

The Visitor

Immanuel Lutheran Church

February 2018 * Volume 56 #2



God May See It Differently

I know I have told some of you this story, perhaps more than once, but it is a good one and bears repeating. The names and some of the details have been changed to preserve privacy.

Back in the days when I was a hospital chaplain, each week I would go up to the psych unit and conduct an “Interfaith Service” in which we would pray, talk about our prayers, and discuss how it related to our lives. More than a few patients were there multiple times in my years there, and I give thanks I was able to get to know them and come to consider them my friends. Two of them in particular stand out over the years, Michael and Sean.

Michael suffered from delusions that were bizarre beyond anything even remotely believable, and Sean suffered from episodes in which he was completely unable to remain calm or stop talking for even a few seconds. One day when both of them were in the group, Michael was having particularly florid delusions, and Sean was even more agitated than usual. It was getting out of control, and I was wondering how I was going to hold the group together.

Suddenly, for no particular reason I have ever been able to discern, Michael stepped out of his psychosis and calmly and compassionately said, “Sean, you need to calm down.” Immediately, Sean calmed down and became as peaceful as I had ever seen him. A few seconds later, Michael returned to his delusions, though not so severely as to disrupt the group.

As far as I can remember, Michael and Sean were never together in the group again, and I don’t recall that Sean was re-hospitalized in my remaining years at the hospital. I saw Michael in the hospital several more times and once in the community, but he did not improve significantly.

The Holy Spirit was present in power that day. God called someone out of their distress and enabled them to help a neighbor in need.

We too suffer. There are times when we are unable to take care of our own problems, let alone reach out to our neighbor in need.

Michael and Sean taught me that God may see it differently.

Peace,

Pastor Burgess

REMINDER: Please notify the church office either by calling (203) 238-1248 or with a note placed in the offering plate when a family member is/will be hospitalized so the church can provide appropriate care and prayers for you and your family member. Thank you for your help.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Richard M. Burgess, Pastor: (860) 462-6545
pastor@immanuelmeriden.org

Diane Murphy, Administrator: (203) 238-1248
office@immanuelmeriden.org

OFFICE HOURS
9am-1pm Monday-Friday

THE NEXT VISITOR

Articles for the March Visitor will be due on February 23, 2018 and mailed on February 27, 2018. Please get your articles in on time. Thanks, Diane

Pastor Burgess on Vacation

Pastor Burgess will be on vacation February 5 thru February 11th. There will be no Bible Study or Pub Theology that week. There will still be worship Sunday, February 11th, with Andrew Hopko and Pastor Andrea Hoslett leading worship.

As always, if an emergency arises while Pastor Burgess is gone, contact any council member, and they will know who is available for pastoral coverage.

Pastor

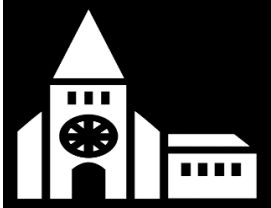
Weather Cancellations

In the event that regular Church Service is cancelled due to weather events, the following outlets will be available for notification.

- #1 The Office Phone service - Status will be provided
- #2 NBC Channel 30 - Will be listed on their Station
- #3 Immanuel Lutheran Church Facebook Page
- #4 Members of Council.

The Word in Season

The January/February/March issue of the daily devotional *The Word in Season* are available in the main entrance way. Lent beings in mid-February, instead of giving up something, consider adding something to your routine that will bring you closer to God. Using the daily prayers located in the back of the booklet would also be a great place to start!



Council Highlights – Joanne Gardner

Council members met after the Annual Meeting to fill positions: Joanne Gardner, President; Wendy Becker, Vice president; Jeff Peterson, Secretary; Cindy Zuber, Treasurer; Members at large: Deb LeHerissier, Kim Freeman, Marilyn Kroneburger, Kyle Fohlin, Lelita McKetty, Paul Olson, Jack Zuber. Thank you all!

A council retreat will be held during February to consider, prayerfully, what Immanuel's path will be as we, like so many other mainline churches locally, have a large building to maintain and decreasing resources. Additionally, we will seek Holy Spirit guidance to explore once again what is "our mission."

In a broad stroke the long-term options before us include "doing church differently" and changing how we maintain a church family/worship here on Hanover Street, consolidating with another church to share costs, or continuing on as we are but expecting that eventually endowments will be needed to pay bills. Some council members believe that if former members were invited to return, things might return to the way it used to be-vibrant and multi-aged. All persons are asked and encouraged to call on former attendees to visit once again. They have been missed! Attendance on Sunday mornings is typically averages in the 40s-50s. One council member has suggested a monthly "town hall meeting" during fellowship time to seek members' feedback and hear council updates. The Synod has asked that all congregations update their constitutions; this is one task that will be initiated this year.

