

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER

942 Grape Avenue, Fisher, IL 61843-8512



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

December 2023



From Pastor McPike's Desk....

The season of Advent comes right before Christmas. For many outside the church, it could be looked at as “getting in the way of Christmas.” For years, the church has struggled to maintain the season of Advent, as many wish to sing Christmas music, reflecting the mood and attitudes of the world around us.

Advent is a time for the church to proclaim Christ's coming. His coming once in time is celebrated as Christmas, with all the trappings of the Baby in a manger and the angels singing to shepherds. Yet the Christian season of Advent looks not only to prepare for Christmas, but to prepare for Christ. Preparing for Christ not only involves remembering His coming and work (life, death, and resurrection from the dead), but also His coming at the end of time as judge of all and His coming continually in word and sacrament.

An ancient custom of the church was to set aside the final days of Advent as days reflecting specific expectation of Christ's coming. These days, from December 17 through December 23, were days that focused on various aspects of the Church's expectation of Christ's coming leading right up to Christmas Eve. The focus of each day is expressed in ancient refrains called the “O-Antiphons”. There are seven in all, each which is featured in the well-known Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” The hymn, written in Latin, is actually not as old as it sounds, but dates back to 1710 when it first appeared in a Catholic hymnal in Cologne, Germany.

The “Advent Wreath” dates back to 1839, when a Lutheran pastor working at a mission for children used a wagon wheel. On the outer part of the wheel were twenty small red candles, while four larger white candles representing the Sundays in Advent were toward the center. The red candles were lighted on the weekdays.

Gradually, this “wheel” became a “wreath” made of greens, symbolizing life in the midst of lifelessness of winter, or everlasting life. The circle reminds us of God's unending love and how He gives us eternal life through faith in Him. Gradually, only four candles were used, and they were purple, the same as the older traditional color of the altar cloths and pastor's vestments (paraments). When royal blue was later adopted as the “Advent color” to distinguish it from the more somber – seeming purple (also used during Lent), many churches adopted blue candles on the advent wreath. Some have

four blue candles, some have three blue and one “rose” candle. The candles represent **hope, peace, joy and love**. There are other names used, but the third candle, the “joy” candle has historically been “rose” in color. On that Sunday, rose colored paraments were also used. This reminds us of the great joy of the shepherds as the first human recipients of the news that the long awaited Savior was born.

For the past sixteen Advents that I have been with you, we have used a short ceremony called the “Lighting of the Advent Wreath” to draw attention to the theme of expectation that characterizes Advent. A key purpose of this ceremony is to highlight how the various prophecies or promises of the coming of Christ gave more information about Jesus leading up to His birth in Bethlehem. This year, all four of the regularly appointed “Old Testament Lessons” come from the book of Isaiah. As such, the “Lighting of the Advent Wreath” has been modified to make use of the promises of Jesus as told by Isaiah.

(Information on the Advent wreath in this article is adapted from <https://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/christmas-and-advent/advent-wreath-candles-understanding-the-meaning-history-tradition.html>)

Church Officers Needed

In January 2024 the church council will be needing names to fill the election ballot. The positions that will need to be filled on the council will be a chairman, treasurer, two elders, one trustee, and one assistant financial secretary. Be thinking about how YOU can use your talents to serve the congregation. Women can hold all offices except chairman and elder. There is a sign-up sheet on the back bulletin board.

Offering Envelopes

If you have never had offering envelopes and would like some for 2024, please see Brenda Hendricks or Susan Martin. If you usually had offering envelopes and do NOT want any, please notify them, too. Please contact them by December 1st so the 2024 envelopes can be organized and prepared to be handed out.

Church Council Meeting

The next church council meeting will be on Wednesday, December 13th, at 6:30 PM. This is a change to avoid the week of Christmas.

