:1-9a	Psalm 112:1-9	1 Corinthians 2:1-12	Matthew 5:13-20
Feb 15	Exodus 24:12-18	Psalm 2	2 Peter 1:16-21	Matthew 17:1-9
Feb 22	Genesis 2:15-17;3:1-7	Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11

## **A Message from Council President**

Writing an article for the future month's newsletter is always a challenge, as it bears witness to things in January that may seem long past to a February reader.

One can only hope that's true for this first topic. At the time of this writing (January 18), those of us in the pews and people watching the service online are painfully aware of the audio glitches that continue to disrupt a smooth church service, and some are no doubt wondering when that will be a thing of the past. None, however, are more frustrated and affected than our dedicated volunteers upstairs in the loft, who cross their fingers every week, hoping for a no-stress technical hour during worship.

There's hope! The council authorized an extensive revamp of the aging audio/visual system a couple of months ago. New equipment is currently being installed and tested. Soundboard training will soon follow.

This is your cue. Tired of just sitting in the pew Sunday after Sunday? Could you help one weekend a month? New equipment is lauded as 'easy to operate'. We would really like to see some additional volunteers to help run the sound and audio, so we don't burn out the people we have.

The Annual meeting is right around the corner. Please attend the Annual Financial Meeting on February 8 and the Annual Meeting on February 15. We'll vote on the 2026 budget, install new council members, and help clean up some governance documents. The Council has reviewed the Constitution and Bylaws and is proposing four amendments that are merely housekeeping in nature. To see how those amendments affect the Constitution and Bylaws click on the link under "Resources" on our website.

As for our Interim path forward - It's a new year! I feel we are ready for a deliberate path forward, and I'm confident we can use the excuse of a new year as a launch pad.

Pastor Ian has a Pastoral ministry plan in mind. The congregation is ready for a renewed season to position Immanuel for our new chapter. Perhaps we can start by gathering some history, an overview of where we've been, to help guide where we'd like to be. What milestones can we recall and record? I'm looking forward to 'The Immanuel Story' that long-time members can pull together.

Stay tuned.

Char

### *Memorials Given By*

Dennis & LuAnn Henrichs for poinsettias/Immanuel Forward in honor of our family  
Rich & Eileen Leino for poinsettias in memory of our parents and deceased siblings  
Stan & Mary Nagorski for poinsettias in memory of CI students who passed before their time  
Stan & Mary Nagorski for poinsettias in memory of June & Wayne Leopold  
Adrian & Jean Olson, undesignated, in memory of Sue Bowles  
Dennis Bowles, undesignated in memory of Suzanne Bowles  
Wade & Vicki Burlet for poinsettias in memory of Milton & Carolyn Gumm, Bob Burlet  
LeRoy Habighorst for poinsettias in memory of Barb Habighorst, in honor of Dale Habighorst  
John & Karen Rosecrans for poinsettias in memory of our parents  
Debra Lindahl & Family for poinsettias in memory of Joel Lindahl  
Debra Lindahl & Family for poinsettias in memory of Helen & Clayton Berg

## Manna for Malawi



This picture is from the 2025 Christmas meal. Many more pictures are on our Facebook page.

Our event will be back at the Bridge Tavern this year. The planning committee met with Heather to finalize the date and time. The 2026 event will be August 9<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 6pm. We need more people on the planning committee. Most of you have volunteered at past events and know the details that goes into this event. Our next meeting is at church on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11am. Please join us.



# Malawi Christmas Meal

*See photo on page 8 in addition to these*



The 2025 Christmas meal served 810 children and 56 adults. They used 2 cows and served the beef with rice and cabbage. Yami said thank you for making the Christmas meal possible and to extend their heartfelt thanks to the entire congregation.



## ENCOURAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

The Bible tells us that “a cheerful heart is good medicine”. Cheerful hearts represent joy, happiness, contentment and a positive attitude, acting as healing medicine for the soul and body.

There is a strong connection between a cheerful heart and nurturing relationships. A cheerful heart invites encouragement from others. Think of a cheerful heart as the “spark” and encouragement as the “fuel” that keeps the fire of life burning. This results in inner strength, passion, purpose and spiritual energy. This can be obtained through prayer, scripture and worship. It is maintained by fellowship with others who share our enthusiasm and our father in Jesus Christ.

