

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER

942 Grape Avenue, Fisher, IL 61843-8512



Immanuel Lutheran Church of Osman
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
Reverend Jeffrey McPike, BCC

February 2024



From Pastor McPike's Desk...

Holy Communion Every Sunday: Why? Why Not?

Since the 1980s, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has encouraged every Sunday communion in every member congregation. The point continues to be debated even to this day. Here at Immanuel, it was common for many years for communion to be celebrated on the first third Sundays. This is what many got used to. Several years ago, there was a small but significant shift. Before, “Holy Communion is celebrated on the first and third (and sometimes fifth) Sundays.” We shifted to “Holy Communion is regularly celebrated except usually the second and fourth Sundays.” Obviously, this was a shift in philosophy and not necessarily practice. However, it was an important shift. Formerly, Communion was the “exception”, being held on certain Sundays but usually not. After this shift, holding communion was the usual practice, while not having communion was the exception. This opened the door for the usual practice to become more and more frequent.

Since the end of the seventeen Sunday shutdown in 2020 due to the Pandemic, Holy Communion has been celebrated every Sunday. This practice continues to the present time.

Now and then, the question is asked, “why not go back to having communion every other Sunday?”

The frequency of Holy Communion is not specified in the Bible. There is a good reason for this. Communion is a gift, not a mandate. To identify a number of times, either a minimum or routine practice, would make communion into some legal requirement, which would change it from a gift to a mandate, from a blessing to a commandment. Indeed, in some churches that do not believe in the Real Presence, that Communion not only brings the Body and Blood of Christ, their description of communion is that it is an “ordinance” – something that we must do because Christ said so, with no focus on the gift that communion is or brings.

Before going further, allow me to direct you to a wonderful series that ran in “The Lutheran Witness”, now available on-line at <https://witness.lcms.org/tag/series-our-lords-supper/>. In this series, Dr. Kenneth Wieting, LCMS pastor and author of a number of works on Communion, presents in seven articles various aspects of communion.

Going back into history, we find that those in agreement with Luther celebrated communion quite frequently. In the writings of the mid-16th century, we have the following:

Among us (Holy Communion) is celebrated every Lord's Day and on other festivals, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it. (Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (p. 258). Fortress Press.)

As I have previously stated in this column in past years, communion was celebrated every Sunday and festival. The reduction in frequency was the result of the migration of the Lutheran Church to America because of a couple of factors.

One reason for reduction in frequency is a sad one, in my opinion. This reason is rooted in an anti-Catholic Church sentiment that grew up in America. Lutheran churches, for whatever reason, wanted to look more like their American protestant counterparts. Since communion is not valued in the same way in those churches, it is celebrated infrequently (if at all). Some protestant churches actually celebrate it once a year on Maundy Thursday, and only in conjunction with a foot washing, just like Jesus did in the Bible. These denominations tend to see communion as something that we do for our own benefit, not because God gives His gifts to us.

Another reason communion fell from every-Sunday use has to do with a false teaching that crept into the church in the 19th Century called "Pietism". The word "piety" is a good word, which means, "the quality of being religious" or reverent, devout. "Pietism" is a movement in the church that tended to put the focus on the individual and how devout or devoted that person was. How did this influence communion? Well, first, it created the notion that we would "get more out of communion" if we did not use it as much. In other words, we would value communion more if it was not done so often. Once again, that turns the focus of communion back on us... how much we value it, how prepared we are for it, etc. The focus of communion should properly be on God and His giving us gifts of forgiveness, strength of faith, fellowship with Him and each other.

Next month's article will include more of a discussion on this simple statement about Communion from the Lutheran Confessions which is quoted above: "Among us (Holy Communion) is celebrated every Lord's Day and on other festivals, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it."

Lenten Season Schedule

The Lenten Season will be upon us soon. We will observe Ash Wednesday on February 14 with a 7 PM worship service. There will not be mid-week Lenten services, but there will be Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The council will discuss the time of the Easter morning service and if there will be a breakfast after that service at their next meeting.

Shut – In Visits

All members can volunteer to visit our members who cannot get out to worship with us. There is a sign-up sheet on the back bulletin board of the church if you are interested in "bringing some smiles" to people who have health issues and cannot get to church.

Newly Installed Church Officers

The newly elected church officers were installed in the worship service on Sunday, February 4th. The following officers were installed: chairman – John Lammle, treasurer – Terri Hooker, elders – Dwight Hooker and Jerry Niemann, trustee - Jeff Warsaw, assistant finance secretary – Barb Whitehouse - Gercken. **Thanks** to the outgoing church council officers – John Grussing, Rick Hardesty, Brenda Hendricks, Jim Van Wakeman, and Don Warsaw for dedicating their time and energies to the work of the church. The present council consists of the following members:

Chairman – John Lammle

Secretary – Sandy Whitehouse

Treasurer – Terri Hooker

Elders – Dwight Hooker, Steve Martin, Jerry Niemann, and Bob Zimmerman

Trustees – Jeff Warsaw and Lee Whitehouse

Finance Secretary – Susan Martin

Assistant Finance Secretary – Barb Whitehouse-Gercken

The next council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 21st, at 6:30 in the fellowship hall.

Thrivent Members!

If you have any Thrivent Choice Dollars which are given upon ownership of certain Thrivent products, do not forget to donate those to one of the 35,000 churches and nonprofits that Thrivent recognizes. Immanuel Lutheran Church of Osman is one of those choices. The deadline to donate 2023 choice dollars is March 31st. The amount contributed to our church in the last year has decreased greatly so if you have Thrivent Choice Dollars, but do not know how to donate them, please see Brenda Hendricks or Terri Hooker.

Welcome Into Membership

We welcome into membership Jerry and Melanie Niemann from Paxton, Illinois. They transferred their membership from St. Johns Lutheran Church in Buckley. They have been attending services at Osman for a few years. Please welcome them!

Our Deepest Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Susan Warsaw, wife of Ron Warsaw, who passed away on Sunday, January 28th after major heart surgery in Texas. May God provide comfort and care for those who mourn her loss. Her funeral will be held at St. Johns Lutheran Church in Champaign next week, and burial will follow at the Bellflower Township Cemetery in rural Bellflower. Susan was confirmed at Osman in 1984 and was a member at Osman for several years following that. During her membership here she was a member of the Altar Guild, Choir, LWML, and also was a helper with Sunday School.

Quilting Dates

The next dates for quilting will be February 5th and 7th at 8 AM in the fellowship hall. The quilts will be given to Lutheran World Relief and Orphan Grain Train in the fall. All ladies of the congregation are welcome to attend as no experience is needed!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Gina (Masko) and Anthony Feit on the birth of their baby girl, Nora Lynn, on January 21st. Grandparents are Dave Masko and the late Cindy Masko. May God continue to care for this new family!

baby & girl



February Birthdays

Bryan Edwards.....02-03
 David Peyton.....02-03
 Theresa Van Wakeman Wilson.....02-07
 Austin Miller.....02-09
 James Amdor.....02-10
 Christie Delaney.....02-10
 Neil Bidner.....02-17
 Jeff Warsaw.....02-19
 Reese Gallier.....02-26

February Anniversaries

Susan and Austin Miller...02-12-1977
 Sara and David Kunde...02-14-2012
 Sandy and Lee Whitehouse...02-28-2015

Statistics

Date	Worship Service	Bible Class	Sunday School
December 31	42		
January 7	38	11	2
January 14	0	0	0
January 21	0	0	0
January 28	43	12	0

ASH WEDNESDAY
 First Day of Lent