Christmas Worship Schedule



**Regular worship service – Sunday, December 24th
at 9:30 AM**

**(No Bible Class or Sunday School)
Christmas Eve Worship Service – Sunday
December 24th at 7:00 PM**

Church Decorating

For Sunday, December 3rd, the tree stands undecorated. Why isn't the tree decorated? We decorate a bit gradually to remind ourselves that the "first Advent" – or the entire Old Testament history, was thousands of years long. When someone important is coming, we want to prepare. How do we prepare for Christ? We repent of our sins and celebrate the forgiveness that Christ gives to us. Advent is not popular because it is not popular to look at ourselves as sinners needing forgiveness. Advent does not look forward to the coming of a holiday, but to the coming of our Savior. On the last day, it will not be Jesus as a cute baby, but rather Jesus as a judge. We who believe and trust in Him for forgiveness will be grateful to hear our sentence of acquittal. Many will not fare well. And so the church has a season before the celebration of Christ's first coming (Christmas) to remind ourselves that He will come again. **On Saturday, December 9th, at 9 AM the congregation is invited to help add decorations to the tree and also to put up the greenery and outside decorations.**

Operation Christmas Child Boxes



On Sunday, November 19th, the Sunday School children packed twenty-four boxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. Terri Hooker and Connie Warsaw purchased the toys, personal care items, and school supplies using a Thrivent Action Team card. A twelve lesson program entitled **The Greatest Journey** is added to the boxes at the headquarters before they are shipped to many countries. This program teaches the children about Jesus and His great love for them. Right after church the boxes were taken to Gibson City Bible Church which is the nearest collection place to Osman. Part of the shipping cost for each box was also paid with a Thrivent Action Team card. Posing in front of the finished boxes on the left are – James Amdor, Blaine Martin, Connie Warsaw, and Terri Hooker. Helping assemble the boxes on the right are – Blaine Martin, Annette Warsaw, Jeff Warsaw, James Amdor, and Addi Warsaw. Before the packing began, they watched a video about a child who received a Samaritans' Purse Operation Christmas Child box as a poor child in the country of Senegal. He later had a chance to come to the United States where he, as an adult, got to help pack boxes for other children who are poor like he was. Thank you to our members who donated four more boxes to add to the 24 boxes made for this great mission project. Thank you to Terri Hooker and Connie Warsaw for organizing this project.

Christmas Treat Bags

There will not be a need this year to donate to the Christmas treat bags that are given out on Christmas Eve. There was money left over from last year and the remaining balance will be paid by the Bill and Moneta McCleary memorial money which was designated by the family for this project. The treat bags will be assembled on December 24th at 8:30 AM during the usual Sunday School and Bible Class time in the fellowship hall. Everyone is invited to help assemble them.

Poinsettias for the Altar

Usually, members of the congregation sign up to donate a poinsettia for the altar for the Christmas season, but this year the Altar Guild is going to purchase these altar flowers.

Soup Supper Benefit

The Soup Supper Benefit, which was held on Saturday, November 11th, was a big success. Over twenty volunteers helped on that evening to serve a delicious meal of soups, sandwiches, desserts, and drinks. Many other church and community members made food for the event. The recipient was Rob Gallier of Mahomet. The freewill offering collected \$5357. Church donations and Thrivent Choice Dollars will be added to this amount. The check will be given to Rob and his family at a date to be determined.

Thank You!

Thank You! We want to share our sincerest gratitude for the Osman Benefit in Rob's honor last weekend. What a testament to our church and its amazing people! Thank you for supporting us in light of Rob's medical challenges. It means the world! We love you all!

Rob, Nikki, Mitchell, Jack, and Reese Gallier

Substitute Organist



On Sunday, November 26th, Eli Beadle played the organ for the worship service in the absence of Alicia Haggin. Eli is fourteen years old and is home schooled. He resides in rural Farmer City with his family. His amazing musical talent at such a young age is amazing.