God loves a cheerful giver. “Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart, then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to do.” Deuteronomy 15:10

Encouragement builds confidence to have a giving heart. This means offering deep love, support, commitment, kindness and generosity. A willing spirit to help others, not just materially, but with time and presence. The encouragement we provide may result in a momentary lift or may change someone for a lifetime. We might never know if increased confidence made them feel more secure and more capable when facing challenges.

We must surround ourselves with friends and family that inspire us to grow by challenging us, bringing out the best in us, being positive to uplift our spirit, support our goals and foster our well-being. That being said, we need to be a source of light, warmth, and hope to inspire others. Encourage them to encourage themselves by remembering positive life lessons coming from God.

The Bible tells us “Surround yourself with those who uplift you and inspire you, for they are blessings in disguise.” Proverbs 13:20

“IT’S NOT WHAT WE HAVE IN OUR LIFE,  
BUT WHO WE HAVE IN OUR LIFE THAT COUNTS.”

Submitted by Paula Traylor



## NEEDED!

ILC is seeking applicants for an additional accompanist. Please contact the church office if interested! Or maybe you know of someone who may be available – Either way, please let us know

If you are willing to mentor a confirmation student during Lent, please contact Nancy Heise, [youth@immanuelcrosby.org](mailto:youth@immanuelcrosby.org) If you have been thinking about it but need more information, Nancy looks forward to hearing from you.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION MEETING

February 8, 10:45 a.m. in the sanctuary.  
This is your opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns regarding the budget.  
Copies of the 2026 budget will be available on February 1.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

February 15, 10:45 a.m., also in the sanctuary.  
There will be installation of new Council members and the Congregation will vote on simple changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

ILC member Sally Oren has a new blog called "Seek Him With Me"

Check it out – you will be blessed

Here is the link: <https://seekhimwithme.com/home/>



# IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Council Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026 5:30 p.m.

### ATTENDEES

X Pastor Ian Hewitson  
X Char Kinzer  
X Bonnie LaPierre  
Debbie Lindahl  
X Brian Marquart

X Tom Nixon  
X Peter Nordell  
X David Pundt  
X Paula Traylor

**OPENING PRAYER** Pastor Ian offered the opening prayer.

**CALL TO ORDER** Char Kinzer called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Addition(s) to Agenda: Old Business #5 Sound System Update; New Business #3: Authorize Norm Hullinger transfer, #4 Home School approval.

Agenda Acceptance: Paula Traylor moved the agenda, as amended be approved. Peter Nordell seconded his motion, and it was approved on a voice vote.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Acceptance: Peter Nordell moved that the Financial Report be accepted. Tom Nixon seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Finance

1. 2026 Budget Approval: Brian Marquart moved that we approve the 2026 Budget, Tom Nixon seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.
2. 2026 Benevolence Approval: Tom Nixon moved to change proposed donations for Lutheran Social Services to \$500 and change Bridges of Hope donations to \$2400 for 2026. Brian Marquart seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote. Tom Nixon moved that we approve the 2026 Benevolence Account as amended. Brian Marquart seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.
3. Council was apprised of Executive Committee action that moved the matured Elsie Anderson Memorial CD to a Unity Bank 9-month CD at 3.85%. Information only.

#### Building and Grounds:

- Parsonage: A sewer line freeze-up at the beginning of the year, caused backup in the parsonage basement. Insurance has been contacted and all repairs are underway. ServiceMaster will be removing carpet and providing clean-up and asbestos mitigation will take place if necessary. Jim Patrick has offered to be the contractor on any rebuild needed. The septic line was steamed out.
- Handicap signs: A number of handicapped parking signs will added in the spring to accompany the painted markings, which get covered by snow.