Council meeting nights have changed! We will meet on **SECOND** Thursdays at 6:30pm.

Thank you for the farm "Good Gifts" donations! Checks totaling \$125 were mailed from the church to the ELCA, which was in addition to private mailings. God bless our animal and farm gifts.

It is with love and delight that I reflect on our church 2018. The core group makes sure the Sanctuary is prepared for worship, that holiday decorations are put away, the pickles and cookies were made, the coffee pot is on and the crumbs are wiped up, that the kids hear a bible lesson, that the deacons and readers are responsive, and the staff receive their paychecks. I know I will personally get several smiles or more when I walk in. The sign of

peace is very real. I know I can trust my church family to be there for me when I will need them and I know I will strengthen for another week with our worship. I recently saw a banner outside one church that read, "A great place to call home" and that's why I love my church-my brothers and sisters are here (even when we squabble) and so is our forgiving Father. These are gifts I would like to share with others that may never have known either.

Sunday Church School Scribbler

We begin February in the season after Epiphany, observe Transfiguration Sunday, Ash Wednesday and then the season of Lent. It can be quite an exciting and meaningful month. Make every effort to experience it as a family-that is how memories are made and faith forms.

The below scripture readings will be explored during SCS. These lessons will also be a part of the Sunday worship service. To help students get more out of our hour together, read and discuss with them the lesson on Friday or Saturday evening. A strong foundation is important to everyone's faith.

2/04	Healing at Simon's House	Mark 1:29-39	Healing
2/11	Elijah and Elisha	2 Kings 2:1-12	Leaders
2/18	God's Covenant w/ Noah	Genesis 9:8-17	Promises
2/25	The Faith of Abraham	Romans 4:13-25	Trust

Let's have some fun before the Lenten Season- There will be a potluck Mardi Gras celebration on 2/10/18 from 6-9pm.

We are working to add a SCS class for younger children (pre-K thru 2nd grade). We will need at least two more teachers to do so. If you sense God is calling you to get involved speak to Joanne Gardner or Kim Freeman.



Online registration has begun for **Resident Camp 2018 at Calumet**. Calumet also offers winter and spring programs along with family summer camping. To learn more about all these opportunities check out their website www.calumet.org

See you in worship,

Kim Freeman, SCS coordinator

Please Come!



**MARDI GRAS * CARNAVAL *
FAMILY FUN**

Saturday, Feb 10 th 6-9pm

Bring Pot Luck * Dress with colors!

**MUSIC - LINE DANCING - SINGING - GUITAR
W/TITO**

**** IF ANYONE NEEDS A RIDE PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE ****

The Lenten Service Schedule

Ash Wednesday service is Feb 14th at 7 pm.

The Lenten dinner church services start on Feb 21st at 6:30 with pot luck.

The following Lenten dates are Feb 28th, Mar 7th, Mar 14 and Mar 21st at 6:30 also with pot luck.

The next week there will be Maundy Thurs service at 7 pm and Good Friday service at 7 pm.

Wendy Becker

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Does Anyone Need Assistance Hearing the Church Service?

If we had hearing assist devices, would you use them?

If there is an interest we would consider purchasing them.

Please let Charlie Gardinier, Cindy McCarthy, Pastor or Diane in the office know.

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Thank you to the congregation and friends for saving the Box Tops for Education. Please continue to save the Box Tops. Below is an example of what they look like:



This is a project that my mother, Ruth Tozier, started many years ago. These labels are sent to the Navajo Lutheran Mission in Arizona.

A collection box is attached to the bulletin board, outside Augustana Hall. Please continue to save these labels for this worthy cause.

Cindy McCarthy

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Library News

The Library Task group meets weekly to log, label and organize the many books Immanuel is blessed with. Stop by the library to browse through our collection. This Lenten season, find a book that interests you. Books can be borrowed for up to three weeks.

This group meets Fridays beginning at 10am. All are welcome, come join us!

Joan Chasse'

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February Celebrations



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sandra Dobratz	2/01
Viola Lohmann	2/01
Kerissa Doehr	2/07
Stephanie DuBois	2/08
Pam Chiarelli	2/09
Aria Marie Merola	2/10
Garrett Kronenberger	2/11
Gary Dobratz	2/12
Dazia Sumpter	2/13
Cheryl DuBois	2/14
Lelita McKetty	2/14
Carson Coon	2/15
Heather Sokolowski	2/17
Herbert Ziemelis	2/18
Jeremy Beaudry	2/20
Vera Luft	2/21
Diane Hoff	2/25
Bertha Sievert	2/28
Michael Barnett	2/29



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Susan & Thomas Zagorski	2/14
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