Ladies Aid/LWML

Nine ladies met on November 9th for the Ladies Aid/LWML meeting at 1:30 PM in the fellowship hall. The group enjoyed delicious refreshments served by Terri Hooker and Deb Lammle before the meeting started. After the meeting was called to order, the third verse of the LWML song was sung. A devotion centered on God always being with us was read by Annette Warsaw. Brenda Hendricks led a topic entitled "From Age to Age" from the Fall Quarterly. Roll call was answered by a Bible verse on thanks. Marsha Warsaw read the minutes from the September meeting, and they were approved with two corrections. The mites were collected. Connie Warsaw gave the treasurer's report which showed a balance of \$2189.18. The treasurer's report was approved. Correspondence was read from our adopted student, Nicholas Brusick, who had contacted Brenda Hendricks by phone to acknowledge his leave of absence from the seminary for the winter quarter due to complications in his personal life. Wilma Grussing reported on cards she had sent in the last two months. Terri Hooker reported that 105 quilts were taken to the Lutheran World Relief truck in late October as well as 13 fabric kits. Brenda Hendricks reported that 19 quilts were taken to the Orphan Grain Train truck in early October. The group completed a total of 124 quilts. Diana Zimmerman sent a report that 581 dresses made for Dresses for Africa have been sent since we started the mission project. The next quilting dates were announced as January 8th and 10th.

In old business Brenda Hendricks thanked all the members who helped with LWML Sunday. She thanked Annette Warsaw for printing the colored bulletin covers. The mite box that was on the back elder pew for LWML Sunday collected over \$50 in money for mite projects. She also thanked all the members who made delicious baked goods for the Amy Jamison benefit which was held in Farmer City on October 22nd. The baked goods were auctioned and made a good amount of money for the medical expenses for Amy. The food committees have not taken food to anyone since the last meeting. Brenda Hendricks gave a short report on the CID retreat which was held at Camp Cilca in early October.

In new business the Christmas Dinner which is scheduled for December 7th was discussed. The members voted to have a potluck at the fellowship hall starting at noon. They also agreed to have a hat and mitten collection instead of exchanging gifts among the members. This collection will also be offered to all the members of the congregation with a collection box being placed on the back pew. The group voted to give \$100 to Lutheran Child and Family Services and \$75 to the Fort Wayne Seminary for their Christmas services to the students. They also voted to give Pastor McPike a Christmas gift.

The bylaws were printed and handed out in October. A few changes were necessary. The group voted to accept the changes. The nomination committee of Terri Hooker and Deb Martin presented the election ballot. The following officers were elected: Brenda Hendricks – president, Diana Zimmerman – treasurer, Deb Martin – secretary, Terri Hooker – mission coordinator, and Debbie Lammle – Christian growth. Planning ahead the group voted to sponsor a soup supper before the Ash Wednesday church service on Wednesday, February 14th.

The next meeting will be on February 1st at 1:30 PM. The topic presenter and the hostess committee will be named when the 2024 program booklet is printed.



Myron Zimmerman..... 12-02
 David Hasty.....12-05
 Debbie Martin 12-09
 Alicia Haggin12-17
 Diana Zimmerman12-21
 Nathan Hooker12-25
 Deb Johnson12-28
 John Grussing12-31



Martha and Darwin Warsaw – 12-31-1966

Statistics

| Date | Worship | Bible Class | Sunday School |
|-------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| October 29 | 42 | 8 | 2 |
| November 5 | 42 | 15 | 0 |
| November 12 | 34 | 9 | 0 |
| November 19 | 38 | 11 | 7 |
| November 19 | 14 | N/A | N/A |
| November 26 | 34 | 8 | 1 |



“What Kind of Birthday Celebration Would That Be?”

Imagine for a moment that the day has come. It is your birthday. Everyone around you has been getting busier and busier in honor of your day. Now that day has arrived, but hardly anyone speaks to you! In fact, some people around you never speak one single word to you all day. Parties take place, and in fact, some of the parties that are supposedly celebrating your birthday turn out to dishonor you. Cards are sent in honor of your birthday. Gifts are exchanged in honor of your birth. And yet, somehow, you are pretty much left out of the celebration of your own birthday. The question is, “So how would that make you feel?” “I just can’t help but wonder if perhaps that is just how the Lord Jesus must feel at times. So my challenge to each of us is to keep Christ in Christmas. Make Him the focus. Read the Christmas messages from His Word in Matthew 1 and Luke 1 and 2. Give a special gift to a ministry or an individual in honor of the Lord. Really listen to the words of the Christmas hymns. Let’s not forget to celebrate the Lord Jesus in honor of His birthday this Christmas. (Taken from www.michaelpeck.org)

Happy Birthday, Jesus!