### OLD BUSINESS

1. Immanuel Forward update: Informational only.



2. Immanuel East rental: Brian Marquart moved that we rent Immanuel East at market rates. Char Kinzer seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote. David Pundt moved we form a committee consisting of Jim Traylor, Harry Kahnert, and Leif Gustafson to prepare a lease agreement and tenant requirements for Council approval at February's meeting. Paula Traylor seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.
3. Organizational structure/council retreat: Postponed indefinitely.
4. Audit Review 2026: An audit review was not completed in 2025. Peter Nordell moved that we ensure an Audit Review will be completed by the end of 2026. Paula Traylor seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.
5. Sound System Update: David Pundt reported that the new digital mixer and 75" color monitor has been installed, and training will be accomplished intermittently, beginning next Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. Contractor Jody Stewart was told of a potentially faulty amplifier, which seems to shut down unexpectedly. Sound system work is nearly complete.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Election of 2026 Officers: Char Kinzer was re-elected to the Council Presidency; Brian Marquart was elected Council Vice President; David Pundt was re-elected Council Secretary.
2. Pastoral and Congregational Interim Plan for 2026: Pastor Ian outlined his plan for Congregational Interim preparation for 2026. More information will be presented at the Annual Meeting on February 15, 2026.
3. Norm Hullinger Transfer: Peter Nordell moved to approve the membership transfer of Norm Hullinger. David Pundt seconded his motion, and it was approved by voice vote.
4. Classical Conversations Home School 2026-2027: Tabled

## **COMMUNION ASSIGNMENTS FOR MARCH**

March 1: Paula Traylor  
March 8: Char Kinzer  
March 15: Char Kinzer and new council member  
March 22: Tom Nixon  
March 29: Brian Marquart  
February 18, Ash Wednesday: Bonnie LaPierre





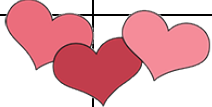

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Brian Marquart moved we adjourn at 8:42 pm. His motion was seconded by Bonnie LaPierre. The meeting was adjourned.

## **NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

February 10



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> <b>9:30am Worship – Churchyard</b> 10:15am Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship & Coffee	<b>2</b> 8am-3pm Home School Community 4pm TOPS	<b>3</b> 9am Staff Meeting 9am Quilting 12pm Renewal Group 3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller	<b>4</b> 8am Bible Study – N. Evans 10am Bible Study – P. Collignon 5-7:30pm Confirmation 6pm High School Bible Study	<b>5</b> 7am Men's Den 6pm Churchyard Practice	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg
<b>8</b> <b>ANNUAL FINANCIAL MEETING-questions only</b> SOUPer Bowl Sunday <b>9:30am Worship-Traditional</b> 10:15am Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship & Coffee 10:45am Financial Mtg	<b>9</b> 8am-3pm Home School Community 4pm TOPS	<b>10</b> 9am Staff Meeting 1:30pm Ruth Circle 3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller	<b>11</b> 8am Bible Study – N. Evans 10am Bible Study – P. Collignon 5:7:30pm Youth Night 6pm High School Bible Study	<b>12</b> 7am Men's Den 9:30am Finance Mtg 6pm Churchyard Practice	<b>13</b> 	<b>14</b> 9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg
<b>15</b> <b>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION</b> <b>9:30am Worship – Wing and a Prayer</b> 10:15am Sunday School 10:30am Grab a Cup of Coffee 10:45am ANNUAL MEETING	<b>16</b> <i>Newsletter Deadline</i> <b>PRESIDENT'S DAY</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b> 	<b>17</b> 9am Staff Meeting 9am Quilting 12pm Renewal Group 3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller <b>5:30pm Council Meeting</b> 	<b>18</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 8am Bible Study – N. Evans 10am Bible Study – P. Collignon <b>6:45pm WORSHIP</b>	<b>19</b> 7am Men's Den 6pm Churchyard Practice	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg
<b>22</b> <b>9:30am Worship – Blended</b> 10:15am Sunday School 10:30am Fellowship & Coffee 	<b>23</b> 8am-3pm Home School Community 4pm TOPS	<b>24</b> 9am Staff Meeting 3:30pm Bible Study – D. Kreller	<b>25</b> 8am Bible Study – N. Evans 10am Bible Study – P. Collignon 6pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Worship	<b>26</b> 7am Men's Den 6pm Churchyard Practice <b>Assemble/Mail Newsletter</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 9:30am The Right Path Recovery Mtg 
<div>  <div> <b>FEBRUARY 2026</b> </div> </div>						

